

NEWSLETTER
THE FRIENDS OF
THE SOLDIERS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE
MUSEUM



AUTUMN 2013

ARMED FORCES DAY – 29 JUNE 2013



A Drum Head Service was held on College Green, in front of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars memorial before a March Past to the Docks. The service was conducted by the Dean of Gloucester, in the presence of the Mayor and civic party of the City, Mr. Richard Graham MP and the Lord-Lieut. of Gloucestershire Dame Janet Trotter.



The rifleman's uniforms of the Corps of Drums of the Gloucestershire ACF (The Rifles) at the Drum Head Service (left) and (above) drill with the '28th North Gloucestershire Regiment of Foot' outside the Museum on the dock side.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There are two major items of news to bring you in this edition of the Newsletter. First our long serving curator, George Streatfeild, has retired after 17 years in post. He has been a steady hand throughout his tenure and, with a sense of humour, has always been approachable and helpful to staff and trustees. We will miss his genuine support of the Museum. He has worked tirelessly in the evenings and at weekends to maintain an open and available building and put in many hours of dedicated leadership. He has particularly had a close relationship with the Friends, attended all our committee meetings and been generally informative, helpful and grateful for our efforts in supporting the Museum. We have awarded him Life Membership of the Friends and hope we can attract him back to our meetings, both at Chavenage and the Museum.

With George's retirement there has been a slight change in staffing the Museum. David Read will continue as our valuable archivist but will also take on a curatorial role and Lavinia Drake (the granddaughter of a familiar name to those who know their Royal Gloucestershire Hussars North African campaign history) has been appointed as General Manager, charged with increasing the activities in the Museum, improving our public profile and generally making the Museum more profitable. She has made an impressive start by creating a small teashop in the entrance of the Museum and, if fine, on the terrace outside. Tea is served in bone china cups and fresh cakes on equally fine plates!

The next news is that the Museum closes on November 4th for the eagerly awaited alterations to the galleries and the displays. Work will continue over the winter months and the opening should be in time for the beginning of the Easter holiday season. The 'refreshing' of the presentation of the artefacts and pictures will be enhanced by an increased use of digital displays, as well as 'flip book' methods of telling the stories and giving extra background information. The Friends will be organising a reception and open evening next year to promote the 'new galleries', when we will encourage you to bring as many guests as you can and enrol them as Friends.

The Museum is also collaborating with SSAFA this year to produce a Gala Concert in the Cathedral on Friday 27 September 2013, with TRH The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester as principal guests. We are grateful to Mary-Jess, The Warminster Military Wives Choir and the Band of the Prince of Wales's Division for supporting this evening in aid of both charities. Unreserved tickets will be available at the door if this edition leaves you little time to get tickets in advance.

Our Autumn Lecture, on Friday 25 October 2013 will be given by Lord Hennessy of Nymphsfield, who is Atlee Professor of Contemporary British History at Queen Mary College, University of London. Prof. Peter Hennessy will talk on 'The Secret State', the organisation and planning undertaken by the Government to survive a nuclear attack at the height of the Cold War.

I am delighted to see an article contributed by one of our members published in this edition and another from one of the Trustees. Please feel free to send in your contributions on topics and news related to the military of Gloucestershire; please note that the editor now has an email address for you to contact and submit (see page 12)

Lt. Col. Ralph Stephenson TD.

Profile

THE RETIRING CURATOR



Lt Streatfeild on exercise, Northern Ireland 1966

George Streatfeild was born in Devon in 1944 and the following year the family moved to Kenya. He attended Pembroke House Prep. School, upcountry north of Nairobi, before continuing his education at The Duke of York's School, in Nairobi.

After leaving school he briefly taught Latin back at Pembroke House before coming to England in 1962 and joining the Army as a private. He entered Sandhurst for a two year course the following year.

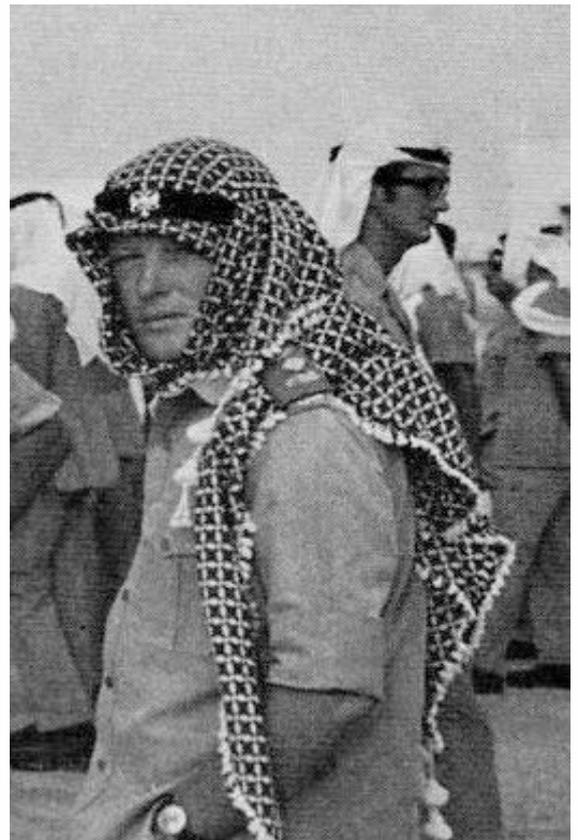
Commissioned into the Queen's Dragoon Guards in 1965, he served with them for 10 years, mainly in the Middle East; Aden and the Oman, with a short spell in Germany. Whilst on loan to the Sultan of Muscat's Armed Forces he saw action in the Oman War. On leaving the Army he became a project manager for an agribusiness company, then gravitated into the leisure industry and he managed several sites in the Yemen and Saudi

before moving to the Littlecote House venue, in Wiltshire, for the Peter de Savory organization. He joined the Museum as Curator in 1996.

Lt. Col. Rob Dixon, Chairman of Museum Trustees writes:

George Streatfeild came to us after a second career in finance and property and we were very lucky to get him. He took on both our Regiments as his own and soon became an expert on their artefacts and histories. His infectious enthusiasm brought life to the museum and he was always at his best when showing visitors around, he absolutely enthralled them and made them want to come back for more. He was particularly knowledgeable on our medal collection which again he could bring to life by describing some of the key recipients. The hours he put into the Museum were way beyond the call of duty and always included considerable weekend work. We will miss his 'joi de vivre' immensely but, as he is helping as a consultant until the HLF revamp is completed in Easter next year, he will still be around for a few more months in this unofficial capacity.

We wish George and Ann Margaret a long and happy retirement together. The Trustees and some of the Friends have clubbed together to provide a voucher for an air tickets for a holiday for them both in the USA. They will not be taking this up until after Easter 2014 so there is time to send a donation c/o Robin Hale, Finance Director, The SOGM, The Docks, Gloucester GL1 2



George Streatfeild, B Sqn QDG, in Sharjah with the Trucial Oman Scouts 1967

THE MUSEUM MANAGER'S REPORT

We have had a hectic summer with lots of projects coming together and some staff changes. George Streatfeild, curator at the museum for 17 years has now retired and I have started as General Manager. All collection based enquiries and responsibilities are for David Read, who is now the Collections Manager and, courtesy of HLF, we have Elizabeth Roper who is our Education and Outreach Officer.

In April Mike Tindall England and Gloucester rugby player, officially opened our Modern Army Display, which demonstrates the evolution of the Rifles and covers the more recent operational tours of The Rifles and The Royal Wessex Yeomanry in Afghanistan. The permanent exhibition gives visitors the chance to try on current kit and lift a fully loaded bergen.

In May the Docks hosted The Tall ships festival which gave us the busiest weekend in living memory with over 1500 visitors to the museum. We took advantage of the increased footfall to trial serving tea and cakes, which was a huge success. With a kind donation from the Friends of the Museum, we've installed a permanent tea room, which is already attracting more visitors and increasing shop spend. Please find your complementary voucher enclosed to say 'thank you' for your support.

June saw Gloucester city's first Armed Forces Day, where a Drum Head service was held outside Gloucester Cathedral, followed by a parade through the city, finishing at the Museum. A family fun day was then held in front of the Museum with military displays; amongst them were the living history group – 28th North Gloucestershire Regiment of Foot. Being one of our ancestor regiments, it was great for the public to see how a soldier's kit has evolved over 300 years; they were by far the warmest men on the day in their thick woollen uniforms!

The successful Heritage Lottery Fund Bid is taking shape; it will see the museum galleries revamped with modern display cases and 'interactives' to entice a varied and younger audience. Our teams of volunteers, trustees and staff are hard at work planning the new displays and layouts. The outline plan is to close the museum on the 4th of November so that contractors can undertake a complete refurbishment. We will then re-open in the Spring of 2014 in time for the first commemorations of the First World War. The shop and tea room will remain open throughout the winter so pop in and say hello, if you are in Gloucester.

October 31st will see the first of a monthly lecture series to be held at the museum, starting with 'The Magic Lantern', its history and a show as it was given 150 years ago. Using an original circa 1928 electrical Magic Lantern, original glass slides from about 1843 onwards, covering local scenes, adverts, some Boer War scenes and the first moving glass pictures. I look forward to seeing you at a museum event soon.

Lavinia Drake

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY AND TREASURER'S REPORT

As at 4 September 2013 the Friends have 335 members in all categories: 238 Life and 97 annual members including 23 overseas. New members continue to join at the rate of about one a month. Our finances remain healthy and we are well placed to continue our support to the Museum. There are 53 Friends paying annually who have not paid for the year June 2013 - May 2014 yet.

Annual rates are £10 for junior, £20 for single and £30 for couples. Conversion to Life membership is a one off charge of £200. Payment can be made:

By cheque made payable to 'The Friends of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum' forwarded to the Friends at the Museum address 'Custom House, 31, Commercial Road, Gloucester, GL1 2HE'.

Over the internet through the Museum website at 'www.glost.org.uk' – follow the link to the Friends' page on the Museum's Home page.

By Banker's Standing Order. To save having to write cheques, pay for postage, or remember that you need to renew your subscription annually, why not complete a Banker's Standing Order Mandate? Receipt of your payment directly into the Friends' bank account will trigger action on my part to issue your new membership card. You can of course cancel a standing order with your bank at any stage. If you would like a Standing Order form please contact me at the Museum.

Some Friends paying annually by Standing Order already may still need to amend their Standing Order with their Bank to reflect the increased annual membership charges effective from June 2012. Please check that your Standing Order is set at the correct value.

Members using internet banking should be able to do this on line and those using telephone banking should be able to contact their bank direct to make the change. Any member wishing to amend their Standing Order in writing should contact me at the Museum and I will forward a new Standing Order form for action with your bank.

Chris Campbell

E-Mail Communications

- Please send your e-address to the Hon. Sec. otherwise you will be missing out on the new monthly Museum e-bulletin, which gives news of activities, events and announcements. Eventually we hope to circulate all Friends invitations by email to reduce the considerable postage costs we currently endure.

Send to: simon.colbeck@msn.com

- The Editor of the Friends Newsletter now has an email address to receive your comments, complaints or even your articles for publication in this prestigious organ of military history. Please keep him informed and corrected.

His address is: editor.fosogm@sogm.co.uk

FREDERICK WILLIAM ('Will') HARVEY – SOLDIER POET

Frederick William ('Will') Harvey, a contemporary of the War Poets Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen was a great friend and comrade of Ivor Gurney, (whose story was told in the Friends Newsletter, *Autumn 2012*.) and Herbert Howells, the composer from Lydney. He enlisted as a Private in the Gloucestershire Regiment in the First World War before gaining a commission with the same regiment.

Harvey, dubbed the 'Laureate of Gloucestershire', published over 400 poems and verses reflecting his view of life in the trenches and POW camps and his great love of Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean.



*Frederick William Harvey,
2/5th Gloucestershire Regiment.*

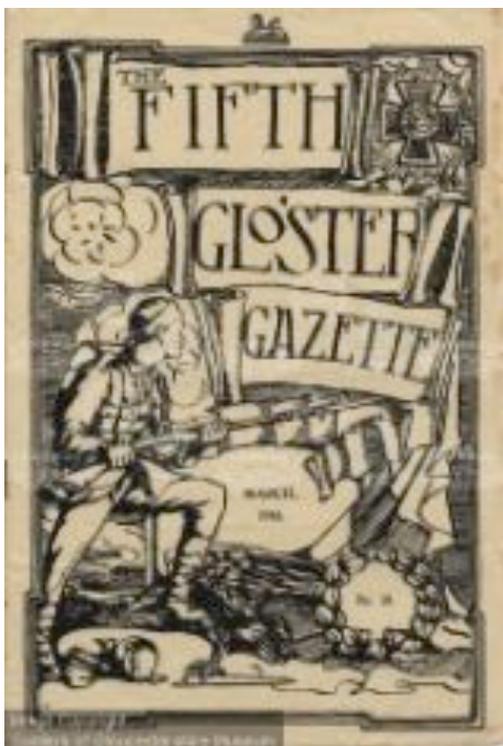
Will Harvey, the eldest of the five children of Howard Frederick Harvey from Westbury on Severn, a local horse trader, and Cecilia Matilda ('Tillie') Harvey, from Redwick, Monmouthshire, was born on 26 March 1888 at Murrells End, Hartpury. In 1891, the family moved to *Parlours Farm*, later renamed '*The Redlands*' at Minsterworth, now opposite the Apple Tree pub. His early education began at home with a governess, Miss Whitehead, the daughter of a clergyman, who taught him to memorize the psalms and learn poetry. In 1897 he became a day-boy at The King's School Gloucester before moving to Rossall School, near Fleetwood, in 1902.* Harvey returned home in 1905 and between 1906 and 1911 was articled to Frank Treasure, a Gloucester solicitor. It was during this period that Harvey met Jack Haines, Ivor Gurney and Herbert Howells and a great friendship formed, as they shared long walks in the countryside and developed their mutual love of nature, literature and music. Initially Harvey failed his law examination but after a 'crammer's course' at Lincoln's Inn

Fields he qualified in 1912. Due to his Articles of Indenture which prohibited his practicing law within thirty miles of Gloucester for ten years, he moved to Chesterfield until the outbreak of war.

On 8 August 1914, the three eldest Harvey brothers, Will, now a solicitor in Chesterfield, Eric, studying Theology at Oxford University and Roy, a Railway Engineer from Swindon, enlisted together in Gloucester. While Roy joined the Royal Engineers, Will (Private, 2371) and Eric (Private, 2422) joined the 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. The remaining brother, Bernard, was too young to enlist and was left in charge of the family farm following their father's death in 1909. Tragically Bernard was killed in a motorcycle accident at Over Bridge on 20 September 1914 and Eric was given a compassionate discharge from the army until a tenant farmer could be found. Eric subsequently gained a commission in October 1915 and went to France in July 1916 as a 2/Lieut. with the 2/5th Gloucesters.

Within a few days of arriving in France the Officer Commanding, Lieutenant Colonel John H. Collett, in a bid to raise troop morale in the 5th, initiated the production of the first trench magazine, '*The Fifth Glo'ster Gazette, A Chronicle, Serious and Humorous, of the Battalion while serving with the British Expeditionary Force*'.

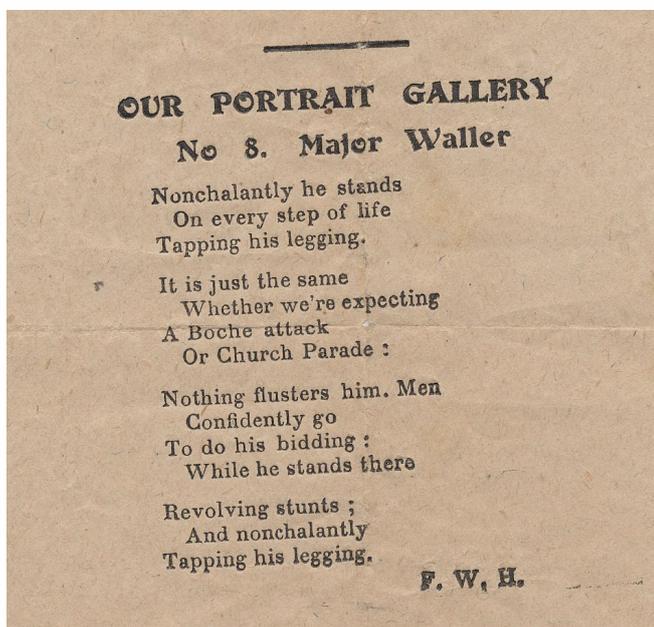
* *Rossall's School, founded in 1844 for the purpose of educating the sons of army officers and clergy, boasts the oldest Combined Cadet Force which celebrated its 150th anniversary in June 2010.*



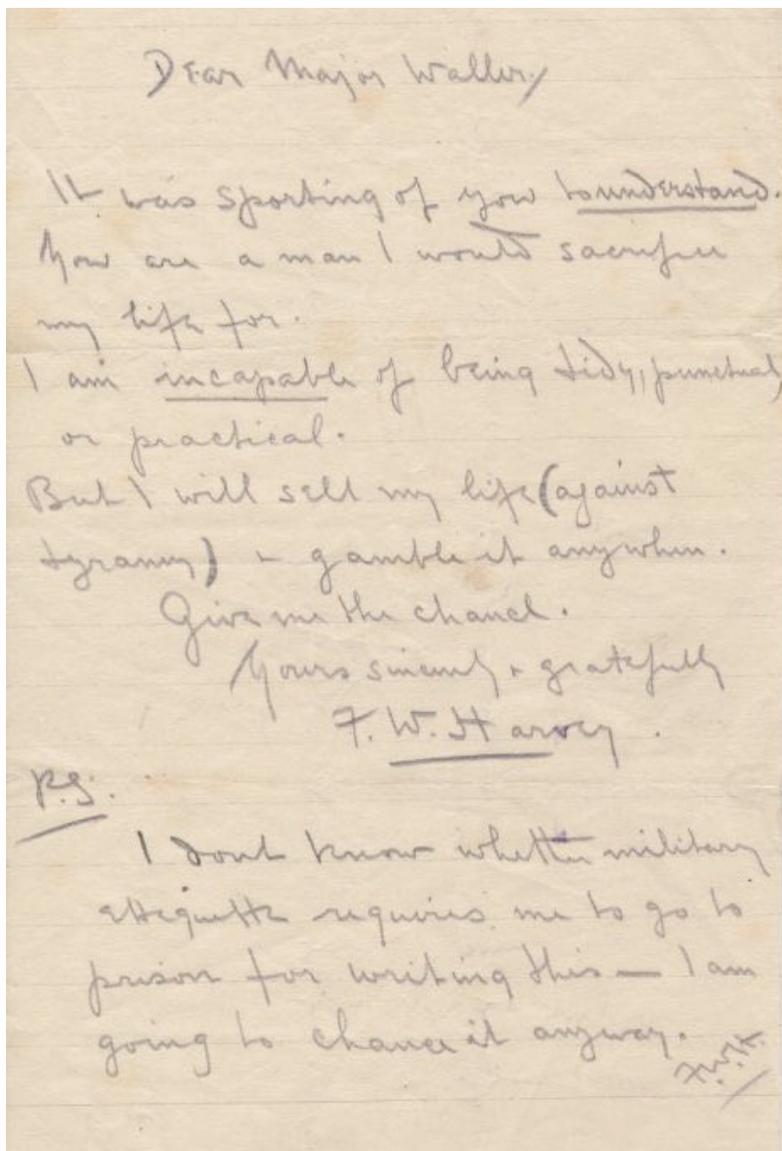
"The Fifth Glo'ster Gazette", published 10 March 1916 (Soldiers of Gloucs Museum)

The first of twenty-five editions was printed on 12 April 1915 and the magazine regularly attained a circulation of over 1500 copies. The editor, the regimental Chaplain, the Reverend George F. Helm MC, drew on the wealth of talent which existed amongst the ranks of the Battalion, including Harvey who was a regular and prodigious contributor with over 70 poems and verses. He frequently used these contributions to mourn and commemorate the dead, including Rupert Brooke who died of disease on 23 April 1915, remembered in 'To Rupert Brooke', Private A. E. Sampson (KIA 1 November 1915) in 'First Day of Spring', Sergeant Tom Durrett (KIA 13 March 1916), in 'Epitaph (TD)' and 2/Lt Ray E. Knight (DOW 25 July 1916), in 'In Memoriam'. Harvey also used the *Gazette* to reflect on army life with his natural gift for humour finding an outlet in his poems in the magazine.

He also created a series of pen portraits, 'Our Portrait Gallery' of notable battalion members, including the CO, MO, QM, CSM, C Company Cook, the Three Padres and Major Waller.



The Museum also holds a handwritten note (right) to Maj. Waller dated 25 August 1915, which reads:



Dear Major Waller

It was sporting of you to understand. You are a man I would sacrifice my life for. I am incapable of being tidy, punctual or practical. But I will sell my life (against tyranny) or gamble it anywhere.

Given the chance

Yours sincerely and gratefully

F W Harvey

PS I don't know whether military etiquette requires me go to prison for writing this - I am going to chance it anyway. FWH

The Gazette served to launch Harvey's poetry to a wider audience and his first volume of poems, 'A Gloucestershire Lad At Home and Abroad', was published in 1916 by Sidgwick and Jackson, with a preface written by Lt. Col. John Collett. With the 1/5 Gloucesters he was able to participate in his other passion, sport, particularly cricket, playing regularly in the Battalion XI where the majority of the team were Gloucester Rugby Club players.

It was not in Harvey's nature to be tidy or organised, a trait that he recognized in his own published portrait:

F. W. H. (A Portrait)

*A thick-set, dark-haired dreamy little man,
Uncouth to see,.....
Uncouth to see,.....*

But on 1 August 1915 Harvey received his first promotion to Lance Corporal (unpaid) and within days he was involved in a night reconnaissance which was to earn him and Cpl. Ray Knight the DCM:

*'For conspicuous gallantry on the night of 3rd/4th August 1915, near Hebuterne, when, with a patrol, he and another Non – commissioned officer went out to reconnoitre in the direction of a suspected listening post. In advancing they encountered the hostile post evidently covering a working party in the rear. Corporal Knight at once shot one of the enemy and, with Lance-Corporal Harvey, rushed the post, shooting two others and assistance arriving, the enemy fled. Lance-Corporal Harvey pursued, felling one of the retreating Germans with a bludgeon. He seized him, but finding his revolver empty and the enemy opening fire, he was called back by Corporal Knight, and the prisoner escaped. Three Germans were killed and their rifles and a Mauser pistol were brought in. the patrol had no loss. **



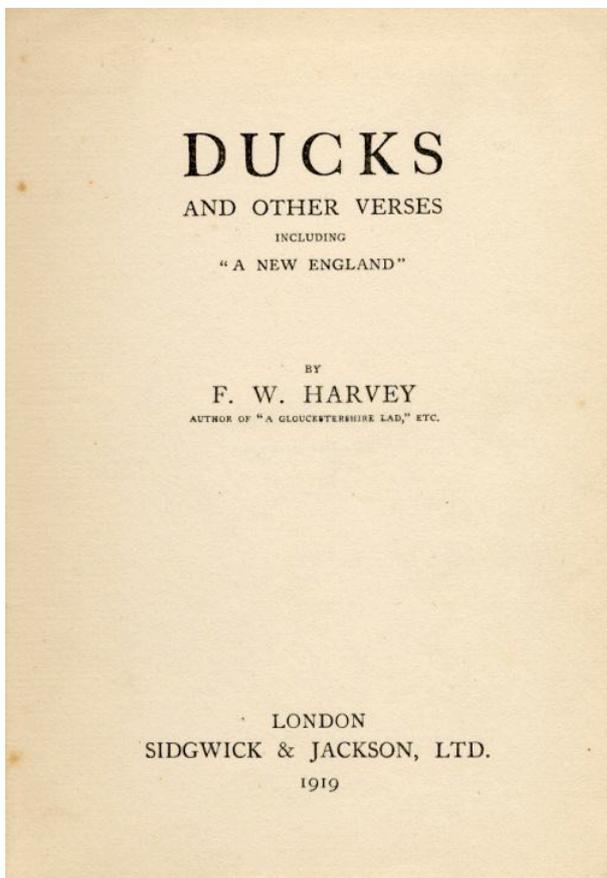
*L/Cpl Harvey's action on a night patrol that earned him the DCM in 1915.
Painted by Margaret Dovason (Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum).*

* London Gazette 9 September 1915

After his decoration had been published, he returned to England for officer training, attending a course at Hayling Island, but was able, during this time, to return to Gloucester to receive personal congratulations from the City Council on his award. Harvey then returned to France as a Second Lieutenant, this time with the 2/5th Gloucesters.

On the 17 August 1916 he crawled out alone into 'No Man's Land' to reconnoitre for a patrol he was planning later. He chose the middle of the afternoon, judging that the German Line would be quiet, apart from a few sentries, and that most opposing infantry would be sleeping. He safely reached the German line and, for some reason even he could not explain, dropped into the duckboards. He was able to walk some distance before being challenged and captured. A report of his capture, written by a German Intelligence Officer, has recently been discovered in the Munich Archives by Peter Baron, a Great War Historian, it seems to indicate that Harvey was 'tight lipped' during his interrogation.*

Harvey spent the remainder of the war in seven prisoner-of-war camps where he wrote an account of his experiences. The book '*Comrades in Captivity*' was published in 1920 and republished in 2010, enhanced with additional information. Whilst a POW he continued to write his poems which were regularly sent back to England and his second collection, '*Gloucestershire Friends*' was published in 1917. During this time he wrote his most famous poem '*Ducks*' inspired from a picture of a duck, in a pool of water, over his bed, drawn by a fellow prisoner. '*Ducks*' became the title of his third collection of poems published in 1919.



"From the troubles of the world I turn to ducks..."

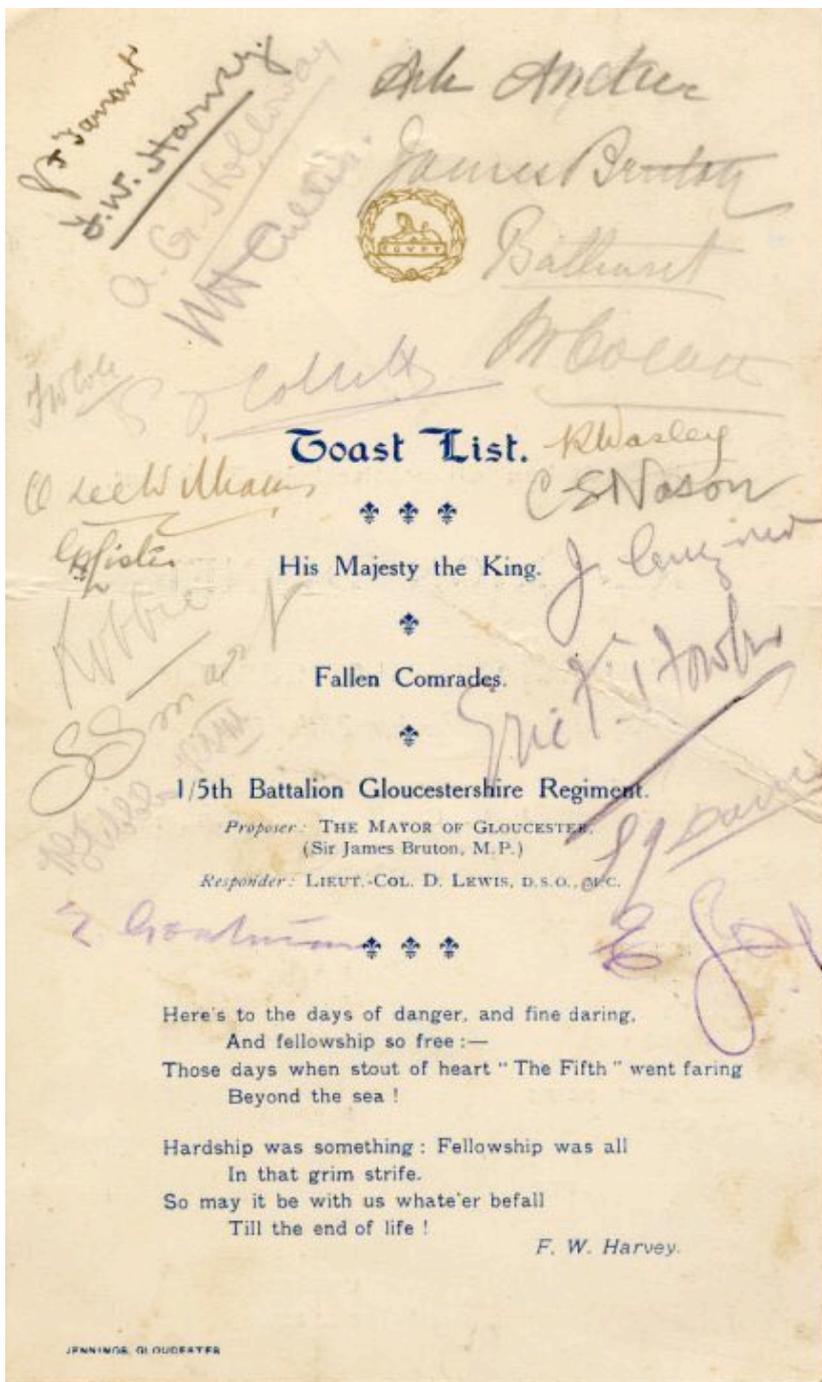
First Edition of '*Ducks and Other Verses*',
Sidgwick and Jackson 1919.
(The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum)

In 1919 he returned to Minsterworth and to legal practice first in Swindon where he married in 1921 Sarah Anne Kane, an Irish nurse with whom he had two children, Eileen Anne (b. 1922) and Patrick (b. 1925); Patrick would serve and be wounded twice whilst on active service with the Gloucestershire Regiment in the Second World War. Once his Articles of Indenture permitted, he returned to law practice in the Forest of Dean at Newnham, Coleford, Lydney and finally for the last thirty years of his life from his home in Yorkley.

His war time experiences and comradeship remained with him and he was a regular attendee at the 5/Gloucesters annual reunion dinners, writing '*The Toast*' and other verses and contributing to the Regiment magazine, with the publication of poems such as '*The Slashers*'. In the Second World War he served in the Home Guard and was a firm supporter of Remembrance Sunday.

His poetry was been set to music by a number of composers particularly his friends Ivor Gurney, who composed '*In Flanders*', Herbert Howells and Sir Herbert Brewer along with more modern composers including Johnny Coppin and Doug McLean with Jan Bayliss.

* A detailed report of the German intelligence report is published on the F.W. Harvey Society website.



The 5th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment Re-Union Dinner Card dated 27th September 1919. Signed by officers of the battalion, including Tarrant, Harvey, Bathurst, Collett,

Property of Sergeant Hubert Charles Barnes MM. 1/5th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. 1914-1918. (The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum)

Toast

Here's to the days of danger and fine daring
 And fellowship so free:-
 Those days when stout of heart "The Fifth" went faring
 Beyond the sea!
 Hardship was something: Fellowship was all
 In that grim strife.
 So may it be with us what'er befall
 Till the end of life!

F. W. Harvey

Harvey died on 13 February 1957 at his home, High View, in Yorkley, Gloucestershire, and is buried at St Peter's Church, Minsterworth. His headstone reads:

*Frederick William Harvey DCM
 Soldier and Poet
 Born 26.3.88
 Died 13.2.57
 A Gloucestershire Lad*

He is commemorated by a memorial tablet in the south transept of Gloucester Cathedral.

In her biography, Frances Townsend described Will Harvey as '*...a man of great charm and intellect, a brilliant talker with a voice which held his listeners spellbound. He had a gentleness, humour and compassion for his fellows which contrasted with his intense, exclusive love of the county of Gloucestershire*'.

Of his brothers - Eric Harvey was awarded the Military Cross in 1917 for leading a bombing attack on a trench held by forty of the enemy, driving them out and consolidating the captured trench. He was awarded a bar to his Military Cross on 11 January 1919 for an action on the night of 2 September 1918 when, almost surrounded by enemy forces, he rushed through heavy fire to warn an advancing Battalion of the position of his company, averting what might have been an unfortunate incident. Tragically he was killed in action on 30 September 1918, two weeks before the birth of his son, Michael. Eric is buried in the Estaires Communal Cemetery, France and is commemorated on the Minsterworth War Memorial.

In October 2012, the family of F W Harvey deposited with Gloucestershire Archives a large collection of his papers including manuscripts and typescripts of unpublished poems, scrapbooks, correspondence including letters from Ivor Gurney and items relating to Harvey's detention in a German prisoner-of-war camp with letters from fellow POWs. A joint project between The Gloucestershire Archives and Exeter University is currently underway to produce a comprehensive online catalogue of the archive material and it is expected that public access will be available from 1 September 2013 which will greatly add to our knowledge and understanding of this much loved local man.

Further reading

Boden, Anthony (2011). *F W Harvey, Soldier, Poet.* McLean Publishing, Coleford .

Davies, Ross (2009). *FW Harvey: Poet of Remembrance. The War Poets Series.* London: Cecil Woolf.

Harvey, F. W. (1920). *Comrades in Captivity: a Record of Life in Seven German Prison Camps.* Sidgwick and Jackson, London and revised edition 2010, McLean Publishing, Coleford.

Townsend, Frances (1988). *The Laureate of Gloucestershire.* Bristol :Redcliffe Press.

The F W Harvey Society, www.fwharveysociety.co.uk – contains more information on his life and works, including a complete bibliography and list of anthologies and poems set to music.

Teresa Davies

FUTURE EVENTS

September 27th - GALA CONCERT – GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL – 7pm.

**MARY-JESS, THE WARMINSTER MILITARY WIVES CHOIR,
and THE BAND OF THE PRINCE OF WALES'S DIVISION**

**A joint event with SSAFA to raise funds for both charities, in the
presence of THR The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.**

*Tickets £25 – **Sold out**, Unreserved at £15 and £10 available at the door until 6.50pm*

-----X-----

October 11th - UNOFFICIAL TEA ROOM LAUNCH - 1.45 pm.

**The Gloster's Korean Veterans will be coming to the museum
after their monthly meeting for an unofficial tea room launch.
They'll get free tea and cake, it's an informal photo opportunity
to get some publicity and make a fuss of them! Join them.**

*The tearoom has been kindly sponsored by the Friends of SOGM,
complementary vouchers are in this newsletters to say 'Thank you!'*

-----X-----

October 25th - CHAVENAGE AUTUMN LECTURE - 6.45 for 7.30pm

LORD HENNESSY OF NYMPHSFIELD

will present

'THE COLD WAR SECRET STATE'

The British Government preparations for Nuclear War

*Peter Hennessy is Atlee Professor of Contemporary History at Queen Mary College,
University of London.*

Invitations are included with this edition of the Newsletter

RE- DISCOVERING ‘ANOTHER’ GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

Since becoming a trustee of the Museum in 2005, I have tried to expand my own imperfect knowledge of the military history of our county, particularly that of the long ago and now almost totally forgotten. The internet can be a very rich source of information, even if much of it is of questionable accuracy and provenance. Nonetheless there is often a core of fact justifying further research, much of which can also be internet based and therefore carried out at home in the evening, from an arm chair and with a glass of wine in hand. This was exactly the case with one internet discovery of mine, the story of Ukasaw Gronniosaw, also known as James Albert, a freed slave who wrote the first ever narrative by a slave in English in 1772. Readers can well imagine that much myth has grown up around such a figure, yet the facts on the ground are very few. Underneath all the popular legends and unnoticed within his own narrative is one single statement, that he had once enlisted with the 28th Foot and had served at the capture of Martinique and Havannah, both in 1762. My researches into this remarkable story are still continuing and I will publish something about him and his military service in due course – however this quest led me to another and completely different discovery.

One of the things I have also done via the internet is to set up a large number of stored searches on eBay (the virtual auction house). As a result of researching into Ukasaw Gronniosaw I added many more, including “Gloucestershire Seven Years War”. One day earlier this year, this brought to my notice the sale of a slim volume, *The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions for 1978*. According to the sale particulars on eBay, this contained an article entitled ‘A Gloucestershire Regiment in the Seven Years War’. One can well imagine that there were not many, if any, other bidders and I ‘won’ it for a few pence plus postage. I then eagerly awaited the package, expecting to learn more about the capture of Martinique and Havannah, even though I knew that the 28th did not officially become the North Gloucestershire Regiment until 1782. However that was not what the article revealed. For what now follows I am much indebted to J.W. Wyatt who conducted the research and wrote the original article in 1978. I therefore now give him full credit.

Although familiar with particular battles within it, The Seven Years War itself has always been something of a mystery to me until very recently. Although there were many dimensions and protagonists, at heart it seems to me to have been a clash between Great Britain and France for global influence. It was fought in Europe, North and South America, The Caribbean, Africa, India and even in the Philippines, surely a first World War? However, as so often is the case, when it started we were not ready for war. With scattered hostilities between Great Britain and France already taking place in late 1755, but war not having officially been declared, the government of the day suddenly woke up to the peril of the situation. There was serious alarm that the army, much reduced in numbers by peace time cuts, was insufficient to combat such a serious threat to British interests across the globe and even of a French invasion of these islands. So nothing new there then it would seem!

Thus the call went out for ten new regiments to be raised as a matter of great urgency. These new regiments were to be, in order of seniority, Abercromby’s, Napier’s, Lambton’s, Whitmore’s, Campbell’s, Perry’s, Lord Charles Manner’s, Arabin’s, Anstruther’s and Montagu’s and numbered from the 50th to the 59th Foot. We shall now follow the recruiting fortunes of Col. John Arabin, a 56 year old professional soldier of French Huguenot descent from the tiny hamlet of Moyvoughly in West Meath, where his father Bartholomew had settled after seeing service at the Battle of the Boyne. John joined the army at seventeen and

had seen much active service including during the '45, when he commanded the 8th Dragoons. Initially basing himself in Manchester two companies, one from the 3rd Foot and another from the 20th were drafted in to form the nucleus of his new regiment. He then came south, recruiting across England, but with very limited success, before finally arriving in Gloucester.

With the whole country now in a state of alarm over the threat of invasion, the county of Gloucestershire took up the challenge, as it always has done when so called. Accordingly a notice appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* on 23 March 1756 appealing to able-bodied men of a minimum height of five feet five inches to enlist in the regiment “intended to be recruited and completed in the county of Gloucester”.

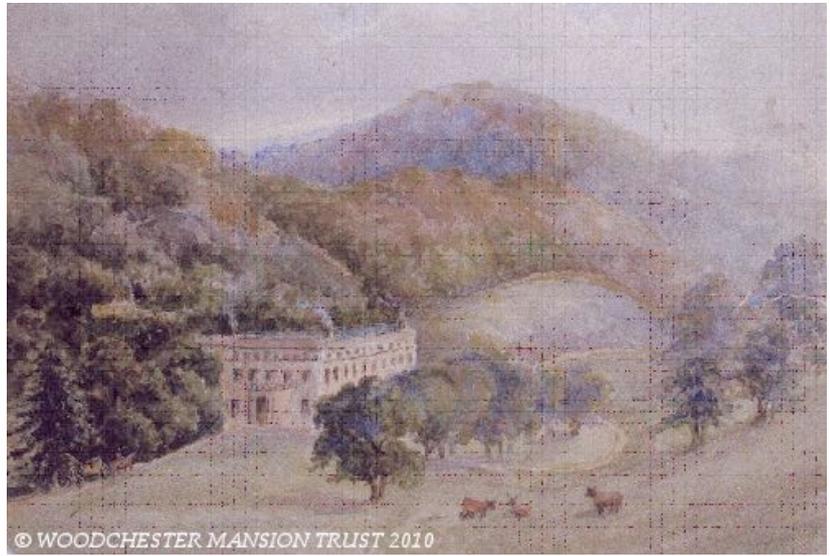
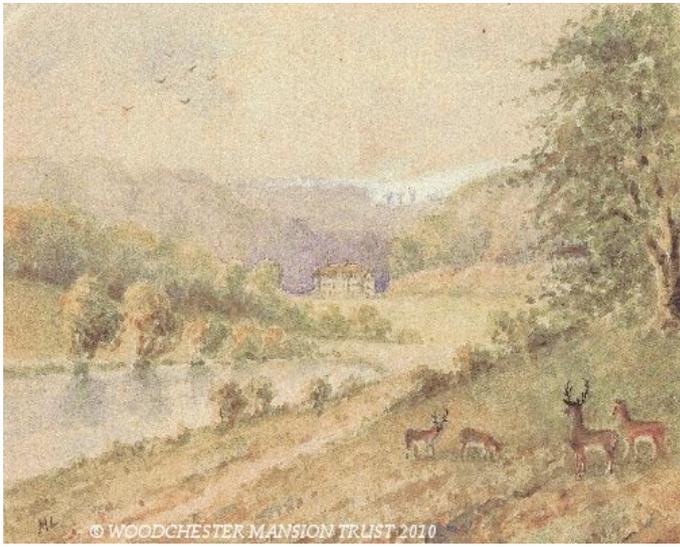
Then the following week the Lord Lieutenant himself, Lord Ducie*, made the following direct plea, reinforcing this call to the colours. He wrote thus:

“The advertisement in last Gloucester Journal for raising soldiers being not thoroughly understood, it is thought proper to be more particular. The County of Gloucester, it is hoped, will take upon it the raising and completing of Colonel Arabin’s, to be called the Gloucestershire Regiment, with which no other is to interfere in the raising of men. The Lord Lieutenant stays in this county only to forward this work, thinking it, at this time, a more important one than his attendance in Parliament; and though the public motives are so strong that any argument of a more private nature may appear trifling, yet he can’t forbear saying he shall take the sending of men to list as a particular and personal favour to himself. Such men as are within reach of Woodchester Park will be welcome to come there and receive the additional money to make up three guineas clear. At places more remote, it is settled for the recruiting officers nearest them to advance the whole money. The same thing is going on in the counties all around us; and it is hoped this rich and populous one will not be the last in completing a regiment to give its own name to, and which may soon be wanted”.

And so they came, some volunteering for the sake of the three guinea bounty, others to escape goal. According to Wyatt these included Richard Allard of Honeybourne and Peter Green of Weston Subedge, both committed to the Winchcombe Bridewell for being ‘idle and disorderly’ and James Tyler from the county goal for refusing to give sureties as the alleged father of an illegitimate child. Despite a continually slow take-up and the need for further cajoling by Lord Ducie, seven companies of Col. Arabin’s Regiment were eventually able to march out of Gloucester at the beginning of May. A party under Major Townshend remained in the city to continue the recruitment. Readers may be able to recapture something of the flavour of such a departure by going to the website You Tube and keying in “Barry Lyndon Lilliburlero” into the search box. You should then play the clip at the top of the list which is from a 1975 film and based on the 1844 novel by Thackeray.

Thus the 57th Foot went to war, winning no fame, nor fighting any great battles, but still performing very useful service garrisoning Gibraltar and then Minorca following the Treaty of Paris in February 1763 which brought an end to the war and restored that island to us. This is not to say that they did not suffer greatly. Wyatt estimated that, by the end of the war at least 24% had died from disease, including Col. Arabin himself. If, when and how the surviving soldiers of Gloucestershire returned home is not recorded, but this was probably some time after August 1763 when the army’s strength was reduced back to peace time numbers. It could be appropriate that there is something retained at the Museum to remember the contribution to the Crown of this ‘other’ Gloucestershire Regiment.

* Lord Ducie served as Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire from 1755 to 1758



Images of the Lord Ducie's estate, Woodchester Park, between 1825 and 1845. The Ducie family purchased the estate in 1631 and the original hunting lodge was transformed into a Georgian house called Spring Park Mansion. Exact details of when the house was built and altered are unknown, but in 1750 Frederick Prince of Wales stayed there and in 1788 King George III visited. When the second Earl Ducie inherited the estate in 1840 extensive repairs costing about £8000 were needed, but the Ducie family decided to sell the property and focus on their other Gloucestershire estate at Tortworth and the Park was put on the market in 1843. The purchaser was William Leigh, a wealthy recent convert to Roman Catholicism. He paid £170,000 for the property in 1845 and over the next twenty years commissioned and started the ambitious stone house that stands, unfinished, in the valley today.

At least we still have a Museum in which to hold our heritage. The 57th Foot, now separated from its connection with Gloucestershire, went on to glory as the West Middlesex Regiment, earning the name 'diehards' after the very bloody Battle of Albuera in 1811. Sadly after amalgamation the soldiers of Middlesex now have no museum of their own, their legacy consigned to boxes in the basement of the National Army Museum in Chelsea. I am sure that by making this statement, my final point is obvious. Let us all ensure that this does not happen to the Soldiers of Gloucestershire.



The 57th drummer boys on the ridge of Albuera, in May 1811, where the regiment won the title of 'Diehards'.

Left, a Grenadier of the 57th Regt of Foot, 1775

Summer Event – 16th April



Mike Tindall MBE, the Gloucester Rugby centre, who opened the 'Modern Army Display', in the Long Room with members of The Rifles, from Chepstow, who attended the event.

Summer Event - 6th June



A Summer Reception was held on a sunny evening in June to allow Friends to visit the new 'Modern Army Room' and to hear a talk, in the Long Room of the Custom House, by the GCHQ historian, Tony Comer, on the History of CGHQ. Above, the Chairman of the Friends thanks the speaker (out of picture on the right) for his presentation and, the editor is reliably informed, dissociates himself from his earlier statement that 'military intelligence' is an example of an oxymoron; on the table are artefacts from the GCHQ Museum, including an early Enigma machine and code books.