

Buckinghamshire: A Military History

by

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Chapter Six: 1859-1899

As the 'third panic' began, the militia and yeomanry remained unrepresentative of society as a whole. A Royal Commission in 1857 suggested that the middle classes 'had no place in the British army under the present system'.¹ Britain was also increasingly urbanised with 58.7 per cent of the population living in urban areas by 1861.² The revival of the volunteer movement was to give voice to the urban middle classes, with lasting consequences for levels of military participation.

The 'third panic' developed from an assassination attempt on the life of Emperor Napoleon III of France by an Italian exile, Felice Orsini, in January 1858. Orsini had links to other exiles in London, and it was alleged that the bomb had been manufactured in Birmingham. Palmerston's attempt to placate the French by introducing a conspiracy to murder bill making it a felony to plot murder abroad was lost on its second reading, and he resigned. Prime minister once more, Lord Derby was more inclined to review defence arrangements in the face of French hostility, as well as the increasing European tensions that led to war between France and Austria in April 1859. The home defence committee established in May 1858 and the resulting Royal Commission on the militia in July 1858 were manifestations of the new concern, albeit that regular army witnesses before the latter took the opportunity to dismiss volunteers as a bad substitute for militia.³

¹ W. J. Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), 79.

² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 164.

³ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 18.

A select committee on military organisation began its deliberations in March 1859 and a Royal Commission on national defence was also convened in August 1859. Soldiers like Cambridge and Burgoyne remained unconvinced of the value of volunteers, but public demands and an increasingly hysterical press campaign culminated with the publication of Tennyson's poem, 'The War' in *The Times* on 9 May 1859 with its clarion call, 'Riflemen Form'. The significance of the press derived from its increasing availability to ordinary people with the abolition of the newspaper tax in 1855, and of paper duty in 1861.⁴

On 12 May 1859, as a means of allaying popular pressure, the Secretary of State for War, General Jonathan Peel, authorised lords lieutenant to raise volunteers under the 1804 Volunteer Consolidation Act. As Peel expressed it, it was 'impossible to resist the general feeling in favour of it, & we must make the best of it'.⁵ There is no indication that Peel and his colleagues expected this as anything other than temporary. Accepting offers had the advantage of satisfying the public without incurring any cost since the government would provide nothing whereas fully embodying the militia would be costly. Moreover, the May circular was merely a selection from the 1804 provisions: eight drills in four months or 24 in a year would be sufficient to qualify for exemption from the non-existent threat of the militia ballot. Men could resign on 14 days' notice, and any subscriptions or disciplinary fines could be recovered through magistrates.

Since lords lieutenant would appoint officers and only the wealthy could afford weapons, there was no danger of the volunteers escaping control. The circular

⁴ Shapiro, 'British Army in Home Defence', 32.

⁵ Partridge, 'Military Planning', 334.

did not specify any role for the volunteers, leading the Prince Consort to urge a second clarifying circular. Issued on 25 May 1859, this defined the intention to induce ‘those classes to come forward as Volunteers who do not, under our present system, enter either the Regular Army or the Militia’. ⁶ Volunteer riflemen could also act on the flanks or in the rear of an opposing hostile army. Peel later suggested he intended only a drilled but unarmed population for use in an emergency. Nonetheless, ammunition would now be made available at cost price.

The popular mood was evident at the public meeting at Aylesbury on 22 December 1859, at which 30 men were immediately enrolled and £112.7s.0d donated by way of honorary and annual subscriptions. The Archdeacon of Buckingham, the Ven. Edward Bickersteth, expressed a common view, ‘When we compare our naval and military position with that of France, we cannot feel satisfied that in one of the political changes which may take place amongst that restless people, there should not arise a desire to invade these our happy shores.’ A coal merchant, Joseph Shaw, voiced pacifist objections, but the solicitor, Julian James, was loudly cheered in responding that ‘if any gentleman was desirous... of having his nose pulled by a Frenchman, he must go to France and have it done, for they could not suffer it in Aylesbury market place’. Captain Toynbee also remarked that ‘he had heard something of Peace Societies, and when he saw that Frenchmen loved Englishmen, or Englishmen loved Frenchman as well as they did themselves, he would join the Peace Society’. ⁷

⁶ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 166.

⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Dec. 1859.

Shaw took his argument to the columns of the *Bucks Advertiser*, but to no avail.

⁸ The eccentric Dr John Lee of Hartwell House, a leading pacifist but also Egyptologist, astronomer, teetotaler, and vegetarian, was prepared to concede that volunteers ‘had the merit of proving additional arguments for reducing the standing Army’. ⁹ Indeed, Lee offered a practise rifle range to the new corps at his own expense. ¹⁰ Lee had inherited Hartwell from Rev. Sir George Lee in 1829. Ironically, in view of Dr Lee’s pacifism, when he died in 1866 Hartwell passed to his nephew, Edward Dyke Lee, who commanded the RBKOM from 1885 to 1890.

Some older fears also resurfaced. George Charsley, a Beaconsfield solicitor, wrote to his brother of a proposed corps there in February 1860, ‘There is a strong feeling that some of the gentry ought to join as the corps is more for the protection of property or of those who have anything to lose than for those who have not.’ The 1st Lord Chesham agreed that an efficient corps ‘will render every man’s property secure from invasion’. ¹¹

Six rifle volunteer corps were initially established at Marlow, High Wycombe, Buckingham, Aylesbury, Slough and Newport Pagnell. After initial meetings, steering committees were established with enrolling of members, followed by an application to Carrington as lord lieutenant. A corps also needed a safe rifle range of 200 yards, a place of custody for arms, and a uniform approved by the lord lieutenant. Safe ranges were certainly essential, one early near-fatal accident occurring in Quarry Wood at Marlow when a young volunteer’s loaded

⁸ *Bucks Advertiser*, 31 Dec. 1859.

⁹ BA, T/A 5/1. For a description of Lee, see John Kersley Fowler, *Records of Old Times* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1898), 73-88.

¹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Feb. 1860; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 25 Apl. 1863.

¹¹ BA, T/A 5/15, George Charsley to Frederick Charsley, 2 Feb. 1860; Chesham speech, 3 Feb. 1860.

rifle went off unexpectedly and the shot only narrowly missed his colleagues. Five years later a ramrod was accidentally fired at Marlow, causing it to burst through the rifle barrel, but there were no injuries.¹²

The initial establishments were fixed at a captain, lieutenant, and ensign for corps between 60 and 100 men, and a lieutenant and ensign for a subdivision of not less than 30 men. The official date of formation was that on which the offer forwarded by the lord lieutenant was accepted by the Secretary of State for War. This usually coincided with the dates of commission of the first officers as printed in the Army List.

The official date of acceptance of the 1st Bucks (Marlow) RVC appears to have been 16 December 1859, eight days after its first 33 members were sworn in. The initial meeting was held in the National Schoolroom as early as 18 August, with £200 raised by October.¹³ The Chief Constable agreed to allow arms to be stored in the police station.¹⁴ The first public meeting in High Wycombe was on 13 December but the official acceptance date of the 2nd Bucks (High Wycombe) RVC was 4 February 1860. Some men transferred from the Marlow corps as Wycombe residents.¹⁵ The initial meeting of the corporation at High Wycombe was requested by around 50 of the leading inhabitants. It was claimed by one anonymous correspondent in the *South Bucks Free Press* that the reason handbills advertising it were not widely distributed was in order to exclude opponents of the scheme, that the attendance had been restricted to just a few selected councillors led by the mayor, Robert Wheeler, and that the

¹² *South Bucks Free Press*, 1 Dec. 1860; 1 Dec. 1865.

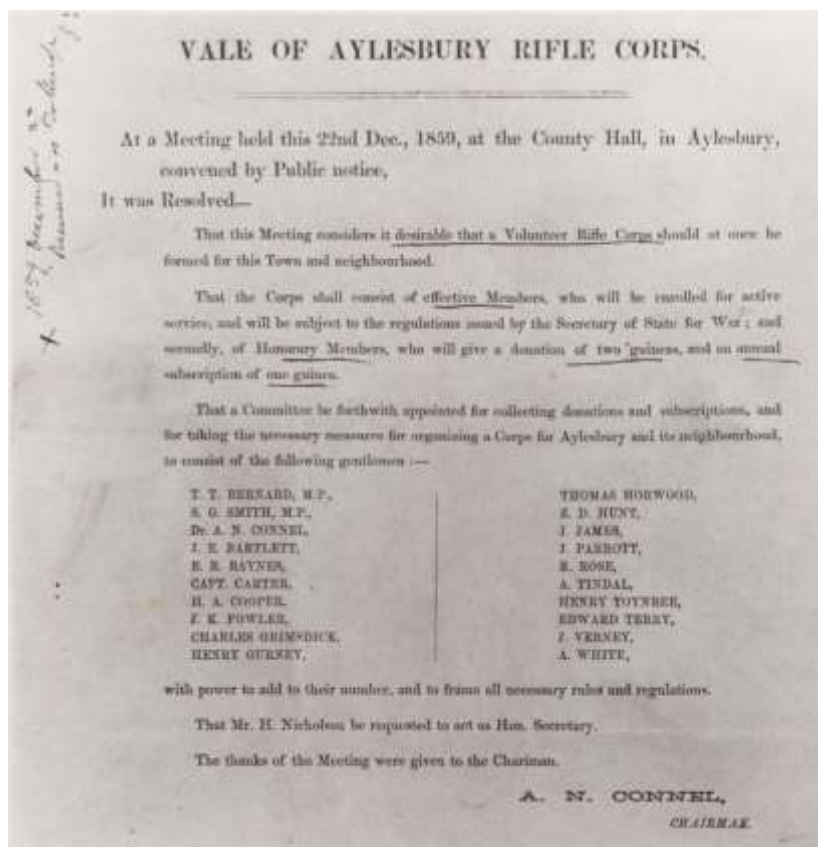
¹³ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Aug. and 22 Oct. 1859; *The Times*, 20 Oct. 1859.

¹⁴ *South Bucks Free Press*, 22 Oct. 1859.

¹⁵ *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1859; Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/6, War Office to Carrington, 4 Feb. 1860.

meeting had been wrongly funded by the Town Council.¹⁶ The corps applied to Carrington for approval on 22 December 1859, requesting ground for a range in Wycombe Abbey Park.¹⁷

The first commissions of the 3rd (Buckingham) RVC were dated 11 May 1860, but the first public meeting had been chaired by the mayor, H. M. Bradford, an ironmonger and seed merchant, on 26 November 1859. A total of £209.9s.0d. was raised that night. Names of potential members were taken at the Town Hall on 17 December. By January 1860 the sum had risen to £317.2s.0d.¹⁸



Meeting to raise volunteers at Aylesbury, 22 December 1859 [BA]

¹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Dec. 1859; *South Bucks Free Press*, 10 Dec. 1859; 21 Jan. 1860.

¹⁷ Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/2, Williams to Carrington, 22 Dec. 1859.

¹⁸ *The Times*, 29 Nov. 1859; *Bucks Herald*, 3 Dec. 1859; 7 Jan. 1860; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1859; J. T. Harrison, *Leisure-Hour Notes on Historical Buckingham* (London: Henry Gray, 1909, 91-93).

Again, while the official acceptance date of the 4th Bucks (Aylesbury) RVC was 11 May 1860, the first public meeting was on 22 December 1859, with the first rules printed on 14 January.¹⁹ Carrington had doubts in allowing the corps to drill in County Hall as it might damage the floor, but otherwise put no obstacles in the way of acceptance. The first parade was held on 17 June 1860.²⁰

Similarly, the official date of acceptance of the 5th Bucks (Slough) RVC was 20 July 1860, but it had been mooted in June 1859 when a public meeting was held at the Mechanics' Institute on 1 June under the chairmanship of George Du Pré.

²¹ It was reported that between £200 and £300 had already been subscribed for a 'South Bucks Volunteer Rifle Corps', and there were 30-40 individuals ready to join. Information was available from Henry Luff, postmaster and stationer at Slough, Charles Sanders, an Eton solicitor, and the Rev. R. P. Bent at Burnham.

²² The rules were printed on 18 January 1860, the delay resulting from problems in finding a safe range, although it was also claimed that Carrington opposed the corps and it had been neglected by the local gentry. William Johnson (later Johnson Cory), an Eton College schoolmaster, complained in November 1859 that the gentleman Carrington proposed for command had withdrawn in July on the grounds that it would prove too laborious; Carrington had not made any suggestion since.²³ A meeting on 2 March 1860 appears to have decided to end the effort to establish the corps, but it was then revived in June.²⁴

¹⁹ *The Times*, 24 Dec. 1859; BA, T/A 5/1, Resolutions, 23 Dec. 1859.

²⁰ BA, Q/JQc 5, Carrington to Tindal, 1 Jan. 1860; *Volunteer Service Gazette*, 23 June 1860.

²¹ *Windsor and Eton Express*, 4 June 1859.

²² *South Bucks Free Press*, 25 June 1859; *The Times*, 30 June 1859.

²³ *Bucks Herald*, 19 Nov. 1859.

²⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Mar. 1860; *South Bucks Free Press*, 12 and 17 Mar. 1860.

The 6th Bucks (Newport Pagnell) RVC was accepted on 14 September 1860, and remained in the Army List until June 1864. It originated with a meeting at the Swan Hotel on 8 June 1859. It held drills in Dr Heygate's Yard or, if wet, in the Wool Warehouse. It also had its own band.²⁵ The range was in Jefferson's Field at Sherrington, damage being done to the butts by those - presumably youths - searching for bullets in March 1862.²⁶ Owen Wethered later suggested that the corps was commanded by William Backwell Praed of Tyringham House, who took the surname of Tyringham in 1859. The corps participated in the volunteer review at Warwick in July 1861, but then foundered when Tyringham resigned.²⁷

In reality, while Praed may have been the first captain, it would appear that command was held from an early stage by the Newport Pagnell solicitor, Samuel Newman. It was Newman's resignation as lieutenant in June 1864 that precipitated the unit's collapse after a meeting at the Anchor Hotel in April failed to produce a successor.²⁸

Despite some previous accounts to the contrary, there is no evidence that a 7th Bucks (Princes Risborough) RVC was ever officially sanctioned, although there may perhaps briefly have been a subdivision there. It was suggested by Wethered that only the Rev. Charles Gray was available to command it.²⁹ Gray

²⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 18 June 1859; *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 15 Sept. 1860; 11 May 1861.

²⁶ *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 1 Mar. 1862.

²⁷ Ian Beckett (ed.), 'Personal Reminiscences of the Buckinghamshire Volunteers by Owen Peel Wethered (hereafter Wethered, 'Reminiscences'), in Toplis, Clarke, Beckett and Hanley (eds), *Recollections of Nineteenth Century Buckinghamshire* (Bucks Record Society, 1998), 124-72, at 135. The typescript of Wethered's Reminiscences is in BA, T/A, 5/17.

²⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Oct. 1861; *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 9 July 1864.

²⁹ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 135.

himself complained that his commission had been held up by Carrington despite the Bishop of Lincoln approving it.³⁰ In denigrating the involvement of a clergyman in a military force, an Aylesbury brick manufacturer and apparent pacifist, James Hill, claimed only 12 men had come forward to join at Risborough.³¹ There was an official 7th Bucks (Winslow) RVC accepted on 17 May 1861, having been formed as a subdivision on 17 December 1860. It was then absorbed by the Buckingham corps, however, to form the 3rd Bucks (Buckingham and Winslow) RVC in 1863.

Ironically, one of the most complete surviving records of an attempt to raise a corps relates to the proposed Amersham and Chesham RVC that ultimately never came to fruition.³² An Amersham solicitor, Frederick Charsley, began to canvass support in January 1860, but enthusiasm was distinctly lacking. Some prominent men such as Lord Howe had already promised support to the corps at High Wycombe or Slough, whilst the Duke of Bedford declined to support a Buckinghamshire corps. George Charsley suggested that the ‘present generation are very unlike that of yore... they are poor here and without any military ardour’.³³ Leicester Hibbert of Chalfont Lodge also felt that ‘all the farmers in the parish are middle aged or elderly, and they have not got a single son among them’.³⁴

A public meeting was held at Amersham on 3 February 1860, a committee formed and 45 men had enrolled by March. Subscriptions from enrolled and

³⁰ *Bucks Chronicle*, 16 June 1860; *Bucks Herald*, 16 June and 7 July 1860; *Bucks Advertiser*, 16 June 1860.

³¹ *Bucks Chronicle*, 11 July 1860.

³² BA, T/A 5/15.

³³ BA, T/A 5/15, George Charsley to Frederick Charsley, 17 Jan. 1860.

³⁴ BA, TA 5/15, Hibbert to Charsley, 17 Mar. 1860.

honorary members already amounted to £145.6s.0d.³⁵ It was suggested that men from Beaconsfield, Great Missenden, and the Chalfonts would join if subscriptions and uniform costs were met, but the committee ‘declined at present to entertain that proposition’.³⁶ A range was selected in Frame Field, part of Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake’s Shardeloes estate, and an armoury in the Market House. At this point, Sergeant Major Cross from the RBKOM visited on 12 April and found a clergyman with a school in occupation of the proposed armoury. The clergyman had no inclination to move ‘until a fit and proper place be provided’ for his books and cases. In any case, the premises were judged unsuitable as ceiling and walls were out of repair, and the door lock weak. The suggested custodian proved to have deserted from the Royal Navy in 1852.³⁷

The proposed range was also declared unsafe by a regular officer as ‘the fields beyond are all arable fields and his opinion is that many bullets, from whatever place, would traverse these fields, or glance off the tress at the back of the butt in all kinds of directions’.³⁸ The War Office refused to accept the corps on 4 June 1860, Carrington being informed on 6 September that the Newport Pagnell corps would now be renumbered as the 6th Corps.³⁹ Ideas swung to a mounted corps at Amersham in August but this, too, was abandoned as an idea on 18 September.⁴⁰ Amersham and Chesham always had a reputation for Non-conformism and radicalism. No attempt was made to recruit volunteers there again until the South African War.

³⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 11 Feb. 1860.

³⁶ BA, T/A 5/15, Committee minutes, 20 Mar. 1860.

³⁷ BA, T/A 5/15, Cross report, 12 Apl. 1860.

³⁸ BA, T/A 5/15, Issacson to Charsley, 26 May 1860.

³⁹ Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/3, War Office to Carrington, 6 Sept. 1860.

⁴⁰ BA, T/A 5/15, Charsley circular, 28 Aug. 1860.

Derby's government fell on a motion of no confidence on 6 June 1859, Sidney Herbert returning to the War Office in Palmerston's new Liberal administration with Earl de Grey and Ripon as his under-secretary. Herbert favoured militia over volunteers but de Grey, who remained under-secretary, and then served as secretary of state himself from 1863 to 1866, was a firm supporter of volunteering. On 1 July 1859 it was announced that 25 Enfield rifles would be issued for every 100 men providing proper arrangements were made for security. Musketry and artillery instructors would also be made available. On 13 July a further circular made volunteers liable to service anywhere in Britain in the event of invasion or insurrection. A War Office committee was then established to set model rules and regulations on 10 August. Central control was also significantly increased by the enforcement of uniformity of rifle calibre in December 1859, the appointment of adjutants in February 1860, the appointment of an inspector general in January 1860, and the authorisation of a battalion structure in March 1860. These could either be consolidated battalions in urban areas or 'administrative' battalions in rural areas, in which corps retained a separate identity but combined for drill, inspection, and returns.

In the case of administrative battalions, corps retained control of their own arms, stores and financial affairs and conducted correspondence through an adjutant. The overall commanding officer had only general charge of drill and discipline, whilst adjutants maintained contact with the individual corps. North to south communications in Bucks were not conducive to uniformity, as it was often easier to travel to London by rail from one town and then back to another rather than go directly by horse or foot.⁴¹

⁴¹ Ian Beckett (ed.), *The Safe Duke: Selected County Correspondence of Richard, Third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 1861-89* (Bucks Record Society, 2016), 99-101, 109-10.



Officers of the 1st Bucks Administrative Battalion at Wakefield Lawn, Northants, June 1867. Standing (l to r): Captain Thomas Wethered, Captain William Forder, Surgeon Shone, Lieutenant Owen Wethered, Sir Harry Verney MP, Captain the Hon. Thomas Fremantle, Captain Alfred Selfe, Lieutenant T. R. Hearne, Lieutenant L. A. Way. Seated (l to r): Lieutenant Egerton Hubbard, Lieutenant Thomas Horwood, Lt. Colonel the Hon. Percy Barrington, Quartermaster John Kersley Fowler, Ensign Francis Wheeler, Lieutenant Thomas Marshall [BMMT]

The 1st Bucks Administrative Battalion came into being in July 1862 with a fully consolidated 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers formed only in March 1875. No battalion commanding officer was appointed until May 1864, when the Hon. Percy Barrington of Westbury, later 1st Viscount Barrington, took charge. He had previously commanded the Buckingham and Winslow corps. The first

adjutant, William Forder, was a former sergeant major in the RBKOM and generally regarded as one of Carrington's cast offs.⁴²

Contrary to official expectation, the growth of the volunteer movement was rapid, with 161,239 officers and men by 1861 in 747 separate corps, of which 133 had appeared in 1859, and 578 in 1860.⁴³ There was some opposition from pacifist groups, but the movement was overwhelmingly popular. It drew considerable support from women, who were active in presenting bugles and Colours, and in raising funds. The French had launched the first seagoing ironclad, *La Gloire*, in November 1859 and there was no diminution of invasion fears or international tensions. The Franco-Austrian War ended in July 1859, but the onset of the America Civil War in April 1861, and widespread sympathies for the Southern Confederacy, raised the prospect of potential conflict with the North.

The initial ideal of the rifle volunteers, as illustrated by the rules adopted by most corps, was for a degree of social exclusiveness with honorary and enrolled members, entrance fees, annual subscriptions, officer election, and discipline enforced by petty fines. Uniform costs were also high. The entrance fee at Slough was half a guinea, whilst the annual subscription at High Wycombe was £1, and a guinea at Buckingham.⁴⁴ At Slough, subscriptions for privates were fixed at 10s.0d, rising to £2 for the captain.⁴⁵ Each volunteer required two supporting recommendations at Winslow. At Aylesbury, honorary members

⁴² Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 139; BA, L/P 14.

⁴³ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 168.

⁴⁴ *Bucks Chronicle*, 17 Mar. 1860; Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/7, Rules of Buckingham Corps.

⁴⁵ Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/8, Rules of Slough Corps.

would be expected to donate an initial two guineas, and subscribe a guinea annually thereafter.

At both Aylesbury and High Wycombe accidentally discharging a rifle would result in a 2s.6d fine. Pointing a rifle at another man would cost 5s.0d in the Aylesbury and Buckingham corps, but £1 at Slough. The cost of uniform and equipment was £3 at Aylesbury, and £2.5s.0d at Marlow. It could be paid in instalments at the latter, as well as at Wycombe.⁴⁶ In November 1861, for example, William Callum of Princes Risborough was prosecuted by the Aylesbury corps, and fined £1.3s.6d costs, as well as the £3.5s.6d cost of the uniform for which he had refused to pay. He claimed it had been agreed he would only pay one pound.⁴⁷

A circular by the High Wycombe committee expressed a wish that ‘the tone of the Corps should be that of gentlemen and that no cause of offence, either in conduct or language, should ever impair the harmony of its action’. The rules of the Buckingham and Winslow Corps were drawn up with ‘due regard for the convenience of members’. At Aylesbury the intention was ‘to make the attendance of members as much as possible voluntary, so as not to interfere with their private avocations’.⁴⁸ Initially, at least, there were plentiful drills from which to choose. At Winslow and Swanbourne, for example, there were daily drills.⁴⁹ In May 1862, however, Thomas Fremantle urged the Winslow sub-division to be diligent in attendance before hay time interfered. In August, he

⁴⁶ BA, T/A 5/13, Rules of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 7th Bucks RVC; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Jan. 1860; *South Bucks Free Press*, 25 Oct. 1862.

⁴⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 16 Nov. 1861.

⁴⁸ BA, T/A 5/1, Rules of 4th BRVC; 5/2, Wycombe: ‘Information for gentlemen desirous of joining’.

⁴⁹ BA, T/A 5/14, Order Book of Winslow RVC.

reminded his men that many had not yet attended the requisite number of drills to be considered effective or to remain as members.⁵⁰

Employment would always be an issue, the first camp of the Bucks Administrative Battalion at Marlow in August 1865 being limited to two days ‘as it was thought our men could not give more than that from civil occupation’.

⁵¹ The general agreement was that 18s.0d regular weekly wage was the lowest income level at which volunteers should be recruited without competing with army or militia.⁵²

In many cases, those who might have sought militia commissions previously joined the volunteers. It has been argued that the movement represented an ‘anti-militarist’ middle class challenge to aristocratic and landed dominance.⁵³ But there was also a common tendency of what Matthew Arnold characterised as ‘hideous English toadyism’ in seeking and readily accepting aristocratic leadership.⁵⁴ The creation of the movement was also accompanied in the press by a considerable emphasis upon ‘manliness’ according with the ‘muscular Christianity’ that had become increasingly prevalent in the 1850s. Volunteering was actively supported by men like Matthew Arnold, Thomas Hughes, and Samuel Smiles for the moral qualities likely to be inculcated through drill and discipline and the encouragement of habits of order, obedience, cleanliness and punctuality. Indeed, the appeal to self-help and the importance of the

⁵⁰ BA, T/A 5/14, Orders, 23 May, and 7 Aug. 1862.

⁵¹ Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 143.

⁵² Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 31, 84-85.

⁵³ Patricia Morton, ‘Another Victorian Paradox: Anti-militarism in a Jingoistic Society’, *Historical Reflections* 5 (1981), 169-89.

⁵⁴ Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force: A Social and Political History* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 55.

autonomous individual made the movement not just representative of middle class ideals, but also ‘the purest example of liberal influence on home defence’.

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Volunteering implied a military response to fears of effeminacy undermining the nation, in much the same way that militia reform had been similarly portrayed in the 1750s and, to some extent, in the 1840s. If that cast women into a subordinate role within middle class volunteer ideology, it was still the case that women played a vital part in public support by assisting at bazaars, presenting prizes and so on.⁵⁶

In reality, while some men were encouraged by employers creating corps, artisans were attracted to the volunteers from the beginning. It made the force far more diverse than many had anticipated, although costs were a serious obstacle to genuinely working class corps. The volunteers were especially strong in large urban centres. Some rural units - although not in Bucks - were almost neo-feudal in reliance upon great estates. Most rural units were located in smaller market towns. If gentry were not available, then leadership devolved upon professional men such as solicitors, with a predominance of professional men and tradesmen in the ranks, and a sprinkling of artisans or craftsmen.

Bucks lacked the lower middle class clerks who filled volunteer ranks in the larger urban centres. In 1867 over 317,000 acres from a total county area of 477,000 acres was devoted to agriculture. The largest male occupational group in 1851 was that of agricultural labourers, the 17,930 so described representing

⁵⁵ Shapiro, ‘British Army in Home Defence’, 26.

⁵⁶ Patricia Morton, ‘A Military Irony: The Victorian Volunteer Movement’, *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* 131 (1986), 63-70.

25 per cent. In 1861 agricultural labourers and farm servants accounted for between one in three and one in four of the male population over five years of age.⁵⁷ The chair making industry around High Wycombe was increasing in importance but, as late as 1871, there were over 70 separate manufacturers. The papermaking industry was likewise one of small independent manufacturers.

The Watling Iron Works established at Stony Stratford in 1845, the Castle Works established at Buckingham in 1857 and the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Factory set up at Aylesbury in 1870 were all really products of a rural economy. Walter Hazell established a presence at 'California' in Aylesbury in 1867 before the now Hazell, Watson & Viney opened a purpose built printing works at the corner of Tring Road and Walton Street in 1878. James Elliman's new embroccation factory opened in Slough in 1876, the family firm having been established in the town initially as a drapery business in 1845 before turning to embroccation two years later. The factory was extended in 1889. The one rapidly growing industrial concern was the London and North Western Railway, which had arrived at Wolverton in 1838, creating the new townships of New Wolverton and New Bradwell. The company had about 2,400 employees in the county by 1860, but the opening of the LNWR's Carriage Works at Wolverton in 1866 further increased the labour force.⁵⁸

Of 125 individuals circulated about the proposed Amersham and Chesham corps in January 1860, 36 were gentlemen, 20 farmers, 13 clergymen, 19 professionals, 23 tradesmen, and 14 artisans. Eleven gentlemen and a clergyman became honorary members, whilst the eight farmers among the 34 men who

⁵⁷ William Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham* 4 vols. (London: Dawson, 1905-27), I, 397-404.

⁵⁸ Page (ed.), *Victoria History*, II, 104-44.

enrolled as active volunteers probably reflected the absence of a yeomanry troop in the area.⁵⁹ Yet there were also a surprising number of farmers at both Marlow and Winslow.⁶⁰ Generally, a third of all Bucks volunteers were tradesmen, with the largest proportion of craftsmen from the more urbanised Slough.⁶¹ The Buckingham and High Wycombe corps both comprised a similarly broad range of members. The roll available for the revived Wycombe Detachment added to the Marlow corps in 1876 provides some limited evidence of the decline in professional men and tradesmen by that stage. The recruitment of paper makers bolstered those from manual occupations, albeit in regular employment.⁶²

The range of trades carried out by individuals can be difficult to categorise, one man at High Wycombe combining drapery with victualling, and another auctioneering and paper hanging. There were 50 men enrolled at Wycombe by March 1860, of whom 29 fully equipped themselves; 11 were equipped by funds raised by the corps, and ten had their annual subscription of a guinea paid by Carrington. Carrington also provided four NCOs from the RBKOM to assist at drill on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings between 0600 and 0900, and between 1900 and 2100 on Tuesdays, Thursday and Saturdays, in addition to use of a range and the armoury in Wycombe Abbey Park.⁶³

⁵⁹ BA, T/A 5/15.

⁶⁰ BA, T/A 5/3; 5/14.

⁶¹ Devon CRO, Seymour of Berry Pomeroy Mss, 1392M/18/14.

⁶² BA, T/A 5/3.

⁶³ *Bucks Chronicle*, 17 Mar. 1860; *Bucks Herald*, 17 Mar. 1860; *Bucks Advertiser*, 17 Mar. 1860.

Table 6:1 Social Composition of Bucks Rifle Volunteer Corps

Unit	Gentlemen	Farmers	Professions	Clerks	Trades	Crafts	Manual	Unknown
Amersham 1860 (Proposed)	-	8 (23.5%)	6 (17.6%)	2 (5.8%)	13 (38.2%)	5 (14.7%)	-	-
Marlow 1859-61	2 (2.4%)	6 (7.3%)	5 (6.0%)	10 (12.1%)	31 (37.8%)	16 (19.5%)	3 (3.6%)	10
Slough 1860	2 (4.1%)	-	4 (8.3%)	1 (2.1%)	18 (37.5%)	16 (33.3%)	5 (10.4%)	2
Winslow 1859-63	2 (3.8%)	12 (23.0%)	5 (9.6%)	2 (3.8%)	19 (36.5%)	7 (13.4%)	2 (3.8%)	3
Wycombe Detachment 1876	-	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	9 (36%)	6 (24%)	3

Source: BA, T/A 5/3; 5/14; 5/15; Devon CRO, 1392M/18/14

Interestingly, a member of the Aylesbury corps complained in June 1867 that the £10 prize for the smartest company at the recent volunteer camp had been won by the Marlow corps. He claimed the Marlow men were receiving 3s.0d a day from company funds - the Buckingham and Wycombe corps were also receiving 2d.0d a day - while the Aylesbury men all had to meet their own expenses. Moreover, the Marlow corps had included eight army pensioners who were employees of Wethered's Brewery, and the entire corps had been marched to the barber's tent on the evening previous to the judging.⁶⁴ An indication of

⁶⁴ *Bucks Chronicle*, 29 June 1867.

the presence of artisans and tradesmen is also evident from funds raised on two occasions by the Buckingham corps - in 1875 and 1878 - to replace tools lost in fires by a Leicester carpenter who had previously been a member, and stock lost in a fire by a Buckingham tailor. ⁶⁵

In terms of officers, there was no preponderance of the merchants, brokers and manufacturers found in larger urban corps. In Bucks, leadership devolved initially upon the traditional landed elite or their economic dependants such as solicitors. The Aylesbury committee included Acton Tindal, who was both Clerk of the Peace and Clerk to the Lieutenancy; his eventual successor, Edward Baynes; Julian James, who was secretary to the Savings Bank; John Parrott, County Coroner and Clerk to the Board of Guardians; and John Kersey Fowler, Chairman of the Gasworks and proprietor of the White Hart. Tindal became the corps' lieutenant, whilst the captaincy went to the Hon. Florance George Irby of Hedsor House, later 5th Lord Boston. There was some criticism of Carrington for allegedly delaying the gazetting of the Aylesbury commissions, and for not donating 20 guineas as he had to other corps. Irby absolved the lord lieutenant, suggesting Tindal had been responsible for the delay. ⁶⁶

Many years later, Fowler recalled that the issue of church rates was 'rampant' in Aylesbury at the time so it was thought that no clergy should be asked to take the lead. There was also no mayor. Fowler, therefore, presided over the initial meeting as President of the Vale of Aylesbury Cricket Club. He was assisted by William Nicholson from Wendover, the head of the tax office, who formulated the first resolutions, and a former doctor in the 2nd Life Guards, Dr A. J. N.

⁶⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 17 Apl. 1875; 12 Oct. 1878.

⁶⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 12 and 19 May 1860.

Connel of The Lillies at Weedon. It was then Walter Caulfeild Pratt of Oving House, lieutenant colonel of the RBKOM, who persuaded Irby to take command, Irby being his nephew. The Aylesbury men had applied to Carrington to take the number of 1st Bucks RVC as they were a full company compared to the half companies so far established elsewhere in the county, but Carrington declined to do so. The first regular who inspected the new Aylesbury corps suggested it was badly officered and worse drilled.⁶⁷

It was rumoured that Irby would resign with John Stratton Fuller of Hyde House near Great Missenden, who was an officer in the RBKOM, taking command. In the event, Irby and Tindal both continued until 1861. After a hiatus of some months, command was taken by Alfred Selfe, manager of the London and County Bank, and the solicitor, Thomas Horwood, senior partner of Messrs. Horwood & James. Selfe and Horwood were among those who attended the Brighton volunteer review in 1862.⁶⁸ Selfe also went on the National Rifle Association's visit to Brussels in October 1866, the first of a number of exchanges between British and Belgian volunteers that continued until 1872.⁶⁹ Selfe continued to serve in the Aylesbury corps until 1877. The sword presented to Selfe by his company in July 1876 is in the possession of the BMMT.⁷⁰

At Amersham, Charsley was Clerk to the Magistrates, Clerk to the Board of Guardians, and Superintendent Registrar and Coroner. The Amersham and Chesham committee included Charsley's brother, George, a Beaconsfield solicitor; and his Chesham counterpart, J. D. Francis, who was Clerk to the County Court and Clerk to the Magistrates. Had the corps come into existence,

⁶⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Nov. 1900.

⁶⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Apl. 1862; 26 Nov. 1864.

⁶⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Oct. 1866; Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 114.

⁷⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 31 Mar. 1877. Selfe's sword is BMMT 702.

its commanding officer would have been the Hon. William Cavendish, heir to the 1st Lord Chesham, RBKOM officer from 1840-55, and Liberal MP for the county from 1857 to 1863, when he succeeded to the peerage.

Similarly, the High Wycombe committee included the Harman brothers, one Clerk to the County Court, and the other Clerk to the Union Workhouse. The first commanding officer was Henry H. Williams, a fund-holder who resided in Easton Street. He was not strictly a local man, but the son of the former curate at Wycombe, the Rev. J. C. Williams.⁷¹ Williams' unpopularity contributed to the disbandment of the corps sometime in August or September 1861. It was claimed Williams was a 'martinet'. There was an enquiry behind closed doors at the Red Lion presided over by the RBKOM adjutant and three officers from other Bucks corps to investigate the 'insubordination' at Wycombe. This resulted from Williams suspending his sergeant major, the Wycombe solicitor, Thomas Marshall, without the opportunity to explain his supposed disobedience of orders that Williams had failed to articulate sufficiently clearly. The Secretary of State for War, Sidney Herbert, concluded that Williams had managed to disorganise his corps.⁷²

Carrington may have influenced Williams's appointment. He had certainly originally intended to put his son Charles in command, writing in October 1860 that he could not do so until 'the plum is ripe'. The emergence of Walter Caulfeild Pratt, leading to reconstitution of the corps on 22 November 1861, may reflect a compromise as Pratt commanded the RBKOM, of which of course

⁷¹ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Dec. 1859; *South Bucks Free Press*, 17 Dec. 1859.

⁷² *Bucks Herald*, 23 Mar., and 15 June 1861.

Carrington was colonel.⁷³ Marshall emerged as the new lieutenant, with Carrington's son gaining a militia commission in 1863.⁷⁴

As related previously, the Buckingham subdivision was commanded by Barrington, while Thomas Fremantle of Swanbourne House, later 2nd Lord Cottesloe, commanded the Winslow subdivision until 1870. Fremantle's second in command was Dr Thomas Newham, the unit's rifles being issued from his surgery.⁷⁵ At Marlow, initial command was held by G. H. Vansittart of Bisham Abbey, but was then devolved upon Thomas Wethered of the Marlow brewing dynasty. Together with Henry Williams from the Wycombe corps, Wethered was one of the volunteer officers present at a royal levee on 9 March 1860.⁷⁶ When Thomas Wethered was elected Conservative MP for Marlow in 1868, his younger brother Owen Peel Wethered took command. The latter also briefly commanded the Slough corps in 1864-65, and would command the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers from 1872 to 1891.

Ferdinand, Lord Seymour, later Earl St Maur, son of the 12th Duke of Somerset of the Bulstrode estate at Hedgerley, initially commanded the Slough corps. He chose to go off to fight for Garibaldi in the cause of Italian unification under the pseudonym, Captain Sarsfield. Subsequently, he died after a botched operation in 1869, thus predeceasing his father.⁷⁷ It was not unusual, an estimated third of those enrolling in Garibaldi's British Legion being members of the recently formed rifle volunteer force in defiance of the provisions of the Foreign

⁷³ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 138; BA, D-CN/C1 (d), Carrington to son, 13 Oct. 1860.

⁷⁴ BA, D-CN/C1 (g), Carrington to son, 23 Feb. 1863.

⁷⁵ BA, T/A 5/14.

⁷⁶ *Colborn's United Service Magazine* 1860 Pt I, 635-54.

⁷⁷ BA, D-CN/C1 (d), Carrington to son, 4 Nov. 1860.

Enlistment Act.⁷⁸ Seymour had served in the Wiltshire Yeomanry. He had also raised both the 1st Wiltshire Mounted Rifle Volunteer Corps and the 5th Devonshire Mounted Rifle Volunteer Corps (later the 1st Devon Light Horse Volunteer Corps) in 1860. He returned to command the latter until 1863.⁷⁹

Sir Robert Bateson Harvey, Bt. of Langley Park succeeded Seymour at Slough in August 1861. Harvey also served in the 2nd Royal Bucks Yeomanry, was brother-in-law to the 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, and would become Conservative MP for the county from 1863-68 and from 1873-85. The appointment was initially blocked by Carrington on the ostensible grounds that Harvey's selection by round robin infringed his right to nominate whom he thought fit, although a corps was perfectly entitled to elect officers.⁸⁰ It was very similar to the effort previously noted in the last chapter when Carrington had encountered the attempt to place William Cavendish in the militia command in 1853. The real reason was the old resentment between Carrington and the Grenvilles extending to their differing political allegiances.

Many wanted Harvey to command the administrative battalion as well and there was talk of another round robin, which Pratt discouraged. Harvey's elevation to battalion command was a step too far for Carrington, hence Barrington's appointment, the latter having some experience as a subaltern in the Scots Fusilier Guards. Carrington alleged that there was a regulation preventing yeomanry officers from holding field command in the volunteers, although he

⁷⁸ Nick Mansfield, 'Military Radicals and the Making of Class, 1790-1860', in Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (eds), *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland 1750-1850: Men at Arms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 57-75, at 69; Shapiro, 'British Army in Home Defence', 254-56; Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 196.

⁷⁹ Gilks, 'Britain's Volunteer Cavalry', 85-86

⁸⁰ Devon CRO, Seymour of Berry Pomeroy Mss, 1392M/Box 18/1/ 1 and 14, Brown to Seymour, 26 July and 1 Aug. 1861.

was unable to produce any evidence to this effect. Harvey pointed out that the Under Secretary of State for War, Lord Hartington, held three commissions simultaneously including in yeomanry and volunteers.⁸¹ Harvey had already voiced his dissatisfaction with the way Carrington was treating the volunteers in October 1863, sounding out his fellow county MP, Disraeli, on whether his resignation from the volunteers might harm the Conservative cause locally. In the event, Harvey decided to tender his resignation in May 1864, writing to Disraeli that his election and his relationship to the Duke ‘were the cause of his having been passed over’. Thus, Owen Wethered took command at Slough to prevent the corps collapsing as no one else was prepared to do so.⁸² The issue still rankled with Harvey 18 years later.⁸³

The idea of a round robin raises the issue of election of officers. It was not as common in Bucks as elsewhere, but certainly the case at Aylesbury when John Lucas of Weedon was elected to the vacant ensigncy in July 1862 as well as two new corporals.⁸⁴ In 1875 the Buckingham corps also elected new lance corporals. Henry Hearn suggested that whilst no unit had the absolute right to elect its own officers, accepting ‘recommendations’ from the rank and file was a convenient way of ascertaining the best candidates. Four names were put forward, receiving respectively twelve, nine, seven and four votes.⁸⁵

With Carrington’s death, Disraeli had the greatest pleasure in nominating the 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos as Lord Lieutenant in March 1868.⁸⁶ Influence had symbolically transferred back to Stowe. Buckingham made

⁸¹ *Bucks Herald*, 16 and 23 July 1864; *Bucks Chronicle*, 16 July 1864.

⁸² Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 140-42; Bodleian, Hughenden Mss, B/XXI/H/275-78.

⁸³ *Bucks Herald*, 28 Jan. 1882.

⁸⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 9 July 1862.

⁸⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 24 July 1875.

⁸⁶ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 95.

enquiries as to the possibility of moving the militia headquarters back there. He assumed that as lord lieutenant and ‘Commandant’ of the regiment, he could ‘fix the Head Quarters where he thinks well in the County, and this appears to have been the course pursued by the late Lord Lieutenant in the removal of the Head Quarters from Buckingham to Wycombe’. ⁸⁷ The move was fully supported by Buckingham Town Council, which also sent a deputation to the Duke on the subject, believing there ‘would be some improvement to the town’. The Duke doubted this would be possible for some years as a safe armoury as well as residences for the permanent staff would be needed. ⁸⁸ In the event, the militia headquarters remained at High Wycombe.

It transpired that Carrington had retained a very personal control over all lieutenancy matters, to the extent that the outgoing clerk to the lieutenancy, John Prestage, had little information to make over to his successor, Edward Baynes. Prestage was less than forthcoming in any case. Carrington had often conducted business entirely independently of the clerk of the lieutenancy. The best hope appeared to be appealing to the new 3rd Lord Carrington for any papers he could find. This even extended to an enquiry Baynes made on Buckingham’s behalf in May 1882 when he was trying to ascertain the circumstances in which the RBKOM had received its Royal title in 1794. ⁸⁹ One would have thought that this was perfectly well-known at Stowe.

Buckingham himself did not attempt to exercise his powers as lord lieutenant while Governor of Madras from 1875 to 1880, Thomas Fremantle, 1st Lord Cottesloe acting in that capacity as vice lord lieutenant. ⁹⁰ There were some

⁸⁷ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 103-04.

⁸⁸ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 11 and 18 Apl. 1868.

⁸⁹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 96-99, 104-05, 152.

⁹⁰ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 129.

problems in that the Duke ‘by neglecting to forward applications to two or three (at least) young County gentlemen who have wished to join us, he has lost us their service altogether’. Indeed, it was hard to get Buckingham to answer any letters on the yeomanry.⁹¹ Given that Madras was faced with a serious famine, this was perhaps understandable.

Meanwhile, in the volunteers, Barrington worked hard to impose uniformity, not least in uniforms, but was frustrated by the anomalous position of the commanding officer in an administrative battalion. In June 1864 Barrington suggested that the volunteers should be subsidised from the county rate, indicating that he himself ‘cannot afford to spend more money than my neighbours of equal fortune on an object that I undertake as a duty and not as a hobby’.⁹² Later that year Barrington criticised poor battalion drill attendance from the Aylesbury corps, a dispute developing from whether there had been sufficient notice given. Selfe was persuaded to withdraw his resignation, the corps feeling that Barrington had not acknowledged the way in which its strength had been maintained between Irby’s resignation and Selfe’s appointment.⁹³ In June 1866 Barrington missed a train when on his way to inspect the Slough corps by invitation and arrangement. He ordered it to be paraded again on a subsequent occasion, which was not within his powers since he could only request attendance through the adjutant. Barrington then ordered the Slough corps disbanded, despite an apology, saying ‘he would not be

⁹¹ BA, D/FR 134/4, Hibbert to Cottesloe, n. d. [1875] and 24 Feb. 1876.

⁹² *Bucks Herald*, 2 July 1864.

⁹³ *Bucks Herald*, 12, 19 and 26 Nov. 1864; 3 Dec. 1864.

humbled by any set of men whatever'.⁹⁴ Wethered persuaded him otherwise, enabling a fuller turnout at the battalion's second camp at Halton.⁹⁵

Then, in December 1868, the Slough band defied regulations to play in uniform at a reception for Roger Eykyn, Liberal MP for Windsor and a stockbroker, whose seat was actually Gayton House in Northamptonshire. Eykyn was also a cornet in the Taplow Troop (South Bucks Yeomanry Cavalry). The band accepted public donations for its funds at the reception, and it was also suggested that a trumpeter of the Taplow Troop was present in uniform.⁹⁶

Barrington confessed to the 3rd Duke on 18 January 1869, 'Personally I hate volunteering and should be most happy to resign if you can find anyone to take my place.'⁹⁷ He eventually resigned in March 1870 citing ill health and was succeeded by Charles Chester of Chicheley Hall after another round robin to have Harvey appointed to the battalion command.⁹⁸ Chester had served in the 90th Light Infantry for 16 years including tours in South Africa, India and Ceylon, and then for a further seven years in the Royal Sussex Artillery Militia. Consequently, he had far more military experience than anyone else in the Bucks volunteers.⁹⁹

In Marlow at least according to Owen Wethered, officers initially 'were mortally afraid of offending their men - many of whom were of equal social

⁹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 28 July 1866.

⁹⁵ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 146-49.

⁹⁶ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 101-02.

⁹⁷ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 102.] Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 102.

⁹⁸ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 107-08; HHL, STG 102, Fremantle to Buckingham, 13 Mar. 1870.

⁹⁹ HHL, STG 101, Chester to Buckingham, 27 Sept. 1875.

standing with themselves'. In collusion with his brother, Owen Wethered came on parade with his pipe in his mouth, enabling an example to be set: 'I was roundly pitched into - and after that evening pipes were duly pocketed at the Fall in.'¹⁰⁰

In most cases, the middle class quickly deserted the volunteers as the novelty wore off. Wethered noted the change as invasion fears subsided:¹⁰¹

It seemed to me unreasonable to suppose that men who might be willing under the stress or supposed stress, of a national emergency to give up their late dinners, go out to night drills, frequently many miles away, in all weathers, in order to shoulder a rifle and stand in the ranks between (say) their own gardeners and their Grocers' Assistants, would continue to do so this indefinitely in cold blood after the emergency had passed away.

Even in Wethered's own corps at Marlow it was reported as early as November 1862 that there was 'lassitude and indifference' creeping in with a neglect of duties, admittedly after a prize shooting on a cold day had attracted few participants or spectators.¹⁰² Nonetheless, the force continued to exist nationwide, reaching over 200,000 in 1878, because of continued international tensions, and its attraction for artisans.

In Bucks the volunteers became reliant upon the employees of the LNWR at Wolverton, where a new company was formed by Owen Wethered in 1877,¹⁰³ and upon the chair makers of High Wycombe. The company at Wycombe was

¹⁰⁰ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 136.

¹⁰¹ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 137.

¹⁰² *South Bucks Free Press*, 29 Nov. 1862.

¹⁰³ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 167.

reformed by Wethered in 1875 following an initial meeting on 25 January at the Lion Hotel, and then a public meeting on 24 February in the Town Hall. ¹⁰⁴

Wethered was keen to remove the ‘slur’ on the town from the previous events.

It was estimated that 80 men could be obtained: they could earn £120 in capitation grant with another £80 required to be found from donations. As the 3rd Lord Carrington declined permission to use the old rifle range in Wycombe Abbey Park, it took until April to find an alternative at Wycombe Marsh. ¹⁰⁵

Alfred Gilbey of Wooburn, who was to command the 1st Bucks Volunteers from 1900 to 1905, recalled of the Wycombe Company in 1876 that ‘the men of my company were nearly all engaged in chair making... There was a certain independence about them which made them hard to drive but easy to lead’. ¹⁰⁶

In the case of Wolverton, there appears to be no evidence to substantiate the idea advanced by one local historian that there had been an attempt to raise a corps there in 1861. ¹⁰⁷ Wethered had tried to attract some interest in 1872, but this had not borne fruit. The initial meeting was held in the Science and Art Institute on 2 October 1877, followed by another at the Carriage Works on 26 November. Based on the Wycombe example, Wethered suggested an entrance fee of £1.5s.0d, which would go towards the cost of uniforms estimated at £3, with the remainder advanced from corps funds against the first capitation grant.

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¹⁰⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Jan., and 6 Mar. 1875.

¹⁰⁵ Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 162.

¹⁰⁶ BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, I, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Markham, *History of Milton Keynes*, II, 256.

¹⁰⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 13 Oct. 1877; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 13 Oct. 1877; *Croydon’s Weekly Standard*, 6 Oct. 1877; 12 Jan. 1878.

The organising committee included John Parrott from the Carriage Works, the LNWR's accountant, George Fitzsimmons, and eleven ordinary workmen. As the Company would be 'principally formed by men who from their circumstances will be unable to defray the whole cost', wider subscriptions would be solicited.¹⁰⁹ The Company was approved on 4 January 1878, its first parade taking place in the paint shop. As well as the Rev. Short as first commanding officer, J. G. V. Field Johnson of Wolverton Mill was appointed lieutenant. Initially, the company used a range at Buckingham and then Stantonbury. The Company fell into the usual rifle volunteer pattern of annual dinners and balls.¹¹⁰ It also soon formed a band.¹¹¹ There was some suggestion of adding a squad from Hanslope to the Wolverton Company in 1896, but this does not appear to have materialised.¹¹²

In May 1897 the battalion was redistributed to take account of the concentration of recruits from Wycombe and Wolverton, with two companies at the former and a detachment equivalent to one and a half companies at the latter. Single companies were now located at Aylesbury, Marlow, and Slough with a half company at Buckingham. The eighth company was a [stretcher] bearer company at Stony Stratford raised by its popular doctor, William Henry Bull. Originally from Oswestry, Bull took over the medical practice at Stony Stratford, where he resided at St Oswald's House, in 1876. He formed the Bearer Company at Stony Stratford in 1880. Subsequently, he commanded the Home Counties Volunteer Brigade Bearer Company - still effectively that of Stony Stratford - in 1888 and, on the formation of the Territorial Force, the 2nd

¹⁰⁹ BA, D/FR 135/13, Printed Notice, 11 Oct. 1877.

¹¹⁰ *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 20 Apl. 1878; 9 Nov. 1878; *Bucks Herald*, 21 Sept. 1878; 9 Nov. 1878; 26 Apl. 1879; 22 Jan. 1881; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 30 Aug. 1879.

¹¹¹ *Bucks Herald*, 7 June, 3 and 24 July 1880.

¹¹² *Bucks Standard*, 15 Feb. 1896; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 Feb. 1897.

South Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance in 1908. Bull served as Assistant Director of Medical Services for 48th (South Midland) Division from August 1914 until the division moved to France in March 1915, and then acted briefly in the same capacity for 61st (2nd South Midland) Division until it moved to Chelmsford from Northampton in April 1915. Subsequently, he became medical officer of six counties in the Southern Division before moving to the Ministry of Pensions as Commissioner of Services for the West Midlands. Eventually reaching the rank of Surgeon-Colonel, Bull became both a Knight of the Order of St John, and also an honorary surgeon to the King in 1913. Having been a long-time magistrate, he was appointed a deputy lieutenant for Bucks in 1919. After the Great War, he was county director of the Bucks County Territorial Association Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs). A keen freemason, he was also president of the Stony Stratford Library and Debating Society, and of the Stony Stratford Town Band. He died in August 1921.

A previous squad at Stony Stratford had belonged to one of the Northamptonshire corps, a situation that Wethered had wished to terminate.¹¹³ It may also have been the case that there was a company at Fenny Stratford attached to the Bedfordshire volunteers, but this seems to be a press error.¹¹⁴

Wethered fully approved the changing composition, insisting on the 18s.0d a week regular wage as the base line for clerks, tradesmen's assistants, artisans or apprentices since 'Agricultural and day labourers' were 'the natural recruiting ground for the Regular Forces and the Militia'.¹¹⁵ The orders were widely publicised so that there could be no doubt as to what men would not be

¹¹³ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 165, 170; BA, D/FR 135/14, Wethered to Baynes, 24 Feb. 1876.

¹¹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 4 and 11 Aug. 1883.

¹¹⁵ BA, T/A 5/6, Wethered Recruiting Instructions, 6 August 1885.

acceptable.¹¹⁶ Recruits were also expected to be a minimum 5'6" from 1889, the previous standard since 1880 having been 5'5".¹¹⁷

Wethered sent a copy of his recruiting instructions to his successor, Lord Addington, in 1893, expressing the hope that he would not go lower than artisans and apprentices 'as the labouring class has not the intelligence enough to become good soldiers with the limited instruction we can give them and they are much better in the Regular Army or Militia!'¹¹⁸ Formerly the Hon. Egerton Hubbard, Addington had joined the 3rd Bucks (Buckingham and Winslow) RVC as ensign in 1863. Similarly, Wethered's son, Captain Francis Owen Wethered, who would command the Bucks Battalion from 1911 to 1915, wrote in May 1897 that he was seeking only 'suitable mechanics and artisans' for the Marlow Company, 'no one of a less educated class being enrolled in the Battalion'.¹¹⁹ Gilbey, who succeeded Addington in command, also refused to admit agricultural labourers.

Owen Wethered believed that officers should remain gentlemen. He lamented in August 1883 the 'supercilious indifference to the duties and responsibilities' displayed by 'Cadets of County families', thereby risking forfeiture of 'their claim to be regarded by those beneath them in position as their natural leaders'.

¹²⁰ Together with his recollection of the change in social composition, this preference for gentlemen in command has been taken as evidence of Wethered's 'complacent paternalism'.¹²¹ In many ways, however, it was no different from

¹¹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 15 Aug. 1885; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 Aug. 1885.

¹¹⁷ BA, D/FR/177, Battalion Order, 28 Feb. 1889.

¹¹⁸ BA, T/A 5/6, Wethered to Addington, 15 Oct. 1893.

¹¹⁹ BA, T/A 5/8, Wethered to OC, District, 20 May 1897.

¹²⁰ BA, T/A 5/5, Wethered to Baynes, 21 Aug. 1883.

¹²¹ Shapiro, 'British Army in Home Defence', 269.

the general assumption in the regular army that men would prefer to be led by ‘gentlemen’ rather than those promoted from the ranks.

Back in 1873 Wethered had recommended that Arthur Kennedy, a former tutor at Aldin House School in Slough, who had become a partner in a London wine and spirit merchants, become Captain in the Slough corps: ‘I fear that it is impossible in the neighbourhood of Slough to obtain the services of any gentleman belonging to one of the established County families’. ¹²² In 1882, he sounded out the sons of Alfred Loder of Lillingstone Dayrell, an officer in the yeomanry, but feared that ‘the rising generation is intolerably lazy and self-indulged!’ ¹²³ The Winslow Detachment wanted to separate from the Buckingham Company, but it was not strong enough. At that stage, Egerton Hubbard was rarely available to command as Conservative MP for Buckingham and then North Bucks. At Buckingham itself the company was ‘going to the bad’ through a lack of suitable officers. ¹²⁴

Wethered contemplated seeking a commission for one NCO in the Marlow corps, T. G. Lunnon, the son of the owner of paper mills at Bourne End and a former officer in the corps. However, he rejected a suggestion by the 3rd Duke in November 1883 that NCOs might be promoted as the men might not like it and ‘I should personally be very unwilling to make so public a recognition of the fact that the natural leaders of the people are willing to ignore their proper responsibilities and duties’. ¹²⁵ Ironically, the Duke had refused to put Thomas Wethered on the bench until 1880 because of his ‘trade’ as brewer, although

¹²² Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 124.

¹²³ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 137-38.

¹²⁴ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 139-40.

¹²⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 139-41.

Thomas Wethered was an old Etonian and had been elected Conservative MP for Marlow in 1868.¹²⁶

Owen Wethered had his own problems after succeeding to the command of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers when Captain W. H. Cutler of the Slough Corps, who had three years' experience in the regulars, was passed over for promotion to the vacant majority in 1874. According to Cutler of Salthill House, who resigned, it was down to his perceived lack of county standing despite his keeping up the corps amid a 'very shifting and changing character of the population of Slough'. The dispute became sufficiently acrimonious for the correspondence to appear in both the *Windsor and Eton Express* and the nationally circulated *Volunteer Service Gazette*. The latter considered it especially reprehensible that Cutler had undermined discipline in raising the issue directly with the Secretary of State.¹²⁷

Wethered also experienced difficulties with his adjutant, a former regular in the 68th Light Infantry, Captain Reginald Clement. Clement rented at Loudwater some five miles from Wethered's home at Marlow, and 15 miles from the actual battalion headquarters established by Barrington in Aylesbury. Barrington had previously despaired of moving Clement as he could not 'ask him to reside where I understand there is no house to be had'. Chester, likewise, had suggested moving the headquarters from Aylesbury to High Wycombe 'being a *shorter* distance to upwards of half the Corps forming this battalion than Aylesbury'. Wethered was able to move the headquarters to Marlow, at which time Clement's tenancy also expired so he also came to Marlow. In 1878 Clement's health deteriorated and he transferred to be adjutancy of the 2nd

¹²⁶ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 153, 172.

¹²⁷ BA, T/A 5/5; *Volunteer Service Gazette*, 12 Dec. 1874.

Bucks (Eton College) Rifle Volunteers.¹²⁸ Clement then succeeded to the command of the Eton battalion from 1884 to 1887. A noted rider to hounds, he was also Secretary to the Trustees of the Ascot Grand Stand.¹²⁹

It is notable how much attention Owen Wethered paid to bringing the boys of Eton College into contact with the Bucks volunteers. Eton College formed a volunteer unit in January 1860. The corps was already 300 strong when presented with a silver bugle by Lady Carrington on 22 November 1860. It was also reviewed by the leading volunteer advocate, Lord Elcho, in June 1861.¹³⁰ It is believed that Colours provided by the headmaster's wife, Mrs Goodford, were presented by the Queen.¹³¹ The corps had Colours but it is uncertain whether the Queen actually presented them. The Queen and Prince Albert certainly reviewed the corps in Home Park, Windsor on 29 November 1861. The press reports indicated that the Prince, who would die on 14 December, looked ill. Indeed, it was his last public appearance.¹³²

The 8th Bucks (Eton College) RVC was only officially formed in May 1867 with an attached cadet corps from August 1868. Carrington had considered the offer 'so special, the surrounding circumstances so full of interest, and the position of the Volunteers so exceptional...' that it should be accepted. Consequently, he appealed against an initial War Office refusal.¹³³ Edmund Warre, then an assistant master, and later Headmaster from 1884 to 1905, was

¹²⁸ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 100-01, 110; Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 156-57.

¹²⁹ *Bailey's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, 1 June 1897.

¹³⁰ *Windsor and Eton Express*, 24 Nov. 1860, and 8 June 1861.

¹³¹ Robert Drummond-Hay, 'The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and the Eton College Combined Cadet Force', *Bugle & Sabre* 9 (2016), 12-17.

¹³² *Windsor and Eton Express*, 30 Nov. 1861; *Cork Examiner*, 30 Nov. 1861.

¹³³ BA, L/P 14, Carrington to War Office, 4 Mar., and 23 Apr. 1867.

the driving force from the beginning, together with William Johnson, who had complained about the initial failure of the Slough corps. The first officers in 1867, however, were the watercolour artist, Samuel Evans, as captain, with an assistant master, the Rev. Herbert Snow, later Principal of Cheltenham College, as lieutenant, and a master and noted amateur cricketer, Richard Mitchell, as ensign.¹³⁴ Evans had previously been an ensign in the Windsor corps in Berkshire.¹³⁵

The numbers of the corps fell in 1870 as the ‘school fashion’ took against it at a time when other public schools were beginning to raise their corps. A circular was sent to all fifth formers in May 1870 and a special meeting on 18 May resolved to maintain the corps. Some difficulties had been experienced with the rifle range that had been leased in 1867 from two farming brothers named Atkins - tenants of the Duke of Leeds - at Chalvey in conjunction with the 5th Bucks (Slough) RVC. It was then successfully renewed, with the Slough corps paying £10 towards the annual rental of £25. The Slough volunteers would use it on Monday and Saturday afternoons, and the Eton boys on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons and on Saturday mornings.¹³⁶ A drill hall was built in Eton Common Lane in 1879.¹³⁷ Numbers were also low in the 1880s and 1890s, the establishment being 404 and the highest strength between 1889 and 1894 342 in 1893. A further appeal by Warre in November 1899 after the

¹³⁴ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 97-98.

¹³⁵ *Volunteer Service Gazette*, 23 Nov. 1859.

¹³⁶ *Eton College Chronicle*, 26 May 1870; Eton College Archives (hereafter ECA), SCH/CCF/21/1, Record Book, 1870-87.

¹³⁷ Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College, 1440-1910* (London: Macmillan, 1911), 555.

outbreak of the South African War saw an additional 178 recruits for a total of 537, but numbers were back down to 393 by 1903.¹³⁸



2nd Bucks (Eton College) Rifle Volunteers on the range at Chalvey, 1883
[BMMT]

The Eton boys had their own field days, as at Hughenden in November 1871. In 1881 they had such field days at Chobham on three occasions, as well as at Bulstrode Park, and on Sandhurst Common.¹³⁹ Increasingly, they participated in field days with other public school corps and, no doubt through their additional social cachet, were invited to attend field days with the Aldershot Division, as in 1879 and 1881, and the Windsor garrison as in 1880.¹⁴⁰ They also participated in college and civic events such as the laying up of the Colours of the 2/14th Foot in the College Chapel in 1877, the welcome home for the 2nd

¹³⁸ ECA, SCH/CCF/21/2, Record Book, 1887-1903.

¹³⁹ *Bucks Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1871.

¹⁴⁰ ECA, SCH/CCF/21/1, Record Book, 1870-87.

Life Guards from the Egyptian campaign in October 1882, the dedication of Burnham Beeches in 1883, the Queen's Jubilee in June 1897, and Gladstone's funeral in London in May 1898. In common with other public schools, they participated in the annual Ashburton Challenge Shield for musketry.¹⁴¹

Barrington rejected any link with the Eton corps as he felt it impossible to integrate the boys into the battalion and they appeared to have more natural links with Berkshire. Charles Chester, too, noted that the Eton uniform was 'totally different' from the rest of the Bucks corps as a much lighter grey more akin to that of the Berkshire corps.¹⁴² Nonetheless, the corps was attached to the 1st Bucks Administrative Battalion from November 1869, although it then applied unsuccessfully to be attached to the 1st Berkshire Administrative Battalion instead.¹⁴³

By contrast, as second in command to Chester and an old Etonian, Wethered invited the Eton corps to participate in Bucks field days in 1871. As soon as he took over the battalion, Wethered directly approached the Eton College authorities. He recognised that the Eton boys could not be asked to dine with the ordinary volunteers so they were all made honorary members of the officer's mess, but with the proviso that any volunteer could dine if introduced by his company officer. Few ordinary volunteers chose to do so.¹⁴⁴ John Kersley Fowler, who became the long-serving quartermaster of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers, thought that the Eton cadets helped to established 'perfect order and soldierly feeling' in the annual camps with their exemplary discipline. Every

¹⁴¹ ECA, SCH/CCF/21/1 and 21/2; Lyte, *History of Eton College*, 554-55.

¹⁴² HHL, STG 98, Barrington to Buckingham, 7 Apl. 1869; Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 110-11.

¹⁴³ HHL, STG 99, Clement to Buckingham, 20 July 1871; STG 101, Chester to Buckingham, 17 Nov. 1870, and 15 May 1871.

¹⁴⁴ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 158-59.

morning at one Marlow camp the Eton boys would parade for ‘water drill’, advancing into lake or river with military precision, albeit naked. There was water polo by canoe in the evenings. On one occasion, 50 Eton boys crossed the Thames at Medmenham - again naked, but with rifles and cartridge boxes held aloft - to surprise a detachment of Bucks volunteers on the other side. On another, an Eton sentry refused entry to the Bucks camp by the Duke of Grafton as he was not in uniform and did not have a pass.¹⁴⁵ They did not come to camp in 1888 due to an outbreak of measles and chicken pox in the school.¹⁴⁶

With the consolidation of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers in 1875, the 2nd Bucks (Eton College) Rifle Volunteers had its first officers gazetted in June 1878. It became the 4th (Eton College) Volunteer Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry in 1889, but was once more designated the 2nd Bucks (Eton College) Volunteer Rifle Corps in January 1902, the corps holding a celebration dinner simultaneously also acknowledging the accession of King Edward VII.¹⁴⁷

There was also another cadet corps that briefly existed, the Rev. Walter Short of St Paul’s College, Stony Stratford being authorised to raise a corps on 9 February 1876. It was suggested that 26 older boys aged over 17 would form a sub-division, whilst 49 boys aged between 15 and 17, with the addition of a very tall 14 year old, would constitute the cadet corps. Wethered welcomed it as the boys were ‘just the right class for a Cadet corps’ as the sons of clergymen and officers and it could well lead to some entering the regular army or continuing in volunteer corps. Moreover, it would strengthen the force in the north of the county with the Buckingham Company ‘almost completely

¹⁴⁵ Fowler, *Recollections*, 74-80.

¹⁴⁶ ECA, SCH/CCF/21/2.

¹⁴⁷ ECA, SCH/CCF/21/2.

isolated'.¹⁴⁸ The cadet corps seems to have disappeared about 1885.¹⁴⁹ As previously indicated, Short acted as initial commanding officer for the new Wolverton Company, although it transpired that he had not received the necessary certificate to be a captain when previously serving with the 1st Oxfordshire Volunteers. He was succeeded by Herbert Williams from the LNWR in 1883.¹⁵⁰

The volunteer force survived despite frequent ridicule of its military pretensions, not least in magazines like *Punch*. There were also some clashes between volunteers and others as the volunteer need for drill space sometimes conflicted with common rights. In the case of the first Bucks volunteer camp at Marlow in August 1865, which was to include shooting competitions, the camp ground chosen by the newly formed County Rifle Association was on common land on the road to Little Marlow. Parishioners would normally have had right of access for recreation, although the vestry had given its permission. A total of 219 volunteers attended from across the five corps in the county.¹⁵¹ Local 'roughs' chose to display their resentment of the encroachment on common land, and a mob gathered at the field gate.

¹⁴⁸ BA, D/FR 135/14, Short to Baynes, 8 Feb. 1876; Wethered to Cottesloe, 1 and 14 February 1876; L/P 14, Baynes to Cottesloe, 31 Jan. 1876; Baynes to Short, 7 Feb. 1876.

¹⁴⁹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 139-41.

¹⁵⁰ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 139-40; BA, L/P 14, Carrington to War Office, 20 Mar. 1876.

¹⁵¹ *South Bucks Free Press*, 5 Aug. 1865.



The first camp at Marlow, August 1865 [BMMT]

Wethered, who was joint secretary of the CRA with Thomas Fremantle, had an inkling of trouble and had doubled the guards. He found the mob on the point of breaking down the gate, so he ¹⁵²

formed up the Guard in line in front with fixed bayonets at the “Charge”. Fortunately, the fences round the ground were in good order and when the leaders realised that, if they broke down the field-gate, they would have to impale themselves on our fence of cold steel before they could attain their object, my representations had effect on them and the mob gradually melted away.

¹⁵² Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 145-46.

One occasion for public ridicule occurred on 6 October 1875 when the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers participated in a review at Stowe to celebrate the 3rd Duke's appointment as Governor of Madras. The day was exceptionally hot and the men drank quantities of what they believed was light claret. It was neat port, although sherry and beer was 'hopelessly mixed'. Most of the men had been under arms for six hours and some for eight hours. They had neither eaten nor drunk anything as the train bringing them to Buckingham had been delayed.¹⁵³ As Wethered described it,¹⁵⁴

I shall never forget the march down the long Stowe Avenue, and I trust that I shall never see such a sight again. Man after man staggered to the road-side, where they lay like logs - and for these we impressed farm wagons in which they were conveyed to the station like corpses. Many others could just keep their feet, and for these we detailed men to help them along. At least half the Battalion were out of the ranks, either incapable or helping along incapables, so that our march through the streets of Buckingham was the reverse of Triumphal.

He apologised profusely to the Duke, although the latter appeared unconcerned, feeling the consumption of wine 'not large'.¹⁵⁵ The local press was surprisingly muted in its reaction. The *Bucks Herald* simply noted that a few men were 'in a condition more creditable to the hospitalities of Stowe than to their discretion'.

¹⁵³ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 130.

¹⁵⁴ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 165.

¹⁵⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 130-31.

The *Buckingham Advertiser* suggested the quality of wines ‘had proved too much for some of the men’, but there was nothing of a ‘quarrelsome nature’. ¹⁵⁶

Occasional criticism surfaced in the local press, as in July 1871. It was alleged by one anonymous correspondent that there had been talking in the ranks at the most recent inspection of the Aylesbury corps, and three men had not passed the adjutant’s examination for promotion to sergeant as claimed. The three men refuted the false report. ¹⁵⁷ An allegation in 1883 came from a former sergeant instructor at Buckingham named Gaunt, now the Master of the Union Workhouse. He claimed publically that the sudden improvement in the Buckingham Company’s musketry and the concomitant increase in its capitation grant were due to dishonest marking by his successors. A full court of enquiry proved Gaunt’s claims false, the previous poor scores being attributed to his incompetence. ¹⁵⁸

Whether attending drill, camp or county events, however, volunteers were far more visible to society than regular soldiers so that, with the militia and yeomanry, they were projecting military values. Regular troops were only seen occasionally, mostly cavalry moving through the county in the summer months en route to places such as Hounslow or Aldershot. In July 1869, for example, a squadron of the 18th Hussars marched through Amersham on its way from York to Chichester. ¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 9 Oct. 1875; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 9 Oct. 1875.

¹⁵⁷ *Bucks Chronicle*, 15 July, and 5 Aug. 1871.

¹⁵⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Oct. 1883; *South Bucks Free Press*, 12 Oct. 1883; *Buckingham Express*, 20 and 27 Oct. 1883.

¹⁵⁹ BA, T/A 2/6.

Fund-raising activities such as balls, concerts, bazaars and internal entertainments such as prize giving and sport all added to the appeal of the volunteer movement and its public profile. Wethered did not like the cost of bands and discontinued the drum and fife band attached to the Marlow corps in the belief that it forced the corps to go on marches when the time could be better spent on drill.¹⁶⁰ Nonetheless, volunteer bands helped further spread the popularity of music making to a far greater extent than the militia or yeomanry. Some civilian bands joined the volunteers, although there could then be tensions relating to disciplinary requirements. But bands were seen as important in terms of recruitment. Volunteer bands generally cost around £100 per annum to run, the volunteers becoming perhaps the ‘only national financial sponsor of the brass band movement as a whole in the mid Victorian period’.¹⁶¹

A fete at Stoke Park in September 1861 was intended to raise funds for the band of the Slough corps, as was a programme of vocal and instrumental music at County Hall in favour of the Aylesbury corps band in January 1862. It became an annual feature thereafter. The attendance in 1864 was small, which the *Buckingham Advertiser* found unsurprising ‘when such a meagre programme is produced, at very high prices of admission’. Tickets were priced at 3s.0d for a front seat and 2s.0d for a back seat, with a family of four offered front seats for 10s.0d and back seats for 6s.0d.¹⁶²

The Buckingham corps had a drum and fife band for a few years. In 1867 an appeal was made for money towards new uniforms, and it performed at the Town Hall in aid of its funds in 1870. It also appeared at such events as the

¹⁶⁰ Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 150.

¹⁶¹ Herbert and Barlow, *Music and British Military*, 164-74.

¹⁶² *Bucks Herald*, 7 Sept. 1861; 25 Jan. 1862; 31 Jan. 1863; 23 Apl. 1864; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 30 Apl. 1864.

Wesleyan Sunday School Treat in August 1869 ‘to the intense gratification of all the little folks’.¹⁶³ The band had lapsed by 1872 and a meeting was held at the George Inn in July 1877 to try and form a new brass band, it being calculated that at least £40 would be required to purchase instruments.¹⁶⁴ This appears to have been successful for a time with the new band appearing at such events as the Church of England Medical and Benefit Club Anniversary in Leckhamstead in May 1885, and the Maids Moreton Friendly Society Anniversary in June 1886. The entire band then resigned in August 1887 in protest at the poor remuneration received by its bandmaster, becoming instead the Gawcott Band.¹⁶⁵ Yet another new band was formed, largely from members of the Buckingham Town Band, but most of them retired in 1895, again leaving the company bereft of its own musicians.¹⁶⁶ At Winslow, the sub-division also had a separate band initially, its debts being cancelled in November 1863 through the ‘liberality of friends of the officers and non-commissioned officers’. Fremantle then urged ordinary volunteers to subscribe towards the £5 deemed necessary to maintain it.¹⁶⁷

The band of the Aylesbury corps played at such events as the Grand Show of Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables for the Vale of Aylesbury Floral and Horticultural Society in June 1862 and the Wendover Harvest Festival in September 1870. The band of the Wolverton Company performed at the Stony Stratford Whitsuntide Festival in May 1893.¹⁶⁸ The band of the Aylesbury

¹⁶³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 13 and 20 Apl. 1867; 7 Aug. 1869.

¹⁶⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 23 Mar. 1872; *Buckingham Express*, 20 June 1874; 21 July 1877; *Bucks Herald*, 21 July and 4 Aug. 1877.

¹⁶⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 30 May 1885; 19 June 1886; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 20 Aug. 1887.

¹⁶⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 30 Dec. 1895.

¹⁶⁷ BA, T/A 5/14, Order, 16 Nov. 1863.

¹⁶⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 31 May 1862; 10 Oct. 1870; 27 May 1893..

Company of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers played ‘a pleasing selection of music’ at the harvest festival in Aylesbury in September 1881.¹⁶⁹ In June 1890 the battalion band played at Marlow Regatta, occupying the top of a house boat.¹⁷⁰ The Slough Company band regularly advertised its availability for regattas, fetes and garden parties.¹⁷¹ The volunteers also popularised sports such as football and athletics.¹⁷² The Slough Company had its own athletic club in the 1890s.¹⁷³

One early spectacle in Bucks was the ‘Grand Volunteer Rifle Fete’ at Velvet Lawn, Chequers on 13 August 1860, including a sham fight, ‘rustic’ games, an ‘alfresco ball’, and the presentation of a silver bugle by the ‘Ladies of Aylesbury’.¹⁷⁴ The power of Caulfeild Pratt’s blast on the bugle was sufficiently remembered to be noted in all his obituaries when he died in 1900.¹⁷⁵ The band of the 1st Life Guards was also in attendance as well as the drums and fifes of the Aylesbury corps. Over 8,000 spectators were present with 400 served dinner in a marquee. Velvet Lawn was also the venue for the Vale of Aylesbury Rifle Fete in August 1861, attended by the Aylesbury, Marlow and Winslow corps, as well as three Hertfordshire corps and the band of the City of Oxford corps. There was a sham fight and, later, a grand ball in a specially erected pavilion, and fireworks.¹⁷⁶ The Velvet Lawn ‘picnic’ and sham fight

¹⁶⁹ *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 1 Oct. 1881.

¹⁷⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 27 June 1890.

¹⁷¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 9 Apl., 7 May, 9 and 23 July 1897.

¹⁷² Lorna Jackson, ‘Patriotism or Pleasure? The Nineteenth Century Volunteer Force as a Vehicle for Rural Working-Class Male Sport’, *The Sports Historian* 19 (2002), 125-39.

¹⁷³ *South Bucks Standard*, 13 Mar. 1891.

¹⁷⁴ The bugle is in the BMMT collection as BMMT 545/1.

¹⁷⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 16 June 1900 *Bucks Herald*, 16 June 1900.

¹⁷⁶ *Bucks Advertiser*, 4 Aug. 1860; *Bucks Herald*, 11 Aug. 1860.

became an annual event, although suspended between 1876 and 1882 before being revived.¹⁷⁷ Prior to 1876, proceeds from the event went to the restoration of Ellesborough Church, and to the extension of the Bucks Infirmary in Aylesbury.¹⁷⁸

The Marlow corps also received a silver bugle from the ladies of Marlow in July 1860 as did the Slough corps in March 1863, whilst the Aylesbury corps was presented with an unofficial Colour by Caulfeild Pratt's wife in November 1860.¹⁷⁹

The members of the Buckingham corps were treated to a 'sumptuous spread' by Barrington at the Swan and Castle after the first annual inspection in November 1860. Its first annual prize shooting took place in September 1861. After an afternoon's drill at Claydon House in October 1861, Sir Harry Verney threw



The unofficial Colour of the 4th Bucks (Aylesbury) RVC presented at Velvet Lawn, Chequers Court, 13 August 1860 [BMMT]

¹⁷⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Oct. 1874; 24 June 1882.

¹⁷⁸ *Buckingham Express*, 5 Sept. 1874.

¹⁷⁹ *Bucks Chronicle*, 17 Nov. 1860; 11 Mar. 1862. The bugle and Colour are held by the Trust as BMMT 442 and 545/2.



The Silver Bugles presented to 4th Bucks (Aylesbury) RVC by the Ladies of Aylesbury, 13 August 1860, and to the 1st Bucks (Marlow) RVC by the Ladies of Marlow, 11 July 1860 [BMMT]

open his house to the members as well as providing dinner.¹⁸⁰ An early venture by the Winslow sub-division was a march out to Hogston in October 1861 for exercises that ‘evidently “astonished the natives”’ when a ‘mimic’ charge was made, and two volleys fired.¹⁸¹ In July 1865 the Winslow men marched out to Swanbourne and, after drill, visited the Red Lion Inn, the landlord, John Green, being one of the members.¹⁸² The Buckingham corps likewise assembled in September 1871 for a dramatic photograph to be taken of them prepared to repel cavalry in Henry Hearn’s garden in West Street by one of their own, Corporal

¹⁸⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Nov. 1860; 14 Sept., and 12 Oct. 1861.

¹⁸¹ *Bucks Chronicle*, 5 Oct. 1861.

¹⁸² *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 July 1865.

Leonard Varney, who was clearly operating in the town some years before the formal establishment of his photography business in 1877.¹⁸³

Among the more unusual activities was a dramatic reading in December 1859 for the benefit of the Marlow corps by the Shakespearean actor-manager of Sadler's Wells, Samuel Phelps. Phelps then repeated the performance in aid of the corps' band fund in the following year.¹⁸⁴ Equally, the Aylesbury corps sponsored a performance of the melodrama, 'Colleen Bawn, or The Brides of Garryowen', by the Irish playwright, Dion Boucicault, at the New Corn Exchange in July 1866.¹⁸⁵ The Buckingham corps sponsored a performance of 'The Barber of Seville' by Betjeman and Temple's London Opera Company in November 1870, and one of King Lear by the local amateur dramatic society followed by a 'grand military burlesque opera' in February 1881.¹⁸⁶ Rather similarly, Sir Charles Young gave dramatic recitals in aid of the Marlow and Wycombe corps in Marlow's Music Hall in March 1878.¹⁸⁷

Not unexpectedly, shooting competitions were a major feature of volunteer activities. Despite a cold wind and driving rain, a rifle shooting contest at Hartwell on Easter Monday in 1864 attracted 'a good sprinkling of the ladies, who with a bravery not common to their sex, boldly faced the wind and appeared to take great interest in the proceedings'.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, Carrington

¹⁸³ *Buckingham Express*, 9 Sept. 1871.

¹⁸⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Dec. 1859; *South Bucks Free Press*, 8 Dec. 1860.

¹⁸⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 7 July 1866.

¹⁸⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 26 Nov. 1870; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 4 and 11 Feb. 1871.

¹⁸⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Mar. 1878.

¹⁸⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Apr. 1864; Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 136; James Sheahan, *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), 125-26.

offered prizes for the volunteers for a shooting competition at Wycombe Abbey in October 1860.¹⁸⁹ The shooting booths at Buckingham Statute Fair in October 1865 ‘with first-class decorations, and lady attendants, came in for a large share of patronage to some of our brave Volunteers’.¹⁹⁰ In October 1869 one of the prizes at the annual rifle meeting of the 3rd Bucks RVC was a wedding ring, presented by the 3rd Duke’s agent, Thomas Beards, ‘the winner to hand the ring over for fresh competition, unless married before next prize day’. The first winner had not married in the interval so it was shot for again in 1870.¹⁹¹

Apart from annual prize competitions, the county’s volunteer corps all organised annual balls and dinners.¹⁹² The annual volunteer ball at Aylesbury was the only one ‘which we - the slow people of Aylesbury - can boast of’.¹⁹³ The Aylesbury and Winslow corps had annual church parades.¹⁹⁴ Cricket matches between volunteers and civilian clubs also became a regular occurrence.¹⁹⁵

When the Queen visited Disraeli, now Earl of Beaconsfield, at Hughenden in December 1877, she was met at High Wycombe station by a guard of honour from the RBKOM permanent staff and band, and detachments from the 1st and

¹⁸⁹ Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 139; *Bucks Chronicle*, 20 Nov. 1860; *Bucks Advertiser*, 20 Oct. 1860.

¹⁹⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 21 Oct. 1865.

¹⁹¹ *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 9 Oct. 1869; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1 Oct. 1870.

¹⁹² *Bucks Advertiser*, 29 Dec. 1860; 13 Feb. 1861; *Bucks Herald*, 6 Feb. 1864, 21 Jan. 1865, 2 Feb. 1867; 12 Dec. 1874.

¹⁹³ *Bucks Herald*, 13 Feb. 1864.

¹⁹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 6 Apl. 1861; 23 June 1866.

¹⁹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 15 Oct. 1872; 2 May 1874.

2nd Bucks Rifle Volunteers.¹⁹⁶ *Punch* celebrated with a poem, one verse of which went:¹⁹⁷

Pass we o'er the address and bouquet,
And the Bucks Volunteers on the green,
And drive on to Hughenden Manor,
Where its honoured Lord welcomed his Queen.

The volunteers also duly appeared at such events as the Duchess of Albany's opening of the new Public Hall and Leopold Institute at Slough in December 1887, and Queen Victoria's visit to Aylesbury and Waddesdon Manor in May 1890. Men from the battalion also lined part of the route in the Mall during the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in June 1897.¹⁹⁸

The level of public support was also shown when the Bucks Volunteer Patriotic Fund was launched under the presidency of the new lord lieutenant, Lord Rothschild, in November 1889 to raise at least £2,100 to equip the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers. This was to meet new mobilisation schedules issued in May in pain of forfeiting the capitation grant if the equipment was not provided. Nationally, appeals were not successful, compelling volunteer MPs to pass a motion in the Commons in March 1890 demanding government make good deficiencies and cancel volunteer debts. Ultimately, the equipment grant was increased in 1891.¹⁹⁹ Those items required by the War Office schedules in 1889

¹⁹⁶ *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 19 Dec. 1877.

¹⁹⁷ *Punch*, 29 Dec. 1877.

¹⁹⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Dec. 1887; 17 May 1890; 19 June 1897; *South Bucks Standard*, 21 May 1897.

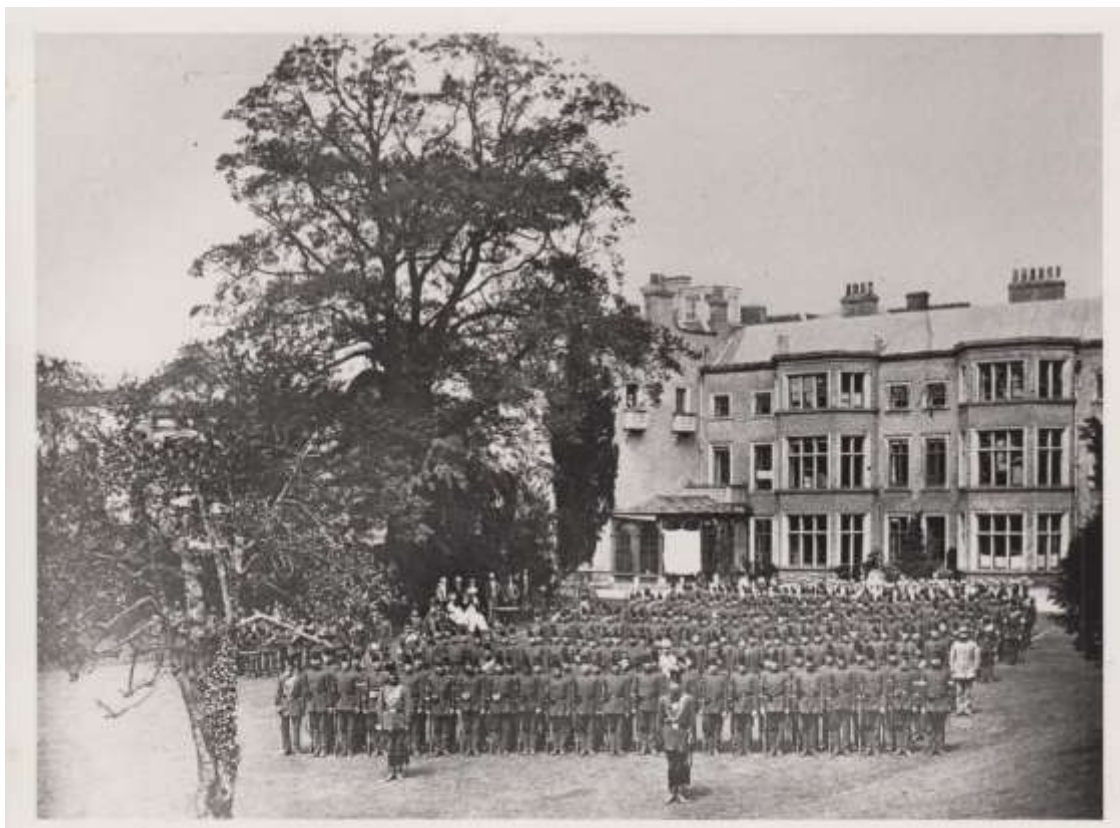
¹⁹⁹ Beckett, *Form Riflemen* 136, 162-63.

were water bottles, haversacks, greatcoats, mess tins, and ammunition pouches. Bucks, however, responded well to the appeal.

A total of £643 was raised on the first day before circulars had even gone out to mayors, local boards, and county councillors. Rothschild led the way with £200. It was soon calculated that the cost would be nearer £3,000 if the need for second uniforms was taken into account. The first instalment of £1,000 was paid to the battalion in 1890, the sum raised by November 1891 with interest amounting to £1,331.7s.6d. Expenditure had been £1,770.9s.4d, but the new equipment grant secured from government had brought in £425.2s.0d leaving a deficit of just £24.0s.3d. As the cost of the battalion's new headquarters in Marlow was higher than expected, the County Rifle Association provided an additional £100.²⁰⁰ That battalion headquarters was adjacent to the equally new Marlow Institute in Station Road. Opened in September 1890, the foundation stone was laid on 31 July 1889.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ HHL, STG 8 (12), Bucks Volunteer Patriotic Fund; BA, D/FR/177, CRA Report, 1890; *Bucks Herald*, 20 Nov. 1889; 1, and 4 Jan., and 1 Feb. 1890; *Chesham Examiner*, 1 Jan., and 5 Feb. 1890; 25 Feb. 1891; *Bucks Standard*, 28 Nov. 1891; *South Bucks Standard*, 20 Mar. 1891.

²⁰¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 19 Sept. 1890.



The newly consolidated 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers at Claydon House, August 1875 with boys from the 2nd Bucks (Eton College) RVC at the rear [BMMT]

As elsewhere, a County Rifle Association was formed to organise annual rifle competitions and to help subsidise annual camps. In Bucks Owen Wethered and Thomas Fremantle sent over 3,000 circulars to all and sundry in the spring of 1864 ‘taking the County Directory parish by parish’. ²⁰² Over £300 was raised. Sir Harry Verney presented the (Florence) Nightingale Vase, shot for annually by the Buckingham corps for a period of five years from 1865 with each winner then to take part in a final shoot-off to keep the prize. Nightingale, who was Verney’s sister-in-law, addressed a number of letters to Verney in praise of the movement, these being read out to the Winslow corps when they visited Claydon in 1861. ²⁰³ In the event, two previous winners - one had won twice -

²⁰² Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 141; HHL, STG Military 8 (2).

²⁰³ *Volunteer Service Gazette*, 19 Oct. 1861.

had left the corps by the time of the final, which was won by the 1869 winner Corporal Thomas Holton, a collector of income tax, in competition against the 1868 winner, Lieutenant Henry Hearn, the Buckingham solicitor.²⁰⁴ Verney was a keen supporter, even at the age of 74 leading 'headers' into the lake at the morning bathing parades when the battalion camp was held at Claydon in 1875. He had briefly served in the RBKOM from 1844-46.²⁰⁵

The Bucks camps in both 1867 and 1879 were severely hit by bad weather, although Wethered recalled that at one very hot church parade in 1872 the dose of brandy and water given the first man who fell out 'had the instantaneous effect of intensifying the sun's powers, and man after man succumbed'.²⁰⁶ The July 1872 camp was at Stowe, the problem of fewer numbers of likely attendees following the disbandment of the Wycombe corps being overcome by the attendance of 400 men from the Northamptonshire volunteers. Sports and races were arranged, the 3rd Duke giving Wethered permission to levy a small admission charge for the sports and the field day. It was also arranged for Archdeacon Bickersteth to hold a Sunday service. Unauthorised canteens and drinking booths, meanwhile, were to be prohibited for it had not 'been found possible to limit the supply of refreshments to Volunteers in Uniform, because there is always a large influx of visitors on the days of the Sports and Field Day, and they have necessarily been supplied'.²⁰⁷

Following the initial camp at Marlow in 1865, the Bucks volunteers camped subsequently at Halton (1866); Wakefield Lawn (1867 and 1870); Ashridge

²⁰⁴ Claydon House, Verney Mss, Fremantle to Verney, 29 Aug. 1867; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 Sept. 1866; 31 Aug. 1867; 4 Sept. 1869; 1 Oct. 1870.

²⁰⁵ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 163; *Volunteer Service Gazette*, 18 Sept. 1875.

²⁰⁶ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 160.

²⁰⁷ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 118- 22.

(1868, 1882 and 1889); Abingdon (1869); Aston Clinton (1871, 1884 and 1886); Stowe (1872); Medmenham (1873, 1876 and 1877); Bourne End (1874 and 1879); Claydon (1875); Stony Stratford (1878); Temple Park (1880, 1881, 1883, 1885, 1887, and 1891); Blenheim (1888); Churn (1890, 1894 and 1895); Aldershot (1892 and 1898); Gayhurst (1893); and Shorncliffe (1896 and 1897). Those at Wakefield Law, Abingdon and Blenheim reflected the desire to co-operate with other counties' units, whilst those at Churn, Aldershot and Shorncliffe came under the provisions made for the Home Counties Volunteer Brigade consequent upon 'territorialisation'. Gilbey found the Aldershot camps of little utility. In Aldershot's 'King Valley' in 1887 'the dust was so bad that, when disturbed by the tramp of so many feet, it resembled nothing so much as a day of November fog in London'. Two years later they 'had a very dull time, for we were in the Reserve, and toiled through the heather and bogs of the Foxhills without firing a shot'.²⁰⁸ There was no camp in 1877, an eight-day period of instruction at Aldershot being substituted.

Like the other auxiliary forces, the volunteers generated significant trade, not least in the case of the large-scale Easter reviews between 1861 and 1877. It was suggested that volunteers and their families spent £50,000 at Brighton in 1863. Railway companies regularly advertised their facilities to the metropolitan commanding officers who organised the Easter reviews. Unfortunately, volunteer encouragement of the half-holiday and early closing movements in the expectation of giving men more time for volunteering backfired when increased holiday traffic meant the rail companies no longer had need of the volunteers' trade. Easter reviews were abandoned in 1878 having already been cancelled in 1874 and 1875.²⁰⁹ There appears to have been a half-holiday in

²⁰⁸ BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Ch. VI, 3-4.

²⁰⁹ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 98.

Marlow for the annual general meeting and church parade of the corps, presumably reflecting the Wethered influence as a major town employer.²¹⁰

The newly formed Aylesbury, Marlow and Wycombe corps all attended the first Royal Review in Hyde Park in June 1860. A combined contingent from the Marlow and Slough attended the Brighton reviews in 1865 and 1868, and the Bucks administrative battalion attended at Dover in 1869. The Bucks volunteers also attended the Royal Review at Windsor in June 1868. There was also a review of metropolitan and midland corps at Stowe in June 1864 attended by over 3,500 volunteers and yeomanry and watched by a crowd estimated at between 20,000 and 30,000.²¹¹ Tenders had been invited to supply refreshments in 1864, whilst James Tilbury of the George and Dragon Hotel at Marlow secured the contract for the Medmenham camp in 1876.²¹² That awarded for the 1867 camp at Wakefield Lawn gave volunteers the opportunity to have breakfast, dinner and supper for 2s.0d a day: they had to bring their own cutlery.

²¹³

Tradesmen advertised their wares on the basis of fulfilling volunteer contracts as in the case of Alfred Ailward of Aylesbury, shoe blacker to several annual camps.²¹⁴ They remained popular spectacles, the *Buckingham Express* describing the attraction of that at Temple Park in August 1881:²¹⁵

²¹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Jan. 1868; 17 Dec. 1870.

²¹¹ HHL, STG Military 4 (10); *Bucks Herald*, 25 June 1864; *Bucks Chronicle*, 25 June 1864; *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 2 July 1864.

²¹² *Bucks Herald*, 30 Apr. 1864; 22 July 1876.

²¹³ BA, T/A 5/14, Winslow Order Book, 4 June 1867.

²¹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 23 July 1881; 26 July 1884.

²¹⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 6 Aug. 1881.

Very many got down to Temple Park by a handsome steam boat run by Mr Meaker of Marlow the voyage down costing each person sixpence. Hundreds of others were brought down by pleasure vans literally crammed, and almost every other kind of vehicle was used for the conveyance of visitors. There were dogcarts, and old ones, gigs, landaus, broughams, brakes, jaunting cars, and most handsome equipages from the dashing single high stepper to the more attractive four in hand: The entire park presented a most gay and animated appearance.

The ‘sham fights’ associated with the reviews were hardly realistic, not least through the attendance of crowds of visitors who often interrupted proceedings. One unit executed an ‘attack’ at Brighton on one occasion under cover of the spectators.²¹⁶ Wethered certainly found that the larger reviews ‘afforded a minimum of instruction out of all proportion to the cost in money and vital energy involved’, withdrawing any Marlow representation at Dover.²¹⁷ Few Bucks volunteers attended a review at Tring in 1876 or one at Dunstable in the following year.²¹⁸

There could be a degree of pride in the local unit. It was well summed up by the *Buckingham Express* in May 1873. The yeomanry’s connection to Buckingham could not be discounted yet ‘the well organised regiment of Rifle Volunteers are almost exclusively borough men, if we except the Winslow contingent, who are all true metal men, both regiments are a credit to the town and county, and the warmest sympathies of the town and neighbourhood are with them, joined to a pardonable pride in their brave appearance and military bearing’.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 176-77.

²¹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Feb. 1869; Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 143.

²¹⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Apl. 1876.

²¹⁹ *Buckingham Express*, 24 May 1873.



Officers and (mostly) NCOs in camp at Bourne End, August 1879 [BMMT]

Pride was also manifest when there was outrage in High Wycombe after its company was disbanded for firing off ammunition indiscriminately after a field day in Burnham Beeches involving the Marlow, Slough and Wycombe corps in October 1871.²²⁰ Surplus ammunition should have been collected, but the order had not reached the Wycombe corps and some had fired off the rounds whilst being conveyed back to the town in horse-drawn vans. Chester, who believed the corps' officers led by Captain Randolph Crewe of Loakes Hill inefficient, ordered disbandment on 28 October after a court of enquiry. He had at once expelled Private John Jones, a 36 year-old chair maker, one of just five men thought to have been responsible. Wethered tried to get the order rescinded

²²⁰ Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/10, Battalion Order, 1 Dec, 1871; HHL, STG 4 (9).

without success, even visiting Chester at 10 p.m. to argue his case. Privately, Chester suggested to the 3rd Duke that Wethered's recent promotion to major had 'quite turned his head'.²²¹ Chester's authority was so undermined, however, that he resigned in March 1872, citing his own ill health and that of one of his daughters.²²² Wethered succeeded to the command. As related earlier, Wethered, who had always thought that disbandment had been unjustified when only five men were responsible, got the Wycombe Company revived under the initial command of Gilbey by having it attached to the Marlow Company.²²³

The government responded to some reported financial difficulties and to the recommendations of the Royal Commission appointed in May 1862 by a new Volunteer Act in 1863, which gave a capitation grant of £1 per annum with an additional 10s.0d for extra efficiency. The standard was set at nine drills and attendance at the annual inspection to qualify for the basic grant and firing off 60 rounds at a target for the additional 10s.0d. No Bucks witnesses were called, the report recording a total of 404 men enrolled in the county, compared to 271 in 1860, and 418 in 1861.²²⁴ The grant was increased to £1.10s.0d in 1869 and to £1.15s.0d in 1887 with other allowances also increased. In return, musketry standards were raised in 1869, 1887 and 1889.

Following the recommendations of the Bury committee in 1878, the number of drills required of new recruits was increased to 60 in the first two years and, from 1896, 12 rather than nine drills were required in the third and fourth years.

²²⁵ Once more, there were no Bucks witnesses, but the appendices provide some

²²¹ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 155; Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 115-17, 128-29.

²²² Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 117.

²²³ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 128.

²²⁴ HCCP 1862 (134), 207.

²²⁵ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 128-30, 132-37.

valuable financial information. The average expenditure between 1873 and 1877 had been £1,009.4s.10d with the amount of grant earned being £645.12s.0d, leaving a shortfall of £363.12s.10d. The average cost of an enrolled volunteer was £2.3s.8d per annum, the average grant being £1.8s.0d per man per annum. Officers were subscribing £30 a year and NCOs subscribing £7 exclusive of any dues paid to the CRA, the general annual shortfall having to be found from the public. The disciplinary powers available were deemed sufficient but finding officers and drill instructors presented a challenge. Compulsory camps would add to the force's efficiency but the cost would be prohibitive under current conditions.²²⁶

Rather similarly, the Bucks submission to the Volunteer Capitation Committee in 1887 favoured the 10s.0d increase that the committee recommended. The battalion had 654 enrolled volunteers compared to an establishment of 807, the expenditure in 1884 on care of arms, ranges, travel, clothing, camps, training, prizes and so on having come in at £2,217 when the grant was £1,575.²²⁷

Increasing commitment led leading volunteers to champion the early closing movement. As suggested earlier, it backfired against the force in that rival recreational opportunities were encouraged, albeit that parades, reviews and camps including royal reviews in 1860, 1863, 1866 and 1881 still meant that the volunteers were often seen primarily as a leisure pursuit.

Additionally, however, while some outside commentators held that volunteer commissions conveyed little social prestige, volunteers themselves emphasised the moral benefits of order and discipline, an argument also used to promote

²²⁶ HCCP 1878-79 [C.2235-I], 199, 207, 224, 252-53, 298, 312, 340.

²²⁷ HCCP 1887 [C. 4951], 10-11.

cadet corps in the 1880s such as that at Stony Stratford. Employers did find the social control and conformity implied in volunteering - subtle or otherwise – helpful. In the case of Bucks, LNWR employees at the Wolverton Carriage Works would be dismissed from their employment if infringing volunteer discipline.²²⁸ One young volunteer who stole drink at the Temple Park camp in August 1881 was instantly dismissed.²²⁹ In both 1894 and 1896, appeals were made to employers to ‘afford such facilities as may be possible for the attendance of their Volunteer employees’ at camp.²³⁰

The Bucks corps had a reasonably steady number of men. In 1866, there were 351 men enrolled in the 1st Administrative Battalion, of whom 271 were judged efficient. In 1867 some 368 men were enrolled of whom 314 were efficient. In 1868 numbers had increased to 410 with 339 judged as efficient.²³¹ With the reformation of the Wycombe Company and the beginning of that at Wolverton, the number of enrolled men reached 618 in 1878 and 646 in 1879, those judged inefficient numbering only three on each occasion.²³² There were likewise 648 men enrolled in 1882, all regarded as efficient, but the battalion as it now was well short of its actual establishment of 807.²³³ In 1886 there were 679 enrolled members, of whom all but two were efficient.²³⁴

²²⁸ Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 169.

²²⁹ *Buckingham Express*, 6 Aug. 1881.

²³⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 20 July 1894; 17 July 1896.

²³¹ *Bucks Herald*, 14 Dec. 1867; 18 Dec. 1869.

²³² *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 Mar. 1879; *Bucks Herald*, 5 June 1880.

²³³ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Mar. 1883.

²³⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Apl. 1887.

In 1889 the number enrolled was 718, but it had fallen to 685 in 1890 and to 679 in 1891.²³⁵ In 1891 the 1st Bucks now mustered 682 men from their establishment of 1,211, all but two men being deemed efficient.²³⁶ The number enrolled was 994 in 1894, 983 being efficient.²³⁷ In 1896 when the 1st Bucks Volunteers mustered 27 officers and 807 other ranks, some 32.8 per cent were aged between 17 and 21 and 24.3 per cent between 21 and 25. In terms of service, 20.4 per cent had served less than a year and 44.1 per cent between one and five years.²³⁸ The average annual strength between 1876 and 1896 was 671.²³⁹

Whatever the social role, the ostensible raison d'être was national defence. Regular soldiers rarely accorded the volunteers much credit as a military force. Wethered suggested that regulars 'as a rule, regarded us at the very best as harmless lunatics, and at the worst, as utterly valueless as a military force, and, in any case, as a great nuisance'.²⁴⁰ Indeed, the first battalion inspection in October 1863 was carried out by a regular - Colonel Ibbetson - whom Pratt judged the worst possible kind to inspect volunteers when encountering him at an earlier inspection of the Wycombe corps.²⁴¹

One exception was Colonel (later General Sir) George Higginson of Gylternscroft at Marlow. A Grenadier, Higginson inspected the Marlow corps in July 1860 and, later as GOC Home District from 1878-85, did so again in

²³⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 19 Dec. 1891.

²³⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 Mar. 1891.

²³⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 20 Apl. 1894.

²³⁸ BA, T/A 5/8.

²³⁹ BA, D/FR/170, CRA Annual Reports.

²⁴⁰ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 140.

²⁴¹ BA, D-CN 21/2/36, Pratt to Carrington, 25 Feb. 1862.

1883, his tenure generally being noted for his encouragement of the volunteer movement.²⁴² He regularly inspected troops in Marlow during the Great War and, indeed, inspected the Bucks Battalion aged 100 in August 1926. He presented a Russian drum captured in the Crimea to the Marlow corps in 1861, which was used subsequently by the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers: it is now in Marlow Museum.

Equally, more radically-minded volunteers sought to pursue an independence of the regular army that failed to recognise the realities and constraints of time and civilian employment. The argument was that volunteers were more intelligent and, therefore, better suited to military innovation than hide bound regulars. Some offers were made by volunteers to serve overseas during the ‘Trent affair’ in 1861 when Canada was threatened by Northern intervention arising from the American Civil War and, again, in 1878 and 1885 during the Balkan crisis and the Penjdeh crisis respectively.²⁴³ Some six militia battalions and two militia garrison brigades were temporarily embodied as well between March and September 1885.²⁴⁴ Legislation would have been required and it was only in 1895 that the Volunteers (Military Service) Act permitted volunteer offers to be accepted once the militia was embodied, albeit not for overseas service.

Volunteers were given a larger role progressively in military mobilisation plans as in 1886 and 1888. Wethered offered 500 of his men for garrison duty to relieve regulars being sent to the Sudan in February 1885 following the death of Charles Gordon at Khartoum, but it was never likely such an offer would be contemplated. Some former volunteers were among those responding to

²⁴² Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 182.

²⁴³ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 194-97.

²⁴⁴ Stoneman, ‘Reformed British Militia’, 202.

Wethered's offer and, on the strength of the response he formed an unofficial volunteer reserve.²⁴⁵ There was a test battalion mobilisation at Temple Park in July 1896, the number of volunteers proceeding there by rail swelling the traffic for the Henley Regatta weekend.²⁴⁶ One former Buckingham volunteer served in Zululand with the 2/3rd Foot (The Buffs), having enlisted as a regular.²⁴⁷

There were also increasingly moves to draw the auxiliary forces as a whole into closer alignment with the army. As Secretary of State, Edward Cardwell implemented localisation in April 1873 whereby two 'linked' regular battalions, militia battalions and volunteer battalions were brigaded in new sub-districts centred on a brigade depot. Apart from saving money, 'localisation' was intended to enable regiments at home to supply drafts to partner battalions overseas, but also to encourage militiamen to enter the regular army.²⁴⁸ Under localisation, the 52nd Foot and 85th Foot linked with the militia and volunteers of Bucks and Oxfordshire in No. 42 (later No. 43) Brigade Depot Sub-district at Cowley Barracks, Oxford. 'Old adjutants' were gazetted as captains under the control of depot commanders and were supposed to be replaced by regulars as they retired. In the case of Clement, after his resignation from the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers, no subaltern was available so Wethered appointed another former regular, Captain Philip Yorke of the 2/4th Foot.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 14, and 21 Feb., and 18 July 1885.

²⁴⁶ *Bucks Standard*, 11 July 1896; *Bucks Herald*, 11 July 1896; *South Bucks Standard*, 10 July 1896.

²⁴⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 31 May 1879.

²⁴⁸ Edward Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 1-28; David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People, c. 1870-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10-30.

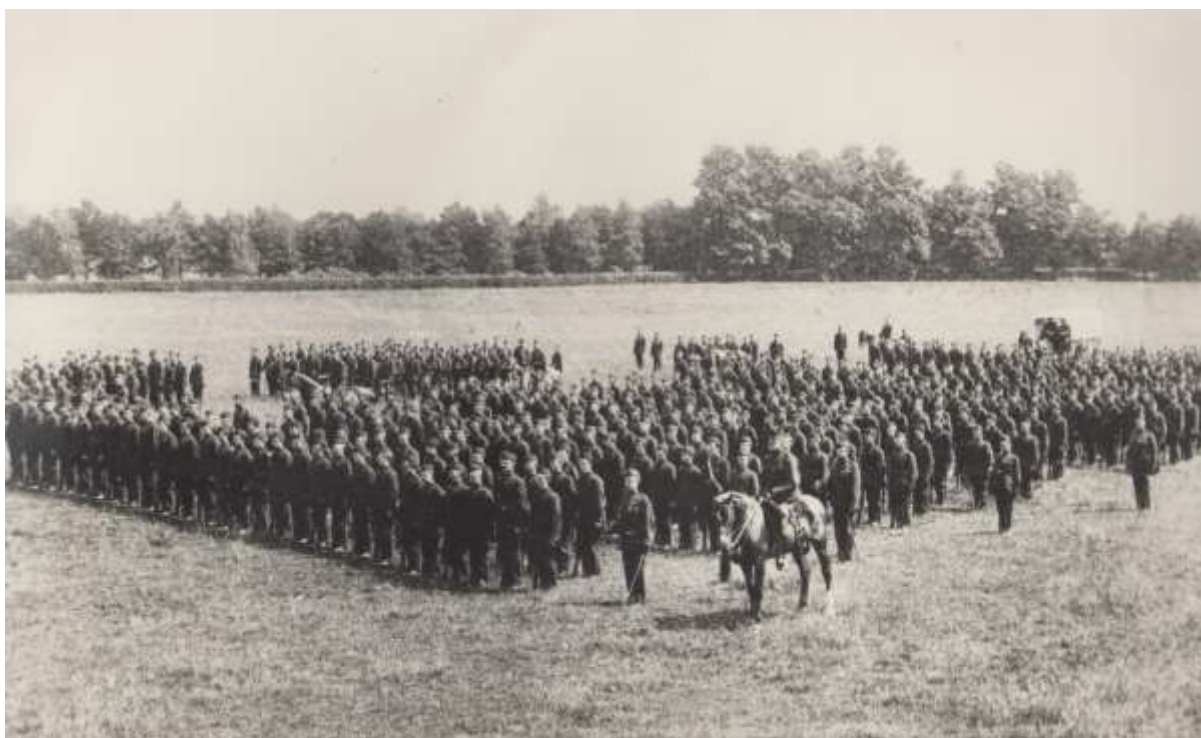
²⁴⁹ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 169.

Inspection and training of volunteers was vested in depot commanders. In reality, many depot commanders did not take much interest in the volunteers. The 1st Bucks saw little of the Oxford depot commander. When arriving for the first brigade drill at Port Meadow in pouring rain in May 1877, it was over an hour before an orderly sergeant appeared to inform them it had been cancelled: ‘The authorities at Cowley Barracks had forgotten all about us’. ²⁵⁰ As Secretary of State, Hugh Childers then brought about full ‘territorialisation’ in 1881, whereby the linkages made in 1873 were made permanent: it had been recommended by a royal commission looking at the impact of localisation on the militia in 1876. .

Whilst the 85th Foot had been raised in Bucks, the 14th Foot had a greater claim to affiliation but, under localisation, it was allocated to No. 10 Brigade Depot Sub-district at Bradford. Now under territorialisation, it became The West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales’s Own), but the 85th, too, was switched to become the 2nd Battalion, The King’s Shropshire Light Infantry. The 43rd Foot and 52nd Foot became the 1st and 2nd Battalions, The Oxfordshire Light Infantry. The RBKOM declined to use its new official title of the 3rd Battalion, The Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and there was much anguish at the end of the official county title, some claiming it was Gladstonian prejudice against a county so connected to Disraeli. ²⁵¹ Wethered was able to persuade the War Office that the title of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers should be retained rather than his battalion becoming the 3rd Volunteer Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry and, equally, to keep its dark grey uniforms rather than convert to expensive and less durable scarlet.

²⁵⁰ Wethered, ‘Reminiscences’, 167.

²⁵¹ *Bucks Herald*, 4 Feb., 4 Mar., and 29 July 1882.



The 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers under the command of the 2nd Lord Addington at Addington Park, 1893 [BMMT]

In the case of the militia, territorialisation had the advantage of enabling a few days' brigade training at the end of each period of annual training where battalions were conveniently located close to depots. Unfortunately, as district commanders became responsible for all militia recruiting in 1881, and preliminary training was undertaken at depots, it rendered recruits particularly susceptible to the blandishments of regular recruiting sergeants.²⁵²

There had been concern among some town councillors in 1872 that the regular army's depot would be at High Wycombe rather than Oxford since garrison towns were 'the lowest towns in England'. Recognising the trade opportunities, however, the majority of councillors voted for a deputation to Cardwell to get the depot at Wycombe. Interestingly, one correspondent to the *Bucks Herald* in 1869 had suggested Aylesbury would be more beneficial both from its better

²⁵² Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 129.

rail connections and also from being quieter and also as its more ‘moral’ inhabitants would have a calming effect on soldiers.²⁵³ This did not happen, and there was then increasing concern that the headquarters of the RBKOM would be removed from Wycombe to Oxford. The 3rd Lord Carrington was asked to use his influence to keep the militia in the county in 1881.²⁵⁴

Commissioned as a lieutenant in 1863, Carrington (later 1st Marquess of Lincolnshire) succeeded to the command in April 1881 when Henry Sanford, a former officer of the 43rd Foot resigned after only three months as Pratt’s successor. Sanford, who resided at Waltham House near Chelmsford, had business and farming interests in Australia. Carrington had resigned his commission in the RBYC in 1873. Carrington was replaced by Edward Dyke Lee in 1885 when he was appointed Governor of New South Wales, but resumed command on his return in 1890. In turn, command went to Henry Burney of Wavendon Tower in 1897, and to Edmond Fitzmaurice, the 7th Earl of Orkney in 1898.

Appearing before a War Office committee on the impact of localisation on the militia in February 1881, Sanford made the point that any move of the regimental headquarters from Wycombe to Oxford would be detrimental: ‘Recruits as a rule only enlist when they are out of work or hard up and walk into head-quarters from the neighbouring villages’. Oxford would be simply too far for men to walk. Indeed, the regiment might lose half its usual recruits. It would also be difficult to find sufficient accommodation at Oxford for either the permanent staff or, during the annual training, for men since the Oxfordshire Militia would also be undertaking its training at about the same time. Whilst

²⁵³ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Feb. 1869; *Bucks Advertiser*, 11 May 1872.

²⁵⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Feb. 1881; *South Bucks Free Press*, 13 Jan. 1882.

there was some connection between the RBKOM and the 52nd Foot - 31 of the 74 men sent into the army in 1880 had gone to them - this was not as important as remaining at Wycombe. Sanford said Carrington had written to the military authorities. He also took the opportunity to read out a memorial against any transfer to Oxford signed by Thomas Wheeler, the mayor of Wycombe, on behalf of the town. Major General George Higginson, then GOC of the Home District, who was also asked for his view when appearing on 22 February 1881, concurred with Sanford, stressing the importance of the Carrington connection to the militia at Wycombe. It was suggested there was no cordiality between Oxford and Wycombe.²⁵⁵

The militia localisation committee rowed back from any transfer of the RBKOM headquarters from Wycombe to Oxford. It recommended that no militia regiment which had not already moved headquarters to a brigade depot should be required to do so if it would take them out county. It became clear, however, that the War Office would only accept a continued presence at Wycombe if new facilities were provided. Accordingly, a fund was launched, Carrington and the 3rd Duke initiating it in September 1881 with £10 each.²⁵⁶ It was so successful that only £247.13s.10d was outstanding from the cost of £1,452.13s.10d when the new militia barracks including 16 cottages for permanent staff, were opened on Loakes Hill on Bank Holiday Monday, 4 August 1884.

The new buildings had all been constructed by the firm of Charles Hunt, who would be Wycombe's mayor in 1892-93. There had already been a military fete

²⁵⁵ TNA, WO 33/37, Report of Militia Localisation Committee, 27-30, 33-35: Q. 696-740 (Sanford); Q. 842-891 (Higginson).

²⁵⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Sept. 1881; *South Bucks Free Press*, 27 Jan. 1882.

as completion neared in September 1883, and a spectacular Grand Military Tournament was arranged for the formal opening, including a musical ride by the Royal Horse Guards. A 12-pounder gun was also presented to the RBKOM to mark the regiment's inspection by the Prince of Wales two years earlier.²⁵⁷ There was renewed concern in 1898, the new commanding officer, Orkney, and Wycombe Town Council vigorously protesting against any move to Oxford.²⁵⁸ In January 1899 there was strong objection in Wycombe to another proposal for moving the headquarters to Oxford. A meeting of the Wycombe Town Council resolved on sending a deputation to the War Office head by Lords Carrington and Curzon.²⁵⁹



Officers of the Royal Bucks King's Own Militia, 1892 [BMMT]

²⁵⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 28 July, 9 Aug., and 8 Sept. 1883; *Buckingham Express*, 23 Aug. 1884; *South Bucks Free Press*, 2 and 3 Nov. 1893.

²⁵⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Dec. 1898.

²⁵⁹ *Daily News*, 3 Jan. 1899; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 7 Jan. 1899.

A particularly significant development also enacted under Cardwell's Regulation of the Forces Act in 1871 was to make commissions in the auxiliary forces as a whole issued by the Crown rather than lords lieutenant. The latter could still make recommendations as to first appointments.²⁶⁰ Thereby, the lieutenancy lost one of its few remaining military functions. Nonetheless, the lord lieutenant did retain the power of nominating magistrates and deputy lieutenants.²⁶¹

Just as Cardwell's reforms had implications for the volunteers, they also went further in subordinating the militia to the army, although it remained very much a localised force in terms of its different component units.²⁶² Militia officers had been eligible to attend the Musketry School at Hythe since 1862, and this was extended to volunteers in 1870. Militia enlistment into the army had been revived in 1866. A militia reserve also started in 1867, by which those who enrolled would be sent into the army in time of war. It was not successful nationwide. In 1878 there were 172 men from the RBKOM enlisted in the Militia Reserve when they were temporarily called to Oxford as a result of the Balkan Crisis arising from the Russo-Turkish War.²⁶³

Cardwell announced the abolition of militia officers' property qualifications in March 1869, making it easier to integrate former regulars. In February 1872 each militia regiment was granted an annual nomination for a regular commission from subalterns aged 19 to 22 who had attended at least two annual trainings and passed an examination in professional duties. Thus, the militia became a backdoor route to a commission without the need to attend the Royal

²⁶⁰ HHL, STG 100, Cardwell circular, 30 Mar. 1872.

²⁶¹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 129.

²⁶² Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 255.

²⁶³ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Apr, and 4 May 1878.

Military College at Sandhurst or the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. Increasingly, its junior officers were those seeking to enter the army. It was not popular with the militia since it meant continued turbulence in subaltern appointments, and it did not thereby improve the relationship between regular and militia regiments.²⁶⁴ One subaltern who used the RBKOM was Sir John Willoughby, later known for his leading role in the abortive Jameson Raid to try and overthrow the Boer government in the Transvaal in 1896. Willoughby had first been a second lieutenant in the Eton College RVC. Another of the raiders was Harold Grenfell, one of nine sons of Pascoe Du Pré Grenfell of Wilton Park, who like Willoughby was seconded to the British South Africa Company forces.²⁶⁵

Cardwell implied the militia was simply an adjunct to the line, the 1889 militia committee even suggesting that the title should be changed to ‘reserve to the line’. Over 327,000 militiamen passed into the army between 1882 and 1904. By 1898 it was calculated that out of every 20 militia recruits, seven enlisted, four deserted, five were discharged, and only four completed the full term of service.²⁶⁶ In response to the Balkan crisis in 1878, 45 RBKOM men enlisted into the 52nd Foot.²⁶⁷ At the time of the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, some 60 men from the RBKOM enlisted, at least one of whom served there. It may also have been the case that Carrington volunteered his regiment for garrison duty.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ French, *Military Identities*, 207-08.

²⁶⁵ *Derby Mercury*, 8 Jan. 1896; Ian Beckett, “‘Daring a wrong like this’: The War Office and the Jameson Raiders’, *Soldiers of the Queen* 161 (2015), 3-9; idem, ‘The Grenfells: A Buckinghamshire Military Family’, *Bugle & Sabre* 10 (2017), 7-13.

²⁶⁶ Beckett, ‘Britain’, 26.

²⁶⁷ TNA, WO 68/242.

²⁶⁸ *South Bucks Free Press*, 25 Aug., and 1 Dec. 1882.

Back in November 1870 a series of questions had been posed to militia commanding officers on recruiting and accommodation. The replies from Bucks suggested that a second battalion could be raised if the county was ‘excited’. It might be possible to find up to 500 recruits per annum instead of the 200 currently recruited even if recruit training was increased to up to six months. The bounty was still deemed essential and training was best between Easter and Whitsun as most men were farm labourers, with a few chair-makers and shoemakers. Of course, at this stage, there were no barracks in the county and the permanent staff had been in lodgings since 1830, but barracks could be built at Aylesbury whilst huts could probably be erected in a field close to the current headquarters and accommodation could be found for recruits. Surgeons were not routinely used in recruiting and were hired in as necessary.²⁶⁹ As indicated by Sanford’s replies to the militia localisation committee in 1881, most recruits were unemployed or ‘hard up’. He suggested the best recruiting areas were Newport Pagnell, Chesham and Wycombe, and that there was also something of a tradition of sons following fathers into the regiment.²⁷⁰

The militia term of service was increased from five to six years in 1873, and the annual training from 21 to the more traditional 28 days in 1875. Briefly it was increased to 56 days between 1882 and 1883 but, thereafter, only recruits were liable to 56 days’ preliminary training. Pay on duty remained static and the bounty was not increased until 1901. Any militiaman could purchase his discharge for £1 after 1877 and desertion and absence remained significant problems. The pattern of recruitment varied considerably depending upon local circumstances, with predominantly rural counties struggling most to maintain

²⁶⁹ HCCP 1871 [C.288], 7; HHL STG 7 (13).

²⁷⁰ TNA, WO 33/37, Q. 697, 734.

numbers. Overall, the militia remained largely a preserve of semi-skilled, unskilled, or underemployed labourers. Its 106,153 enrolled men in 1898 comprised 30.7 per cent agricultural labourers, 18.2 per cent mechanical labourers and 11.9 per cent miners.²⁷¹



RBKOM Private Henry Lee of High Wycombe, c. 1863 [BMMT]

²⁷¹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 187.

The 3rd Duke clearly thought little of Carrington's successor as commanding officer. Caulfeild Pratt was a 'good fellow at heart', but adrift without Carrington's 'supporting and controlling influence', and so badly affected by gout that he had difficulty mounting his horse.²⁷² Not surprisingly, the militia still tended to attract only the casually employed as recruits, the regular army seeing the militia as a manpower quarry. In a primarily agricultural county like Bucks, it was dependent largely upon agricultural labourers. There was a constant endeavour to bring in recruits, whose training would immediately precede that of the main training period. In February 1869, for example, Caulfeild Pratt and the adjutant attended at the White Hart Hotel in Buckingham and enlisted 14 recruits. Similarly they were at the Swan Hotel in Newport Pagnell in December 1871, this time finding 11 recruits. In February 1882 there was even an old-fashioned attempt at recruiting by beat of drum at Buckingham with drummers and buglers marching up and down and drawing in at least some recruits.²⁷³

An incomplete battalion roll book for the period between 1886 and 1907 yields some information as to age and length of service in the RBKOM, as well as place of origin and reason for leaving.²⁷⁴ It might be added that there was a fairly constant change of personnel with recruits balanced by those purchasing discharge, leaving time expired, deserting, re-engaging, entering the army, and either being discharged as medically unfit or temporarily sent home as unfit.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 126-27.

²⁷³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 Feb. 1869; *Buckingham Express*, 23 Dec. 1871 and 4 Feb. 1882.

²⁷⁴ TNA, WO 68/247.

²⁷⁵ TNA, WO 68/249.

A random sample of 260 men from the Roll Book shows, for those who were no longer serving (180), an average age at time of enlistment of 18.8 years and an average service of 4.8 years. For those still serving in 1907 (80) the average age at time of enlistment was 19.2 years and the average service was 2.6 years. Of these, 20 (25 per cent) had served just a year and 17 less than a year (21.2 per cent). Of the 180 who were no longer serving, 62 had left at the end of their term of service (34.4 per cent); 61 had enlisted in the army (33.8 per cent), of whom 18 entered the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and eight the Royal Berkshire Regiment; 19 had purchased their discharge (10.5 per cent); 18 had been invalided out or discharged as unfit (10 per cent); nine had deserted or been recorded as absenting themselves (5 per cent); six had been discharged (3.3 per cent) of whom two received free discharges, and two were discharged for felony; four had died (2.2 per cent), of whom one was killed in the South African War, and one died on active service in South Africa; and one had no reason recorded. Places of birth were not consistently recorded with place of enlistment (usually Aylesbury, Slough or Wycombe) substituted. Of those whose place of birth was recorded, most were in the south of the county. Only eight men were recorded as being born out county, four from Berkshire, two from Oxfordshire, and one each from Bedfordshire and Middlesex.

More detail is available from the regiment's attestation forms.²⁷⁶ A sample of 670 men attested between 1886 and 1898 shows the continuing preponderance of those who described themselves simply as labourers (64.3 per cent).

However, it is noticeable that Wycombe chair makers were just as likely to enlist in the militia as the volunteers albeit that most of those in the militia were the very youngest. There were also a sizeable number of recruits from the boot and shoe trade at Chesham, where eight major manufacturers were situated by

²⁷⁶ TNA, WO 96.

the end of the nineteenth century. An interesting sidelight was that eleven men employed as furriers at Wycombe by Messrs. Phillips also enlisted.

With the exception of a few men in trades, the regiment was overwhelmingly reliant upon manual workers. The average age was 18.8 with no less than 557 men under the age of 20 (83.1 per cent), and 295 of them just 17 (44 per cent). Of the remainder, 94 were between 20 and 29 (14 per cent), and just 19 over 30 (23.8 per cent). Compared to the roll book, details of residence are full. In all, 122 men were from Chesham or its immediate vicinity (18.2 per cent), and 109 from Wycombe and its immediate vicinity (16.2 per cent). There were certain concentrations in the vicinity of Slough (37 or 5.5 per cent), Marlow (29 or 4.3 per cent), Aylesbury (27 or 4 per cent), Princes Risborough and Bledlow (26 or 3.8 per cent), Wendover (26 or 3.8 per cent), Great and Little Missenden and Prestwood (24 or 3.5 per cent), and the Chalfonts (16 or 2.3 per cent).

It is noticeable that the great majority of men were enlisted in the south of the county, bearing out the earlier comment by Sanford in 1881 that most recruits were found within relatively easy distance of the regimental headquarters. There were very few men indeed from the north - only twelve from Buckingham and its surrounding villages, twelve from Newport Pagnell or Olney, six from Stony or Fenny Stratford, and just one from Wolverton. Interestingly, an 18 year old fitter from Hanslope was employed by the LNWR at Wolverton and one of the Stony Stratford men - 19 year old John Cox - was a machinist with the LNWR and had previously served in the Bucks Rifle Volunteers. Indeed, some men from northern or western parishes joined the Oxfordshire rather than the Royal Bucks.

Table 6.2 Royal Bucks King's Own Militia Attestations, 1886-98

Occupation		
Trade	17	2.5%
Clerk	1	0.1%
Boot & Shoe Trade	57	8.5%
Chair making	70	10.4%
Furrier Trade	11	1.6%
Crafts and Skilled Manual	29	4.3%
Servants	7	1.0%
Labourers	431	64.3%
Other Unskilled Manual	47	7.0%
Total	670	

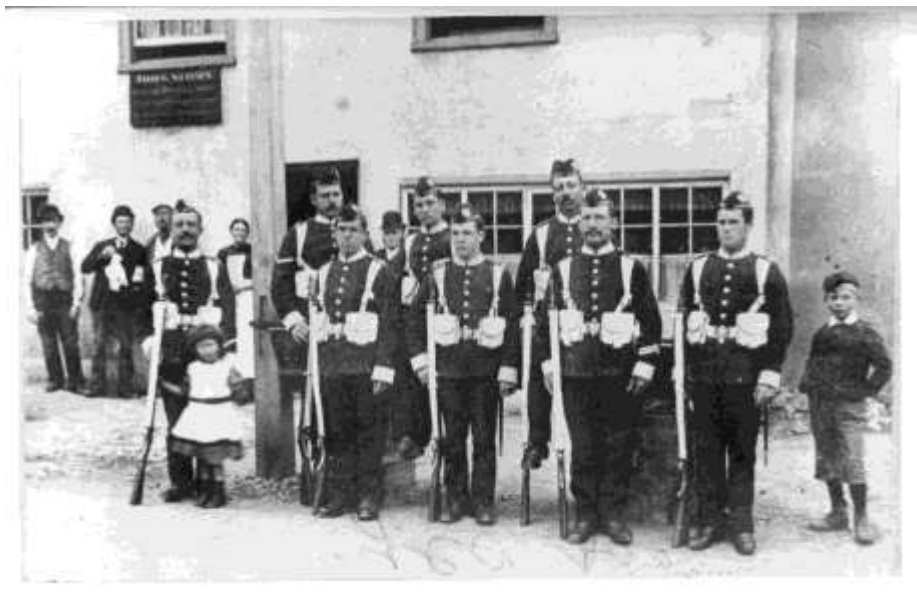
Source: TNA, WO 96

In 1870 it became possible to call out the militia for imminent national danger or emergency. Under the 1875 Militia (Voluntary Enlistment) Act voluntary offers could be accepted for the Channel Islands, Gibraltar, and Malta. In 1882 it was confirmed that 75 per cent of a unit must do so for such an offer to be accepted, but no man would be compelled to go overseas against his will. In fact, no militiamen went overseas between 1857 and 1899, although some militia units were embodied during the Penjdeh crisis in 1885.

The militia's profile rested largely on the annual training. This continued much as before, with the usual notices sent to constables to be affixed to doors or

walls of places of worship summoning men to appear.²⁷⁷ As the *Bucks Advertiser*'s correspondent reported on the training at Wycombe in May 1860,²⁷⁸

Our town has been the scene of much excitement since Monday last, from the annual calling out of the Royal Bucks Militia numbering about 800, the Abbey being their headquarters. The green meadows around are dotted with red-coats, while the streets are literally charged with them at all hours when off drill, the noise and excitement reaching its culminating point at nine o'clock in the evening, when the band of fifes and drums marches through the principal streets to the manifest admiration of the "small boys", and, in some instances of "children of a larger growth".



Men from the RBKOM outside the Red Cow in Buckingham Street, Aylesbury during the annual training in May 1892 [BA]

²⁷⁷ BA, D-CN 21/2/38, Notice, 9 Feb. 1864.

²⁷⁸ *Bucks Advertiser*, 5 May 1860.

The annual inspection that ended the proceedings continued to ‘constitute one of the holidays most enjoyed by the inhabitants’ for, as the *Bucks Herald* reported in May 1862, military spectacles ‘always draw a large number of lookers-on, and in this instance the evolutions having been gone through in a spot celebrated for its natural beauties, it will not be wondered at that a concourse of persons, both gentle and humble, gathered together on Monday last in Lord Carrington’s park’. ²⁷⁹ In 1869 annual training coincided with the presentation of new Colours by the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, for which Pratt also prepared a short, printed regimental history. ²⁸⁰ Interestingly, Pratt later told Buckingham that the 2nd Lord Carrington ‘never would allow the subject [of a history] to be mentioned’, presumably as it would have emphasised the Grenville connection to the militia. ²⁸¹

Other than the annual training, the permanent staff and the band maintained a presence at High Wycombe. NCOs from the staff, for example, exercised boys each morning at the Board School in the ‘Swedish drill’. ²⁸² Rather similarly, a drill sergeant from the yeomanry was attached to Buckingham Collegiate School in 1887. ²⁸³ Naturally enough, the militia permanent staff was visible in any particular civic celebrations, as in the case of that for the Queen’s jubilee in June 1897 when the town also played host to the contingent of the New South Wales Lancers, of which Carrington was honorary colonel as a result of his time

²⁷⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 31 May 1862.

²⁸⁰ *Bucks Chronicle*, 22 May 1869; *Buckingham Express*, 22 May 1869; *Short History of Royal Bucks*, 8-9.

²⁸¹ HHL, STG 105, Pratt to Buckingham, 25 May 1871.

²⁸² *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1 Sept. 1877.

²⁸³ *Buckingham Express*, 26 Nov. 1887.

in the colony.²⁸⁴ One of the more unusual duties of the RBKOM was to provide a night guard for a balloon that landed at Botolph Claydon in May 1869.²⁸⁵

The RBKOM band was in much demand, although its participation in local events came at a price. In July 1860 it was reported that one bandsman had held out for £8 to appear at the united fete of the town's two institutes when the committee could only afford £6 and that had been agreed by other bandsmen. As a result a civilian band was secured from Kingston-on-Thames. The counter-claim was that £7 had been agreed and the militia band would have appeared if the agreement had been kept.²⁸⁶ Advertisements were even placed in the local press advertising its availability for fetes and garden parties.²⁸⁷ In April 1881, the RBKOM band was undercut by the band of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers on the occasion of a meeting of the Buckingham Horticultural Society. Rifle volunteer bands from Northamptonshire and London had suggested respectively 17s.6d and a guinea a man, whereas the Bucks volunteers charged a flat fee of 10 guineas compared to the RBKOM offer of 15 guineas.²⁸⁸

The 1st Bucks Volunteers offered its band's services at the Buckingham Horticultural Society Show in May 1885, suggesting 15 men could be supplied for 10s.0d with six men additionally being available for £2.10s.0d, or eight men for £3 at the subsequent evening dance. Playing during the evening fireworks would cost another 21s.0d. The militia offered 20 men for £20 with other offers received from the Northants volunteers, the 2nd Oxfordshire Volunteers, and the Oxford City Band. A resolution was put before the planning meeting to employ

²⁸⁴ *South Bucks Free Press*, 25 June 1897.

²⁸⁵ *Western Mail*, 28 May 1869.

²⁸⁶ *Bucks Chronicle*, 21 July, and 8 Aug. 1860.

²⁸⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 30 June 1877.

²⁸⁸ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 Apl. 1881.

the 1st Bucks. It was defeated with the job allocated to the Oxford City Band, which had offered 20 bandsmen for £15 and a dance band for £4.²⁸⁹ The Oxford City Band again won out in 1888, their bid this time of £15 being preferred to the 11s.0d a man offered by the band of the Wolverton Volunteer Company.²⁹⁰ Pointedly perhaps, the *South Bucks Free Press* suggested in May 1891 that some free concerts by the RBKOM band in the Abbey grounds or on the Rye would be welcome during the annual training as military music was only heard emanating from the officer's mess in the Red Lion and at church parade.²⁹¹



'F' Company of the RBKOM at Aylesbury, 1896 [BMMT]

Irrespective of haggling, the RBKOM band was a frequent presence at civic events such as the Crendon Lane Chapel Bazaar in Wycombe in August 1861; the Penn Harvest Home in September 1863; the Whit Monday joint procession of the Buckingham Oddfellows, Foresters and Tradesmen's' Provident Society in May 1866; the Marlow Horticultural Society Grand Fete in June 1869; the Quainton Bazaar in August 1872; the Marlow Regatta in August 1879; the

²⁸⁹ *Buckingham Express*, 16 May 1885; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 May 1885.

²⁹⁰ *Buckingham Express*, 24 Mar. 1888.

²⁹¹ *South Bucks Free Press*, 8 May 1891.

Aylesbury Floral and Horticultural Society meeting in July 1888; and that of the Royal and Central Bucks Agricultural Association annual meeting at Wycombe Abbey September 1888.²⁹² It even provided music for ‘Professor’ Whitworth’s demonstration of electro-biology mesmerism in Wycombe in April 1862.²⁹³ Generally, reports were very favourable. In April 1881, however, it was suggested that the ‘pudding-headed yokels’ of the RBKOM band - playing ‘music-hall tunes very much out of tune’ - were paid to go away from outside the Red Lion in Wycombe on the night before Disraeli’s funeral.²⁹⁴

As in the 1850s, the 2nd Lord Carrington continued to demand good conduct of his men, noting that the departure of the RBKOM from High Wycombe at the end of its annual training was a cause of regret to the town in both 1864 and 1866. In 1867 he received a petition from the town ‘expressing the pleasure which their [the regiment’s] good behaviour and quiet and orderly conduct have afforded us and to tender our best thanks to the officers and staff for preserving such good discipline, so beneficial to the men, and so conducive to the comfort and welfare of the town’. Further testimonials followed in 1868 and 1869. Likewise, Caulfeild Pratt, urged men after the 1868 annual training period ‘to be careful to follow that mode of life which becomes the true Christian soldier.’²⁹⁵ Once more, the mayor, council and inhabitants of Wycombe praised the regiment in May 1869: ‘During the period of their station in this town, it would have scarcely seemed possible for a town to be so quiet as this has been during

²⁹² *Bucks Chronicle*, 24 Aug. 1861; *Bucks Herald*, 26 Sept. 1863, 19 June 1869, 3 Aug. 1872, 16 Aug. 1879, and 7 July 1888; *Buckingham Express*, 26 May 1866; *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 13 September 1888.

²⁹³ *South Bucks Free Press*, 25 Apl. 1862.

²⁹⁴ *The Sporting Times*, 30 Apl. 1881.

²⁹⁵ *Records of RBKOM* (High Wycombe, 1868), Pratt to Regiment, 26 Apl. 1868.

the whole training while containing so large a body of men in addition to its ordinary inhabitants.’²⁹⁶

As with the other auxiliary forces, local prestige needed to be maintained. It did not sit well in 1862 that a drummer, Frederick Humphries, had left Mary Dennis of Hazlemere pregnant, but could not legally be obliged to pay maintenance until after his term of militia service ended.²⁹⁷ The militia was notified in December 1865 that a former Bucks police constable, who had left without ‘certificate of character’ for defrauding accounts, had been allowed to join the permanent staff. The 3rd Duke could not believe that the militia had known of this and feared ‘an unpleasant discussion might probably arise’.²⁹⁸ In July 1871 two privates - one from Aylesbury and the other from Dinton - were at once dismissed for drunkenness.²⁹⁹ In 1896 when three RBKOM men from Wolverton and Stantonbury were found guilty of stealing logs from a platelayers’ hut and fined 7s.6d each, it was made clear that they had done so before enlisting so that the regiment’s reputation would be preserved.³⁰⁰

In May 1899 there were two significant problems for the RBKOM. First, it was reported that those assembling at Wycombe before going to Buckingham for the annual training were drunk.³⁰¹ Then in a widely publicised case, Corporal Charles Tilbury was arrested at Buckingham under suspicion of murdering his wife, Rosetta, by drowning her in the Grand Junction Canal at Uxbridge after quarrelling with her when temporarily back there from Buckingham on leave. In the event, it was deemed that there was insufficient evidence to proceed with a

²⁹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 25 May 1867; TNA, WO 68/242, Town Council to Pratt, 15 May 1869.

²⁹⁷ *South Bucks Free Press*, 18 Apr. 1862.

²⁹⁸ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 156.

²⁹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 1 July 1871.

³⁰⁰ *Bucks Standard*, 11 Jan. 1896.

³⁰¹ *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 20 May 1899.

prosecution.³⁰² In both 1890 and 1892, non-attendance of the children of the NCOs of the permanent staff at school was especially stamped upon.³⁰³

There were concerted efforts to keep the militiamen out of trouble during annual training. In 1860 the *South Bucks Free Press* urged its readers to do more to offer ‘rational entertainment’ to ‘young unsophisticated men from the country’; only lectures, sermons and evening classes were currently provided by philanthropic organisations. Sermons were very much the order of the day with distribution of religious tracts and representatives from home missions active among the men.³⁰⁴ Rather similarly, at Aylesbury in 1892 the YMCA opened its premises on Rickford’s Hill as a reading room with refreshments at low prices, whilst there were gospel services in the Corn Exchange. In 1895 in Aylesbury, the Victoria Club in Kingsbury Square was opened for refreshments while the Wesleyan Schoolroom was used as a reading room, and lantern slide shows given in St John’s Schoolroom, usually of a religious nature.³⁰⁵ At Wycombe in 1896 a ‘Militia Club’ was established in Crendon Street as a place where men could read and write letters.³⁰⁶ The Woolpack in Wycombe, however, was placed out of bounds to militia recruits in 1895, and the Hen and Chickens similarly in Aylesbury in 1896.³⁰⁷

³⁰² *Northern Echo*, 27 May 1899; *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 May 1899; *Belfast Newsletter*, 5 June 1899; *Daily News*, 5 June 1899; *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 7 June 1899.

³⁰³ TNA, WO 68/248, Orders, 18 July 1890; 22 July 1892.

³⁰⁴ *South Bucks Press*, 26 May 1860, 16 May 1862, 2 June 1865; *Bucks Herald*, 19 May 1866.

³⁰⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Apr. 1892; 4 May 1895.

³⁰⁶ *South Bucks Free Press*, 28 Feb. 1896.

³⁰⁷ TNA, WO 68/248, Orders, 23 Mar. 1895; 17 May 1896.

There was a departure from the annual training at Wycombe when it was switched to Aldershot in 1873, it being held that this had resulted in lower recruitment.³⁰⁸ Training had been split between Wycombe and Aldershot in 1871 and 1872. Annual training again took place at Aldershot in 1878, 1880, 1881, 1888, 1889, 1890 and 1894, with accommodation during the 1876 autumn manoeuvres at Minchinhampton Common and under canvas at Churn in 1897.

The inhabitants of Aylesbury were somewhat apprehensive when, after so many years of militia training at Wycombe, it was proposed to switch to Aylesbury in 1887 largely on the initiative of its colonel, Edward Dyke Lee of Hartwell.³⁰⁹ It was calculated that Aylesbury could make at least £5,000 from militia business based on what had been the usual level of spending at Wycombe. Such business included the provision of food and groceries as advertised for tender in 1882.³¹⁰ Wycombe was somewhat aggrieved to lose the trade, especially when some members of the Aylesbury Local Board of Health cast a stigma on the regiment by suggesting its members were a 'low lot'.³¹¹

In the event, all went off smoothly, with a strength of 658 all ranks coming to the town by rail from Wycombe, although accommodation was stretched by the unexpected arrival of a regular artillery battery. Exercises were held on ground in New Street with musketry practice at Hartwell, and the headquarters established in the Judges Lodgings. The band played in the Market Square on some evenings, whilst Aylesbury Wesleyans provided entertainments including an afternoon tea.³¹² Such was the business generated that 506 leading

³⁰⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 21 Mar. 1874.

³⁰⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Dec. 1886.

³¹⁰ *South Bucks Free Press*, 17 Feb. 1882.

³¹¹ *Bucks Herald*, 19 Feb., and 5 Mar. 1887; *Bucks Standard*, 12 Mar. 1887.

³¹² *Bucks Herald*, 14 and 21 May 1887; *Short History of Royal Bucks*, 10.

inhabitants signed a memorial urging the regiment to return: it did so in 1892, 1895, 1896, and 1898.³¹³ The only damage, and that contested, was to a water closet in County Hall.³¹⁴



The RBKOM assembled in 'quarter column' at Buckingham, 1899 [BMMT]

Perhaps inevitably, there were always some difficulties. For whatever reason, some men would miss the annual training, would be classed as deserters and brought to court. In January 1867 Wycombe Magistrates Court fined Joseph Roadknight two guineas or two months in gaol if the fine was not paid, whilst David Hatchett (alias George Baker) received a fine of £5 or four months.³¹⁵ In December 1874 Henry Brickland was able to pay a £2.6s.6d fine and costs

³¹³ TNA, WO 68/242.

³¹⁴ BA, Q/AP/83/9, Quartermaster to Clerk of Peace, 7 June 1887.

³¹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Jan., and 2 Feb. 1867.

levied at Newport Pagnell Magistrates Court.³¹⁶ John Atkins was fined £2 or two months in gaol in February 1879, and Nathaniel Miles of Ligh Green, Chesham a fine of £2.0s.10d in November 1880. George Payne (alias George Taylor) could not pay his fine and costs of £5.11s.4d in May 1891, and went to gaol for two months.³¹⁷ In May 1871 Benjamin Church from Newport Pagnell was fortunate that his fine and costs of £2.8s.6d was paid by the curate, Rev. Merton Smith, sparing him two months' hard labour.³¹⁸ In May 1892 the charges against William Young at Aylesbury Petty Sessions were dropped when he was able to show he had been absent in Derbyshire when the training summons arrived.³¹⁹

The Chief Constable complained to the Midsummer Assizes in July 1867 that he had been instructed to send a constable to search for one deserter in Manchester. Although the police had only pursued 19 men over the last ten years, it was resolved that the RBKOM was responsible for its own deserters.³²⁰

Fraudulent enlistment also occurred occasionally. In May 1859 a deserter from the 80th Foot, George Palmer, enlisted fraudulently in the RBKOM at the Cross Keys on election-day in Wycombe. Already in the lock-up for the past 15 days, he was unable to pay the £10 fine, and was despatched to Aylesbury gaol to serve three months' hard labour.³²¹ Private Jesse Ayres was recovered by the army in April 1866, whilst Privates Lovell and Burrows were reclaimed from

³¹⁶ *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 12 Dec. 1874.

³¹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Feb. 1879; 20 Nov. 1880; 9 May 1891.

³¹⁸ *Buckingham Express*, 6 May 1871.

³¹⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 May 1892.

³²⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 6 July 1867.

³²¹ *South Bucks Free Press*, 21 May 1859.

the army in 1868.³²² Another offender was an apprentice bootmaker from Chesham, George Moulder, who had left his apprenticeship to enlist in the RBKOM in 1874: he was ordered to complete his contractual obligations or face three months in gaol.³²³ William Brown claimed in September 1882 to have resided in Newport Pagnell for twelve months when he was a stranger to the area.³²⁴ In 1873 Pratt offered to support the wives of men left destitute when their husbands were at training and where relief had been declined by the Board of Guardians.³²⁵

The RBKOM mustered 797 officers and men in 1867 and, two years later, still 794, although this fell 13 officers and 78 other ranks short of the establishment.³²⁶ It had declined to 645 officers and men by 1882 when the establishment remained 903. In 1891 it was still short of 250 men, although by 1895 it had recovered to 796 rank and file. This was still well below establishment.³²⁷

There would be occasions when the unchanging pattern of the agricultural year clashed with the annual training if it was varied from the usual period between seed time and harvest. Thus, Caulfeild Pratt suggested in March 1869 that training between Easter and Whitsun would suit the farmers ‘it being a dull time and will not prevent the men from obtaining work in the Hay harvest etc.’³²⁸ In March 1871 he again indicated that recruits would be best assembled in April, thereby meeting the wishes of the farmers and enabling the regiment as a whole

³²² TNA, WO 68/246.

³²³ *Bucks Herald*, 23 May 1874.

³²⁴ *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 9 Sept. 1882.

³²⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 24 and 31 May 1873.

³²⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 9 May 1867; HHL, STG Military 2 (7).

³²⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Mar. 1882; 4 May 1895; *South Bucks Standard*, 20 Feb. 1891.

³²⁸ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 103.

to return home in early June and ‘so make their arrangements, for the hay harvest.’³²⁹ In further letters the same month, Pratt pointed out that Whitsun would be the wrong time for any inspection as men would want to attend their clubs. He also indicated there could be no realistic prospect of calling men up until October if they were not trained before the harvest. Training would always be best between bean setting and harvest or between Easter and Michaelmas as masters tended to keep places open for men and they ‘would be safe in their places throughout the winter, which I very much question would be the case if called up later’.³³⁰

The War Office decision to order the RBKOM to participate in the autumn manoeuvres in 1876, which would draw men away at a crucial time, was widely condemned. The *Bucks Herald* commented that there was no militia officer in Bucks ‘who does not see the hardship of calling our labourers from the harvest for practically no essential object’. It also rendered null and void the advertisements already placed for billeting those who would otherwise have been on recruit training.³³¹ Billets had been in public houses in the past but, from 1871, they were shared between public houses and private lodgings.³³²

Postponement of the training in 1886 due to a smallpox outbreak in the county led Lee to point out that any autumn re-arrangement would cause hardship ‘by calling them out during harvest time’: training that year was cancelled.³³³ Cancellation of planned training at Aldershot and the substitution of Churn in

³²⁹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 113.

³³⁰ HHL, STG 105, Pratt to Buckingham, 20 and 22 Mar. 1871.

³³¹ *Bucks Herald*, 18 and 25 Mar. 1876.

³³² *Buckingham Express*, 29 Apl. 1871.

³³³ TNA, WO 68/242.

1897 equally caused problems, as it brought forward the recruit training.³³⁴

Postponement of training by the War Office from May to August in 1898 was also felt highly inconvenient, it being held that recruitment suffered as a result.

³³⁵ As in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the same consideration still applied to the yeomanry, the official date set for the annual training in 1885 being during hay making. As a result, Lieutenant Colonel Lord Chesham feared that ‘many of his men would not come’.³³⁶

The issue of civil employment was a major factor generally in the interdependence between the auxiliaries and the society from which they were recruited. Another rather different connection was the suspension of militia training in both April 1870 and April 1871 as a result of small pox outbreaks at High Wycombe. It had been intended to billet the permanent staff and recruits in Buckingham, but this would have risked spreading the disease. On the former occasion, there had been at least 130 cases of small pox since November 1869, with 15 deaths. Some 281 militiamen lived in Wycombe or its immediate vicinity. Eight militiamen had been among those succumbing and, in April 1870, two of the permanent staff were still down with the disease. In March 1871 two militiamen were down with small pox with at least six deaths occurring daily in Wycombe when 260 RBKOM resided in the town or its immediate vicinity.³³⁷ It was also thought necessary to prohibit the 2nd Bucks (Wycombe) RVC from attending the Easter Monday review at Brighton in 1870.³³⁸ There was some expectation that the training might be moved to

³³⁴ *South Bucks Free Press*, 26 Mar. 1897.

³³⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Apl., and 30 June 1898.

³³⁶ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 144-45.

³³⁷ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 108-10, 113-14; HHL, STG 8 (16); *Bucks Herald*, 9 Apl. 1870.

³³⁸ HHL, STG 197 (18), Marston to Army Medical Board, 20 Mar. 1870.

Buckingham, but it was suspended.³³⁹ By contrast, in March 1896 the children of the RBKOM permanent staff were directed to stay away from school so that they would not contract the measles sweeping Wycombe.³⁴⁰

As with the yeomanry, it was difficult to find younger officers with a sufficient county connection, Pratt telling Buckingham in March 1871 that if he was restricted entirely to the county then he could not find enough candidates. Indeed, he said he had ridden from Olney to Marlow to call on ‘almost all the young people’ of his acquaintance: ‘There is no inducement now for a young gentleman of the county to join, & those who had joined say they were deceived & put to expense.’³⁴¹ This was so even given the backdoor route into the army mentioned earlier available from 1872 onwards. A militia adjutancy, however, was an attractive proposition for those contemplating retirement from the army until, like the yeomanry, serving regulars were progressively appointed. In March 1871 Pratt received over 40 applications for the vacant adjutancy. The appointment went to Lieutenant Frederick Powell, formerly of the 49th Foot, and one of two existing officers in the RBKOM recommended as potential adjutants by Pratt. Powell, however, was a ‘county man’ and ‘will take a greater pride in the Corps than a stranger’. In the event, Powell, who became a Bucks magistrate in 1879, annoyed Pratt by wishing to be gazetted as Captain and Adjutant. Pratt also came to doubt Powell’s energy.³⁴²

Following concern at Fenian activities, including a plot to seize arms and ammunition at Chester in February 1867, there was not only a review of the precise status of auxiliaries acting in aid of the civil power, but also a major

³³⁹ *Buckingham Express* *Buckingham Express*, 9 and 16 Apl., and 23 July 1870.

³⁴⁰ TNA, WO 68/248, Order, 2 Mar. 1896.

³⁴¹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 112-13.

³⁴² Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 112.

examination of security arrangements. It was concluded that rifle volunteers could not be used as an armed body but only as citizens acting as special constables and armed with staves. They could use their military knowledge to combine. In the event of riots aiming at insurrection, felony or subversion of authority, however, magistrates could use them as an armed body. They were entitled to defend armouries with arms.

As for the review of security, the headquarters of the RBKOM at Wycombe Abbey was condemned. The armoury of the Eton RVC was secure. Stowe was also considered secure, although Charles Pilgrim had his doubts when only the sergeant instructor and his family were ordinarily resident in the Bourbon Tower armoury.³⁴³

There was a scare at Stowe in March 1867 when 30 or 40 ‘strangers’ appeared close to the Stowe butts. There were rumours that this was an intended Fenian attack by men from Northampton to coincide with St Patrick’s Day. Police were summoned as were yeomanry, rifle volunteers and estate workers. Nothing transpired, but police and yeomanry remained on guard for a week at the Bourbon Tower, the barracks in West Street and other points in Buckingham and at Stowe.³⁴⁴ Weapons from the volunteers’ armoury in County Hall were also distributed to the police as a precaution when two suspected Fenians apprehended in Wolverton were sent to Aylesbury Gaol in January 1868.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ BA, D-CN 21/2/42, Ward Report, 2 Sept. 1867; 21/2/29, Hewett to Carrington, 3 Dec. 1867; L/P 14, Carrington to War Office, 26 Mar. 1867; HHL, STG 197 (13), Pilgrim to Wells, 31 Dec. 1868.

³⁴⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 23 Mar. 1867; *North Wales Chronicle*, 30 Mar. 1867.

³⁴⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 4 Jan. 1868.

The only other hint of political violence came when Joseph Arch, the founder of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, held a public meeting in Buckingham on 21 May 1873. In the course of his speech Arch launched a 'tirade' against the auxiliary forces. A 'skirmish' ensued between 'roughs' acting as Arch's bodyguard and local yeomen. Some specials were sworn in but the trouble subsided quickly. The *Buckingham Express* absolved the yeomen from the charge aired in one correspondent's letter that they had been the aggressors and that this had amounted to military interference in politics.³⁴⁶ Branches of the Union had been formed in a number of parishes including Dinton, Haddenham and Whitchurch, and there was a labourers' strike at Swanbourne. In 1877 Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Hibbert pointed out that a report that the band of the non-existent 'North Bucks Yeomanry' had played at the union's procession in Brackley was entirely false. In any case, it would have been illegal.³⁴⁷

The yeomanry alone was left unscathed by Cardwell and, after the passing of the 1863 Volunteer Act, alone remained subject to the 1804 legislation. No minimum numbers were laid down until 1875. This was despite recommendations by the Lawrenson committee in 1861, the ostensible purpose of which was to find further economies. The committee recommended a decrease in officers' allowances when on duty. That was the only recommendation carried out, and was then overturned by the strength of the yeomanry lobby.³⁴⁸ No change was made in the now traditional eight days' annual training inclusive of travel and annual training was entirely dispensed

³⁴⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 14 May, and 24 June 1873.

³⁴⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 5 May 1877.

³⁴⁸ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 23-24.

with in 1860, 1861 and 1879 - the same had been true in 1849, 1851 and 1857 - on the grounds that the force had proved efficient previously.

In a situation analogous to the problems with small pox for the RBKOM, the Royal Bucks Yeomanry's annual training was postponed until September as a result of the cattle plague that struck the county in February 1866.³⁴⁹ Over 3,500 cattle were slaughtered in the north of the county, the 3rd Duke presiding over preventative measures as a whole as Lord President of the Council in the new Conservative government that took office in July 1866.³⁵⁰

It was also the case that despite the exhortations by both the Lawrenson committee and also the Stanley committee in 1875 against hiring in horses, the percentage of yeomanry doing so increased to 14 per cent by 1895; and would do so even more dramatically after the South African War.³⁵¹ Figures available on horse hire in Bucks are suggestive of the trend. At the 1880 training, 254 men attended on their own horses, while 37 were mounted by family or friends, and only 17 were hired (5.5 per cent). Two years later, 307 men attended the annual training on their own mounts, with 49 relying on family and friends and 42 hired (10.5 per cent). At the 1890 training, 183 were on their own horses with 60 borrowed from family or friends, and 66 hired (19.4 per cent). In 1891, 217 men had their own horses, 40 were those of family or friends, and 33 were hired (11.3 per cent).³⁵²

³⁴⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 26 May 1866; *Bucks Herald*, 2 June 1866.

³⁵⁰ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 17-18.

³⁵¹ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 26, 93.

³⁵² *Bucks Herald*, 26 Mar. 1881; 22 Mar. 1884; 21 Mar. 1891; 26 Mar. 1892.

Horse sales were often advertised with an emphasis on the horses' suitability for yeomanry work.³⁵³ Horses were also hired to pull the guns. In 1872, £4 was offered per horse for the eight days' training with stabling and forage provided by the regiment.³⁵⁴ The various prizes available at annual training were restricted to those riding their own horses, or those of family and friends.³⁵⁵ Disputes sometime arose over injuries to hired mounts. Thus, in September 1861 a Mursley publican, George Collyer, successfully sued George Mansell of Great Horwood - an army pensioner employed as a regimental drill sergeant - for £8 plus £1 costs for injury to a mare. In April 1876 an Aylesbury butcher, Charles Copcutt won £5.14s.0d damages against Hardy Warrener for injury to a hired horse.³⁵⁶

It was logical that the 3rd Duke should succeed his father in command of the 2nd Royal Bucks Yeomanry. Thomas Tyringham Bernard of Nether Winchendon was retiring after having served as lieutenant colonel for the last 19 of his 43 years in the regiment; he had once been persuaded to remain despite financial difficulties. Bernard wished to ensure the regiment would not 'fail from the inability of finding a Commander of sufficient rank and Station to keep it together'.³⁵⁷ Carrington indicated that he was glad to agree to the Duke's appointment.³⁵⁸

The regiment paraded in the late 2nd Duke's honour as the body was buried in the Grenville vault at Wotton. His son conveyed his thanks for to his father, 'it

³⁵³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 21 May 1864; *Bucks Herald*, 26 May 1888.

³⁵⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 4 Mar. 1872.

³⁵⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Mar. 1867.

³⁵⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 Sept. 1861; *Bucks Herald*, 15 Apl. 1876.

³⁵⁷ BA, ON 2/ (a), Chandos to Bernard, 4 Apl. 1832; D54/42 (vi), Bernard to Buckingham, 2 Apl. 1862; *Bucks Herald*, 19 May 1883.

³⁵⁸ BA, D54/42 (vii), Carrington to Bernard, 31 Mar. 1862.

was a soothing and grateful thought to him in failing health, to indulge the hopes that the Yeomanry would to the last reciprocate those feelings; and that when he himself should be no more, his beloved regiment would signalise their undiminished regard for their Colonel, by attending to their final resting place, his earthly remains.’³⁵⁹ Rather appropriately, the sword presented to the 2nd Duke by his yeomen back in May 1821 was placed on the coffin in the vault before it was bricked up. It was then stolen by a labourer, who broke into it, but was recovered and returned to the vault.³⁶⁰



Richard, Third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos as Honorary Colonel of the Royal Bucks Yeomanry, 1886-89 [BMMT]

³⁵⁹ HHL, STG 106 (65); BA, D54/44 (x); ON 2/11.

³⁶⁰ Fowler, *Recollections*, 84-85; *Morning Chronicle*, 30 May 1821; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 24 Feb. 1866; *Buckingham Express*, 28 June 1890.

The 3rd Duke had resigned his yeomanry commission in 1858, but was duly reinstated as lieutenant colonel in 1862, commanding until 1886 when he became honorary colonel. The regimental command then passed to Frederick Drummond Hibbert of Bucknell Hall, Bicester, a former regular with service in the Crimean War. Hibbert had been second in command since 1869 and was effective commander when the Duke was absent in Madras. George Manners Morgan of Biddlesden, succeeded as honorary colonel when the Duke died in 1889. Morgan's son, Luis married the duke's daughter in 1884, taking the name Morgan-Grenville in 1890. Morgan himself served in the regiment from 1858 to 1889, only briefly commanding it for a year in succession to Hibbert. Hibbert himself retired on grounds of age, but also because of the expense 'what with rents down to nothing'. ³⁶¹

In practice, the yeomanry came out voluntarily for reviews, parades and other exercises. Squadrons and troops would also hold drills locally. This was not necessarily easy if a troop was widely distributed. In 1873, for example, 'C' Troop had members at Aylesbury (7), Buckingham and Chackmore (4), Grandborough (2), Grendon Underwood (91), High Wycombe (14), Marsh Gibbon (1), North Marston (4), Oving (2), Quainton (10), Waddesdon (3), and Winslow (7). The 3rd Duke had no idea how men from Buckingham and Chackmore had ended up in the troop, and neither had the adjutant, Reginald Calvert (later Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire), who had replaced Wells. ³⁶²

Captain the Hon. James Drummond of Moreton Lodge, later 8th Viscount Strathallan, notified Buckingham in April 1882 that Sir Robert Harvey's troop

³⁶¹ HHL, STG 207, Hibbert to Morgan, 16 Mar. 1888.

³⁶² HLH, STG 99, Calvert to Buckingham, 21 Mar. and 8 Apl. 1873; Note by Buckingham, n. d.

would drill at Waddesdon, Sir Nathan Rothschild's at Aylesbury and Richard Purefoy FitzGerald's at High Wycombe.³⁶³ 'A' Troop had a field day in Padbury in April 1882 and drills at the Crown Inn, Tingewick.³⁶⁴ Troops would also be suitably entertained locally. Captain Charles Pilgrim of Akeley Wood provided a 'sumptuous breakfast' for all his troop and their families following artillery drill in July 1866, and followed with a ball at his house in the evening.³⁶⁵ Sir Robert Harvey entertained his troop to dinner at the Bell Hotel, Winslow in January 1871; and George Morgan of Biddlesden his at the Old Fleece Inn in Buckingham in May 1874.³⁶⁶ 'E' Troop had an annual shooting match at Bradwell.³⁶⁷ In 1890 the usual pattern for 'A' Troop at Buckingham was drill from 1700 to 1900 on Mondays and Wednesdays in Tingewick, on Tuesdays at Steeple Claydon, on Fridays at Preston Bisset, and on Saturdays at Biddlesden.³⁶⁸

The annual training was the highlight of the yeomanry year and, as in the case of the militia and volunteers, it brought spectacle and trade. It was usually held on the 100-acre 'Cavalry Drill Ground' at Stowe. In 1873, the *Buckingham Express* noted that the town had escaped the disadvantages of becoming a military depot with a permanent presence of potentially troublesome regulars. But it retained the advantages of the annual presence 'where every man in the ranks has kindred ties with the crowd of spectators, and most of those who come to witness the spectacle have some personal friend, of not nearer and

³⁶³ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 93, 101, 122-23, 135.

³⁶⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 22 Apl. 1882; 14 Apl. 1883.

³⁶⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 14 July 1866.

³⁶⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 7 Jan. 1871; 16 May 1874.

³⁶⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 29 July 1882.

³⁶⁸ HHL, STG Military 3 (8).

dearer connexions among the civilian faces'.³⁶⁹ It was feared in 1877 that the training would pass to Aylesbury, seen as another blow to Buckingham after the loss of its status as county town, its assizes and its gaol. Hibbert favoured the switch as more men now came from the centre and south, and Stowe had lost its attraction with the Duke absent in Madras. In the event, the training that year was split between Buckingham and Aylesbury with four days at each.³⁷⁰

The return to Buckingham in 1878 was greeted enthusiastically, the *Buckingham Advertiser* commenting, 'The clatter of swords on the pavement, the galloping of horses in the streets, and busy scenes at the Inn yards, once again being back to remembrance the old days of the regiment.' It was so fond of the image conveyed that it repeated the description almost word for word in 1880, 1881, and 1882.³⁷¹ In 1887 the inspection day was brought forward to the Friday so that it was quieter than usual whereas a Saturday inspection would always take on the appearance of a general holiday.³⁷² It was certainly suggested that the annual training was worth £2,000-£3,000 a year to Buckingham.³⁷³

Apart from the actual military exercises including sham fights and the formal regimental inspection, annual training also meant the now traditional competitions for regimental prizes for swordsmanship, carbine exercise, knowledge of gun drill for the artillery, and for the best recruits.³⁷⁴ In June

³⁶⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 24 May 1873.

³⁷⁰ HHL, STG 102, Hibbert to Buckingham, 22 May 1877; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 Apr. 1877; *Buckingham Express*, 26 May 1877.

³⁷¹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 11 May 1878; 8 May 1880; 21 May 1881; 13 May 1882.

³⁷² *Bucks Herald*, 28 May 1887.

³⁷³ *Bucks Advertiser*, 11 May 1872.

³⁷⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Mar. 1867; *Buckingham Express*, 21 Oct. 1876.

1865 it was claimed that a new challenge cup presented by the Rev. William Uthwatt of Maids Moreton had been won unfairly by a member of the artillery troop through some restriction on entrants. Similarly, in May 1875 there was some controversy when some alleged the award for swordsmanship had not been impartial, but this was refuted by the inspector who had awarded it.³⁷⁵

Nathan Meyer de Rothschild put up a £20 Yeomanry Cavalry Cup for his Aylesbury Troop that was then competed for annually over a three mile course from 1877 onwards. This was usually at the Princes Risborough Steeplechase although, occasionally, at the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt Steeplechase.³⁷⁶ The annual regimental prize shooting first organised in 1872, would take place separately, whilst the officers had an annual dinner in London.³⁷⁷ In September 1884 there was a ‘Grand Military Tournament’ at Buckingham with such competitions as tent pegging, lemon cutting, and tilting at the ring.³⁷⁸ Rather similarly, there was a Military Assault at Arms in Buckingham in May 1889, as well as a Regimental Horse Show.³⁷⁹

The yeomanry races generally were revived at Stowe in the 1870s, whilst the training would culminate with the annual yeomanry dinner and ball.³⁸⁰ The 1872 ball in Buckingham Town Hall was attended by over 250 guests, ‘comprising representatives of all the leading families of the county’.³⁸¹ In 1898

³⁷⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 and 17 June 1865; 22 May 1875; *Buckingham Express*, 29 May 1875; *Bucks Herald*, 22 May 1875.

³⁷⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Mar. 1877; 16 Mar. 1878; 12 Apl. 1879; 17 Apl. 1880.

³⁷⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 14 July 1860; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 July 1873.

³⁷⁸ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 20 Sept. 1884.

³⁷⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 11 May 1889; *Buckingham Express*, 11 May 1889.

³⁸⁰ HHL, STG Military 3 (11), 4(3), 5 (3); *Buckingham Express*, 7 Mar. 1874.

³⁸¹ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 3 Feb. 1872.

the regiment was reviewed by the Prince of Wales, who also made an official visit to Buckingham.³⁸²

The RBY band was in constant employment under its long-serving bandmaster, Ambrose Nelson, who succeeded his father, George, in the position in 1831. Nelson, who owned a pianoforte and music selling business in Buckingham and later resided at Great Horwood, dispensed with the reed section to make the band a purely brass one. Some musicians were local, but most came from London and elsewhere. The decision to concentrate on local musicians was taken when Nelson finally retired at the age of 73 in 1890: he had been retained as an honorary member after compulsory retirement was introduced. His successor was Robert Payne, formerly with the 4th Hussars. Presented with a suitable silver salver on his retirement, Nelson died in 1904.³⁸³

Under Payne's direction, the band was one of a few military bands to make early recordings on Berliner cylinders in November 1899.³⁸⁴ The band's rendition of 'The Deep Blue Sea' with a piccolo solo on 28 November 1899 survives.³⁸⁵ At some point after 1861 the 'Royal Bucks Yeomanry March' dedicated to the 3rd Duke was composed by E. M. Pellatt. It was twice performed in Madras in 1877 when the Duke was Governor-General, and was also certainly heard at the annual review at Stowe in 1882.³⁸⁶

The band played at the marriage of Thomas Fremantle at Swanbourne in October 1859; the Leckhamstead Club anniversary meeting in June 1860; the

³⁸² *Bucks Herald*, 28 May 1898; *Buckingham Express*, 21 May 1898.

³⁸³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 23 May 1885; 29 Nov. 1890.

³⁸⁴ Herbert and Barlow, *Music and British Military*, 235.

³⁸⁵ BL, 1CD0028844/2CD0007302.

³⁸⁶ BA, T/A 3/515 [BMMT 358]; *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb., and 178 May 1877; 27 May 1882.

Chetwode and Barton Hartshorn harvest home in September 1864; the harvest festival at Great Horwood in September 1872; the Buckingham Oddfellows Fete in July 1875; the christening of Egerton Hubbard's son at Addington Park in July 1883; the golden wedding of the Hon. J. G. Hubbard at Addington in June 1887; and the flowers, fruit and vegetable show at Whittlebury Lodge in August 1887.³⁸⁷

Sport was another regimental activity. The regiment played cricket against the Buckingham club, for example, in June 1865.³⁸⁸ In April 1878 it faced the Oxfordshire Yeomanry in a shooting match, which was won by the latter.³⁸⁹ It was intended that there would be a cricket match between the two regiments at Wilton Park in September 1891, but it proved too difficult to arrange.³⁹⁰

A rather different spectacle was provided by military funerals. There was that for Corporal Bull in Newport Pagnell in June 1859; Sergeant Major Baker of the Olney Troop in June 1864; George Lucas, the former commanding officer of the Olney Troop in October 1864; and that for Sergeant Major Schmitz of the yeomanry staff at Buckingham in June 1882. A former regular with service in the Crimea and India, Baker had left a widow and young daughter. It was suggested over 1,000 attended, this being the first military funeral in the town in 50 years. A German by birth, Schmitz had served in one of the East India Company's European regiments before transferring to the 20th Hussars. About

³⁸⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 15 Oct. 1859; 28 Sept. 1872; 21 July 1883; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 23 June 1860; 24 Sept. 1864; 17 July 1875; *North Bucks Times*, 9 June 1887; *Buckingham Express*, 13 Aug. 1887.

³⁸⁸ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 June 1865.

³⁸⁹ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 27 Apl. 1878.

³⁹⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 4, and 11 Sept. 1891.

150 yeomen attended, a fund also being started for his widow and children.³⁹¹

Rather similarly, the military funeral for a member of the Aylesbury RVC, James Durley of Bierton, in November 1861 was the first such event there in 50 years.³⁹²

In 1872, the RBY attended the volunteer review at Wakefield Lawn, the Duke of Grafton's Northamptonshire seat, along with the Bucks volunteers.³⁹³

Charles Chester, who attended with the Bucks Volunteers described it as 'quite a *sight* the day of races, & Inspection; *thousands* of visitors, pedestrians [,] equestrians & carriages filled with smart people from all parts of the country'.

³⁹⁴ In 1864 the 3rd Duke spent £598 on entertaining the yeomen and their families at the time of the completion of an obelisk dedicated to his father in Stowe Park close to the Bourbon Tower and the Cavalry Drill Ground. The obelisk itself, costing £230, was funded by the regiment's other ranks.³⁹⁵

In December 1882 the regiment was on hand to welcome General Lord Wolseley when he visited Cyril Flower at Aston Clinton.³⁹⁶ Fifteen years later Wolseley inspected the regiment at Stowe in the company of Francis (later Field Marshal Lord) Grenfell of Butlers Court, Beaconsfield, the cousin of William Henry Grenfell (later Lord Desborough) of Taplow Court. Grenfell noted,

³⁹¹ *Bucks Chronicle*, 8 June 1859; *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 4 June 1864; *Bucks Herald*, 22 Oct. 1864; *Buckingham Express*, 24 June 1882.

³⁹² *Bucks Chronicle*, 2 Nov. 1861.

³⁹³ Wethered, 'Reminiscences', 149.

³⁹⁴ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 110-11.

³⁹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 3 June 1865; *Croydon's Weekly Standard*, 3 June 1865; Bevington, 'Bourbon Tower', 13-15.

³⁹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Dec. 1882.

‘Horses good, a great number of them the property of the Yeomen.’³⁹⁷

Similarly, a detachment appeared, as did the volunteers, at the opening of Burnham Beeches to the public in October 1883, the area having been purchased by the Corporation of London three years earlier to protect it as a green space.³⁹⁸

A special detachment of the Royal Bucks Hussars, as the regiment became on 30 July 1889,³⁹⁹ escorted Queen Victoria from Slough to Windsor on her return from her Diamond Jubilee celebrations in London in June 1897.⁴⁰⁰ This was something of a triumph given that some years earlier the Queen had apparently declined an escort on the grounds of her objections to the regiment’s ‘indifferent horsemanship’.⁴⁰¹ The occasion appears to have been the Queen’s visit to Waddesdon Manor in 1890.⁴⁰² In the Jubilee year the Royal Bucks Hussars also provided an escort for the King of Siam’s visit to Taplow Court.⁴⁰³

The 3rd Duke died in 1889 without direct male heirs. As in the case of his father, the regiment was in full attendance at the funeral.⁴⁰⁴ Stowe was leased out to the head of the French Orléanists, the Comte de Paris, until 1896. Stowe, however, remained the regular venue for the exercises of the Royal Bucks

³⁹⁷ Middle East Centre, St Anthony’s College, Oxford (hereafter MEC), Grenfell Mss, GB 165-0319, Box 30, Diary, 20 May 1897.

³⁹⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 6 and 13 Oct. 1883.

³⁹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 3 Aug. 1889.

⁴⁰⁰ NAM, 1987-07-10, Printed notice of congratulations for the regiment’s service, 23 June 1897.

⁴⁰¹ Mrs James de Rothschild, *The Rothschilds at Waddesdon Manor* (London: Collins, 1979), 47.

⁴⁰² *Bucks Herald*, 17 May 1890.

⁴⁰³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 July 1897.

⁴⁰⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 6 Apl. 1889.

Hussars, although the headquarters moved to Yeomanry House in Hunter Street, Buckingham. The latter, formerly a ladies' seminary built in the 1860s, had been purchased in early 1886. It was opened in time for that year's annual training in May as an officer's club, but with attached stabling for the regiment as a whole. A cell in the Old Gaol was also rented as an ammunition store.⁴⁰⁵ In 1898 when the Prince of Wales inspected the RBH, the mess was in the hands of Mr Luck for the seventh year in succession with the food prepared by the chef, Mons. Bequinot. Fourteen officers stayed in Hunter Street, whilst Lord Chesham was lodged in 'Hamilton' at the invitation of Dr G. H. De'Ath, with Lionel de Rothschild and another officer in the White House, and two others at Brookfield. The festivities included squadron 'smokers' at the *Woolpack*, as well as a military tournament and a horse show.⁴⁰⁶

Musketry and artillery practice was held at the range close to the Bourbon Tower at Stowe, which was used as a magazine and also a residence for the yeomanry's drill instructor.⁴⁰⁷ New butts had been erected at Stowe by the Duke in June 1864.⁴⁰⁸ In the 1980s an enterprising pupil at Stowe School uncovered a wide variety of musket flints, cannon balls, rifle bullets, cartridge cases, and Maxim rounds in the vicinity of the old ranges. A Nordenfelt machine gun round was also found when the Oxford Water was drained in 1987.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Apl., and 8 May 1886; *Buckingham Express*, 29 May 1886, and 8 Oct. 1892..

⁴⁰⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 21 May 1898.

⁴⁰⁷ For reports on artillery practice, see HHL, STG 197 (12), Fitzgerald to Calvert, 16 Dec. 1868; (34), Fitzgerald report, 18 Mar. 1873.

⁴⁰⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 4 June 1864.

⁴⁰⁹ Bevington, 'Bourbon Tower', 15-16; F. A. Hudson, 'Cannonball Harris and the Firing Range at Stowe', *The Stoic* 30 (1989), 329-34.

Training was rarely realistic and the yeomanry as a whole was to prove resistant to the introduction of musketry requirements, remaining wedded to cold steel, albeit that musketry instruction was introduced in 1870 along with the need to attend a minimum of eight squad and four troop drills and commit to a three-year engagement to be regarded as efficient.⁴¹⁰ In fact, the RBY won the competition for mounted riflemen at the National Rifle Association's annual Wimbledon meeting in 1880, 1881 and 1882.⁴¹¹ Bucks yeomen were equally successful in competitions at the Royal Military Tournament. Between 1881 and 1902, the Bucks won 42 prizes in the various competitions such as lemon cutting, tent pegging, lance and bayonet, sword versus lance and so on. No less than 22 of the prizes were won by W. T. Keen, and six by R. Dudley.⁴¹² Prior to 1876 the artillery had also competed at Shoeburyness.⁴¹³

In 1875 the Stanley Committee proposed an additional two days' training in the form of troop drills but this, and a recommendation for six months rather than 14 days' notice of resignation, was rejected. The yeomanry was put under military law in the case of training, exercise and aid to the civil power, but it was only in 1888 that the National Defence Act made the force liable to serve anywhere in Britain upon the embodiment of the militia. In 1885 both James Poynter and Purefoy Fitzgerald volunteered to replace any regular officers for six months where they had been sent out from home postings to the campaign in

⁴¹⁰ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 25.

⁴¹¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 July 1881; *Leeds Mercury*, 22 July 1882.

⁴¹² *Daily News*, 20 and 23 June 1884; *Reynolds' Newspaper*, 28 June 1885; P. L. Binns, *The Story of the Royal Tournament* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1952), 103-09, 114, 116, 118-20, 125, 134.

⁴¹³ HHL, STG 3 (3).

Bechuanaland.⁴¹⁴ Fitzgerald had seen previous service in the Indian Mutiny. The one Bucks yeomanry officer to see active service thereafter was Lieutenant Harry Hyde Hewett, son of the RBKOM adjutant, when a passenger in October 1876 on a Royal Navy vessel on the Niger commanded by his uncle, Commodore (later Vice Admiral) Sir William Hewett VC. Hewett resigned from the RBY in 1879 to accompany his uncle to the East Indies, which command William Hewett assumed in 1882. The regiment gave Harry Hewett a farewell dinner at the *Three Cups* in Buckingham.⁴¹⁵ Another officer of note was James Delap, an accomplished artist, who published *The Yeoman's Manual* in 1885. Subsequently, Delap produced a series of water colour images of the regiment's uniforms from 1794 onwards that appeared as illustrations to a chapter he contributed to John Grant's history of Buckinghamshire in 1911.⁴¹⁶

As the result of the Brownlow Committee in 1892, a capitation grant of £1 was given and, between 1893 and 1898, yeomanry was paired for brigade training with adjutants attached only to brigades. The Royal Bucks Hussars was placed in the 2nd Yeomanry Brigade. It was not entirely a success, Lord Chesham being somewhat displeased at the unnecessary expense when the brigade exercise in 1895 lasted only a single day after the Oxfordshire Yeomanry was excused attendance.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ *Buckingham Express* *Buckingham Express*, 7 Mar. 1885.

⁴¹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 9 Dec. 1876; 1 Mar. 1879.

⁴¹⁶ James Delap, *The Yeoman's Manual* (London: Clowes & Sons, 1885); Major James Delap, 'The Royal Bucks Hussars Imperial Yeomanry', in John Grant (ed.), *Buckinghamshire: A Short History with Genealogical Biographies* (London: Provincial Publishing Co., 1911), 21-49, The originals are held by BMMT as BMMT 236/1-13.

⁴¹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 4 May 1895.

A squadron system was also introduced in 1893 with a minimum number of 70 men and a maximum of 100. Two were located at Buckingham and one each at Northampton and High Wycombe, the former Newport Pagnell Troop being discontinued to accommodate the Northamptonshire men. A line was drawn from where the Cheddington to Aylesbury railway line entered the county to designate the boundaries between the Buckingham and Wycombe squadrons, the latter organising its drills at the Crown Hotel, Chesham; Nag's Head, Wycombe; White Lion, Quainton; the Hare, Leighton Buzzard; and the Dumb Bell, Taplow. Attainment of the capitation grant required six squadron drills (12 for recruits) and two mounted drills or attendance at the annual training. The regiment would earn £2 for each efficient man but be fined £2 for non-efficients.⁴¹⁸

Yeomanry training remained largely unrealistic. Its cost was proportionally more than militia or volunteers, and turn outs for annual inspections were often disappointing. In 1878 only 10,508 yeomen did so nationwide and only 8,829 in 1899, the force's overall strength having declined by that year to only 11,891.

⁴¹⁹ In Bucks in 1880 a total of 308 yeomen attended the annual training with 71 absent with leave and 22 without, the regiment also being short of 97 men on its establishment. In 1891 a total of 292 men attended the training, 49 being absent with leave and six without but the regiment was now 181 men short of establishment.⁴²⁰

The origin of the Northamptonshire squadron in 1893 resulted from Lord Chesham's move from Latimer to Holme Wood in Huntingdonshire. He

⁴¹⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 17 Mar. 1893.

⁴¹⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 189.

⁴²⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Mar. 1881; 26 Mar. 1892.

conceived of raising men in the vicinity as the Duke of Manchester's 1st Huntingdonshire Light Horse Volunteers had been disbanded in 1882, and the last Northamptonshire yeomanry troop - at Kettering - had gone in 1873. Chesham hoped for 80 recruits. Initially, it appears to have been designated as a Peterborough Squadron when it attended the annual training in 1894.⁴²¹ The eight troops were now based on Tingewick (A); Stony Stratford (B); High Wycombe (C); Akeley (D); Northampton, Peterborough, Kettering and Wellingborough (E); Aylesbury (F); and Buckingham (G and H). In 1895, with the formation of a second Northamptonshire Squadron, the squadrons were located at Buckingham and Winslow (A); Towcester, Akeley, Brackley and Daventry (B); Northampton, Peterborough, Kettering, Wellingborough, and Newport Pagnell (C); and High Wycombe, Beaconsfield, Aylesbury, Quainton, and Taplow (D).⁴²²

The Northamptonshire Squadron was discontinued in 1902 with the formation of the new Northamptonshire Yeomanry. RBH squadrons were then established at Aylesbury, Chesham, Stony Stratford, and High Wycombe, with headquarters at Buckingham. At the time there was only one yeoman in Amersham - Edwin King, a draper - and it was hoped that a display of troop prizes in his shop window might 'perhaps be the means of arousing interest, and bringing more recruits into the ranks'.⁴²³ A detachment was raised in Chesham, a dinner and smoking concert in the Town Hall celebrating the yeomanry's revival there in 1894. Previously, there had been some Amersham and Chesham men serving in the 9th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers at Harrow, but they had not been permitted

⁴²¹ *Bucks Herald*, 7 and 21 Oct. 1893; 26 May 1894; *Chesham Examiner*, 4 Oct. and 6 Dec. 1893.

⁴²² Delap, 'Royal Bucks Hussars Imperial Yeomanry', 42, 46.

⁴²³ *Bucks Herald*, 8 Sept. 1894.

to raise a Chesham company of the latter. Attempts to add a Chesham company to the Wycombe volunteers did not materialise in 1891 and 1892.⁴²⁴

Such efficiency as was achieved required an appropriate permanent administrative staff headed by an adjutant. The long serving and elderly Thomas Wells was replaced in 1868 by a more up to date former regular officer after 20 years' service with the regiment. The quartermaster, Henry Wootton of High Wycombe likewise served for 68 years with the regiment.⁴²⁵ Progressively, however, serving regular adjutants were appointed. Interestingly, the first two regular adjutants joined the regiment as officers after completing their terms of regular service.



Adjutant Thomas Wells, 1866 [BMMT]

⁴²⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 18 and 25 Apl. 1891; 9 and 16 May 1891; 29 Oct. 1892; *Chesham Examiner*, 20 July 1892; 28 Mar. 1894..

⁴²⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 92-93; *Bucks Herald*, 11 May 1889.

There was little ostensible reward for yeomanry service, exemption from the militia ballot being of little relevance after 1831, and that from the horse duty being abolished in 1874. Considerable expense was likely to be incurred on the part of individuals, not least for elaborate uniforms. In 1892 the Brownlow Committee estimated a minimum uniform cost of £150 in addition to contributions to regimental funds and band expenses, and a likely cost for a troop captain of between £60 and £100 per annum over the allowances available.⁴²⁶ Yeomanry officers also became inextricably linked with hunting, some regiments, although not the RBH, maintaining their own packs. In 1877 *Punch* suggested the yeomanry was a ‘country gentleman’s rather costly plaything’.⁴²⁷ Racing, too, was frequently promoted by regiments.

Land and wealth remained a measure of the yeomanry’s existence. New wealth was frequently invested in land, the older aristocracy and landed incomes generally being hit by the widespread agricultural depression between 1875 and 1896. Primarily, depression affected arable farmers through the importation of American and other wheat driving down prices at a time of poor harvests and bad weather. Other grain prices did not fall as much, and meat and dairy prices retained much of their value despite importation of refrigerated meat after 1877. Bucks was one of a number of counties where the general fall of rental value averaged around 41 per cent between 1874-75 and 1894-98, whilst the county’s gross farm output declined by 13 per cent between 1873 and 1894 when the average fall was four per cent.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 39.

⁴²⁷ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 72.

⁴²⁸ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 14.

Promotion was not to be expected, some lieutenants in the Bucks taking as many as 19 years to reach a captaincy.⁴²⁹ But promotion was not really the point of yeomanry commissioned service. Potentially, therefore, there was stagnation in commissioned ranks. It was not perhaps surprising that some potential officers were reluctant to commit to the yeomanry whilst others even had difficulties meeting the modest training requirements. The Taplow banker, Charles Grenfell, resigned as lieutenant in March 1869 as he had little spare time and could not leave London for ‘a week at a time’ in summer. William Woughton, an Aylesbury brewer, declined to join on grounds of expense in March 1873, the potential entry of a brewer into the regiment in itself an indication of the scarcity of candidates. Purefoy Fitzgerald suggested more needed to be done in February 1874 to encourage men to come forward, albeit without offering any actual solutions.⁴³⁰

Yet, the yeomanry remained influential in local society. Indeed, the yeomanry proved something of an entrée to that society for men of newly acquired wealth moving into a county. The unofficial nicknames of the RBH became ‘the ‘Flying Foreskins’ and ‘Rothschild Blood Hussars’ from the number of emerging Jewish families associated with it such as the Rothschild family. In Bucks, if not elsewhere, militia and volunteers also provided a similar route by which second if not first generation newcomers sealed their commitment to county.

Many men held dual commissions in more than one branch of the auxiliaries, showing no apparent social distinction between them. Thus, notwithstanding the 2nd Lord Carrington’s claim as to the impossibility of doing so, Robert Harvey

⁴²⁹ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 41.

⁴³⁰ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 106, 125-26, 135.

served in both yeomanry and volunteers, and Pratt and Cavendish in both militia and volunteers. Even Carrington's son had served in both yeomanry and militia, albeit not simultaneously. Sir William Robert Clayton was captain in the militia in 1870, and lieutenant in volunteers until 1871. Egerton Hubbard, later 2nd Lord Addington, was both in the yeomanry and rose to commanding officer in the volunteers.⁴³¹ Thomas Fremantle, later 2nd Lord Cottesloe, turned down a militia commission in 1853 as he was 'studying law to qualify himself for Parliament and the business of a County gentleman'. But, as already indicated, he later commanded the Winslow volunteer subdivision.⁴³² His son, also Thomas Fremantle, later 3rd Lord Cottesloe, became a distinguished marksman. He was appointed the first volunteer aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley in 1895.⁴³³

The Rothschilds first appeared in the Vale with their Staghounds in 1839, buying their first land around Mentmore and Wing in 1842, whilst renting Tring Park. They benefitted from the sales at Stowe in 1848 and from the financial difficulties of Sir John Dashwood King in 1849, substantially increasing their land holdings in the county. Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild, later 1st Lord Rothschild, and Buckingham's successor as lord lieutenant, joined the RBY in 1863. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1871, and given the responsibility for raising a new troop at Aylesbury in 1875.⁴³⁴ He was made Captain in the interests of the regiment in 1885 for failure to do so might mean 'he will loose [sic] much of his interest in it and the regiment will suffer in consequence'. In

⁴³¹ Ian Beckett, 'The Local Community and the Amateur Military Tradition: A Case Study of Victorian Buckinghamshire', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 59 (1981), 95-110, 161-70; BA, L/P 14, Note by Baynes, 12 Aug. 1870.

⁴³² BA, D-CN 21/2/8, Fremantle to Carrington, 8 Sept. 1853.

⁴³³ *Bucks Herald*, 16 Nov. 1895. For the 3rd Lord Cottesloe's career as marksman, see Lord Cottesloe, *The Englishman and the Rifle* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1946).

⁴³⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Oct., and 20 Nov. 1875.

any case, the adjutant, Henry Leslie Ellis, believed Rothschild had a superior claim to that to Drummond.⁴³⁵ Rothschild could not find time to pass promotion examinations, an impasse regretted ‘after all the money and trouble he has given to the Regiment’.⁴³⁶ He left the regiment in 1884.

Rothschild apparently ordered all of his papers relating to the regiment destroyed on his death for unknown reasons.⁴³⁷ Two letters, however, survive from 1863, one describing being taken around Stowe with the other officers by the 3rd Duke, and the other recounting the excitement in the park as a result of artillery practise: ‘everybody was delighted when the firing ceased and no accident had taken place’.⁴³⁸ Lionel Walter Rothschild, 2nd Lord Rothschild entered the regiment in 1889, presenting it with a Maxim Gun in 1897. He resigned in 1892, but then rejoined in 1895.

Another wealthy newcomer of Jewish descent in 1883 was Harry Webster Lawson, later 2nd Lord Burnham, son of Edward Levy, who had taken the name of Lawson in 1875 and purchased Hall Barn at Beaconsfield in 1881. Indeed, the Lawson family would become prominent in the regiment, Harry Lawson himself commanding it from 1902 to 1913. Although not Jewish, Cyril Flower, a London property developer who married Constance de Rothschild, daughter of Antony de Rothschild and initially settled with her at Aston Clinton, was a lieutenant in the RBY at the time he was elected as Liberal MP for Brecon in 1880. Subsequently, MP for South Bedfordshire, Flower was elevated to the peerage as Lord Battersea in 1892.

⁴³⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 143-44.

⁴³⁶ BA, D/FR 134/4, Hibbert to Cottessloe, 28 Sept. 1878.

⁴³⁷ Gilks, ‘British Volunteer Cavalry’, 13.

⁴³⁸ Rothschild Archives, RFamC/3/28 and 104, Rothschild to his parents, Jan. [1863] and 16 June [1863].



The Hon. Harry Lawson, 1886 [BMMT]

Henry Allhusen of Stoke Court, successively Conservative MP for Salisbury and Hackney Central from 1897 to 1906, and High Sheriff of the county in 1913, was also an officer of the RBH. Another notable officer was Thomas Knox Holmes, the ‘grand old man’ of cycling. Originally from Sussex and a member of an established firm of parliamentary agents, he was briefly a regular before entering the Bucks in 1828 and remaining until 1876 when he was 68. He is said to have unsuccessfully contested Wendover in the last election in

1831 before the borough seat was abolished.⁴³⁹ Brownlow Know was MP for Marlow from 1847 to 1868. Charles, 7th Earl of Egmont was commissioned in the regiment in 1868, reaching the rank of captain in 1874, the year in which he succeeded to the peerage and vacated his seat as Conservative MP for Midhurst, which he had won only six months previously.

Wealth alone, however, could not confer acceptance, as witnessed by the promotion of Charles Cavendish, 3rd Lord Chesham to command the regiment in 1889 only three months after his promotion to Major. Captain and Honorary Major James Poynter, a former regular who had moved to Wavendon in 1874, was not ‘a County man’ in terms of property. He had no objection in making way since, as George Morgan put it, it was ‘understood in a yeomanry regiment that a big man in the county will be promoted over less men and quite acquiesced in’.⁴⁴⁰ Subsequently, Poynter, who had been unsuccessful in property dealings, went bankrupt in 1896.⁴⁴¹ He had been sued for £16.9s.3d outstanding on dinners provided for his troop at the Swan Hotel, Newport Pagnell back in 1878.⁴⁴² It was not the first bankruptcy of one of the regiment’s officers, William Cosby Lovett, the heir to Liscombe Park near Soulbury, owing £7,500 to tradesmen in Leighton Buzzard and London when he was bankrupted in 1870.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ *Penny Illustrated and Illustrated Times*, 22 July 1893; *Bicycling News* 22 July 1893; *The Sporting Mirror* 8 (1884), 193-99.

⁴⁴⁰ HHL, STG 208, Morgan to Lyon Fremantle, 11 June 1888; Morgan to Poynter, 3 Aug. 1888; Wood to Morgan, 7 Aug. 1888; Poynter to Morgan, 20 Nov. 1888.

⁴⁴¹ *Reynolds’ Newspaper*, 23 Aug. 1896; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 Aug. 1896.

⁴⁴² *Bucks Herald*, 13 July 1878.

⁴⁴³ *Croydon’s Weekly Standard*, 23 Apl. 1870.

The Buckingham solicitor, Henry Small, was also overlooked despite long service since the 1840s - he was a lieutenant for 19 years - and being second senior captain to Poynter. Another long-serving officer, Purefoy Fitzgerald, while having some influence with the county's farmers, was not considered militarily or socially good enough to command: many officers would probably not serve under him. He was also persuaded to make way by promotion to major on the condition that he would retire one month later.⁴⁴⁴ Having served in the regiment for 26 years, Fitzgerald was sent off by 'H' Troop with a 'massive marble timepiece... striking on a Cathedral gong'.⁴⁴⁵ Fitzgerald had proved prickly on occasions as in response to an alleged lack of courtesy shown him by Wells,⁴⁴⁶ but this was not uncommon among yeomanry officers. Charles Pilgrim of Akeley Wood, a former regular who served with the regiment from 1855 to 1872, complained bitterly to Buckingham in November 1865 that a former 'canteen keeper at Aldershot' had been appointed a sergeant on his troop without consultation.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 146-47; HHL, STG 207, Fitzgerald to Morgan, 10 July 1888; Lyon Fremantle to Morgan, 5 July 1888; STG 208, Wood to Morgan, 20 May 1888; Morgan to Wood, 5 June 1888; Morgan to Fitzgerald, 30 July 1888.

⁴⁴⁵ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 3 Aug. 1889.

⁴⁴⁶ HHL, STG 197 (4), Fitzgerald to Holmes, 29 June 1865.

⁴⁴⁷ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 91-92.



Purefoy Fitzgerald, 1886 [BMMT]

The fact that Fitzgerald was not considered of sufficient status is interesting. He had been a naval officer and, whilst the family seat was at Shalstone, he resided at North Hall at Preston Candover in Hampshire and later rented Upon House near Banbury. Commissioned in the 2nd RBY in 1863, he had also taken a commission in the 1st Oxfordshire Light Horse Volunteer Corps in the following year, remaining with the latter until promoted to captain in the RBY in 1869.⁴⁴⁸ It was not unusual for the regiment to draw officers from outside the county,

⁴⁴⁸ Gilks, 'Britain's Volunteer Cavalry', 79-82.

those in the 1860s including Charles Powell of Speldhurst Lodge, Tunbridge Wells, Henry Currie of Rushden House, Higham Ferrers, and Edward Clayton of Cottesmore Grange, Oakham.⁴⁴⁹

The yeomanry's rank and file were still drawn from the farming community or what might be characterised as horse-related trades from the simple fact that yeomen were expected to be able to ride. In 1862, for example, the Newport Pagnell Squadron presented a silver cup to its quarter-master, Robert Adams, a farmer from Bradwell Abbey 'as a token of the high esteem in which he is held by his brother yeomen, and more particularly to prove their appreciation of the kind and liberal hospitality always shown to them at their rifle practice and drill at Bradwell Abbey'.⁴⁵⁰

Drafting his thoughts on the possible introduction of a three-year term of engagement in February 1870, the 3rd Duke doubted whether 'men from the class from which this regiment is recruited will undertake a legal engagement of three years' since 'the recruits are chiefly composed of sons of farmers or of substantial tradesmen'. Young farmers and young tradesmen were all liable to changes of occupation, residence or business, with many seeking to enter farming or trade wherever opportunities might arise.⁴⁵¹

It was suggested in 1859 that the Buckingham rifle volunteers had not prospered as so many young men in the town had joined the yeomanry.⁴⁵² Interestingly, the Buckingham Board of Guardians refused to allow the master of the

⁴⁴⁹ Gilks, 'Britain's Volunteer Cavalry', 328, fn. 7.

⁴⁵⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 31 May 1862.

⁴⁵¹ HHL, STG 4(15), Draft, 8 Feb. 1870

⁴⁵² *Bucks Chronicle*, 17 December 1859.

workhouse to remain in the yeomanry in 1879 whilst the School Board's attendance officer resigned in 1886 as he had taken on additional yeomanry duties.⁴⁵³ The regiment was frequently short of officers and establishment. Thus, it needed 50 more men in May 1865, 57 in June 1864, 152 in June 1871, and 218 in May 1873, although the deficiency had lowered to 67 in May 1881 and to 36 in May 1885.⁴⁵⁴

As with the other auxiliary forces, local prestige had to be maintained. Anything that tended to diminish the regiment's status within the community, therefore, was a matter of concern. In June 1865, two men - George Howland, a chair maker, and Daniel Church, a builder and publican, both from High Wycombe - appeared before magistrates for being drunk and disorderly during the permanent training. There had been other incidents involving men from Amersham and Wycombe. The two were each fined £2 including costs, but with time to pay rather than immediately being compelled to serve seven days. Publicans in the county were often yeomen but chair makers were more unusual, although there were a few.⁴⁵⁵ Subsequently, Church made the rank of sergeant, but was dismissed in 1878 and then sued for not returning the equipment supplied him from regimental funds. Claiming that he required a proper explanation for his dismissal from the commanding officer, Hibbert, as he had not had one from his troop commander, Purefoy Fitzgerald, Church refused to pay the £2.13s.0d in fines and costs. He said he would go to gaol for a month. In the event, his wife paid the fine.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1, and 15 Nov. 1879; 27 Mar. 1886.

⁴⁵⁴ HHL, STG 4 (12).

⁴⁵⁵ *South Bucks Free Press*, 2 June 1865; Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 90-91.

⁴⁵⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 June 1878.

Rather more serious, Thomas Cox, a Preston Bissett shoemaker and a member of the band, was fined £4.2s.6d including costs for an assault on Annie Rogers of Tingewick in June 1871.⁴⁵⁷ In October 1883 a farmer from Maids Moreton, Frederick Osborne, was fined 10s.0d with £2.7s.0d costs for using foul language in the *White Hart* at Buckingham, the bench branding him a disgrace to the regiment.⁴⁵⁸

Buckingham appears to have settled privately a case brought against William Cooper, a High Wycombe master cooper, for ill-treating a hired horse in June 1873. In November 1883, it transpired that Sergeant Major John Linwood of Tickford was keeping a public house in Newport Pagnell against regulations. Ellis, the adjutant, wanted Linwood dismissed. Linwood survived only to cause Ellis angst again in March 1885 when engaged in a very public separation from his wife. Linwood once more survived as there appeared to be no scandal per se.⁴⁵⁹ Avoidance of public scandal also enabled Lieutenant Chaloner Ellis - no relation to Leslie Ellis - to avoid resignation in December 1884 although, unfortunately, the precise nature of the reports about Ellis is not known.⁴⁶⁰

Buckingham was solicitous of those who had served in the yeomanry, as in the case in August 1867 of the widow of a butcher, Harry Baker of Aston Abbotts, who had served in the regiment for 17 years. Baker had died suddenly at the age of just 36, leaving six young children.⁴⁶¹ The Duke was equally determined that his tenants should comply with the requirement to provide horses. One was Francis Bennett, keeper of the *White Hart* in Buckingham Market Square. In

⁴⁵⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 June 1871.

⁴⁵⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 6 Oct. 1883.

⁴⁵⁹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 124-25, 141-42, 144-45.

⁴⁶⁰ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 142-43.

⁴⁶¹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 94.

April 1872, the then adjutant, Calvert, had requested Bennett provide horses to pull the regiment's artillery. Whilst Thomas Blackwell of *The Swan and Castle* immediately complied, Bennett objected. Buckingham noted that the horses had always been supplied by the two inns and, as Bennett was holding the tenancy on the same conditions that had always applied, 'it can only be necessary for Bennett to have this pointed out to him'. A formal order was issued to Bennett in December that he would be liable to find four horses at 14 days' notice. Two years later in August 1874 Fitzgerald reminded the Duke to direct Bennett to apologise for his attitude to officers whilst at mess during the previous permanent training 'for I very much fear that if the man is not made to send an apology to the officers, we shall have many resignations before long'.⁴⁶² Bennett's successor, John Gough, received a contract for messing in 1883, with an immediate order of 52 dozen bottles of assorted wines.⁴⁶³

Among others of the Duke's tenants and employees known to be in the regiment were his agent, John Thomas Beards, and the superintendent of the estate fire brigade, Joseph Virco.⁴⁶⁴ Son of the previous agent, Thomas Beards, the former, was dismissed by the Duke for mismanagement and fraud in 1873. However, he was an excellent marksman, winning the Alexandra Prize at Wimbledon in 1864, and being one of those who went on the NRA visit to Brussels in the following year.⁴⁶⁵ When new regulations were introduced in 1888 to restrict recruits to the ages of 17-49 with the requirement that all men aged over 50 should be removed, 13 members of the regiment were compelled to retire.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶² Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 118, 127; HHL, STG Military 4 (17), Order, 30 Dec. 1872.

⁴⁶³ HHL, STG 3 (9), Minutes of Mess Meeting, 16 Apl. 1883.

⁴⁶⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 9 May 1868; 17 June 1871.

⁴⁶⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 16; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 July 1864; 1 July 1865.

⁴⁶⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 10 Nov. 1888; 26 Jan. 1889; HHL, STG 3 (3).

In 1875, the Stanley Committee recommended the removal of horse artillery and dismounted sections from the yeomanry. There had always been prejudice against yeomanry operating artillery as one sympathetic regular inspecting officer acknowledged to Buckingham.⁴⁶⁷ Moreover, the committee concluded that the idea dated back to ‘galloper guns’ long since discarded by the regular army and was incompatible with any duties that the yeomanry would be called upon to undertake on active service. The regular officer last called to inspect the regiment noted in his evidence that it comprised mostly Buckingham tradesmen with the Duke hiring horses for them. The regiment’s submission in answer to a questionnaire noted that the adjutant received additional pay from a contingency fund. It favoured 12 days’ training spread over three distinct periods supplemented by voluntary troop drills. A three year term of service was expected, but there were no actual penalties for breaking an engagement as none could be enforced realistically. There was not currently a band as it was too expensive to maintain.⁴⁶⁸

Acting in command in the Duke’s absence in Madras, Frederick Hibbert complained to Cottesloe, who was acting as lord lieutenant, that ‘to punish the officers and men, by disbanding them, for all the trouble and expense they gave been at in making themselves efficient... as Artillerymen as well as cavalry, seems as monstrous a piece of wanton mischief as can well be imagined’. Cottesloe wrote at once to the Secretary of State for War, Gathorne Hardy. He also wrote to Disraeli, to whom he hinted ‘that it would be wise to abandon a measure which as regards economy can be of small importance, but which as a

⁴⁶⁷ HHL, STG 106, Woolsey to Buckingham, 13 June and 28 Sept. 1873; Woolsey to Holmes, 18 June 1875.

⁴⁶⁸ HCCP 1875 [C. 1352], 3-4, 233-39; Oakes evidence, Q 1385-81.

matter of sentiment, and, as it effects the efficiency of the yeomanry may produce, if carried out, a good deal of angry feeling among the farmers of the County hostile to the measures of the Government'. ⁴⁶⁹

There was certainly dismay at the loss of the guns as directed by the War Office on 26 January 1876, the *Buckingham Advertiser* choosing to suggest the guns were the 'pride, plume and glory' of the regiment. ⁴⁷⁰ Disraeli raised it with Hardy and the regiment was able to retain its artillery troops, but as ordinary yeomen without the guns. ⁴⁷¹ Hibbert certainly feared there would be difficulties as the men 'are very sore at the original order to disband them, as well as at losing their guns, and you know what a touchy individual a British Yeoman is, to deal with'. Moreover, the Duke of Manchester's 1st Huntingdonshire Light Horse Volunteers had taken 'some of our best men in the Newport District'. ⁴⁷² The inspector at the 1873 training had already noted the recruitment of men from Bucks by the Light Horse Volunteers, suggesting the need for an enquiry. ⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁹ BA, D/FR 134/4, Hibbert to Cottesloe, 24 Dec. 1875; Cottesloe to Hardy, 1 Jan. 1876; Cottesloe to Disraeli, 6 Jan. 1876; Hibbert to Cottesloe, 20 Feb. 1876.

⁴⁷⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 Jan. 1876; 31 Mar. 1877; *Bucks Herald*, 11 and 18 Mar. 1876.

⁴⁷¹ Bodleian, Hughenden V/XX/Ha/113s, 113b; BA, D/FR 134/4, Hardy to Cottesloe, 24 Jan. 1876.

⁴⁷² BA, D/FR 134/4, Hibbert to Cottesloe, 20 and 24 Feb. 1876.

⁴⁷³ HHL, STG 103, Oakes report, 1 Oct. 1873.



The Artillery Troop, c. 1865 [BMMT]

Egerton Hubbard, MP for Bucks from 1874 to 1880 and again from 1886 to 1889, raised the issue of the guns in the Commons but without success.⁴⁷⁴ As Hibbert reported to Buckingham in Madras in February 1876, the men were ‘very much disgusted at the loss of their guns, & some talk of resigning & very probably will do so’. The officers who commanded the artillery troops, Fitzgerald and Pilgrim, together with George Morgan felt that it would be necessary to try and widen recruiting in the Aylesbury and High Wycombe areas to compensate for the potential loss of men. Buckingham himself thought the decision to disband ill-judged given the frequent praise of the artillery troops

⁴⁷⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Aug. 1876; *Volunteer Service Gazette*, 5 Aug. 1876.

in past inspections.⁴⁷⁵ In the event, it did not result in the wholesale defection of men as predicted as the new Aylesbury troop recruited 50-60 men.⁴⁷⁶

Cardwell had earlier resolved in June 1870 to reduce independent yeomanry troops and those regiments with less than four troops. This had particular relevance for the one surviving troop in the south of the county at Taplow. In May 1863 the 5th Earl of Orkney resigned his command. Nathaniel Grace Lambert of Denham Court succeeded him as Captain Commandant in August. A coal owner, Lambert was to become Liberal MP for Bucks from 1868 to 1880. Under his command, the annual training tended to take place at Eton, Slough or Windsor. In 1868, for example, the training was at Slough and the culminating inspection undertaken at Lambert's own Denham Court. In 1869 training was at Eton, and the annual inspection in Windsor Great Park.⁴⁷⁷ From May 1867 onwards, Lambert's second in command was Orkney's fourth son, Lieutenant the Hon. Alexander Fitzmaurice, an equerry to the Prince of Wales. As previously related, the cornet was Roger Eykyn. Orkney's eldest son, Viscount Kirkwall served in the RBY.

The Taplow Troop participated in several of the great volunteer reviews. At the Whit Monday Review in Windsor Great Park in June 1867, Lambert was reported as being injured in the leg whilst charging a square 'probably from a ramrod, which cut through the trousers and boot to the bone, nearly upsetting man and horse'.⁴⁷⁸ The troop also attended the Portsmouth Review in April 1868. It was present again at Windsor in July 1869, its over-enthusiasm in a

⁴⁷⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 131-33.

⁴⁷⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 29 Apl., and 25 Nov. 1876.

⁴⁷⁷ HHL, STG 104, Lambert to Buckingham, 11 Sept. 1868; 13 Apl. 1869.

⁴⁷⁸ *The Times*, 12 June 1867; *Bucks Chronicle*, 15 June 1867; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 June 1867.

charge against the 10th Hussars resulting in all being ‘taken prisoner’.⁴⁷⁹ In March 1863 it had attended the arrival at Slough Station of Princess Alexandra of Denmark ahead of her wedding to the Prince of Wales.⁴⁸⁰



The Taplow Lancers, c. 1869 [BMMT]

On 14 May 1869 the troop was present when new Colours were presented to the RBKOM at High Wycombe. It was described as the Taplow Volunteers (Light Horse) in orders for the volunteer review at Brighton on Easter Monday, in April 1863, showing that 42 men and horses were to be conveyed to Brighton by the LNWR through Oxford.⁴⁸¹ It is suggested that the troop became lancers soon after Lambert took command, although it is possible they had adopted a lancer-style uniform without the title in 1845.⁴⁸² They were described as lancers

⁴⁷⁹ *The Times*, 17 Apl., and 19 July 1868; *Bucks Chronicle*, 18 Apl. 1868.

⁴⁸⁰ *Bucks Chronicle*, 11 Mar. 1863.

⁴⁸¹ HHL, STG 4 (10).

⁴⁸² Freeman, ‘History of Bucks Yeomanry’, *Bucks Free Press*, 10 Oct. 1919.

at the Dover Easter Monday review in April 1867, and an illustration in the *Illustrated London News* showed the troop charging at Windsor in June 1867 as lancers.⁴⁸³ The South Bucks Yeomanry Lancers was again used to characterise the troop when it paraded for Gladstone's visit to Windsor in December 1868 on his becoming prime minister.⁴⁸⁴ Lambert himself began signing orders as commander of the Taplow Troop (Lancers) in July 1869.⁴⁸⁵ The Troop was also characterised as the Royal Bucks Yeomanry Lancers in 1868 and 1869.⁴⁸⁶



Shapka of the Taplow lancers, c. 1869 (missing the leather peak) [BMMT]

⁴⁸³ *Daily News*, 23 Apl. 1867; *Illustrated London News*, 15 June 1867.

⁴⁸⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, 7 Dec. 1868; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 7 Dec. 1868.

⁴⁸⁵ HHL, STG 104, Lambert to Buckingham, 9 July 1869.

⁴⁸⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 20 June 1868; 10 Apl. 1869; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 June 1868.

In July 1869 Lambert was disabused of his assumption that he was entitled to use the royal title, and there were also enquiries as to his authority to turn the troop into Lancers.⁴⁸⁷ Increasingly, there were problems in finding sufficient recruits within the county, although Lambert was able to find sufficient men beyond its boundaries.⁴⁸⁸ Of the 91 officers and men serving in April 1869, 60 per cent were from London (32), Middlesex (10) or Windsor and its vicinity (13). Only 36 men were from Bucks. It is difficult to establish the occupations of nearly all of those from out county. Of the 36 from Bucks, 29 can be identified comprising two gentlemen, ten farmers or sons, two professional men, 12 tradesmen, and a coachman. Moreover, of those from the county, only five appear to have come from Taplow: Sergeant W. Rance (a butcher), Corporal R. Cleare (a victualler), and Troopers J. Cleare (presumably a relative of the former), H. Davis, and C. Cross (a farmer's son).⁴⁸⁹

In 1869, the establishment remained at the modest level fixed in December 1830, namely a Captain, Lieutenant, Cornet, Quartermaster, two Sergeants, two Corporals, a Trumpeter, and 40 Troopers.⁴⁹⁰ Lambert, however, wanted to form a squadron, since he had sufficient numbers.⁴⁹¹ He suggested that Fitzmaurice be promoted to Captain and Eykyn to Lieutenant, with Henry Walker, a former regular, and Leopold de Rothschild of Ascott House respectively as the additional Captain and Lieutenant.⁴⁹² It is unclear whether the latter, who had

⁴⁸⁷ HHL, STG 100, Cardwell to Lambert, 12 July and 2 Aug. 1869; STG 197 (16), Lambert to War Office, 5 July 1869.

⁴⁸⁸ HHL, STG 104, Lambert to Buckingham, 3 May 1869.

⁴⁸⁹ HHL, STG 4 (14).

⁴⁹⁰ HHL, STG 100, Cardwell to Buckingham, 25 Mar. 1869.

⁴⁹¹ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 96-97.

⁴⁹² HHL, STG 104, Lambert to Buckingham, 28 Apl. 1868.

inherited Ascott from his uncle, Baron Meyer de Rothschild in 1874, had actually agreed to join Lambert's unit.

Lambert argued that it was necessary to recruit out of the county because, as Taplow was at the most southerly point, there was 'not any wide field to recruit from in it'. Indeed, Londoners could be called out by telegram quicker in an emergency than those from further north in the county.⁴⁹³ In the event, Lambert did not get authorisation for a squadron, but he was allowed to continue to recruit above establishment.

Lambert's relative success, however, proved of no avail once Cardwell resolved to reduce all independent yeomanry troops and those regiments with less than four troops. An overall limit for the yeomanry force was set at 36 regiments with new minimum establishments. The change was intended to become effective by 31 March 1871, with Cardwell anticipating that units would disband, amalgamate, or convert to less expensive mounted or light horse volunteers. A number of corps of light horse had emerged in 1860-61 although primarily where there were no existing yeomanry regiments.

Lambert had already considered some merger with the RBY in 1869, but got no response from Buckingham when suggesting attaching a lancer troop to the regiment.⁴⁹⁴ Lambert rejected the possibility of converting to mounted volunteers in May 1871. He believed that he could have raised 'as smart and well mounted a corps of Volunteer Lancers as could be brought together, one party alone having stated that if I would raise a Volunteer Corps to be called Captain Lambert's Ulans [sic], he would undertake to find 10 men'. However,

⁴⁹³ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 106-07.

⁴⁹⁴ HHL, STG 104, Lambert to Buckingham, 31 Dec. 1869.

he felt he no longer had the time to devote to such a project, and that it would be too expensive.⁴⁹⁵ Accordingly, the troop was struck off the yeomanry establishment in June 1871.⁴⁹⁶ A number of men then transferred to the Windsor Troop of the Berkshire Yeomanry, including Eykyn who became a troop commander in it. Both Lambert and Fitzmaurice applied to be allowed to continue to wear their old uniform.⁴⁹⁷

The yeomanry was changing in other respects for horse ownership was declining: Britain's horse population diminished by eleven per cent alone between 1904 and 1910. Indeed, in 1904 one yeomanry officer complained that 'a large number of yeomen are really townspeople with no intimate knowledge of, or feeling for, horses'.⁴⁹⁸ New urban yeomanry units were to be formed in 1901 and 1902 such as that in Northamptonshire. Aid to the civil power had also disappeared, speeded by the Fenian scare in 1867 when government became concerned at the legal status of the volunteers in face of insurrection. There were some overtly political activities on occasion on the part of volunteers but the auxiliaries largely avoided partisan involvement in politics after 1867. This did not mean that the auxiliary forces' representatives in parliament were not active in the wider interests of their members, and they had some influence, especially within the Conservative Party. Difficulties would be encountered after the South African War when that influence was eroded by the realities of parliamentary arithmetic.

⁴⁹⁵ Beckett (ed.), *Safe Duke*, 114-15.

⁴⁹⁶ *Bucks Chronicle*, 3 June 1871.

⁴⁹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Set. 1871; HHL, STG 102, Fitzmaurice to Buckingham, 4 Apl. 1871; STG 104, Lambert to Buckingham, 18 May 1871.

⁴⁹⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 190.



Lord Chesham and the officers of the Royal Bucks Hussars together with an inspecting officer at Yeomanry House, Buckingham, 1894 [BMMT]

Certainly the existence of the militia, yeomanry and volunteers had contributed significantly to a more overt militarism in Britain. Other factors were involved including invasion fears and other perceived external threats, the popularisation of the ideals of muscular Christianity, the cult of athleticism, imperialism, and Social Darwinism. All these influences, which were strongly interwoven in the ideals of the citizen soldier, were not only inculcated in the press and popular entertainment, but also in the classroom and adolescence. Few of those who served in the auxiliary forces would have come into contact with the British army in any other way. In the process, they absorbed and transmitted military values to wider society. They represented opportunities such as experiencing something different, enjoying recreational facilities or comradeship, or perhaps

demonstrating loyalty and commitment to country, community and employer. A focus and outlet for so many, militia, yeomanry and volunteers all anticipated that their true worth would be fully demonstrated when war broke out in South Africa in October 1899.