

## Chairman's Report

In October 2008, Dr Alan Thomson's transcription of a little used series of seventeenth-century documents held in National Archives appeared. Entitled *The Impact of the First Civil War on Hertfordshire 1642-47*, this handsome volume is number 23 in our series. The large number of people mentioned, who came from all parts of the county, means that this book will become a valuable source for both local and family historians as well as for those working on a wider canvas. For the first time we moved away from our traditional dust jacket to one in colour showing much of Jan Blaeu's 1645 map of the county. We hope that members like this change, and expect to place similar illustrations on our dust jackets in future. A new printer, Biddles Ltd of Kings Lynn, was used to produce this book and this new relationship has proved advantageous in more than one way.

It had been expected that Volume 24, *The Barnet Workhouse Papers of Benjamin Woodcock, 1836-1838*, edited by Dr Gillian Gear, would have been published by now but further revisions have meant that this had to be put back, but it should appear in the not too distant future. Volume 25, for the membership year 2009/10, will be a transcript of the Datchworth Tithe Accounts, edited by Jane Walker. Preparation of this volume is reaching its final stages.

Work is well under way on the publication of a comprehensive version of *John Carrington's Diary 1790-1802* from the original held at HALS. In 1973 W Branch Johnson brought out a much edited version of the diary entitled *Memorandums For...* but this really only gave a flavour of the original. The diary has been transcribed onto computer and footnotes and explanations are being added. The text is so long that it will probably appear in two volumes, the first which will hopefully be published in 2010, the bicentenary of Carrington's death.

Other volumes are in active preparation, some of which were mentioned last year. For the latest developments members should consult our website ([www.hrsociety.org.uk](http://www.hrsociety.org.uk)) which is in the course of being updated. As always our thanks goes to our editor Sue Flood, secretary Heather Falvey and treasurer Gwyneth Grimwood for the amount of work that they put in on behalf of the Society.

Alan Ruston

## Lionel Munby

Lionel Munby, for so long the doyen of Hertfordshire history, died on 19 April aged 90. It would be impossible here to list all that he wrote on the history of this county, and his contribution to our

various local history groups. He played a signal role in the foundation of this Society, edited our second volume *Early Stuart Household Accounts* published in 1986 and was successively our Vice President and President. Until not long ago he was always to be found at our annual meeting making his trenchant, but always positive, contribution to our work.

It was as staff tutor at the University of Cambridge Board of Extra Mural Studies from the 1940s that he expanded out round the county teaching and encouraging local classes and societies. His published work was wide ranging stretching as it did - for example - from interpreting Stuart handwriting, to population studies and to the relative cost of living at different periods. Lionel's interests and influence spread ever wider through the pages of the *Local Historian* which he successfully edited for many years. His book on the *Hertfordshire Landscape* was a seminal work. Teaching at WEA classes at numerous places led, for example, to the fine work based on co-operation between enthusiasts which he edited under the title *Life and Death in King's Langley*.

Lionel's contribution was recognised in the festschrift published in his honour in 2004 entitled *Hertfordshire in History*, edited by Doris Jones-Baker. Perhaps it's too easy at this time to say that his like will not be seen again but nonetheless it's a valid statement, as his contribution to recording and preserving the history of this county was a unique one and will without doubt remain long into the future.

Alan Ruston

## Forthcoming Volume XXV

### Datchworth Tithe Accounts 1711-1747

The Rev William Hawtayne was rector of Datchworth from 1709 until his death in 1747. For most of that time he kept an account book recording his financial transactions that consisted mainly of tithe collection. Tithes were paid both in kind and by composition agreement, sometimes as lump sums reviewable every three years and sometimes as rates per acre of crops.

In the early years he took a personal interest in the farming of his twenty-three acres of glebe and noted his dealings at Hertford market giving an insight into the crops he grew and the fluctuating prices he experienced when selling his produce.

The records are in his handwriting almost to the day he died and it is in the last few entries that one

can see the efforts his son made in trying to get to grips with the difficult process of tithe collection.

The introduction contains biographical details of Hawtayne who lead a full and varied life. He started his professional career in Elstree in 1706 and married two years later. Between 1711 and 1716 the Hawtaynes had five children and later, another child was born at Datchworth. He managed both these livings for about ten years and there are occasional references to curates in the account book. Although he was resident in Elstree for most of this time, he kept his records meticulously and obviously tried to keep his finger on the pulse of Datchworth.

On leaving Elstree, already rector of Datchworth, he became vicar of Shephall, a parish adjacent to Datchworth, and later, mysteriously, exchanged this last commitment for a similar one in Leighton Buzzard. He visited Leighton Buzzard annually in March or April, mainly it seems, to check the registers which he routinely signed.

Besides all this, he found time to be an army chaplain in Flanders during the War of Spanish Succession and was also chaplain to Caroline, Princess of Wales until 1727. His fierce loyalty to the monarchy is echoed in one of his published sermons given soon after the accession of George I. His position in high places may have influenced his invitation to deliver the assize sermon, also published.

The introduction also includes some background history of tithes, illustrated where possible with examples found in Hertfordshire roughly contemporary with Hawtayne's incumbency in Datchworth.

Hawtayne's careful record keeping spread into other church documents and many of these have been used to complement this fine archive.

Jane Walker

**Review of Volume XX, in the Newsletter of the Friends of the National Army Museum, Spring 2008, volume XVIII, Number 11.**

Masefield was a poet who wrote little war poetry; Julian Grenfell was a soldier whose poetry only emerged after his death. Unlike Masefield, who had lived at the rougher end of the social scale in the docks of New York, Grenfell was almost the "central casting" idea of the gilded youth who went to war. Educated at Eton and Oxford; the heir to Lord Desborough; pre-war officer in the Royal Dragoons serving in India and South Africa, his letters home would typify the youthful spirit of empire, a mood which continued into action. He had had a "good war"; awarded a DSO at Zillebeke for dispatching troublesome snipers at close range in October 1914, perhaps higher rank might have beckoned had he not died from wounds resulting

from being hit in the head by a shell splinter in May 1915 at Hooge.

In fairness, he never affected to literary aspirations and most of his poetry was most likely not intended for publication, but his "anthem to the British fighting spirit", "*Into Battle*" was published after his death and became (and remains) a popular subject for anthologies. The Hertfordshire Record Society have now brought Grenfell's letters and diaries together as a complete anthology, offering valuable insights to the history of the pre-war and early fighting in 1914. The letters and the diary were part of a major purchase of a major family archive in the early 1990s. Grenfell has been subject of a biography (*Julian Grenfell: His Life and the time of his Death, 1888-1915* by Nicholas Mosley, 2nd Ed 1999) and is noted in the Holts' book on war poets; this is the first full compendium of his writings whilst in the Army.

Even at the time, Grenfell's assertion in a letter to his mother in October 1914 that "I adore war. It is like a picnic without the objectlessness..." brought angry response, but to judge him from this would be to misjudge a man who was brave, well regarded by his fellow officers and solicitous for his men. He was indeed a product of his time. The volume presented here represents a very high standard of archival cataloguing and research, and deserves a place in all serious archives of the First World War or the British Army of the early 20th Century.

**Review of Volume XX in *Stand to! The Journal of the Western Front Association*, April/May 2008**

This collection of diaries and letters from the substantial archive held in the Hertfordshire records makes a fitting supplement to the Grenfell biography written by Nicolas Mosley in 1976 (2nd Edition 1999) and Angela Bolger's biography of 2005. Julian Grenfell, the son of Baron Desborough, was educated at Eton and Balliol, he joined the army in 1910 and served in India and South Africa with 1st Royal Dragoons until 1914. The regiment sailed for France as part of 3 Cavalry Brigade where they operated as infantry. In the fighting he appeared to love war ('It's all the best fun one ever dreamed of ...') and not to fear death, he cared for his men and the innocent civil population around Ypres. He was awarded the DSO in December 1914. His letters home were published in the *Times* and in 1915 he began to keep his diary and to write poetry. He was wounded in the head in May and died in hospital at the end of the month. His best-known poem: 'Into Battle' appeared in the *Times* on the next day. The greatest historical value is in the early letters, which take up a major part of the book, but of the greatest interest to us will be the fantastic letters from the Western Front and, to a lesser extent, the diary entries. We are fortunate to have this valuable archive in print.

Col. Bob Wyatt

## **Review of Volume XX in the Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, Winter 2008**

Julian Grenfell (1888-1915) was a minor poet of the Great War whose most famous work, 'Into Battle', was part of an initial reaction to the war that celebrated 'the joy of battle'. Grenfell was the eldest son of William Henry Grenfell, the first Baron Desborough and lived a privileged life, having attended Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, before joining the army in 1910. Julian was a man who simply brimmed with life. He had a deep love of sports, particularly those that required daring, skill and courage, such as riding and hunting. He also had literary interests and wrote poetry, the most famous of which, 'Into Battle', would become very popular and cement his posthumous reputation as a promising writer whose career was cut short by the war. Although Grenfell's poems would later become unfashionable owing to their glorification, perhaps even celebration, of the experience of war and combat, he belonged to a group of writers, most notably Rupert Brooke, whose early experiences of combat, and whose early enthusiasm, had yet to be dimmed by prolonged exposure to the dehumanizing slaughter of modern industrialized warfare.

The letters of Julian Grenfell are available in the Panshanger Archive in the Hertfordshire County Archives. This volume contains 278 of Grenfell's letters alongside a variety of helpful appendices including his 1915 diary, a selection of his poems and 11 intriguing letters to a female correspondent, Flossie Garth. The letters in this volume were written between 1910 and 1915 and cover Grenfell's service in I/Royal Dragoon Guards in India, South Africa and on the Western Front. These letters offer a vivid and highly valuable chronicle of a young man's attitudes towards soldiering and, from 1914, his thoughts on the war that was consuming Europe. His army service before the First World War was largely unremarkable, mainly garrison duty in India and South Africa, where he learnt more about his duties and the way in which the British Empire was run. He loved India but hated Africa. Grenfell arrived on the Western Front in time for the First Battle of Ypres in October 1914 and was immediately thrilled by the experience. He wrote on 15 October that it was 'all the most *wonderful fun*; better fun than one could ever imagine. I hope it goes on a nice long time: but pigsticking will be the only tolerable pursuit after this, or one will die of sheer ennui'. Although it would be easy to write off such enthusiasm as naivety or inexperience, Grenfell seems to have been a natural warrior; strong, tough and eager to pit himself against enemy soldiers, the weather or anything else that came up against him. In late October, after 48 hours in trenches and under artillery and sniper fire, Grenfell admitted that he did not like being under fire, but could still write of how he adored war, even comparing it to 'a big picnic'. He had, he claimed, 'never been so well or so happy'. Grenfell adjusted

well to the strains of war and even amazed himself at how strong his nerves were, on one occasion managing to sleep in a trench despite being under heavy shrapnel fire. He seemed to appreciate the effect that combat and constant exposure to danger was having on his life and his opinions and revelled in the meaning that his life had now acquired. 'The fighting excitement vitalises everything - every sight and word and action. One loves one's fellow man so much more when one is bent on killing him.' He was a good officer, always concerned about the health and welfare of his men and always sharing their dangers. His letters contain continual requests to his parents for supplies from home, for cigarettes for the men, whisky for the mess, socks, mufflers, caps, writing paper and a whole host of other items that were desperately needed to make life a little easier.

Early May 1915 found Grenfell in the trenches around Railway Hill near Ypres, fighting in what would become known as the Second Battle of Ypres. His battalion was in the second line of trenches and under a terrible German bombardment. Grenfell, ever the eager young officer, volunteered to act as a runner and spent the day delivering messages up and down the line, all whilst under fire. That afternoon Grenfell's luck ran out and he was hit was a shell splinter. He was evacuated to a base hospital and died 13 days later. This volume of Grenfell's letters provides an excellent source of information on his life and opinions and will provide historians with a greater understanding of the development of his poetic voice, which was tragically cut short in May 1915. Like Rupert Brooke, Grenfell's poetic reputation has suffered from the general revulsion towards the Great War that occurred from the late 1920s, which rejected the idea, perhaps epitomised by Grenfell more than anyone else, that war was a joyful and enjoyable act and that it was, in the words of Wilfred Owen, 'sweet and fitting to die for one's country'. Nevertheless, these letters reveal that Grenfell did experience a great deal of hardship during his time on the Western Front, taking part in some extremely bloody and dangerous encounters, and he was well aware of the shattering effect of war on both his men and the area in which they were fighting. In the end, one suspects that even if Grenfell had experienced the Somme or Passchendaele, he would have still found something in it to celebrate and to enjoy. He was one of those rare people who could not help loving war and all that it brought.

*Dr Nick Lloyd*

## **Review of Volume XX on the website of the Western Front Association**

Julian Grenfell is probably best known as the author of the poem *Into Battle* which was published posthumously in 1915. Grenfell was more than a minor poet; he was a professional pre war soldier serving in the 1st Royal Dragoons, first in India then in South Africa and was to be awarded a posthumous D.S.O. Powerfully built and

handsome, standing over 6 feet, Grenfell was a fine sportsman with a zest for life. Grenfell was the eldest son of Lord and Lady Desborough, of Taplow Court, Buckinghamshire and Panshanger in Hertfordshire; the Panshanger archives being deposited in the Hertfordshire Record office in stages following its demolition in 1953. Educated at Eton and Balliol College, he was a contemporary of Charles Lister, Edward Horner and Patrick Shaw-Stewart amongst others. His parents belonged to a group known as The Souls, intellectual members of the aristocracy.

The letters mainly to his mother but some to his father and sister Monica begin en route to India in 1910, and describe the life on board ship then the life of a junior officer. Grenfell writes with great enthusiasm of the impressions of service abroad, his impressions of his fellow officers and the social life. Actual soldiering gets very little mention; he writes enthusiastically of pig-sticking and polo which were obviously favourite occupations. His mother was a famous society hostess and he makes frequent references to parties and friends of the family, and is always concerned as to her health. Grenfell seems to have suffered frequent illness and injury during his early spells in India, taking falls during polo matches and contracting jaundice. In late 1911 the Dragoons transferred to South Africa. Initially Grenfell appears very unhappy with the life there, missing India sorely. Gradually the letters reveal that he is accepting the life and enjoying trekking with his men and taking part in boxing matches and show jumping. The Dragoons arrived in England in September 1914 and got to the Western Front in October 1914. Many of the letters are taken up with lists of requests for articles to be sent out to him and the men, but Grenfell also revels in warfare, claiming to adore war. One wonders whether the sentiments would have remained the same if he had lived longer. He is excited by the prospect of his sister arriving at Wimereux to become a nurse and talks of transferring to the Guards, although this was never to come to fruition.

The letters cease with a jaunty note sent to his mother telling her he had stopped a Jack Johnson with his head. This is the last of his letters, but in the appendices are further letters and diaries, Grenfell's Western Front diary and that of his mother describing the time from his wounding to his death and burial at Boulogne Eastern cemetery. There are also letters of condolence and letters from his commanding officer in the appendix. A short appendix contains the letters to Flossie Garth, a girl that Grenfell was obviously very attached to and who he had spent time with during his last leave. There are references in the letters to an uneasy relationship between Grenfell and his mother and his displeasure at her relationships with his contemporaries, although the notes do not elaborate on this.

WFA member Kate Thompson has done a very good job editing these letters for publication; notes are at the foot of the page which I always find pleasing and are generally very good. Personally I would have liked to have seen some more illustrations, the one photograph of Grenfell is an excellent one taken in 1915. The book has certainly made me want to read more about the Desboroughs. Recommended.

*Michelle Young*

#### **The Delmé-Radcliffe Archive, 1263-1944**

The Radcliffe family owned Hitchin Priory and its estate in Hertfordshire from 1548 until 1965.

This highly important archive comprehensively charts the development and changing circumstances of a prominent Hertfordshire family over a period of 400 years. It contains their title deeds, estate documents and other family papers including a particularly fine sequence of pre-16<sup>th</sup> century title deeds and a vast personal correspondence.

The accounts and bills show the family's contribution to the local economy by their purchases from local as well as London tradesmen, and the employment of local craftsmen and estate workers.

As well as serving the local community as Sheriffs of Hertfordshire, Lords Lieutenant and local magistrates, the Radcliffe family engaged in business with the Levant Company from 1702 until the 1760s. The family accumulated a considerable fortune by trading English wool for exotic silks and carpets from the Turkish Empire. The business accounts and papers included in the archive are of international significance and shed light on British involvement in the Middle East.

This collection has been on loan to Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies since 1949. Now offered in a private treaty sale, please help to ensure that the archive remains in Hertfordshire for everyone to use and enjoy. Some funds have already been raised thanks to generous grants from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the national Libraries and local societies and individuals. But more is needed to ensure that the collection is not removed to be sold at auction. If you can help personally, please send your contribution to Hertfordshire Heritage Fund, c/o Museum Development Officer, County Hall, Hertford SG13 8EJ. Cheques should be made payable to 'Hertfordshire Heritage Fund'.

Susan Flood