

# THE ASSEGAI

*The 1879 Group*



*Isandlwana & Rorke's Drift*

**AUTUMN 2013**

**Newsletter of the 1879 Group**

**The 1879 Group  
Isandlwana & Rorke's Drift  
Founded 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1998 at the Barracks, Brecon**

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# **The 1879 Group**

## **Patrons**

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Mrs Nora Bunting

## **1879 Group Officers**

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Mr Douglas Bourne

### **Honorary Colonel**

Colonel TJ van Rees MBE

### **Chairman**

Mr Jimmy Reynolds

### **Events Co-ordinator/Secretary**

Mr Danny Tully (01189 670104)

35 Westwood Road

Tilehurst

Reading RG31 5PL

### **Treasurer**

Mr Glynne Davies

### **Membership Secretary**

Mr Barrie Evans (01656 733354)

### **Adjutant**

Mr Duncan McDonald (01982 553612)

### **Group Armourer**

Mr Keith Piggott

### **Assegai Editor**

Mr Bill Howells (01656 734779)

## **1879 Group Committee Members**

Mr Douglas Bourne

Mr Jimmy Reynolds

Mr Danny Tully

Mr Glynne Davies

Mr Roger Morgan

Mr Keith Piggott

Mr Barrington Evans

Mr Bill Howells



## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Autumn issue of the Assegai and it is good to report another successful if limited summer events programme thanks to, as usual our uniformed branch who continue to work hard in flying the flag for the benefit of all members. Which leads on to the sad death earlier this year of one who put in so much work for the group and who played such a central role that he will be difficult to replace.

Roger Manning died in January just after issue of the last Assegai having been unwell for a number of years. Apart from being an active committee member he was also of course the most senior member of the group in his role of General Chelmsford, his portrayal of whom was meticulous as one would expect of someone who was a keen student of the Victorian era. He was a key figure in the organisation of the Llandrindod Wells Victorian week held in the town every August and a visit to his home confirmed his love of the subject which held a wide collection of memorabilia from the Victorian era.

Those who attended the Rorke's Drift dinner each January will know that Roger did much of the organising and took on the role of Master of Ceremonies each time and managed the proceedings in a highly professional way with not a little humour as well which made for such enjoyable evenings. He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him but none more so than his good lady Daphne who supported him so well through everything he was involved with. Our heartfelt condolence with a bouquet of flowers was passed on to her on behalf of all members of the group. An obituary and personal tribute by Keith Piggot is given below.

### IN MEMORIUM – ROGER MANNING



I had known Roger since I joined the Group some twelve years ago and we became great friends. I often stayed with Roger and Daphne at their home in Llandrindod Wells where there was always a warm welcome. Roger played a leading part in the running of the 1879 Group via his unstinting work on the committee taking a major role in organising our annual dinners and of course displaying his incomparable skill as Master of Ceremonies. This skill he also brought to good use at the performances of Old Time Music Hall which he helped to produce for the Royal Albert Hall in Llandrindod Wells and which I have been privileged to enjoy when I came to stay. Indeed his skill as scenic artist and props maker as well as his work on stage and front of house will I am sure be greatly missed by the community. Roger was a man of many parts and was

always busy with some project. He used to amuse me with tales from his National Service days in the RAF including the time he had to convince his Commanding Officer that he was not spying for the Russians after some drawings he had made of the new Lightning Fighter were brought to his attention. He was an accomplished art teacher and photographer and I remember him taking us to see a full size replica of a Bleriot flying machine he had constructed in his garage workshop and which was proudly on display in the Cycling Museum in Llandrindod Wells. Roger was a great figurehead for both the 1879 Group and his local community and a true friend who I will miss very much.

### 2014 RORKE'S DRIFT DINNER

After a lapse of a number of years the annual Rorke's Drift dinner is to be held once again at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells on Saturday 18th January at 7.30pm.

The cost of the dinner is £24 per person. If you wish to attend please fill in the booking form received from Danny Tully and send to Glynne Davies, 5A Chenies Parade, Chalfont Station Road,



Little Chalfont, Amersham, Bucks HP7 9PH with your cheque for the appropriate amount. Members guests are welcome. For accommodation at the Metropole if required a special rate of £90 for a double room with breakfast has been arranged or £45 for single room. Tel. 01597 82370. Please note that the dress code is Black tie, Mess Dress and uniform.

## 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM held on 4<sup>th</sup> May at the RRW museum drew 24 members, an encouraging increase on the previous year. Before the meeting was formally opened a two minute silence was held in memory of Roger Manning.

The agenda opened with the reading and formal acceptance of the 2012 AGM minutes. The Chairman and Secretary completed their reports confirming completion of the programmed events for 2012. Group finances were tabled and confirmed satisfactory by the Treasurer's report which was followed by the reports of the Group's Armourer and Editor of the Assegai. Group membership was given as 84.

The committee en-bloc then stood down as required under the constitution and were offered for re-election for a further year. In addition Mr. Robert Coates was offered for committee as a new nomination. All were approved by the membership following which the meeting was closed.

## REPORT ON THE 2013 EVENTS PROGRAMME by Keith Piggott

This year has not proved to be a particularly busy one in the events programme. The cost of putting on these events has I feel had some part to play in this as several venues which have welcomed the Group in the past have not taken place. Having said that, new ones are appearing all the time and I have no doubt that we will have invitations to take part in a varied programme of events next year. The other factor to keep in mind when taking on an event was the anticipated turnout at these bookings. Last year the turn out was not that good, often seeing no more than a half dozen or so of those members in uniform which does not help our reputation as a living history group. We also had to consider that we could not afford to take on many free events as we still need to build up funds and also at the same time not spread ourselves too thinly on the re-enactment scene.

Three events were chosen this season, a low key event at the Regimental Museum Brecon to coincide with the dedication of John Williams VC at Cwmbran on the 20<sup>th</sup> April where we paraded the colours. The dedication was attended by hundreds of people some of whom found their way to the Museum during the course of the weekend. As always it was a pleasure to be involved with our spiritual home of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Shown below, the colours being paraded at Cwmbran.





In July we returned to Hughenden Manor following our success there the previous year. We had an excellent turn out and the weather was kind with hot sunny days but with a torrential rain storm on the Saturday night. Not that it spoiled the evenings mess which was most entertaining between helping people with their washed out and blown down tents!

August took us to yet another return muster at Tyntesfield and again we had a brilliant turn out. This event is always a busy one and all who took part found it a thoroughly enjoyable experience. I had the dubious honour of drill sergeant to a group of children with the aid of our new prop of Martini Henry rifles. Chris and Tony did us proud with their catering in the Mess.

A big thank you to all who turned out and helped to make the season a successful one. The coffers are now in a healthy position and so is the reputation of the Group and I don't think it will be long before invitations will be coming in for events next year.

On a final and personal note, I will be handing over organisation of the events back to Danny Tully for 2014. It has been hard but rewarding work and I wish Danny all the best for the new season.



The Group at Tyntesfield 2013.

## MORE ARMY PAY

Following on the pay scales of the army in 1879 as featured in the last Assegai, Bob Coates has provided more information on the administration of the Army Pay Department of the period and its role in the Zulu war.

The Department came into being on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1878 as a result of Queen Victoria's Royal Warrant of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1877 and consisted only of officers, there were no senior NCO's or other ranks. The clerks who supported the officers were regimental soldiers provided specifically for this purpose by their individual regiments. The officers themselves were recruited from the pay sub-department of



the Army Control Department and from those officers who had held the title 'Paymaster' in a cavalry or infantry regiment.

The APD rapidly expanded and many line officers especially those wounded in action chose to make the transition from normal regimental duties to an honorary commission with the APD. This resulted in two pay scales for those below the rank of Captain when appointed and those above.

<u>Daily Pay Scale £.s.d</u>	<u>On Appointment</u>	<u>After 5 years</u>	<u>After 10 years</u>	<u>after 15 years</u>
Paymaster not in rank of Captain when appointed.	0.12.6	0.15.0	0.17.6	1.0.0
Paymaster holding rank of Captain or above when appointed.	0.15.0	0.17.6	1.0.0	1.2.6

The generous pay scale allocated to departmental officers was commensurate with the degree of responsibility and integrity required eg. An Infantry Lieutenant on 6/6 could virtually double his salary to 12/6 on being appointed Paymaster. He could overtake the Infantry Captains pay of 11/7 and start a swift progression towards the 16s of a Major.

At least 8 Infantry and 2 cavalry regiments took a Paymaster with them to South Africa to ensure the Army and Navy were paid properly. Many were stationed at the Pay Office in PieterMaritzberg but some crossed into Zululand and took part in the war.

Two of the most notable who saw action were Paymaster F.Taylor of the 90<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry who fought at Zunguin Nek, Khambula and Ulundi and Captain AWH Gelston of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, The Buffs who was with Pearson's No 1 Column during the invasion. Gelston was at the battle of Nyezane where he was in charge of a squad of sharpshooters stationed in the church tower during the siege of Eshowe.

Two members of the APD died during the war, the most high profile casualty being Major Francis Freeman, paymaster with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment who was killed at Isandlwana. The other was Lieutenant John Hardwick, Assistant Paymaster who died in London on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1879 from consumption of the lungs brought on by exposure and fatigue during the Zulu conflict.

At the conclusion of the war 6 members of the APD were awarded the South Africa Medal and 1877-8-9 clasps which included Paymaster Major J Mahoney of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

Ten others were also awarded the medal plus the 1879 clasp and 16 were awarded the medal but without clasp as they did not cross the Tugela River into Zululand. This tally included assistant paymasters as well as higher ranks.

So from the above it is clear that the APD although small in number played a vital role in maintaining and supporting the essential routine and administration of the Zulu war and all other conflicts during the days of Empire in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

## **THE 1879 REGIMENTS –WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

Many of our traditional regiments as we know have been lost or amalgamated over the years and this is still ongoing. Whether from the Cardwell/Childers Reforms, or in modern times, Options for Change, the current Future Army Structure and Defence Review of the Army in 2020, unit titles have changed in accordance with the military and political thinking of the day. Whatever the title used with amalgamations, mergers of battalions, the end product has meant the removal from the Order of Battle (Orbat) or in civilian language, disbandment.

The 1879 titles of the Corps and Regiments as listed below has been taken from the Hart's Annual Army, Militia and Indian Civil Service List of that year. To simplify what is obviously a lengthy list any interim titles from 1879 to the present with a few exceptions, have not been included.

The Royal Marine Light Infantry. From 1923 The Royal Marines.

1<sup>st</sup> The King's Dragoon Guards. From 1959 The Queen's Dragoon Guards.

17<sup>th</sup> Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers. From 1993 The Queen's Royal Lancers.

The Royal Regiment of Artillery. No change.



The Corps of Royal Engineers. No change.

3<sup>rd</sup> East Kent the Buffs Regiment of Foot. From 1992 The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires).

4<sup>th</sup> The King's Own Royal Regiment of Foot. From 2006 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border).

NB In March 2007 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was disbanded and personnel posted to the other two battalions (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions) providing the regiment as a whole from the other three antecedent regiments.

13<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Somersetshire) Prince Albert's Light Infantry Regiment of Foot. From 2007 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Rifles.

21<sup>st</sup> Royal Scots Fusiliers Regiment of Foot. From 2006 The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

24<sup>th</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Warwickshire Regiment of Foot. From 2006 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Welsh, Royal Regiment of Wales.

57<sup>th</sup> West Middlesex Regiment of Foot. From 1992 The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Queen's and Royal Hampshires.

58<sup>th</sup> Rutlandshire Regiment of Foot. From 1964 The Royal Anglian Regiment.

60<sup>th</sup> The King's Royal Rifle Corps Regiment of Foot. From 2007 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Rifles.

80<sup>th</sup> Staffordshire Volunteers Regiment of Foot. From 2007 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Mercian Regiment. (Staffords)

88<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers Regiment of Foot. From 1881 The 1st Battalion The Connaught Rangers. (NB. From 1922 disbanded in preparation for the Irish Free State).

90<sup>th</sup> Perthshire Volunteers Light Infantry. From 1881 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Camerons Scottish Rifles 26<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> Foot.

NB. In 1968 the regiment was given the option of amalgamation or disbandment and having chosen the latter, its singular regular battalion was accordingly disbanded.

91<sup>st</sup> Princess Louise's Argyllshire Highlanders Regiment of Foot. From 2006 The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regiment of Foot 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

94<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. From 1881 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the Connaught Rangers. (NB from 1992 disbanded in preparation for the formation of the Irish Free State).

99<sup>th</sup> Duke of Edinburgh's Lanarkshire Regiment of Foot. From 2007 The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Rifles.

The Commissariat and Transport Corps. From 1993 The Royal Logistics Corps (via the Royal Army Corps)

The Army Medical Department and the Army Hospital Corps. From 1868 The Royal Army Medical Corps.

### **The Strategic and Defence Review as part of the Army of 2020**

This includes :

The Queen's Own Royal Lancers will amalgamate with the 9<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Lancers Prince of Wales not before October 2014.

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland will be reduced to a role of Public Duties Incremental Company not before August 2013.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Staffords) will be removed from the Order of Battle and be absorbed into the rest of the Mercian Regiment not before October 2014.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Welsh Royal Regiment of Wales will be removed from the Order of Battle and absorbed into the rest of The Royal Welsh (Royal Welch Fusiliers) not before October 2013.

With acknowledgement to Derrick Smart for the above. For further information refer to Major General HG Hart's list of 1879 and website [www.army.mod.uk/news/24264.aspx](http://www.army.mod.uk/news/24264.aspx) - 5th July 2012.

### **THE MARTINI HENRY SKELETON ACTION**

The Martini Henry rifle was the first purpose built breach loading rifle to be adopted for British Army service in 1871. It was around this time that cut away examples as shown below came into existence. Part of the Martini Henry rifle's components was a sectionised or cut-away in the body



and block and in some cases the barrel as well to allow the inner mechanism of the breech action to be readily seen. This enabled the various parts to be identified, changed and to demonstrate its operation. They were accordingly used in several roles :

1. As an exhibit to show the mechanical features of a particular pattern.
2. As a demonstration weapon eg. for drill purposes to instruct troops in the operation and routine and essential maintenance of their arms.
3. As a test weapon to allow armourers to identify faulty parts and their replacement.



To encompass the three main roles above, four basic patterns of sectionised arms were developed and named as follows :

The Sectional or Exhibition Model, which was used for demonstration.

The Skeleton Action used for demonstration purposes

The Waster Action also used for demonstration.

The Gauge Action used for testing purposes.

It would appear though that in practice there was some overlap in function between these roles.

### **LAST COLOURS FLOWN – Correction**

The article on this in the last issue of the Assegai stated that at Isandlwana camp both the Queen's Colour and Regimental Colour of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were carried. Only the Queen's Colour of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was present (which was the Colour heroically saved by Coghill and Melvill). The Regimental Colour of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was safely held at Helpmekaar. The Queen's and Regimental Colours of the 2nd Battalion were irretrievably lost during the war.

### **GRAVE MAINTENANCE – JOHN SAMUEL JOBBINS**

One of the objectives of the Group and other groups who share our interest is to locate and renovate the graves of the Rorke's Drift veterans. Before the 1879 Group was formed the Anglo-Zulu War Society found the grave of Pte. Jobbins at St. Cadoc's, Trevethin near Pontypool and undertook the renovation. The re-dedication of the grave took place in a service there in 1996 and was covered by BBC Wales. Since then lack of ground maintenance at the churchyard meant that heavy plant growth in the churchyard prevented access to the grave which was itself difficult to see. Volunteers from the Pontypool branch of the Veteran Association however have recently been active in clearing the growth giving access again to the grave. This raises the question, are there any other graves of the Rorke's Drift defenders renovated and re-dedicated in recent years which similarly are now overgrown and needing maintenance? A topic which needs a wider debate perhaps.

### **THE HALES ROCKET**

By the time of the Anglo-Zulu war, rockets had been in service with the British Army for a number of years. In 1879 there were two types in use the Hales pattern 9 pounder and 24 pounder models.



These were a definite improvement on the earlier Congreve types with the Hales rockets being spin stabilized in flight by rotation which was effected by three metal vanes fitted in the exhaust nozzle. Rockets were fired from V-shaped troughs or open tubes, the trough launcher being used by the Army whilst the Navy tended to use the tube type as they were less dangerous to the crew and ship. Both were mounted on simple stands and were fired either by a slow fuse or by means of a friction tube at the exhaust nozzles.



Operation of the rockets was risky on firing and accuracy was poor particularly if conditions were windy. Manuals stated that rockets could be used for bombarding towns, buildings and firing at ships. Against enemy troops and cavalry even if not accurate they were effective at frightening horses. This thinking extended to their use against 'savages' and other 'unsophisticated' opponents such as the Zulus although they tended to treat them with contempt. Some idea of their operation can of course be seen in the film Zulu Dawn during the battle scenes.

The 9 Pounder Trough type is shown above. The technical specifications of the rockets were :

9 Pounder Trough. Weight 27lb. Max elevation 15 degrees. Range at 15 degrees 1371 to 2228 yards

24 Pounder Trough. Weight 64lb. Max elevation 25 degrees. Range at 25 deg 1546 to 2276 yards.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE BRITISH ARMY

It may or may not come as a surprise to learn that corporal punishment in the army continued until as late as the 1950's. Flogging as a punishment for a wide range of military offences was quite common up until the middle of the nineteenth century with sentences handed out at formal courts-martial. Flogging with the recipient tied to halberds in the form of a x, was usually applied to a soldier's upper back using a cat-o-nine tails. Numerous accounts exist of gory ceremonies at which dozens of lashes were inflicted with the offender's comrades being forced to stand to attention to witness the punishments.

Flogging was abolished by parliament in 1881 but this did not exclude birching on the bare buttocks which was still allowed in military prisons. Even boy soldiers were caned at army apprentice schools and junior soldiers too could be sentenced by the commanding officer to receive 'strokes', which was carried out as a formal canning by the regimental sergeant-major. Corporal punishment was eventually abolished in 1956.



## FIELD SIGNALS

Mute signalling was used as part of the Field Exercise Manual of 1877 for reasons whereby silence was required not to alert an enemy who may have been close, for routine communication from a distance or other strategic reasons.

The following signals were taught to officers and infantry and would have been used during the Anglo-Zulu war as appropriate.



Enemy in sight.

**The Enemy is in sight.** The rifle or sword is held up in a horizontal position.

**Signal to Advance.** Wave of the hand or sword.

**Signal to turn Right or Left.** Hand or sword held out horizontally in the required direction.

**Signal Enemy in sight.** NB. The rifle or sword if held up steadily in the horizontal position will indicate that only small bodies such as vedettes or outposts are to be seen. If lowered or raised in the same horizontal position once, twice or more times, the strength of the enemy as seen by the signaller will be noted. All instructions are taken directly from the Field Exercise Manual.

Two of the signals are shown above as demonstrated by Russell Dunton



No enemy in sight.

**No Enemy in Sight.** The rifle or sword is held up in a vertical position with helmet on top.

**Signal to Reinforce.** Head-dress to be held above the head and if necessary waved.

## IN MEMORIUM – BILL RACE

Sadly we have to report the loss of Bill Race from South Africa who has passed away at the age of 76. Bill was a close friend of our Chairman, a true Zulu War historian and a talented artist. Those who were on the trip to Kwa-Zulu Natal in 2004 will remember Bill and his family visiting whilst we were staying at the Royal Country hotel in Dundee. Our thoughts are with Bill's family.



## **ZULU ARMY FOR SALE!**

This includes 60 married Zulu warriors, 60 unmarried Zulus two Indunas and one Witch Doctor, that's what it says on the box anyway! All are good quality plastic models with the box priced at £60 and available from Ian Allan Book and Model shop at the Royal Arcade in Cardiff. So if anyone is interested Tel. 02920 2039 or website.

## **BRITISH INFANTRYMAN vs ZULU WARRIOR**

This is the latest book by Ian Knight which concentrates on the defeat at Isandlwana, the Zulu ambush at Nyezane and the final victory at Khambula. The book traces the changing face of infantry combat in the Anglo-Zulu war and is fully illustrated in colour and black and white photographs etc. Published by Osprey, it is priced at £11.99 in paperback, ISBN 978 1 78200 365 6.

## **BRITISH ARMY LIST 1880**

The British Army List of 1880 has been donated to the Group as a CD obtained from 'Your Old Books and Maps', Dewsbury, Yorkshire. This contains the names and ranks of all serving soldiers with their regiments as registered at the time. Should any member wish to locate any particular details then please contact the Editor.

## **2013 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**

The annual subscription for 2013 was due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. At the time of writing a number of normally regular members have not renewed with the Membership Secretary, Barrie Evans. If you have not already done so please contact Barrie as soon as possible.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks to Keith Piggott, Derrick Smart, Bob Coates, Allen Coles and particular thanks to Russell Dunton for responding so well to appeals for articles. To all members please submit any suitable material by end January 2014. Also thanks to Barrie Evans for helping with postage and packaging. Members addresses have now been digitised to labels which will help speed up distribution.

## **ADVERTISING**

Should any member wish to sell any article or is looking for any specific item to purchase then please send in the details which will then appear in the next issue.

## **SEASON'S GREETINGS**

The officers and committee wish all members and their families an enjoyable and peaceful Christmas and every good wish for the new year.

**Editor : Bill Howells**

**39 Ystad Celyn**

**Maesteg**

**Mid-Glamorgan CF34 9LT**

**Tel. 01656 734779 Email [bill.howells@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bill.howells@yahoo.co.uk)**