

Minchinhampton

The newsletter of Minchinhampton Local History Group

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Editor's note:



Well, it's a new year and my first newsletter of 2025. There's a lot going on in Minchinhampton and we have talks planned up until October. The plans for the History trail are going apace, and the Baynham monument has been moved – all I can say is go and see it Guys. This is fantastic!!

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The Weight family of Gloucestershire

By Andrew Weight

I'm Andrew Weight and my origins lie within the long-established Gloucestershire family of Weight/Waight/Wight (etc!)

My oldest direct ancestor was Robert Weight who was born in 1560. He bought Pitchcombe Farm in 1609. This was subsequently renamed to Mandeville's Farm/Wight's Farm and The Eagle pub before becoming the private residence of today.



[Editor's note – if members recall my talk on “The murder at the Red Door” this was the place where the murderer [Edwin Pritchard] was caught on the 31st of December 1886]

I'm not a 'natural' genealogist but thankfully others have preceded me doing all the hard (and very impressive) work – and I've just been building upon it. I have a cardboard box filled with various articles, maps, books and Post-it notes and, spurred on by realising that I'm not immortal(!), it is very satisfying to bring it all together into one book which will eventually be lodged at Gloucestershire Archives Office alongside other precious Weight artifacts.

The most impressive piece of genealogy was written in the 1950s by Edward Thomas Sellens Weight, a bank manager from Altrincham. Luckily for us, he deposited a copy with the Archives Office just 3 weeks before he died. I was able to read the enclosing letter he attached to the notes, which ended modestly: -

“I am afraid you may find my notes amateurish, however, your acceptance of them pleases me.”

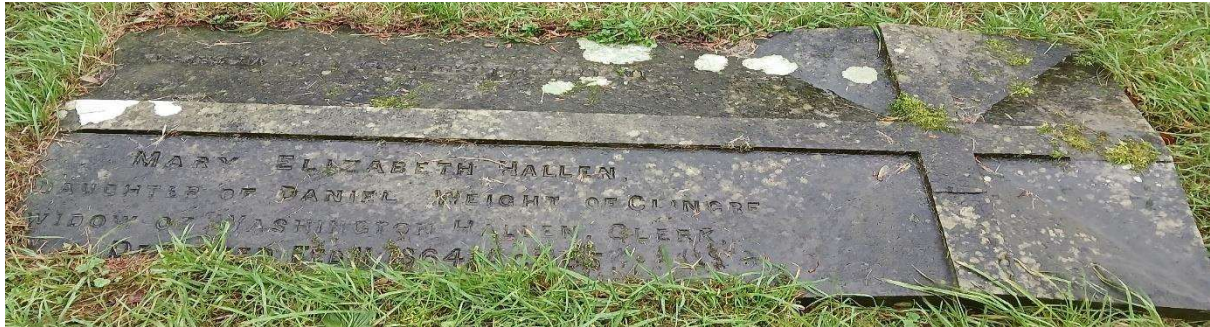
They were anything but amateurish and, from his work in the 1950s (no Internet, of course) I have been stunned with the information he was able to unearth. I have read his notes over and over and followed every lead that he gave.

One of the most precious sources of information that he followed was a book by Rev. A.W.C. Hallen called, “An Account of the Family of Hallen or Holland.” intriguingly, its subtitle was “Pedigrees of Families of Hatton of Newent, Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon and Weight of Clingre” (Clingre was a small hamlet next to Stinchcombe.)

What had the Weights done to deserve being in the same book title as William Shakespeare?

I had to have a copy! ...but it was written in 1885 and only 100 copies were ever produced! What were my chances? I wrote to an antiquarian bookseller in the Cotswolds, but they didn't have any copies – but to my complete surprise, they were pro-active and had found a copy on eBay!

A few days later, I had a copy of this precious book, which contained detailed family trees which unfolded from within the book. In short: A.W.C Hallen's mother was Mary Elizabeth Weight, and she is buried (with many other Weights) in the graveyard at St Cyr's, Stinchcombe.



Hallen is a name originally of Flemish descent and, through marriage, the Hallens and Weights link up to William Shakespeare's family tree. The book is stamped with 'Clackmannanshire Library' throughout

This puzzled me - then I read that, as a Clerk in Holy Orders, Hallen spent his last days in Alloa, Scotland. As Alloa is in Clackmannanshire, it is probable that I have one of his own personal copies! (it's also interesting that Mary is buried in Stinchcombe, not with him in Alloa.)

The stories and coincidences I could relate could make this a very long article! So briefly... William Shakespeare was involved in a lawsuit in London between a Justice Gardner and his stepson Wayte.

Shakespeare held these two up to ridicule in his plays, as Shallow & Slender. My father was an English teacher, and I remember him talking about these characters as he tried, in vain, to get me to take some interest in Shakespeare. If he were alive today, he would be flabbergasted to find that one of these characters was a relative! [Editor = it is fair to say that other persons have been named as the genesis of "Shallow" – For example Sir Thomas Lucy, but of course Mr Weight may indeed be right]

Shallow and Silence by J. Coghlan, c.1820

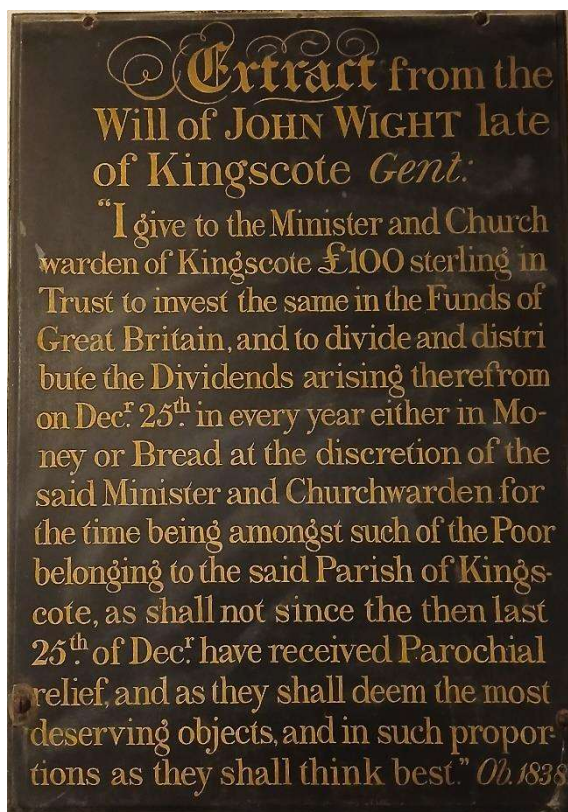


Another coincidence is that we live in a remote location in the Suffolk countryside. However, a mere 1.5 miles away lives another Weight. I took her family tree back to the 1500s and she is the result of one brother staying behind in England when the rest of the family emigrated to America.

Here's another coincidence. As far back as the 1100s, apparently, the Weights/Wights were tenant farmers on the Kingscote estate. I went online and found the email address of the 'custodian' of the Kingscote records.

In his reply, he explained that this was incorrect: his only connection was that his grandmother had married into the Kingscote family years ago.

In my original email to him, by way of background, I mentioned that my grandmother came from Newfoundland, and after a discussion about this it transpired that not only was he from Newfoundland himself, but he knew my grandmother's family!



Seen at Kingscote Church, December 2024

So,
in

writing to the "custodian" about one side of the family, I had found out about another side of my family who came from an entirely different country! [Editor = It's great when research comes together like this].

The biggest surprise was yet to come. My 1950s genealogist, Sellens Weight, wrote that there was a 'Wayte' family crest above the church porch at Yatton, Somerset. This I photographed it in 2023.

I expanded the image when I got home and was distinctly unimpressed; erosion had taken its toll, and I couldn't really make anything out. I very nearly didn't bother to include it in my book, but then thought, "Well, you've taken the photo so you may as well include it" Then [just for fun] I typed in "Wayte, Yatton" to see what came up on the computer.

I found an article about stained glass shields in one of the church windows. One shield was depicting the heraldic devices of the Wayte and Popham families. It turned out that Thomas Wayte (from Hampshire

and the Isle of Wight, d. 1482) was Margaret Popham's second husband – but he also had a daughter called Elizabeth (b. circa 1445).

[Editor's note = This seems to be a very complex subject for which see the following blog]

[Elizabeth Wayte and the 1483 rebellions, Richard III Discussion Archive](#)

She had encountered Edward IV on his travels in Southern England. His eye wandered (as it frequently did, apparently) and she became his mistress. A daughter called Elizabeth resulted, and a boy called Arthur was also born (circa 1471). Whilst Edward IV was still alive, Arthur Wayte lived in relative obscurity. Meanwhile, Edward V appeared, then quickly disappeared as a Prince in the Tower, so that their 'protector', [Editor – Let's not get into an argument with the Richard III Society but for what it is worth I agree with the speech marks] Richard, gained the crown. He was killed at Bosworth; Henry VII took over – and brought Arthur closely into the Royal Family. Arthur was given the surname 'Plantagenet' and the title 'Viscount Lisle'. He then served loyally under Henry VIII, so he kept his head! [Editor's note – as we know – quite an achievement!]

Arthur accompanied Henry to the Field of Cloth of Gold, gained several titles and estates, and eventually took over as Deputy Lord of Calais (which was then English territory).

However, Arthur's luck eventually ran out. Running Calais was a poisoned chalice, especially with courtiers informing against him in London whilst he was not present to defend himself.

He was eventually suspected of being part of a plot to return Calais to the French.

The numerous letters that Arthur had written (mostly to Thomas Cromwell) were seized and gone through in a search to find damning evidence for Arthur's trial for treason. Nothing incriminating was found, but this did not stop Henry from sending Arthur to the Tower of London. Other (presumably guilty) parties were executed.

This vast stash of letters, written between 1533 and 1540, survive to this day, and are described as "a vast tapestry of Tudor life." (See the book, "The Lisle Letters", ISBN 0-226-08800-6.)

Arthur languished for 2 years in the Tower. He was allowed to walk the ramparts and one day, he apparently saw the royal barge coming down the Thames. He waved and shouted at Henry, for they had spent much of their lives together working well and respecting each other. Perhaps Henry had forgotten that he had thrown Arthur into the Tower - because very shortly, a letter arrived: it contained one of Henry's rings and advised Arthur that he was to be released. Arthur was so overcome with relief and emotion; it was too much for the old man. He had a heart attack and died!

Arthur had always hit it off with Henry: he was totally loyal and hard-working under often difficult circumstances. They should have got on well: after all, Arthur Wayte/Plantagenet was Henry VIII's (illegitimate) uncle!

...And all of this has come to light from a photograph that I very nearly decided not to research or write about! There's no space to tell you about the Wayte who worked closely with Samuel Pepys, or the Rev John Wight of Tetbury (whose personal notebook from the 1700s I have seen and photographed at the Archives Office)... nor of the wills I've had translated that go right back to Robert Weight, born in 1560.[Editor – Mr. Weight is welcome to follow up with a further article!]

This genealogical hunt has been full of twists, turns and surprises. Along the way, I have met some wonderful people who have met me as a complete stranger and then generously offered me unlimited help. Last year, I was looking for the grave of John Weight (1756 – 1802) and Hannah Weight (nee Day, 1755 - 1824) at your churchyard: they are my great, great, great, great - grandparents. I knew they were there but despite 2 visits tirelessly hunting around, I had to come away disappointed.

This year, I met Martyn Beaufort, and he has been a complete star,[Editor – Thanks Andrew but it is what I do!!] helping me to locate the grave on his map and scrabbling around by torchlight, and getting soaked into the bargain!

Grass had covered where the grave was supposed to be and a mini excavation with borrowed garden tool revealed nothing. But after I returned home, he quietly persevered and then sent me the most amazing photograph of this illusive gravestone. He had found it and it read:-

In Memory of John Weight of the parish of Horsley who departed this life Jan. 28th, 1802 aged 45.

A loving husband, a Father dear, Until our Saviour Christ shall say
With three little infants, keepeth here, Arise ye blest and come away.

Hannah his wife ended this transitory life August 17 th 1824 aged 69 years.

Genealogy: It can take you over if you're not careful – but you meet some wonderful people, both from the past and in the present, as you embark on an amazing journey!

P.S. If anyone has any information about Weights/Waytes/Wights etc, past or present, please do get in touch with me via Martyn. Many Thanks!

Dr Brown of Dr Brown's Road fame, and his connection to the Boer War.

By Jon Crouch

I've recently researched the life narrative of one individual delivering medical services in the Anglo Boer war.

Alfred Brown was born on a Sunday, in Edinburgh.

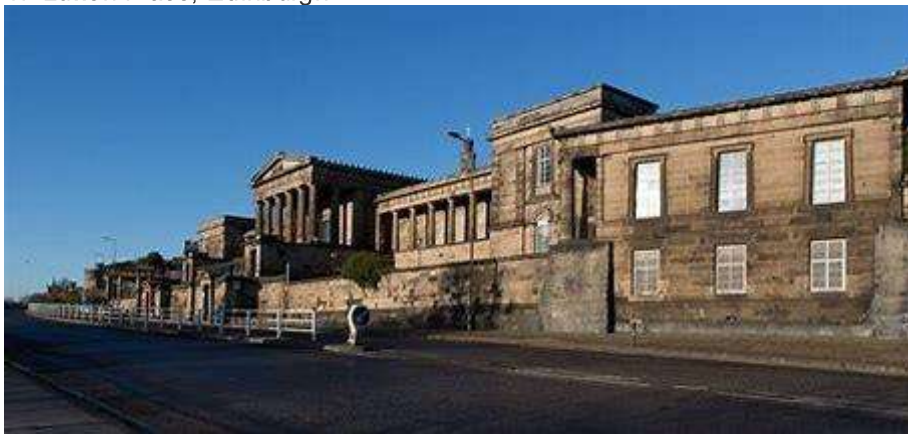
This Sunday, the 16th of Nov 1879, was in a year marked by exceptionally cold weather across Europe where rivers froze, people died of cold, agricultural production struggled and evergreen trees perished. It was described as a year of two winters and no spring or summer. Two weeks later an eye-watering minus 31c was recorded in nearby Berwickshire.

Alfred's parents, John Brown, a Paper Merchant and Printer, and Caroline Patience Bailey Brown, both aged 42, must have worried, and focused on keeping him warm in the early weeks of his life.

The family lived at 17 Lutton Place, Newington, Edinburgh in the 1881 census - a spacious Victorian building overlooking St Peters church. By 1886, aged 7, he had been enrolled at the Royal High School, Edinburgh - a fee-paying, boys' school near Calton Hill - a brisk 30 min walk from Lutton Place over North Bridge and Waverley station.



17 Lutton Place, Edinburgh



The Royal High School, Edinburgh

Over the years of his school commute, he would have seen the redevelopment of Waverley station (in 1892) and would have passed the spot where, a decade later, the South African War memorial to the Kings Own Scottish Borderers would stand without knowing this would play a part in his future.



Memorial to Kings own Scottish Borderers, Edinburgh

To Edinburgh University Medical School - 1895

We know Alfred was diligent and intelligent, as the University of Edinburgh Historical Alumni site shows him obtaining a place studying Medicine, commencing 1895, aged 16.

Then, as now, Edinburgh's global reputation in medicine meant winning a place was exceptionally competitive. Entry was based on academic

achievement, financial resources, and social connection. Prospective students needed proficiency in classics, Latin and Greek, alongside an understanding of science and maths. Fees were £150 (at time when junior solicitors earned £150 pa, Bank managers £300 pa and doctors £200-500 pa).

The Medical School's reputation attracted influential figures including Joseph Lister, who pioneered antiseptic techniques in Surgery; James Young Simpson, who introduced chloroform as an anaesthetic; and Charles Darwin, who theorised evolution by natural selection. Arthur Conan Doyle attended, encountering surgeon Joseph Bell whose use of deduction in medicine inspired the character of Sherlock Holmes. Bell continued teaching until 1900, so it's possible that Alfred may have attended one of Bell's lectures.

The Royal Infirmary, where Alfred studied, was built in 1879 and was an early adopter of aseptic surgical techniques that would significantly improve survival rates in the Anglo Boer war and beyond. Alfred was studying at a heady, experimental time - where for every advance in medicine, such as the discovery of Roentgen (X) rays (1895) or blood typing (1897), parallel developments in global communication, engineering and weaponry were underway. The modern world was being brought into being.



Edinburgh Royal Infirmary c.1890



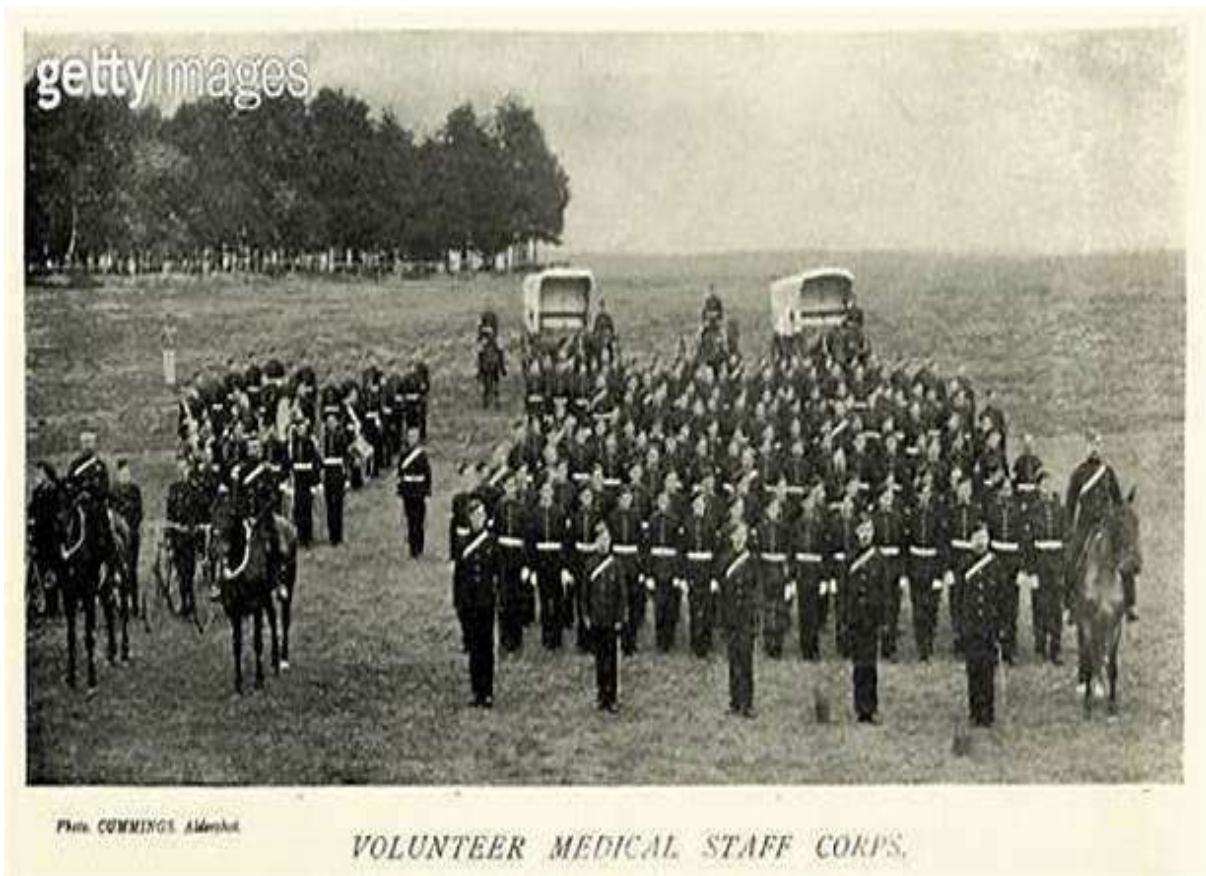
Left – a ward at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary

Edinburgh Volunteer Medical Staff Corps

The British Volunteer Corps was a civilian reserve force established in the 1850s to recruit and train volunteers who could defend Britain in times of emergency.

A medical component, the Medical Staff Corps, raised in June 1855, was

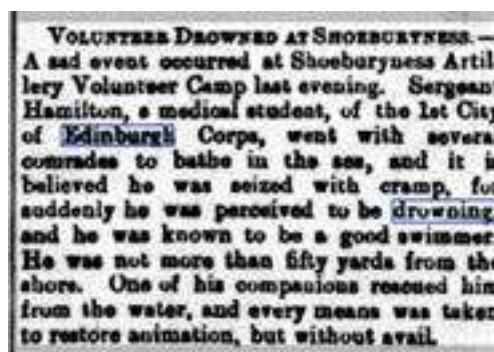
to provide orderlies for the care of the injured in General Military Hospitals. Allegations of neglect during the 1882 Egyptian Campaign led to the creation in September 1884 of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps (VMSC) staffed by University Medical students. By December 1884 the Glasgow Herald reported the establishment of a VMSC at Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and St Andrew's Universities.





Like all Volunteer Corps in the Victorian army, the unit badges were differentiated by being made of white metal – here is an example.

We know that Alfred, as a medical student at Edinburgh, had joined the VMSC between 1895 and 1900 and that the Edinburgh VMSC were held in high regard. Training included an annual camp. In August 1897 this tragically included an accidental drowning of an Edinburgh VMSC member near Southend. [Editor – see below]



On June 1st 1899 The Scotsman newspaper outlined plans for that summer's camp, commencing 22 July at Dunbar Common in East Lothian, with the Edinburgh VMSC working alongside the Royal Scots, Gordon Highlanders, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and Kings Own Scottish Borderers.

Whilst Alfred, aged 19, received notification of that summer's training plans, that same week, 8000 miles away at the Bloemfontein Conference, the British High Commissioner and Boer representatives failed to reach an agreement on the franchise for British subjects in the Transvaal, with the president of the Transvaal immediately placing orders for weapons and ammunition from overseas in anticipation of a looming conflict with Britain.

By July 27th, as the Dunbar camp ended in the unusually warm weather, Alfred may have read news of Britain issuing a warning to the Transvaal, stating that failure to grant political reforms would have serious consequence. The Boers dismissed this ultimatum.

The training in the fields around Dunbar would soon be tested in reality for Alfred, and all others at that camp.

The Edinburgh and East of Scotland Hospital

War was declared in October 1899 and the British soon suffered setbacks, including three successive defeats in one week in December 1899. The Medical services, including the newly formed Royal Army Medical corps (RAMC) founded in 1898, were soon beyond capacity. The British public and wealthy individuals stepped in to fill the gap in medical provision, proposing a series of private hospitals, mirroring the public provision of medical services with private enterprise of today.

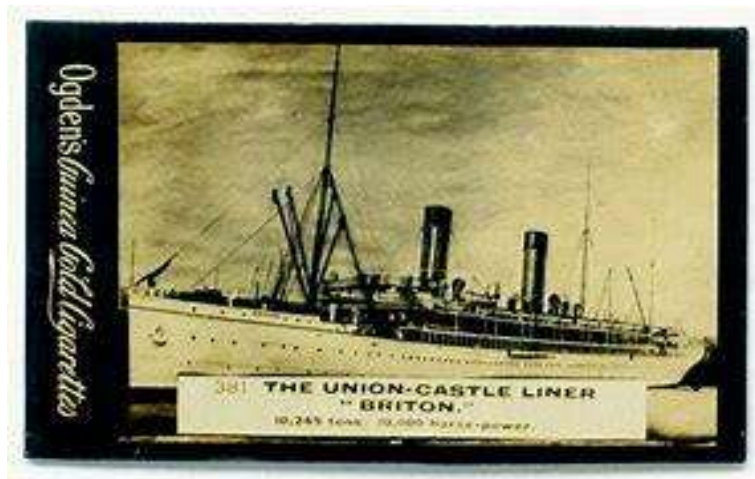
By February 1900 the Glasgow Herald reported a meeting called by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh to establish a hospital of 100 beds for the sick and wounded. By 9 February £12,000 was collected for what was to be the Edinburgh and East of Scotland hospital and Prof John Chiene, a Professor of Surgery at Edinburgh University, and Major Sir James Clark Bart of the RAMC were appointed to lead it.

On the 13th of February the Glasgow Herald reported 17 members of the Edinburgh VMSC had volunteered, been passed fit and had been attested into the RAMC. Alfred, aged 20, would have been

amongst them. He must have demonstrated leadership potential as, out of the 40 orderlies, he was made Corporal.

Staffing included Doctors, radiological specialists, seven nursing staff and 40 additional staff. The additional staff included 1st class orderlies (students in the Edinburgh VMSC) and 2nd class orderlies [skilled artisans, joiners, and engineers, with St Andrew ambulance certificates, who were able to assist in the building of huts for the hospital

On the 22nd of March 1900, the company paraded in the Edinburgh University old college quad before leaving. The unit embarked at Southampton on the Union Castle S.S. Briton on the 24th of the same month. The ship also carried 193 tons of equipment and stores. Arriving at Cape Town on the 10th of April, they proceeded to Port Elizabeth.



As a side note the school's global pre-eminence in the medical field meant that the Edinburgh VMSC were not the only students or faculty active in South Africa. Edinburgh Medical students from South Africa volunteered to staff the Sivewright ambulance, providing medical services to the Boer forces from Dec 1899.

[South African Military History Society - Journal- The Medical Aspect of the Anglo Boer War, 1899 - 1902: Part 1](#) [Editor – This interesting article gives more details of Foreign efforts to provide ambulances to the Boers]

Indeed, Edinburgh's influence is such that, of the 133 names of the most notable medical practitioners (excluding unqualified individuals) listed in De Villiers seminal work on Boer war military medicine, 23 (17%) of these had taught at, or been trained in Edinburgh.

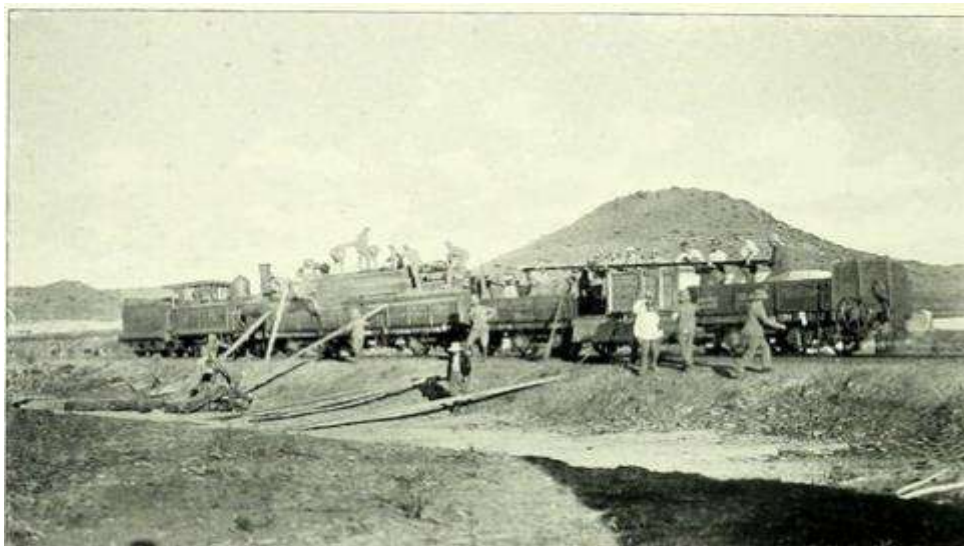
Challenges at Norvalspont

By April 1900 the British had overcome the earlier setbacks and were driving northwards to the Boer capitals.

Prioritisation of supplies for the advance on Pretoria along the single-track railway meant Alfred and the staff of the Edinburgh hospital had to wait until the 21st of April 1900 to move to the proposed hospital site at Norvalspont, 225 miles northwards on the Cape and Orange Free State border. The train journey took 36 hours with staff arriving at 2am and sleeping on the ground.

Surgeon-in-charge David Wallace later referred to this site as "the most god-forsaken country any man could put his foot in" notwithstanding "that for people from the dull sky and constant rain of Scotland we had the advantage of having blue sky".

There the hospital encountered challenges - an unsuitable and unsanitary site, the single track railway requiring a siding be constructed, non-standard huts and missing materials requiring purchase of equipment from Cape Town.



UNLOADING TRUCKS.

[To face page 3.]

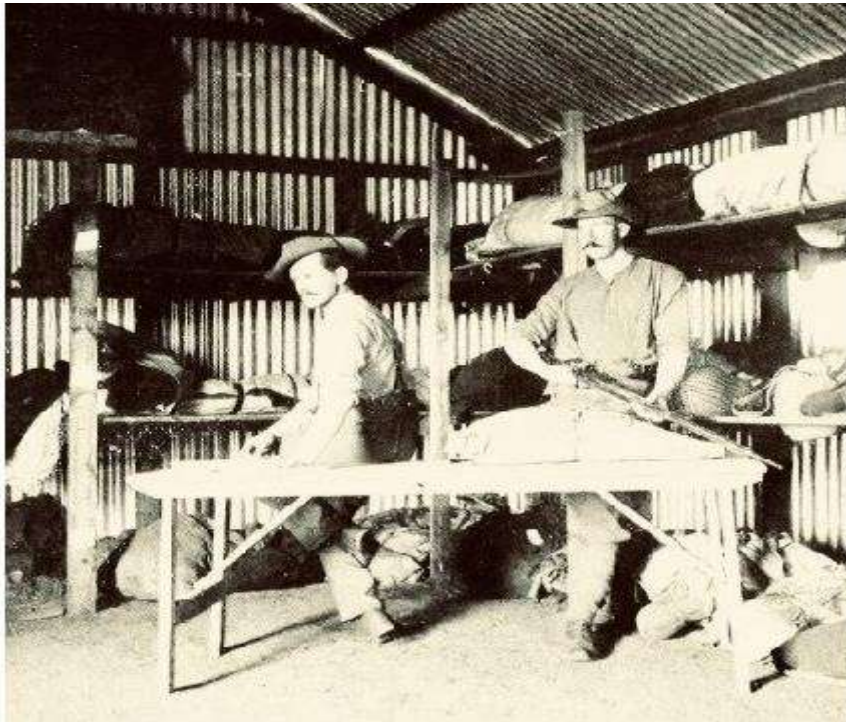
(The Railway line and unloading the Hospital, Source: Report of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Hospital, 1901)

The staff set to the task of "turning a lumber yard into a hospital" and Wallace talked of the medical students carrying out the "most uncongenial work with a whole-heartedness and enthusiasm which was every great credit to them" (Scotsman Newspaper, Nov 24, 1900). It's in these trials that NCOs, such as Alfred, often provide the day-to-day motivation, leadership and energy to get the task done.



ERECTION OF WARDS.

[To face page 4.]



(The Hospital underway and inside one of the stores, Source: Report of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Hospital, 1901)

The surgeon general sent ten tents to accelerate establishment of an outpatient facility/temporary wards. The main hospital was ready by 14 May 1900 with the first hospital train arriving on the 29 May with 96 patients. The facility was expanded in July to house 150 beds with an admin block, four hospital huts, surgical theatre, X-ray room, laboratory, mortuary, two cookhouses and stores, all lit by electricity.



INTERIOR OF WARD.

(To face page 9.)

(Stand By your beds - a completed ward, Source: Report of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Hospital, 1901)

Surgical Impact

During its functioning the Edinburgh hospital treated 166 surgical cases, of which 75 were bullet or shell injuries (8 Head wounds, 8 Abdomen, 10 Thorax, 49 Extremities).

When we read historical casualty figures, we might prefer to focus on the number alone, yet each one contains a deal of pain, suffering and a potentially life-altering injury that Alfred and the medical services tried to alleviate.

Two surgical cases are typical of the injuries dealt with.

- Private 6745 of 1st HLI had his lower jaw carried away by a pom-pom shell necessitating three rounds of extensive plastic surgery over 2 months. Though a traumatic injury the skill of the surgeons meant that he was able to "eat soft puddings; enjoy biscuits soaked in tea; to speak fairly distinctly, and to enjoy a smoke and the usual bottle of beer or stout" (!) by the time of his leaving (Wallace & Boyd, 1901). He would, of course, have carried significant deformity for life as a result.

- Private 1825 of 1st HLI was "lying down in the firing line, when he was shot in the hand by what he thought to be shrapnel. When retiring to get his hand dressed, he was shot in the back by a Mauser bullet: the bullet coming out in front. After being struck, he staggered for about 15 yards and then dropped". Surgery removed fragments from the hand and the chest. The wounds healed before discharge 3 weeks later.

Wallace, the Chief Surgeon, described the first war with high-velocity projectiles in a dry environment thus "The majority of wounds due to rifle bullets do not become septic if properly dressed at the time of injury, and unless they strike a bone, joint, or some vital part, the patient as a rule escapes in a wonderful manner, and is often quite fit a fortnight or three weeks after" (Wallace & Boyd, 1901).

Enteric, the Risk to Staff and the use of X-Rays

The hospital also treated 156 enteric/typhoid cases (with heart-rending descriptions of the disease impact in the Report of the Edinburgh Hospital). Tantalisingly, one of these cases was listed as a staff member with initials A.B. No staff member other than Alfred had these initials.

This individual presented on 17th May with tongue dry and coated, abdomen distended and rose spots visible. The patient had a mild attack of enteric, modified by inoculation and his temperature returned to normal by the twenty-fifth day. It's highly likely that this was Alfred, which demonstrates the risk staff were taking daily in dealing with typhoid patients. Though all 58 staff were inoculated, 9 staff contracted typhoid.

Wallace also states-"X rays were invaluable, not only in cases of bullet or shell wounds, but also in cases of fractures and as an aid in making a definite diagnosis in cases where fracture was doubtful". Ward & Boyd (1901) report "Fifty cases of gunshot wounds and fractures were photographed by means of the X-rays. In several of these, bullets were discovered, in many their absence was proved".

In total the hospital dealt with 507 cases and "upwards of 1000" outpatient cases up to 14 October 1900 when it was handed to the government as a free gift. Deaths which occurred in this period were 13 due to enteric fever, and 1 from injuries sustained. The surgeon general, initially critical of the speed of set-up, later acknowledged that it was well-equipped and run and was excellent, once established.

Return to Edinburgh

Alfred returned to Britain in mid-November having served 216 days overseas. The Scotsman Newspaper reports a dinner held by the Edinburgh VMSC for all hospital members on 23 November 1900 in the Imperial Hotel, Edinburgh.

At that dinner Colonel Rooney, principal officer for Scotland of the RAMC, stated he was "under considerable obligation to the soldiers of the VMSC for their assistance". Surgeon Captain Hepburn described "one of the first wars of magnitude in which any serious attempt had been made to cope with the sick" and that "the Edinburgh company of the VMSC was one of the earliest to respond to the call to volunteer".

He hoped the "experience would be beneficial to them for the rest of their lives".

Later Life

We cannot know for certain what benefit Alfred took from his time in South Africa.

What is known is that Alfred returned to his studies attaining M.B. Ch.B. in 1901 before submitting his thesis, 'A statistical inquiry into the condition of the facial and other reflexes in general paralysis of the insane' in 1907 when he attained M.D status. This thesis sits in the Edinburgh University library today.



(Which one is our man? - Edinburgh Medical School Postgraduate Cohort 1907. Source: Edinburgh University Heritage Collections)

By 1908, aged 29, Alfred married Gabrielle Stella Bell (b.1882) in Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire. By 1911 he was in practice and resident in the small rural town of Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire. The couple would go on to have three children - Ronald Arden Brown (b.1913); Barbara Brown (b.1914); and Alison S Brown (b.1919).

Glimpses of Alfred appear from time to time - still being a force for good. In 1916, he is chairing a special committee in Minchinhampton examining the 'advisability of not lighting the Street Lamps owing to the probable Air Raids by German Aircraft'. By 1918 he is instrumental in helping find premises for a local school, Beaudesert Park.

He is cited by the Local History group as being the first in the town to buy a car - perhaps a continuation of the atmosphere of experimentation he found in 1890s Edinburgh. [Editor – also probably essential in a rural town such as Minchinhampton]

He practiced as the local Doctor until Nov 1946 - a full 35 years' service devoted to the health of the town. The residents thought highly enough of him to name a road after him.

His death on 18 January 1951, aged 72, was reported in the British Medical Journal.

Dr Brown's Road runs through the town to this day, a 1/3rd of a mile-long testament to Alfred's own road from Edinburgh childhood to medical school to South Africa to a lifetime's service as a rural town doctor.



Dr. Brown's headstone – Minchinhampton Holy Trinity



street sign

So What ?

So why is this narrative of one person's service in the Boer war important? I'd argue there are 4 reasons.

1. It is a good illustration of **key themes in British Medical service provision** at the close of the

Nineteenth century :

- Edinburgh's global medical influence ;
- the failure of the government/war office to provide appropriately scaled services for the task;
- the response of private sector/charitable donations to cover the gap; and,
- with the VMSC, a test of the emerging reserve forces model that would be fully realised in the 1907 creation of the Territorial Force that would meet the German Forces 7 years later.

2. It is a reminder that **warfare, sadly, has often acted as an accelerant of medical and surgical practice**. Here we see the creation of Typhoid inoculation in 1898 (under the auspices of the Army Medical services) and its first mass trial in the ABW, experimentation with X-rays and the development of surgical competence that would be documented and revised and put into further use 12 years later in WW1.

3. As historians this narrative serves to remind that **sometimes a single, state clasp QSA can represent as significant a historical insight** as multiple battlefield clasps, if we have the determination (& archival luck) to uncover it.

4. Personally, I found this an example of **how history allows us to take inspiration from the service and sacrifice of precedents and use this today**.

The Royal Infirmary where Alfred studied also happens to be the place I attend as a post-graduate. Every time I visit the building I'm reminded that Alfred is one of example of many predecessors who saw the immediate challenges of their time and committed to sacrifice their time, effort and energy and to take risks in order to make a positive contribution to the world around them.

Any corrections/builds or further information on Alfred are always welcome.

Thank you for taking the time to read of his journey.

Extract From Chiz Hayward's soon to be published book on Holy Trinity: Wall Paintings

During the recent reordering of the church the archaeologists discovered fragments of wall plaster painted with Black Letter text. The discovery sheds light on the appearance and decoration of Holy Trinity, but also on the changing nature of the church in the 16th century. Excavation of the backfill of a secondary grave within a masonry tomb uncovered part of a dump of painted wall plaster; only the top of the grave backfill was excavated so not all the plaster was excavated, but enough was excavated to tell us much about the painted inscription.

The assemblage is dominated by fragments painted with text in a finely executed Black Letter 'textura quadrata' script. The script is neatly and precisely painted in black on a whitewashed background. The letters are all set out on horizontal scribe lines, with all the letter fragments appearing to be set out on a base and midline; some letter fragments also appear to have horizontal scribe lines for the descenders, but not for ascenders or capital heights. Some fragments have closely set parallel scribe lines, presumably from consecutive lines of text. There are relatively few blank pieces although many of these do have scribe lines.

None of the fragments are large enough to contain complete letters. As the Black Letter script is made up of letters sharing many similar elements such as the vertical downstrokes known as minims it is hard to deduce letters from most of the fragments, however two conjoining fragments include the descender and tail of the letter 'y', and the lower part of a letter 'z'. The top of a letter 'thorn' is also present, a letter still in use (with a superscript 'e'), in the 1611 King James Bible, and which indicates the text is in English rather than Latin, giving a post-Reformation date for the text.

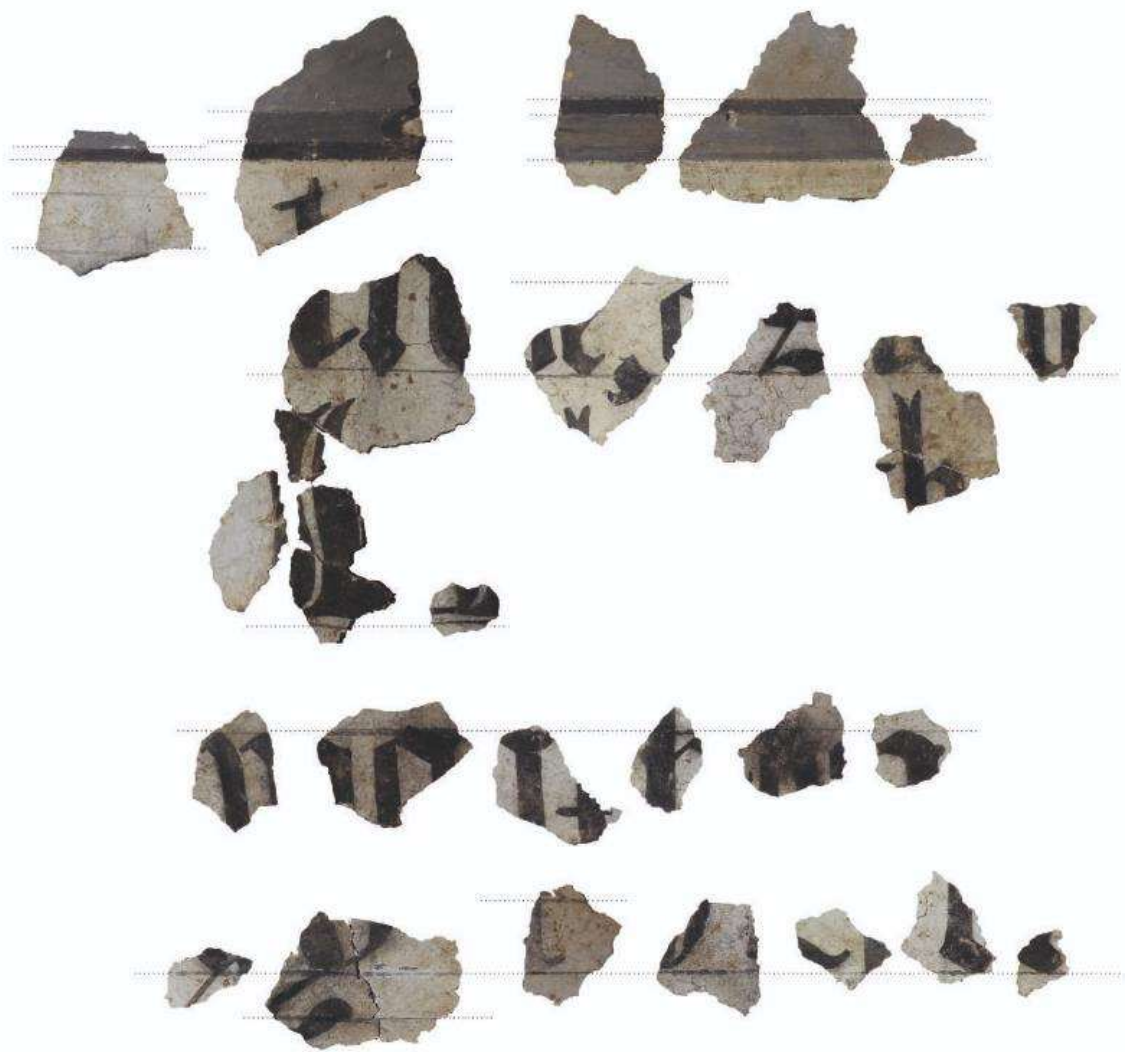
One group of four conjoining fragments shows that there were at least two lines of text and contains part of a capital which is positioned underneath a lower-case letter 's'; there appear to be two different sizes of letter. The presence of a comma places the script post c.1520 and the text is most likely to be of 16th-century date.

The Reformation saw a series of waves of destruction of medieval wall paintings and the painted monograms and scrollwork on the chancel and south aisle arches are the only survivals at Holy Trinity.

Wall painting did not stop at the Reformation however and framed blocks of English text in Black Letter script were frequently added during the reigns of Edward VI or Elizabeth I and the practice continued into the Puritan Revolution, post-Restoration period and indeed the 18th century. Texts were typically of the Ten Commandments (The Decalogue), the Creed, or scriptural extracts. The text was often painted on the whitewashed walls but may also be on cloth hangings (as at Chichester cathedral) or on wooden boards.

In 1594 the churchwardens' accounts lists a payment of 4 shillings to the well named Adam Painter, 'for paintinge the ten Commandementes, and other charges'; could this be the payment for the Black Letter text painted on the plaster? There is no letter 'z' in the Decalogue, but the 'other charges' could refer to a further Scriptural text. By 1606 the Ten Commandments and 'the degrees of marriage' were repainted with the table of consanguinity, this time on new timber boards with 'a ring to hang them from'. A new table of consanguinities and frame was made in 1632, and again in 1662.

The plaster is in good condition with clean breaks, suggesting that it was stripped from the wall and dumped fairly quickly in the tomb. It is possible that the plaster was stripped off the wall as part of a wider programme of refurbishment, or deliberate destruction of the text, but it is also possible that this was a discrete area hacked off to allow, for example, a new monument or memorial to be mounted to the wall. The date of the deposition cannot be dated precisely due to a lack of other finds, although it was clearly deposited before 1842, and is likely to have been deposited before box pews were constructed above the tomb, probably in the 17th century.



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Request for volunteers from Martin Bryan of the Stroudwater Navigation Archive Charity

Gary received this email from Martin Bryan of the Stroudwater Navigation Archive Charity on the 15th of February. If this is a project you would be interested in helping with, please see the contact details below. The links give a flavour of what is involved, and there is also some interesting stuff to browse.

“Morning Gary

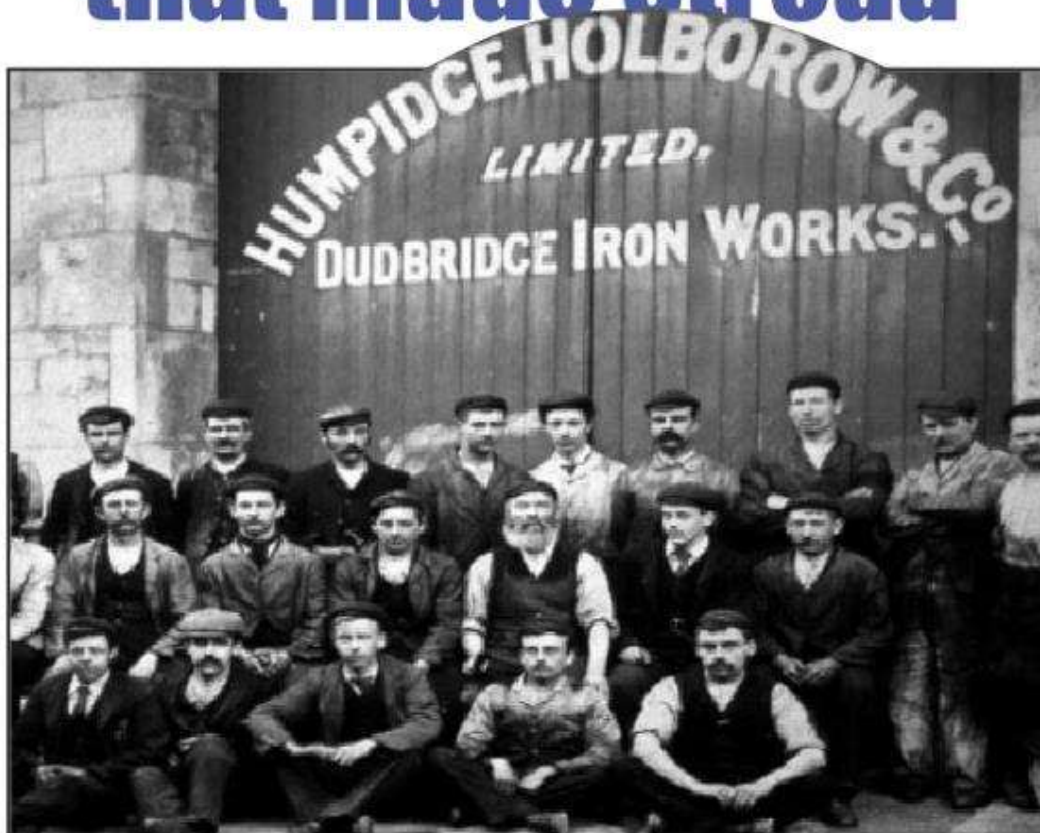
The Stroudwater Navigation Archive Charity (SNAC) has recently been given permission by the Gloucestershire Archives to add some of the records they hold for the Thames & Severn Canal Company to the records of the Stroudwater Navigation we have put online at [Home - Stroudwater History](#). Our existing entry on the Thames & Severn ([Thames & Severn Archives](#)) needs to be expanded so we need to recruit volunteers to help with this. Volunteers do not need to come to the Archives, as we have photographed the documents and can make them available online.

Of particular interest to me are the Import and Export books for the Brimscombe Port Warehouse of the company. These contain fascinating details of the wide range of goods delivered to the Stroud Valleys and other places accessible from their canals. We have already captured a few scant samples from these documents and created PDFs to allow people to scan them (see [thames-severn-imports-september-1802](#)). We are hoping that some of your members might be interested in helping us with this project.

We are happy to come to talk to you when you want to know more about the project. If anyone wants to join us they can contact us at archives@stroudwaterhistory.org.uk

Martin Bryan
Stroudwater Navigation Archive Charity”

More than textiles – the other industries that made Stroud



**An illustrated talk by Dr Ray Wilson, president of
Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology**

Friday March 7 at 7.30pm, Minchinhampton Market House

Tickets £5 (cash) from M&B Stores, Minchinhampton
(£4 for members of Minchinhampton Local History Group)
or on the door (cash or card). Licensed bar

Presented by Minchinhampton Local History Group

Blast From the past.

I thought that because of Jon Crouch's excellent article on Dr. Brown, I would complement it with the below article from the Annual Bulletin from 2002. I never edit these offerings so the opinions are the author's own. I may change the grammar / punctuation for clarity.

The Boer War

by Sue Smith

In October 1899, action was taken to stop the dilution of British Power in Southern Africa and the weakening of her Naval supremacy round the Cape and the Indian Ocean. Great Britain was at war!

The first mention in Minchinhampton of this little war slotted between the Crimea with its Florence Nightingale, cholera and Charge of the Light Brigade, and the Great War with its slaughter of an entire generation, was in December 1899 issue of the Parish magazine.

There was a large congregation present in the parish church on Sunday morning October 29th - it having been announced that the Rector would preach on behalf of the fund for the families of those engaged in the war. Taking for his text "Follow after the things which make for peace" (Romans xiv. 19) ,he concluded thus:

"No one likes war, the English people are not a warlike people. No Government bearing in mind the dreadful nature of modern warfare would lightly and wantonly plunge into war. And yet - for the first time since the Crimean war - we find ourselves engaged with whitemen, excepting only the brief hostilities with the same people who are now again our foes... "

The sermon concluded with an appeal for the Soldiers and Sailors Assoc., which aided wives and families of serving personnel. The collection came to the grand sum of £27.7.0 a very large amount in those days. Apart from this Mrs Bryans (Rectors wife) had received £7 towards the fund and would be glad of further contributions. Meetings of this Association were held at Longfords and a careful list of all soldiers and sailors serving in this division was kept.

There are 35 soldiers whose homes are in the Minchinhampton parish and of these 14 are serving in South Africa. In several cases help had been given to families in the parish.

January 1900 bought the relief fund to £81.13.9d. On January 15th a Patriotic Concert was held for the War Fund in the Market House.

A large enthusiastic audience attended helped by a fine night and the Town Band playing outside bringing people together.

The Playnes, Lawrences, Bryans and the Littles organised, played and acted for the concert. They raised, while playing "The absent minded beggar" [this seemed to be the custom!!], The sum of £11.9.11d.

In April 1900 a list of men serving in the war was recorded in the Parish Magazine; they were as follows

William Henry Apperley
Edward Bingle
Lieut. Hinton Bryan
Frederick Bullock
George Brawn,
Joseph Brown
Albert Cuss,
James Cuss
Albert Creed
Sergeant Edge
Charles Evans
William Flooks

Edward Gilett
Henry Gosling
Edwin Harman
Frank Hatherall
William Holmes
James Masters
Richard Paddison (Imperial Yeomanry)
Capt. William Playne (Lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry)
Amos Stevens
Sergt.-Major Walkerley
Albert Edward Weaver
Edward William Willoboys

Four wives of men at the front were already receiving weekly allowances from the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association and two aged parents were also receiving help. Here is an extract from a letter from a soldier from Bristol serving in South Africa

"There is not a married man or widower or son in this camp that hasn't a sunshine in his face when he gets his letters from home, and hears what the generous public or his late employers are doing for him. I am sure we cannot thank them enough. Of course we never dreamed of them doing as much as they have done".

In November 1900 a special prayer [was made] for peace, and thankfulness for the signs of the end of the present conflict.

The War Fund was still collecting money and in Nailsworth (in which Minchinhampton is included) relieved 46 cases at a cost of £172.

Nearly 400 persons, mostly ladies have distributed these funds nationwide making sure that families did not starve while their men were fighting in South Africa.

In his New Years letter to the Parish of 1901 the Rector was obviously in London on May 18th when Mafeking was relieved. Though peace had not been declared the war was practically over.

News that the War was over came at last and reached Minchinhampton on Monday, June 2nd and great was the rejoicing. "The bells rang, flags were flying and the band was playing". A lecture was given in the Market House on February 27th 1902 on the subject Our Soldiers in South Africa by Miss Violet Brooke-Hunt, proceeds going to Miss Brooke-Hunt's Soldiers Institute Fund and the local division of the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association. The returning men were met at Brimscombe station by the Town Band and were brought up into the town. The soldiers were wearing their red jackets and after were all given a meal in the Market House.

We have no record of any local men lost in the Boer War so we have to presume that all returned safe and sound.

Minchinhampton Church Magazines and Story of Minchinhampton 1850 - 1957 by Minchinhampton W.I. is acknowledged