

*History*  
*Fare*

**BULLETIN ISSUE NO. 14 – AUGUST 2024**



**Lieutenant Colonel Robert Buntan Muir**

# Welcome

Ladies & Gents,

Welcome to this edition of the *HistoryFare Bulletin*.

I hope you are all enjoying the summer holidays and the lovely weather we have been having.

As always, if you have any snippets of local history, or even suggestions for topics to include in future bulletins, please do send them in.

Once again, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at a HistoryFare event soon.

Brian

## Next Monthly Meeting



Our next monthly meeting will be on **Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024** at the Melton Mowbray Royal Air Forces Association Tornado Club, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0HR at 20:00Hrs.

I will be talking about Melton Mowbray and its connections to the Crimean War.

The famous leader of the Light Brigade was the Earl of Cardigan, who, when not living at his country home at Deene Park in Northamptonshire lived in a house on Burton Road in Melton Mowbray.

Not only will this talk cover Cardigan, but we will also look at other connections that Melton has to this 19th century war.

**Admission Cost £3 - Seats are to be reserved via the following link:**  
**<https://historyfare.co.uk/events/melton-mowbray-the-crimean-war/>**  
or via email: **[meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com](mailto:meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com)**

## Raffle



Many thanks to those of you who have supported the monthly raffles by donating prizes for use the draws, they have all been gratefully appreciated.

If you would like to donate prizes to future raffles, biscuits, chocolates, wine, beer etc are all acceptable proving they are in date! Books and artwork etc will also be accepted.

# Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Bunten Muir O.B.E. J.P.



Officers of the 65th (2nd Leicestershire Yeomanry) Coy.  
Lt. F A Belville, SSM. G Hobden, Lt. C Challinor  
Lt. Sir F F Fowke, Cpt. W A Peake, Lt. R B Muir

Robert Bunten Muir was born on 17 July 1862 at Anderston in Glasgow. He was the youngest of 6 children for Matthew Andrew Muir and his wife Agnes (nee Bunten).

Matthew was a managing partner of the Anderston Foundry Company which produced looms for both cotton and wool and later on also produced chairs for railway carriages. Robert was educated at Cheltenham College.

Robert came to Melton for a week with a view to securing property for the hunting season. He purchased Newport Lodge in February 1889 following the death of millionaire, Mr. Julius Behrens in October 1888.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1895, Robert married Alice Katherine Ashton at St Peters, Pimlico.

On the wedding register, it records his address as residing at the Grosvenor Hotel on Buckingham Palace Road in London and her father as Sam Tudor Ashton, a Major in the Leicestershire Yeomanry. (See Bulletin No 2 July 23 for Lieutenant Colonel Sam Tudor Ashton).



Advert from The Field, The Country Gentleman's Newspaper 29 Dec 1888

They were married by the Reverend R Blakeney, Vicar of Melton Mowbray and assisted by the Reverend John Storrs of St Peters.

In 1896, Robert and Alice had a daughter, Agnes Katherine Muir who was born in Brighton and was their only child.

Robert was commissioned into the Leicestershire Yeomanry Cavalry as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in January 1890 and was promoted to Captain on the eve of the Boer War. He served with the 65th Company 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion Leicestershire (Prince Alberts Own) Imperial Yeomanry.

The 65<sup>th</sup> Company was one of the units of the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion Imperial Yeomanry that sailed as part of the Rhodesian Field Force under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir F Carrington, who incidentally was also educated at Cheltenham College.

Along with the other seven companies comprising the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Battalions IY, they set sail on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1900 from Southampton, calling briefly at Tenerife on 12<sup>th</sup> April before sailing directly on to Beira, Portuguese East Africa, now modern day Mozambique. In all, there were 63 officers, 1019 men and 53 horses that sailed aboard the transport ship Galeka.

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Battalions landed at Beira on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of May, joining with other volunteer mounted troops from Australia and New Zealand to form the Rhodesia Field Force.

The 65<sup>th</sup> did not arrive at their base camp at Marandellas until June 7<sup>th</sup>. Whilst at Marandellas, the 65<sup>th</sup> was employed with some British South Africa Police on a small 'expedition' in the North against the native chief M'Pondera. Although the chief escaped, the expedition was deemed as successful and they were recognised for their good work carried out and gallantry displayed by all ranks.

He was awarded the Queen's South Africa 1899-1902 with 3 clasps: Cape Colony, Rhodesia, Orange Free State.

He was also awarded the Melton Mowbray Tribute Medal, Transvaal War in South Africa 1900 - 1901, reverse inscription in raised letters (name, rank and unit engraved), 'Presented by the Town of Melton Mowbray to R. B. Muir in recognition of his Patriotism & Valour in serving in the Transvaal War as Captain in the 65<sup>th</sup> Com. Imp. Yeo.'

(See Bulletin Issue No 9 February 2024 for more information on these local medals.)



Melton Mowbray Tribute Medal

Due to Richard being in South Africa, and his expectation of not returning to Melton until March 1901, he let Newport Lodge to Mr & Mrs Foxhall Keene. His wife Alice moved into Northfield House on Scalford Road at the back end of 1900 whilst her horses were located at the stables of Mr. W Payne on Park Road.

At this time, Melton & surrounding area was experiencing a water dilemma with the water at Scalford Spring now being 3ft 5in down the pipe. There was also an issue with air getting into the pipes resulting in poor flow of water. In November 1900, Alice sent a letter to the Urban District Council which was read out by the Chairman at their monthly meeting: "*Northfield House, Melton Mowbray, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1900. Mrs Muir wishes to draw the attention of the Urban District Council to the great scarcity of water at Northfield House. For days together there has been no supply whatever from the town. Mrs Muir understood that new arrangements for the supply were to have been carried out last October. The scarcity of water here is causing great inconvenience.*"

Northfield House wasn't the only property affected as the same issue was also reported by Mr Fast who was also experiencing the same at Mowbray Lodge on Dalby Road.

When the 1901 Census was taken on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 1901, Alice was recorded as now residing at Northfield House on Scalford Road.

She was listed as being 29 years old and living on her own means. Also listed was Marjorie, her 4 year old daughter plus Jane MaClean, Edith Whittingham, Annie Dunkley, Jessie Pope and Mark Kellam, all servants.

Richard returned to the UK on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1901 sailing on The Hawarden Castle and expected to arrive in Southampton on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Following his return from South Africa, he Commanded the Melton Mowbray 'A' Squadron of the Leicestershire Yeomanry until he resigned his commission on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1905.



In 1910, the Muir family moved from Melton Mowbray and took up residence at Kirby Hall, Kirby Bellars, just outside Melton.

Following the outbreak of World War One, the Regiment was brought up to war establishment which provided for a regimental HQ and three squadrons.

Mobilisation took place at the Squadron Headquarters of A, B and C Squadrons in Melton, Leicester and Loughborough respectively. The

personnel of D Squadron at Lutterworth were distributed between A, B and C Squadrons. The Regiment moved off to Diss in Norfolk until November 2<sup>nd</sup> when they headed over to France under the command of Lt-Col Percy Evans-Freke.

Back in England, the raising of the second- and third-line units synchronised with Lord Kitchener's appeal to the country for a million volunteers. Both units filled quickly and Richard rejoined the Leicestershire Yeomanry in August 1914 taking command of the second line whilst Lt-Col W Byron took command of the third line.

Early in 1916, Richard and the second line moved to the East Coast as part of the force organised against hostile invasion, whilst the third line under Byron moved to the Cavalry Depot at Aldershot where they were involved in training drafts was carried out in conjunction with other regiments.

Later the same year, the second-line unit was dismounted and issued bicycles instead of horses, but they were subsequently remounted. Throughout its existence, the second-line unit was called upon to function both as a complete home defence unit, and at the same time as a draft finding units with drafts being sent not only to the first line but also to other units in all theatres.

Alice was also involved in the Great War effort as she was involved in the collecting eggs for the wounded campaign. The Melton Mowbray Times published on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1915 reported that so far she had forwarded on 2,025 eggs with the kind assistance of contributors, she hoped she would be sending eggs for some time to come.



During the Great War, Muir attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the 2/1st Leicestershire Yeomanry, was mentioned in despatches and awarded the O B.E. for his services to the war (London Gazette 3 June 1919).

Richard resided at Kirby Hall, Melton Mowbray, until he died on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1937.

## Social Media

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Twitter: HistoryFare @FareBrian

Website: <https://historyfare.co.uk/>

Email: [meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com](mailto:meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com)



# Bosworth Battlefield Tour

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August myself and a group of 5 undertook a tour of Bosworth Battlefield with fellow guide Ben Mayne.



Ben explaining what happened at Crown Hill.

We started the tour at St James' Church in Sutton Cheney which is reputed to be the place where Richard III held his last mass before he went into battle.

Form Sutton Cheney we moved onto the visitor centre and Ambion Hill to discuss the battle.

We also looked at the other villages of Shenton, Dadlington and Stoke Golding, plus Fenn Lane to discuss the "Clash of the Vanguard" and the new 'battlefield location' before making our way back to the visitor centre and the cars at Sutton Cheney.



## HistoryFare Events

### **September**

- 5<sup>th</sup> – Monthly talk - Melton Mowbray and the Crimean War
- 29<sup>th</sup> – Guided Tour – Airborne & Commando General Tour

### **October**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Monthly talk – Machine Gun Corps and Harrowby Camp
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Guided Tour - Melton Mowbray History Trail
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Guided Tour – Airborne & Commando General Tour

### **November**

- 7<sup>th</sup> – Monthly talk - High Society: Flying Foxhunters and Airborne Aristocrats
- 9<sup>th</sup> - Guided Tour - Melton Mowbray History Trail
- 30<sup>th</sup> - Guided Tour – Painting the Town Red

### **December**

- 5<sup>th</sup> – Monthly talk – Melton Mowbray in WW2

To keep up to date with forthcoming HistoryFare events and to book a place, visit my website <https://historyfare.co.uk/events/>

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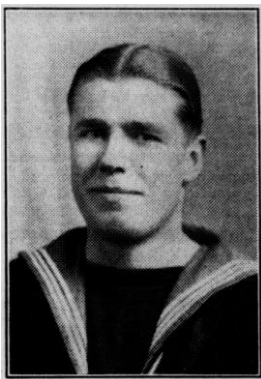
HistoryFare gift vouchers are the perfect gift for friends, family and colleagues who love getting outdoors, discovering history, or exploring new places. We provide guided walks and talks across the historic market town of Melton Mowbray.

Give a HistoryFare gift voucher!



For more information, see my website: [HistoryFare Gift Vouchers - HistoryFare](#)

## Melton Sailor Wins Distinguished Service Medal.



The award of the Distinguished Service Medal to Able Seaman William George Edward Burrows C/JX.154411 serving with HMS Pembroke for bravery with the Army was announced in the Melton Times published on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1940.

The "London Gazette" describes the award as "for determination and resource in affecting the rescue of several N.C.O's and men of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Own Royal Regiment, when buried in the debris of a bombed house at Dunkirk, an act of bravery which earned special commendation of the Commander in Chief B.E.F."

William Burrows is the son of the late Mr. C. Burrows and Mrs. Burrows of Scalford Lodge, Melton, and attended the Melton Boys Modern School. He was employed by Messrs. D.S.Hayes, the fishmonger in the Market Place until he was sixteen when he expressed a desire to "see the world" and joined the Navy.

First news of his adventures filtered through when it was learned he was on a ship engaged in the Narvik assault during Hitler's invasion of Norway, when although his ship was hit, he survived the adventure.

Now comes the heroic story of his gallantry at Dunkirk, where he landed with a party from the trawler, to help the evacuation, when the German bombers came.

One bomb smashed a house in which the N.C.O's and men of the King's Own Royal Regiment were sitting, says the "Daily Express" account of the incident. "A.B. Burrows ran to the house. Rafters, bricks and floors hung grotesquely, poised insecurely, ready to collapse at the next reverberation.

From within the debris, came the cries of men alive, Englishmen. William Burrows' broad back held up the rafters. His strong feet kicked away the bricks.

His quick eye watched and his skilled hands forestalled each sign of collapse. All the troops were saved. Able Seaman William George Edward Burrows won the personal praise of the B.E.F. Commander in Chief.”

The 5th Battalion King’s Own Royal Regiment were to retreat to Dunkirk and help form the defensive perimeter around the Port of Dunkirk whilst others were evacuated between 26<sup>th</sup> May and 4<sup>th</sup> June. By 2nd June most of the King's Own men had embarked for England. At 9am on the 4<sup>th</sup> June Dunkirk was surrendered to the Germans.

The battalion was attacked by 24 German aircraft on the 24<sup>th</sup> May. During this attack Drummer J Whitbread fired a Bren gun forcing the aircraft to break formation and desist from their attacks. The next day the decision was made to evacuate the BEF through Dunkirk and the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion were ordered to hold the line at the River Marcq at Bouvines as part of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division.

## Melton Spitfire Fund is launched

**WHY NOT A MELTON SPITFIRE FOR BRITAIN ?**



**S**CHOLARS at the Primary Boys' School, Asfordby Road, do not believe in half measures. Here is a picture which speaks louder than words of the boys' practical effort in the collection of aluminium.

One ton of this aluminium metal, it is said, is sufficient for a Spit fire. Soon there may be an opportunity for Melton and district to raise sufficient money to buy a Spitfire for Britain.

Boys in the group are:—Robert Jackson, Lewis Smith, Gordon Barnard, Norman Baxter, Denis Hopkins, Peter West, Fred Payne, John Yeoman, Gordon Smith,

August 1940

**Thank you for your support!**

**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](mailto:meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com)**