



## Redcoats Review

### 153rd Anniversary of the Battle of Tofrek

Editorial : Firstly we should warn you of a change of layout style for this particular newsletter, the principal reason being explained here. In preparing for a presentation, entitled "Researching Military Ancestors, which will be given at the Wiltshire Family History Society at their Open Day in Wilton on 12 May 2018, I felt that I needed to purchase a couple of Reference books to ensure that I spoke with a modicum of knowledge. Imagine the sense of satisfaction when Simon Fowler, the author of *Tracing Your First World War Ancestors* had this to say of Regimental and Service Museums and Archives: .... *"Most allow you to visit, but you usually have to make an appointment in advance. The museum websites may be pretty basic (an exception is The Wardrobe Museum in Salisbury for the Berkshire and Wiltshire regiments, see [www.thewardrobe.org.uk](http://www.thewardrobe.org.uk))." Praise indeed from an author whose books are sold by the National Archives at Kew, the mecca for genealogical research*

That got me thinking and then out of the blue we received a letter of thanks which perfectly illustrates the reputation your museum has out there in the wider world. So to blow your trumpet for you and let you bask in the warm glow of a job well done, we have spent the greater part of this publication reproducing the letter in full.

In addition there are a couple of short articles submitted by members of the Society and an article explaining the meaning behind the Regimental Collect. The latter research was caused by attending the funeral of In Pensioner at the Royal Chelsea Hospital and being unable to answer the probing question from the officiating Chaplain after the service.

Finally we welcome comments on your preferred layout, at the end of the day it is your Newsletter.



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#### FUTURE EVENTS

- Friends Spring Talk by David Chilton 26th April
- AGM 23 May 2018
- Battlefield Tour 10-14 Sep

The Editor of the Newsletter of  
The Rifles Museum (Berkshire and Wiltshire)  
The Wardrobe  
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Dear Sir, Madam

We would be grateful if you could publish the following in grateful thanks of the tremendous work the research volunteers do in providing information and honouring the memory of these men

**How The Wardrobe played an invaluable part in our honouring Second-Lieutenant Aubrey Edward Walter Butler, Attached 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire Regiment, Killed in Action Ovillers, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1916**

The Wardrobe, and its amazing researchers and volunteers, will forever hold a special place in the hearts of our family. My husband, on the advice of an ex-military colleague of him, initiated a research query at The Wardrobe into *any* information they may have on Aubrey Butler. All we knew was he had served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, had been an officer, and that he had died in the Somme, around July 1916.

Why was it so important to me to find out more about this man I had never met?

My Great-Uncle was Aubrey Butler and he was the eldest living son of the Stephen Thomas Butler, Works Manager at Callender's Cable Works, Erith. Hetty Elaine, his sister and my Grandmother, was just 13 years of age when her brother was killed at the Somme. She never forgot her brother, and regularly would tell me stories of her memories of him and the day she 'knew' he had died.

I always promised Granny I would try and find out more and that I would visit the area and leave some flowers in remembrance of her much loved brother. It took me 40 years to actually fulfil that promise and in June 2016 my husband Clive and I made that special journey.

Without The Wardrobe, and especially the help of Richard and Chris, we wouldn't have been able to start on that journey of honouring Aubrey. They went above and beyond to research and get information to us before our journey in June 2016, and we are indebted to them for this. They gave us the threads to his story, and we continue to add to it.

We visited Thiepval memorial in June 2016 where The Wardrobe told us Aubrey is commemorated on Pillar 11, Face D. We discovered the Thiepval records had a scant two lines of information about Second-Lieutenant AEW Butler and they were keen to learn more of the man behind the name. Thiepval, and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission representative we met, asked us to provide them with the information we obtained so Aubrey's record could be updated. The Wardrobe has helped us to do this, and now there are several pages of his story, including photographs.

The initial amount of information we received through you was far beyond our expectations (especially within the tight timescale before we left for France). The inclusion of the 5th Royal Berkshire Regiment book was extremely helpful, together with information in the Electrical role of Honour from University of London which contained so much information.

As the pack from The Wardrobe research arrived a few days before we left we took it with us and pored over it gleaning every fact we could.

We wanted to try and understand more about *where* my great- Uncle had been, and what he had seen, although we knew we could in no way imagine the horrors of what he had seen prior to his death on, or around the 3rd July at Ovillers.

Our journey commenced by walking from our accommodation in La Boisselle to Ovillers to get a general lie of the land. We later learned from a book we were walking up 'the sunken road' by the German trenches. We walked through the village of Ovillers and then by way of the C roads and lanes across fields to reach Thiepval memorial on the hill. We found Aubrey Butler's name on Pillar 11, Face D.



The next day we decided to retrace Aubrey's footsteps using the dates and information provided by The Wardrobe. We wanted to try and see the land that he had seen, as far as we were able, so we drove out west to Vignacourt where he had spent the first 10 days of his time in France. We visited the churches, walked around the village squares. We then followed the 'C' roads in the direction he would most likely have marched with his men, across to Molliens au Bois, then to Franvillers and then to Henencourt. At each place we made sure to walk past the church, and walk the roads he would most likely have walked on. And thought of him.

I have included a copy of the map and the resulting photographs that you may like to see.

In the evenings at the Gite, with no television, it enabled us to read the many accounts of the action around Ovillers and to being to understand where the trenches and line of attack fell.

The Regimental war diary provided in the pack was especially helpful as we learned Aubrey was in 'A' Company and on the right hand side of the 120 yards assigned to the 5th Royal Berkshires. This narrowed the area to 60 yards. Assuming as a Second Lieutenant he would have positioned himself in the middle with his men either side, this narrowed down most likely where he was even more. Now all we needed to find was the locations of where the trenches actually were, especially Argyle Street, St Vincent Street and Ryecroft which were all mentioned in the accounts.

We visited Le Grand Mine out of interest and of course there is an engraved map there. On closer inspection we got a huge shock of excitement through us as we could just make out 'Ryecroft St' in the far upper left corner. Somewhat below was something that was unclear, but could have said 'Argyle'. We went in the next day to have a coffee at the Old Blighty Tea Room in the village, and lo and behold, we found copies of the respective Trench Map for sale. This allowed us to go out the next day to the C road running from the west towards Owillers and find how the trenches translated in real terms to the lie of the land today.

This enabled us to walk pretty much where my Great-Uncle walked, and to go and visit where he met his end.

We stood on that C road and walked back to the British front line. We then turned and looked across the open land to the village of Owillers, with the 'sunken road' lying directly in front of the village - another barrier to cross. The distance across No Mans Land was indescribable. We imagined ourselves going back in time, as being Aubrey and the men, moving up from Molliens au Bois to Franvillers, then Henencourt. They must have heard the bombardment so clearly, and the sounds of war on the 1st July, whilst they waited in reserve. It must have been chilling. The 'Glorious' event he had anticipated and described in his letter home must have become more terrifying hour by hour as Aubrey waited for his orders.

Then came the order on 2nd July to move up into the trenches... We hadn't thought before about the dead, and still dying bodies left from 1st July that they would have seen, or have had to climb over ...it must have been truly horrific. Yet these young men, including Aubrey, 24 years old, continued to hold their nerve, overcame their fears and did their duty to the end.

The research work enabled us to honour the promise to my Granny, and, we continue to honour and remember Aubrey

When the Tower of London displayed the Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red ceramic poppies, we bought a ceramic poppy in Aubrey's memory. We took this with us to France and have taken it to the special places relating to Aubrey, including Thiepval and Owillers.

Numbers of people saw us with this and asked if we would share the story of our loved one with them. It was all very moving and made us very proud that indeed so many people take the time to remember these brave young men who sacrificed their all for a better world. Young and old we met said they do it 'Lest we forget'. The Wardrobe and the work you do helps to keep their memory alive.

On our last full day in the area Clive and I once more walked in Aubrey's last footsteps - this time stopping at the Owillers Military cemetery and holding our own service of remembrance for him, and his men. As we watched the crops swaying in the breeze, and the incredible sound of the skylarks overhead, we couldn't imagine a more peaceful place ... how different from 100 years ago.



But, the story of remembering Aubrey Butler did not finish in that field in France in 2016.

Since then, the research work and additional information has been compiled and sent to Thierval and the CWGC. They have compiled the information into several pages of information in their format for their archive.

We wondered if Aubrey appeared on any war memorials in the Erith/Bexley area of Kent where he lived. After being in contact with Bexley Archives librarian, Will Cooban, he has now replaced the grainy blurred image of Aubrey with a clear photograph in uniform which I had received from The Wardrobe research. We have exchanged information and he has written an article on Aubrey which will appear on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2017 on the Bexley Archives Facebook page. Fittingly, 30<sup>th</sup> December was Aubrey's birthday.



In addition, he put me in touch with the Erith local historian, Ken Chamberlain, who told me that Aubrey's name is on the Callender's Cableworks memorial which is still there. Ken sent me the following regarding the Memorial:

*'Callenders sold up, left the area and the memorial totally. We could not help noticing the poor state it had fallen into .*

*However every so often it was tidied up. After a lot of enquires I discovered it was the work of John, he is an ex-employee., and with the assistance of a couple of others they "kept it tidy"*

*A year or so ago Tesco's and Ocado opened massive warehouses next to the memorial, and to cut a long story short they volunteered to care for the memorial.*

*Earlier this year they offered to pay to have it completely restored. AND to erect a fence around the immediate area. There is no doubt the cost ran into thousands. The result is superb'. There was a short service at the memorial on Remembrance Sunday and there were about 30 of us there'.*



It is good to know that even the large Supermarkets are doing their part for Remembrance and I will be writing to Tesco and Ocado to thank them on behalf of our family.

We will be going to the Callenders Memorial on Remembrance Sunday November 2018 to lay a wreath in memory of Second-Lieutenant Aubrey EW Butler.



In addition, Ken sent me a copy of the Erith War memorial too which stands in the grounds of St John's Parish Church and bears Aubrey's name.



The story is not over... On clearing my mother's home recently following her death earlier this year, I discovered an incredible photo of Aubrey with his parents and brothers and sisters shortly before he left for the Somme. Aubrey is in uniform and his sister Hetty Elaine, my Granny who started this act of remembrance for her beloved brother, is front row far left.

This photograph is now framed and hangs on our wall. We look at it most days and remember promises finally fulfilled. .. one by a little girl of 13 years to her brother who had died, and one by her grand-daughter made at the age of roughly 13 to find out more. After over forty years, *both* promises have finally been achieved thanks to your invaluable help, the people who comprise, 'The Wardrobe'.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your help in providing the keys to unlock so much of an important part of our family history

'Lest we forget'

Helen and Clive Holloway

## Newspaper report 1867

### Fenianism at Cork

John Kelly, a private soldier of the 62nd Regiment, stationed at Haulbowline, Queenstown, was tried by court Martial on Monday, at Spike Island, for having uttered treasonable language on St Stephens Day at Queenstown. The Court was presided over by Captain Gilpin, 62nd Regiment and six officers of the same Regiment, and the prosecution was led by Lieutenant Scott. The charges against the prisoner were first, for having at Queenstown, on Dec, 26, 1866, made use of traitorous and disgraceful language against her Majesty the Queen. Secondly for conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline, having, at or, about the same time and place as stated in the first charge been riotous on the streets, and created a disturbance, by shouting, "To——— with Orange Dogs, James Stephens, where are you ? You have the green flag nearly planted, come on with your Army, and you will be shortly right". The evidence in support of the charges was that of three policemen who arrested the prisoner. The man was under the influence of liquor at the time. For the defence a written statement was handed in, in which the prisoner sought to excuse himself by a plea of drunkenness and total ignorance of the offences laid against him. Lieutenant Scott gave an indifferent character of the prisoner.

The proceedings will be submitted to the Commanding Officer of the district.

Note - We do not know the final outcome, but at that time the 62nd had a significant number of Irish Soldiers within its ranks

## Explanation of Regimental Collects

On 22 November 2017 Regimental representatives attending the funeral of In Pensioner (WO2 ) Roland Davies (Royal Berkshires) at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and were asked, at the appropriate point in the service to stand and say the Regimental Collect. As it was written in the service sheet embarrassment was avoided at that stage. For those not in the know the Collect goes as follows:

*"O eternal God , who didst summon thine ancient people before thee three times every year, and dost thrice a year rejoice thy church with pledges of thy presence among men, grant we beseech thee, that we, The Royal Berkshire Regiment, recalling on three days the valour of our fathers in the presence of their enemies, may every day and all our days remember, our creator, and rejoice in thy salvation, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Our embarrassment came after the service when the Chaplain asked the Regimental members if we could explain the three days of battle. We thought of Maiwand (2 Days), Tofrek (over before breakfast if one listens to oral history) but we could not fathom a battle of three days. So we promised to seek an answer. An initial trawl of the members of the 49th/66th came up with similar answers those of us attending provided. So cap in hand we sought the expert advice from the Army Chaplains Department Museum and here is there explanation:

*O eternal God , who didst summon thine ancient people before thee three times every year* This is a reference to Exodus Ch.23. vs 17. *'Three times every year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God'*

- *'and dost thrice a year rejoice thy church with pledges of thy presence among men'* These being Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

- *'grant we beseech thee, that we, The Royal Berkshire Regiment, recalling on three days the valour of our fathers in the presence of their enemies'* This a reference to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion which celebrated Tofrek (Egypt), 1885 – in reward for gallantry at this battle the title 'Royal' was added – and to the defence of Bourlon Wood November 1917 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's action at Maiwand, 1880, when it covered itself with glory.

- *' may every day and all our days remember, our creator'* A reference to Ecclesiastes Ch. 12. Vs1. *'Remember now the Creator in the days of thy youth'*



## Regimental Collect Continued

- *'and rejoice in thy salvation'* References to :
  - a) *Psalm 9.14 'I will rejoice in thy salvation.*
  - b) *Luke 1 46-47 'any Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in god my Saviour'*

The collect was composed by the Reverend Mathew Tobias CF and published in *'Collects of the British Army'* (Plymouth; 1930) The collect was replaced by a new collect for the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment in July 1960. The explanations above appear as footnotes in *'Collects of the British Army'*

## Genealogical Snippet by Linda Robson

I do quite a lot of research on local soldiers for local WW1 memorials and the name of Shergold jumped out at me. The connection being that one of the Shergolds is part of the exhibition at the Museum at the moment. Shergold is a fairly common local name and there are about 24 Shergolds in the Wiltshire Regiment about 8 of whom died in WW1. We have in Salisbury appropriately, a funeral undertakers of that name and no doubt they are some of their descendants.

The interesting thing in all this is Wilfred Stanley Shergold reported killed in the Bishop Wordsworth school magazine. His name was also listed on UK, Army Register of Effects, a definite sign they believe you are dead, but underneath in red it says Man Alive – POW. This is something I have never seen before on these lists

				Date	£	s.	d.	Date	£	s.	d.	Date	£	s.	d.
687641	Shergold	1 Best	34.3.18	Exeter	10	12	6	10	2	6	Exeter	10	12	6	Cancelled
	Weyford	Wicks	5.18								19.9.18	R.P. Exeter	10	12	6
	Sharnley	Cpl	Dr												
		6809	Exeter												
Man Alive + P.O.W.															

I would say it is something that rarely happens. Also the fact that on the day he is alleged to have died 24th March 1918 there were 60 1st Wiltshire Regiment men killed, who are remembered on the Arras memorial. So to be honest I don't know how the administration staff, didn't make a lot more mistakes than this!

## Newspaper Report 1853

### An Old Veteran

In the work house of St Luke's, Chelsea, there is a man of colour, John Turner, aged 102. He was born in Jamaica in 1750, was stolen from his parents as a child, and went to sea on board a Man of War. He afterwards joined the 62nd (Wiltshire) Regiment as a cymbal player. In this Regiment he continued for 28 years, and was discharged at Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has a pension of 1s 2d per diem, a portion of which is stopped for his and his wife maintained, she also being in the house.



## BUDDING SUBSCRIBERS?

Anyone who has a particular topic that they would like to have included or a story that they wish to recount please get in touch with either Mac or me.

Mac's email address is

Researcher2@the-wardrobe.org.uk

My email address is

Researcher3@the-wardrobe.org.uk

Museum's Facebook :

See the foot of this main page.

The Society of Friends of  
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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

We are extremely fortunate to have two very dedicated individuals who put this Newsletter together. They are Michael Cornwell and Martin McIntyre and they spend considerable time researching and writing in order to produce it. Our thanks go to them. Other researchers, Chris Bacon in particular, also help. Our volunteers at the Wardrobe are the heart and soul of the organization and on any one day there may be six to ten people helping out. It is a great place to work and many volunteers share the duties of running the front desk, helping customers and visitors, and also providing visitor information. I have been volunteering for two years now and it is such a privilege to be part of the organization. As a former serving member of DERR and RGBW I can take great pride in being part of our "Home". We are always looking for more people to help and there are still a couple of half day 'slots' which are vacant and need to be filled, operating at the front desk. If you live reasonably nearby please consider offering your services. You will not regret it!

Next year there will be a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration event of the formation of DERR, taking place at Hayling Island over the period 7 – 10 June 2019. The Association has already issued details and at the moment it is expected that at least 400 people will be attending. It will be a great week-end and many Redcoats Members will be there. It will also be an opportunity to do some more recruiting and promoting the museum.

## CAN YOU RECRUIT ANOTHER MEMBER?

We are always looking to recruit new members, and a good method of advertising is by each of us spreading the good word ourselves. So please think about passing this Newsletter one to friends relations etc. Application forms to become members can be found on :

[www.thewardrobe.org.uk](http://www.thewardrobe.org.uk)

Your web page on the Museum web site is:

<http://www.thewardrobe.org.uk/museum/contact-us/support-us/friends-events-and-publications>

If you want to join us on Facebook the link is:

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Rifles-Berkshire-and-Wiltshire-Museum-500832510060892/>