



Mercian Regiment



**Worcestershire and
Sherwood Foresters
Regiment**



**Worcestershire
Regiment**

• ***From the Chairman***

John Lowles has spent his whole working life, and much of his retirement, dedicated to the Regiment. After a very successful career in uniform he became Regimental Secretary at Norton Barracks. What many may not realise is that this role also entailed being the Curator of the Regimental Museum, a task which he approached with his usual dedication and meticulous attention to detail. He steered the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the grant that enabled the museum's display to be redesigned and updated within the Gallery of the Worcestershire Soldier in the Old Library in Foregate Street. This was formally opened in 2003 by HRH The Princess Royal, Colonel in Chief of the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment. On retirement from the Regimental Secretary post John's total commitment to the museum continued with long service as a Trustee and Chairman of the Board, in addition to virtual daily research work in answering questions and enquiries from the Regimental family and general public. The 'good health' that the Museum enjoys today is entirely due to John. However, such extraordinary dedication and service cannot last forever and in March 2014 John decided that it was time to step down as Chairman and as a Trustee and to limit his time to just two days a week as a volunteer researcher. All of us connected with the Regiment and the Museum are hugely grateful to John for all he has done for the Museum, and we are very grateful indeed that his encyclopaedic knowledge will still be available to us all in his new role.



• ***From the Curator***

Loan of the medals of General Sir Richard Gale

The Trustees have loaned the medals, orders and decorations of General Sir Richard Gale, the war time commander of 6th Airborne Division, to the Pegasus Memorial Museum at Rainville, France, in commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

General Gale was commissioned into the Worcestershire Regiment in 1915; he won the Military Cross in 1918 while serving with the Machine Gun Corps. Between the wars he served at regimental duty and on the staff for a total of eighteen years in India. He was a major at the War Office when war broke out in 1939. By 1941 he was in command of 1st

Parachute Brigade and in 1944 he commanded 6th Airborne Division which landed by parachute and glider in advance of the Normandy landings to capture, amongst other objectives, what became

known as Pegasus Bridge and to neutralise the Ranville Battery. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order during this battle for 'inspiring his men by his indomitable resolution and vigour'. On returning to his Headquarters when operations were going well he was heard to declaim, half to himself:

*'And gentlemen in England, now a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here'*
(William Shakespeare, *Henry V* in Act IV Scene iii)

He remained in command of airborne troops for the rest of the war. His post-war appointments included command of 1st Division on operations in Palestine, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army of the Rhine and Deputy Supreme Commander Allied Troops in Europe. He retired in 1960 and died in 1982 aged 86.

A successful grant bid for Library shelving

In 2009 the Mercian Regiment Museum (Worcestershire) moved from the old RHQ at Norton Barracks in the North of Worcester to the 'new' Reserve Army Building, Dancox House, in the centre of the Town. The move was carried out in something of a hurry and heavy duty shelving (Long Span) was erected in the object store. However at this time, due to financial constraints, no provision was made for the extensive library other than two 'antique' wooden bookcases and a standard government-issue office unit moved from Norton Barracks. The Library currently consists of over 4,000 volumes, periodicals and pamphlets, including regimental histories, publications, war diaries, personal diaries and memoirs. The earliest volumes date to the late 17th century, many of these are of high intrinsic value and heritage importance. The result was that for the past three years the library has been poorly stored in inadequate bookcases in the general office and on very deep shelving in the object store. This situation was totally unsatisfactory and not conducive to the long term preservation of, or access to, this important heritage asset. Indeed public access is currently almost non-existent as shortage of space has made it impossible to arrange the books in a sensible order. Some boxes of books have yet to be unpacked because there is nowhere to put them where they can easily be retrieved. The aim of this project is to preserve and enhance the use of the Mercian Regiment Museum library by providing appropriate storage conditions and better access to manuscripts, books and periodicals. It gives me great pleasure to say that the Museum has successfully applied to AMOT (the Army Museums Ogilvy Trust) for a grant of £750 toward the cost of shelving to re-house the museum's valuable library.

● ***New Acquisitions***

An Important Belt plate of the 36th (Herefordshire) Regiment

We have recently acquired an Officer shoulder belt plate of the 36th Herefordshire Regiment. This belt plate succeeded the 1800 pattern and was prompted by the plethora of battle honours awarded for the Peninsular War, and the authorisation of the motto "FIRM", both events occurring in 1816. The introduction of this plate must therefore be after 1816 when the last four battle honours were granted, yet before 1825 when "PYRENEES" and "NIVE" were granted. This plate shows clear signs that the star has been moved upwards to accommodate the "FIRM" scroll. Bennet, who originally acquired the badge of Captain Bayley, (Bennet R.W. 1994 "Badges of the Worcestershire Regiment") mentions only one other example of this type of shoulder belt plate. Its current location is unknown.

Charles Andrew Bayley was first commissioned on the 25th November 1804, as an Ensign of the 41st Regiment of Foot. On the 26th January 1806 he was a gazetted Lieutenant and Adjutant of the 31st Foot and it was in this capacity that he served in the Peninsular. He was present

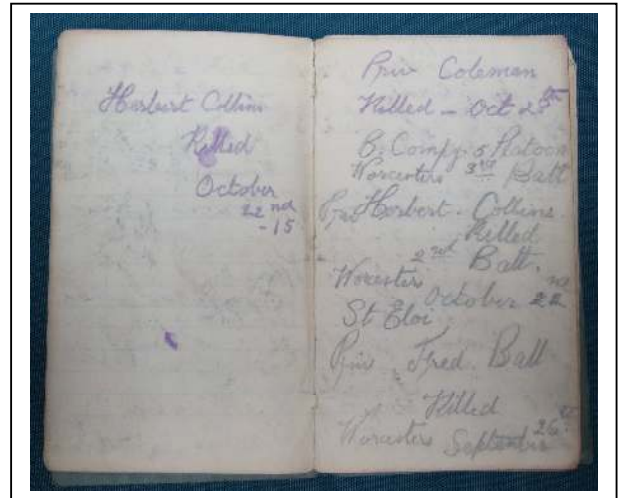
at the siege of Badajoz and the Battle of Albuera and at the action of Arroyo del Molinos for which



he received a promotion. He was gazetted Captain and joined the 36th Foot (the Herefordshire Regiment) on the 15th January 1812. He joined the 2nd Battalion of the 36th in May and went recruiting in Borrisokane, Ireland. He was back in Spain in March 1813, but was sick and on leave from October 1813 to May 1814. He was then appointed Officer in charge of the 36th Depot in Cork. Following the disbandment of the 2nd battalion in 1815 he joined the first battalion in Portsmouth. In 1817 he was posted to Malta. He became DAQMG Malta in August 1821 and then Military Secretary Corfu in February 1822. He was appointed military secretary in Malta from May 1824 and then deputy Judge Advocate in Malta in April 1825. In 1826, he went on half pay until 1841. On the 23rd November 1841 he was appointed Lt. Colonel Mediterranean and from 1846 to 1850 he was Commander Forces Gozo, Malta. He died in 1852.

A First War Soldier's Diary.

On the 6th of May 2014 the Museum received a moving donation: a World War One soldier's unofficial diary belonging to Private Joseph Collins no.14316 of the 3rd battalion the Worcestershire Regiment. It covers the period April 1915 to November 1915 and records the dead and wounded in his company and battalion. For instance on the 23rd April 1915 he records the following deaths: Dick Cartland, Alf Hinton, Dickie Busch, M Locks, Arthur Price, Ted Holmes, Jack Tolley, Ted Saunders, A. Hollingshead, W. Evans, H. Brown, Joe Dadds, G. Harriss, A. Pinder, Jack Roberts and H. Pritchard. The diary was donated to the museum by Joseph Collins' grandson, Mr James Collins.



• Meet the new Administrative Officer

The Museum has appointed its first Administrative Officer, Pamela Langford, whose prime task is to administer the forthcoming Capital Appeal which will enable the Museum to move forward with greater financial security. Pamela has lived in Worcester for several years where she has recently been working for the Local Authority. However, her first love is Museums and she comes to us with wide-ranging experience.



Pam read history at Queen Mary College, London, and then completed an MA in Museum Studies at Leicester University, the foremost course of its kind in the UK. Since then she has been a volunteer cataloguer and exhibitions assistant at Dove Cottage, the museum of the Wordsworth Trust at Grasmere in the Lake District, and a museum assistant at the Florence Nightingale Museum in London. She also spent time at the Bethlem Royal Hospital in Beckenham, Kent, where she catalogued the museum and art collection, and at the National Trust for Scotland Georgian House in Edinburgh where she co-ordinated the volunteers.

Nearer to Worcester, Pam has worked in visitor services for the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham and has volunteered at the Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings in Bromsgrove. However, her most recent local experience has been casual work at both the Worcester City Museum and the County Museum at Hartlebury (now combined into Museums Worcestershire).

Pam is working Monday to Wednesday and looks forward to getting to know members of the Friends organisation.

• ***Our 'New' Home***

In 2009 the Museum office, store and archives moved to the new Army Reserve Centre, an elegant listed building in Worcester. This was originally built in the 1850s as part of the Hill Evans factory which was a major producer of malt vinegar. The building, known as the Great Filling Hall, housed the world's largest vat (more than 0.5 million litres) for storing vinegar and was connected to Shrub Hill station by its own railway. The firm produced 9 million litres of malt vinegar every year, as well as British wines and quinine. The factory closed in 1965 and the building then housed an engineering works for a while.

The vinegar business was founded in 1830 by William Hill and Edward Evans and, in the 20th Century, two generations of Edward Evans' descendants were commissioned into the Regiment.



Captain E F H Evans



Captain E S F Evans



Major R F B Evans MC

Captain Frank Evans (father of Edward and Robin below) served in the Boer War and went to France with the newly formed 10th Battalion in July 1915. He was wounded at the Battle of Bazentin Ridge in July 1916. He kept a war diary that is now in the Museum. He died in 1958 aged 84.

Captain Edward Evans volunteered at the outbreak of WW2 and was commissioned into the Worcestershire Regiment in April 1940 and posted to the 1st Battalion in the Sudan. He saw active service in the Sudan and Eritrea, where he was severely wounded at the Battle of Keren in March 1941. He subsequently served on the staff at HQ Western Command until demobilised in 1945. He was High Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1964 and died in 1996 aged 85. In 1993 he published an autobiography entitled *Gentleman's Relish*.

Major Robin Evans was commissioned into the Regiment in 1941 and was awarded an MC while serving with the Green Howards in Tunisia for leading his men through an uncleared minefield while under machinegun fire. They took the enemy position and captured 30 prisoners. He was wounded twice during the War and left the Army in 1946 after further service in Germany. He died this year.

- **Charles Sargeant Jagger MC**

The sculpture illustrated here, entitled *The Sentry*, which is on display in the museum, is a maquette of the memorial to the employees of Watts Warehouse in Manchester (now the Britannia Hotel). It is one of many war memorials sculpted by Charles Sargeant Jagger after the First World War, the most famous of which is the Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner in London. Others include 'The Soldier Reading a Letter' in a recess in the wall of Platform 1 on Paddington Station and 'No Man's Land' acquired for the Tate Gallery. He also sculpted 'The Steel Puddler' exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1933 which he said was based from memory on a soldier of that trade who served in Gallipoli with the 4th Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment.

Charles Sargeant Jagger was born on the 17th December 1885 in Kilnhurst, the second child of the Kilnhurst Colliery manager, Enoch Jagger and his wife Mary. He attended the Sheffield School of Art moving on to London to study sculpture at the Royal College of Art (1908–11). He found employment with the renowned Sculptor Edourd Lanteri and he supplemented his income as an instructor in modelling at the Lambeth School of Art. In 1914 he won a scholarship at the British School at Rome which was the UK's leading humanities research institution abroad, but the outbreak of war saw Jagger give up his Rome scholarship to 'answer the call'.



He joined the Artist's Rifles and then in 1915 he was commissioned into The Worcestershire Regiment and served in the 4th Battalion in Gallipoli and later in the 2nd Battalion in France where he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at the battle of Neuve Eglise in 1918. He was wounded three times and while convalescing in 1919 he began work on *No Man's Land*, a low relief which depicts a listening post, a technique of trench warfare in which a soldier would hide among the corpses, broken stretchers and barbed wire of No Man's Land, in order to listen for the enemy. The demand for War Memorials from 1921 meant that over the next seven years Jagger received numerous commissions.

Jagger was made an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1926 but he died from pneumonia at the age of 48 in 1934.

Portrait of Charles Sargeant Jagger (in the National Portrait Gallery) by David Jagger (1891-1958) (his brother), also a well-known artist.

- **Volunteer Gallery**

Mick Wilks, seen here with his display panels on the **Defence of Worcester** project at the annual Home Guard event in the Guildhall on 10th May this year, has been a volunteer at the Museum for about 15 years. He is one of the team that research the public inquiries about former members of the Regiment. Their work not only satisfies the inquirer but also contributes to a data base for Museum use in the future.



Mick is a chartered town planner who worked for Hereford and Worcester County Council until he retired 20 years ago. Growing up during WW2 surrounded by a bevy of uncles who all served in the RAF, Mick has always had an interest in 'things military', but his first volunteering job was pot washing for the County Archaeological service! However, his interest in the historic landscape resulted in him being invited to join a group of people tasked with recording 20th century defence sites in Worcestershire – both civil and military. The results

were included in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) database, which is now known as the Historic Environment record (HER) and is accessible via the www.

Researching the sites led to an interest in the people who manned them and, in particular, to the Home Guard of WW2. A visit to Norton Barracks in search of information led to Mick becoming a museum volunteer answering family history inquiries from the public.

Mick Wilks is already the author (or joint author) of three books published by Logaston Press, Herefordshire: **The Mercian Maquis** (jointly with Bernard Lowry), 2002, **The Defence of Worcestershire**, 2007 and **20th Century Defences in Britain: The West Midlands** (jointly with Colin Jones and Bernard Lowry), 2008. His fourth book, **Chronicles of the Worcestershire Home Guard** is due out in October this year.

- **And here is another one ...**

In the 'new acquisitions' section of the last Newsletter there was a photograph of a German POW biscuit brought home in 1918 as a souvenir. Publication reminded John Lowles that the Museum also has an example of the British rations biscuit labelled **June 1915 Hebutorne France**.

Although these were of no value in 1918, their very survival for nearly a century is remarkable.



- **‘Show and Tell’ on 22nd May 2014**



John Lowles with a display about World War 2 Prisoners of War.



Curator John Paddock discussing the recent acquisition of a Napoleonic period Brown Bess musket.



John Davies with a display of photographs from the Museum's very extensive archives. *If you have photographs documenting the life of the Regiment, we would be pleased to see them – and possibly acquire them (or copies of them). However, all photographs must be annotated. One of the sad aspects of the photographic archive is that so many of the people on the photographs are not identified. If you can spare the time to look at photographs from your period of service with a view to identifying the 'sitters', please contact the curator. In fact, one visitor to the Show and Tell did augment the caption to one photograph on which he himself appeared!*



Jane Taylor with a display of documents from the archives. Of particular interest were the original commissions signed by George III and the Prince Regent.



Pat Oddy also showed material from the archives, in particular caricatures of officers by Marcel Pic drawn in the later 19th C.



The evening also provided opportunities to renew old friendships and make new ones in a convivial atmosphere.

Left: Chairman Mark Jackson talks to Vaughan Wiltshire, Richard Shaw and A N Other.

And below Trevor Wilson, Mick Wilks and John Leighton.



- **The 2014/2015 Programme**
PLEASE SUPPORT THE LECTURES AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS

Wednesday 1st October 2014 7.00pm Dancox House

Major John Cotterill will deliver a lecture entitled ***Advance at the Double; the Counter Attack of the 2nd Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment at Gheluvelt seen from a century on.***

It is October 31st 1914 and the German advance across Belgium towards France has reached the village of Gheluvelt on the outskirts of Ypres. The Battle here is significant as it marks the nearest that the German army came to breaking through Allied lines at Ypres until 1918. At Gheluvelt, the retreat was stopped by a brave counter-attack by 354 men of the Worcestershire Regiment who charged the advancing German troops (more than three times their number) by running across open ground with bayonets fixed while under machine gun fire. A third of the Worcesters died in the counter-attack, but they repelled the German push and closed the gap in the line.

Wednesday 18th March 2015 7.00pm Dancox House

Mark Rogers will give a lecture entitled ***My Grandparents, The Worcesters, and the Great War***

Future Events

Have you any suggestions for speakers for future programmes – either by yourself or somebody of whom you have heard elsewhere. Any subject relevant to the history and tradition of the Mercian Regiment and its forebears, or to the museum and its collections will be welcome. Please contact Andrew Oddy at Dancox House or by email waoddy@googlemail.com

This newsletter is published by the Friends of *The Mercian Regiment Museum (Worcestershire)*, registered charity no.276510, Dancox House, Pheasant Street, Worcester, WR1 2EE. For more information please visit the Museum website at worcestershiresoldier.org Neither the newsletter nor extracts from it may be published or posted on the internet without permission.