



History
Fare

BULLETIN ISSUE NO. 7 – DECEMBER 2023



**Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Richard
de Bacquencourt des Voeux**

Welcome

Ladies & Gents,

Welcome to this December edition of the *HistoryFare Bulletin* and I hope you enjoyed reading the last issue, sent a couple of few weeks ago.

Many thanks to all of you who have supported HistoryFare over the last year by attending talks, walking tours and followed and shared my posts on social media.

As a result of your generous donations over the year, HistoryFare has raised £524.02 for various charities as follows:

£24 - Commonwealth War Graves Foundation

£30 - Loughborough Carillon

£52.84 – SSAFA

£417.18 - RAF Association Wings Appeal

Many thanks to you and the various speakers who have supported me during 2023.

I would just like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Brian

Next Monthly Meeting

Our next monthly meeting will be on this Thursday, **7th December November 2023** at the Melton Mowbray Royal Air Forces Association Tornado Club, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0HR at 20:00Hrs.

There will be no talk at this meeting, but instead it will be a social giving us all time to have a chat and a drink. We will also have the monthly raffle and maybe a short quiz.



We will also be holding a 'Show and Tell' during the night where you can bring along anything with a militaria interest to show to everyone else and tell all about it.

The first talk of 2024 will be on Thursday 4th January where we welcome guest speaker Peter Spooner who will be talking to us about the Battle of Frezenberg in May 1915, in which A Squadron (the Melton Mowbray Squadron) of the 1/1st Leicestershire Yeomanry played a key role.

The current talk schedule proposed for 2024 can be seen online via [HistoryFare Military Talks Programme - HistoryFare](#)

Admission Cost £3 Seats are to be reserved by email: meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com

'Dick' was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and took over command of 156 Battalion Parachute Regiment on 15th March 1943 from Colonel Hose whilst the unit was based in Palestine. He commanded the Battalion through their time in North Africa and Italy was the CO when they arrived back in England following their withdrawal from Italy.

Following their arrival in the UK, the transport ship "Staffordshire" docked at Liverpool on 16th December 1943. Following their arrival at Liverpool, 156 Battalion made their way to their new billets at various locations in Rutland.

The Battalion HQ were billeted in Ayston Hall and HQ Company were at Bisbrook Hall. 'Company were sent to The Knoll, 'B' Company to Loddington Hall and 'C' Company to Allexton Hall. The Mortar Platoon were billeted in Launde Abbey and a Platoon from 'C' Company were billeted in the skittle alley of Wilsons Arms pub in Allexton.

Des Voeux was not happy with the Battalion being billeted in scattered locations across Rutland, so he arranged for them all to be brought together in Melton Mowbray in February 1944. On arrival in Melton, the troops of 156 Battalion were billeted in several hunting lodges in town. The Battalion HQ along with HQ Company were billeted in Staveley Lodge, Support Company at the Spinney, 'A' Company were at Scalford Hall and 'B' and 'C' Companies at Newport Lodge. However, following several arguments with the owner of Scalford Hall, a certain Colonel Mustard of Colman's Mustard fame, 'A' Company moved into the Spinney to join the Support Company.

But why did 'Dick' choose Melton Mowbray as the base for 156 Battalion? Was he aware that the hunting lodges had been requisitioned for use by the military and were currently vacant? I'm sure that he would as other military units had previously been billeted in the lodges before 156 took up residence, for example, No 16 Parachute Field Ambulance were billeted at Scalford Hall in Dec 43 and the 'Shropshire Gunners' had been billeted at Newport Lodge.

Was there another reason for Melton being chosen? Did Dick have previous knowledge of the town?

If we go back a couple of generations to Dick's Great Uncle, the 5th Baronet, Sir Henry Dalrymple Des Voeux. Sir Henry was a frequent visitor to Melton, especially during the hunting season and was frequently mentioned as being a guest at the various hunt balls alongside Earl Wilton. On the 13th of August 1863, Sir Henry married his wife, Lady Alice Magdalene Grey Egerton.



Lady Alice was the daughter of Thomas Grosvenor Egerton, 2nd Earl of Wilton and Lady Mary Margaret Stanley. Following the death of Lady Mary in 1858, the Earl Wilton married Isabella Smith in 1863. They had no children, but Lady Wilton rejoiced in the title of "Queen of Melton" for fifty years.

Park House in Melton Mowbray was owned by the Reeve family and around 1828/29 when the Earl and Countess of Darlington moved out of

Park House to a property at the bottom of Burton Street, Millicent Mary, the widow of John Reeve sold Park House for £6,700. The new owner was the 2nd Earl of Wilton who was no stranger to

Melton as he and his brother Lord Belgrave frequently hunted at Melton from their property at Grantham.

Following the sale of the property, the building was renamed Egerton Lodge. The 5th Baronet, Sir Henry Dalrymple was a frequent visitor to Melton and Egerton Lodge.

Lady Alice Des Voeux along with her mother the Countess of Wilton were both heavily involved with the social scene in Melton Mowbray organising and helping to run events both in town and surrounding villages.

The other local connection concerns his mother. As mentioned previously, "Dick" was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Henry John Des Voeux OBE and his wife Dorothy Gladys Turner-Farley. The couple were married at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, Kensington, London.



A YACHTSWOMAN WHO OWNS AND STEERS HER OWN BOAT: MISS TURNER-FARLEY, MARRYING MR. H. DES VOEUX ON THE 16TH. Miss Turner-Farley is the eldest daughter of the late Mr. T. M. Turner-Farley, of Wartnaby Hall, Melton Mowbray, and of Mrs. Turner-Farley, of Rosilian, Falmouth.

Doris was the daughter of Mr. Thomas MacNaghten Turner-Farley of Wartnaby Hall near Melton.

There is no direct evidence that I have come across confirming Dick visiting Melton prior to WW2, but one can only assume that he certainly had knowledge of the town due his close family ties with Melton Mowbray.

In July 1939, Dick married Jean Marget Rew Elkington, the daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel John Ford Elkington at Burghclere in Hampshire. Dick and Jean had two daughters Elizabeth and Jean, born 1940 & 1941 respectively.

On Wednesday 20th September 1944, the 4th Para Brigade were retreating towards the Oosterbeek Perimeter whilst mortars rained down over the whole area as they were hotly pursued by German infantry and tanks. 156 Battalion were the Brigade's rearguard, and they suffered the worst out, however it is a great tribute to the men of 156 that the Germans never realized that they were fighting a foe in retreat as attacks were beaten off, and counter-attacks were mounted to push the enemy back.

A terrible toll was taken in terms of casualties and very few men from 156 made it into the Perimeter. Lt-Colonel Des Voeux was not amongst them. Sergeant Andy Thorburn discovered his fatally wounded commander, leaning against a tree. He asked if he could help him, but Des Voeux said "No. Move forward. The enemy is in front of you; they need you there". It is believed that Sir Richard died shortly after.

Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Des Voeux is remembered on the 156 Battalion memorial at St Mary's Church here in Melton Mowbray and also at the Church of Ascension at Burghclere in Hampshire.





F.-M. LORD MONTGOMERY with ELIZABETH and JEAN DES VOE after he had unveiled memorials at Burghclere Church to their grandfather, Lt.-Col. J. F. E. Elkington, D.S.O., father, Sir Richard des Voeux, Bt., and uncle, Capt. R. F. R. Elkington.



The Burghclere memorial for the girl's father, Dick along with a memorial to their grandfather, Lieutenant-Colonel John Ford Elkington and a stained-glass memorial to their uncle Captain Richard Ford Rew Elkington were unveiled by Field Marshal Lord Montgomery in 1946.

Dick and Captain Richard Ford Rew Elkington are also listed on the Burghclere Second World War memorial.

Talks & Walking Tours

My last planned public walking tour will take place on Saturday 16th December, and this will be the General History tour.

New tour dates for 2024 are Friday 19th January and Saturday 17th February, both at 10:00Hrs.

Tours are £5 per person and last approximately 2 hours. To book a place on one, just email meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com

I am also working on developing new tours for 2024, some relating to general history of the town and another military history one, based on a particular theme, but more of that to come over the next few months.

To keep up to date with future tour dates, keep an eye out on social media and my web page <https://historyfare.co.uk/historyfare-tours/>

Street Names

Not really a street name, but a name of a row of cottages. Situated on Ankle Hill as it was then, now Dalby Road, roughly opposite the swimming baths was a row of cottages where “Uplands” is located now.



The name plaque on the building was “Cardigan Terrace 1854” and were named in honour of James Brudenell, 7th Earl of Cardigan and the year 1854 was when they were built but also the year of the Charge of the Light Brigade which Cardigan led.

Leicester City, County & Rutland At Risk War Memorials Project

The ARWMP team have announced a series of open days for 2024. They are based at: The Chancel, (rear of) All Saint’s Church, Highcross Street, Leicester LE1 4PH

Open Days – 11:00Hrs to 16:00Hrs

Saturday 27th January; Saturday 16th March; Saturday 25th May; Saturday 27th July; Saturday 16th November

Heritage Open Days

Saturday 7th September (10:00Hrs – 18:00Hrs); Sunday 8th September (14:30Hrs – 17:00Hrs)

If you have not visited the project yet, please do as they have a fantastic display of war memorials from across the county that they have 'saved' from being lost forever.

For further information contact: mail@atriskwarmemorials.co.uk

Website: www.atriskwarmemorials.co.uk

Face Book: www.facebook.com/arwmp

Twitter Page: @ARWMP

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HistoryFare gift vouchers are the perfect gift for friends, family and colleagues who love getting outdoors, discovering history, or exploring new places. We provide guided walks and talks across the historic market town of Melton Mowbray.

Give a HistoryFare gift voucher!

For more information, see my website:

[HistoryFare Gift Vouchers - HistoryFare](#)



Merry Christmas



Till next time!

Please feel free to share this bulletin with whoever you think may be interested.

For any enquiries or to submit articles, please email Brian at meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com