

The Vault

Issue 7
Spring 2015

Lord Lovatt
A Tribute

Pirates!
Facts and Fiction

The
Richard II
Sword

Druidry
by
Robin
Whitlock

Monty - The Field Marshall with two badges

Plus;
King Richard Thirds Funeral
by The City of Lincoln Waites

79th Cameron Highlanders



We are a collection of people who are dedicated to living history and re-enacting life as it would have been in the 79th Cameron Highlanders Regiment during the Peninsular wars and up to the battle of Waterloo. We try to recreate as authentically as possible the everyday life for the soldiers and their families within the regiment.

The regiment meets regularly at Fort Amherst, Chatham, Kent, a genuine Napoleonic Fort and is one of the best preserved Napoleonic fortresses in England.

The 79th provides opportunities to persons who may not want to portray the life a line infantryman, but still be actively involved in the group using their own unique skills.

If you are intrested in joining our group please visit our website to find out how to do so.

We are also available for film and photography work, historical events and many other events feel free to message us via the site with requests.

www.the79thcameronhighlanders.co.uk/

The Vault Issue Seven

Front cover: Mark Jenkins aboard the longboat.

Many thanks to Regia Anglorum for the use of their ship, the 79th Cameron Highlanders and the Sheppey Pirates.

Edited by Stephen Briggs, graphics by Zoe “Zestart” Smith

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Frederick Rossington is 102, and a modest man. When the local press mentioned he was a Dunkirk veteran, we wrote to Fred and within an hour secured an interview. Sadly he has no pictures of his remarkable wartime service. But he proudly carries a medal in his wallet, not one earned in war, but commemorating his many years of service as a Nottingham bus driver.



He grew up “very, very poor” in Nottingham and was 28 years old when the Second World War broke out. Given no training he was “given 50 rounds of ammunition round his neck and a gun that he didn’t know how to use”. Nobody taught him how. A driver by trade before the war, it made sense that he drove lorries in the Army Service Corp. Upon the Dunkirk beaches he spent two days up to his neck in the sea, wet through, hungry with a gun that hadn’t been oiled for three weeks.



British soldiers safely aboard a ship, during Operation Dynamo (Pathe)

Eventually Fred was hoisted onto a ship, only to look up and see Stukas screaming down on them. He realized that the poor lad next to him now resembled a pile of offal – “his liver blown clean out, both legs gone. Terrible.”

Back in England he was discovered to have Shrapnel in his back. Another two inches would have severed his spine. “The Dr asked if I want it out. I said well I certainly don’t want it in! It went in, so it can come out!”... Fred was given 40 days leave to recover.

The next phase of his career involved driving ambulances in Norfolk, to an old hall near Coltishall. “We opened up the back doors and he (the medic) went spare at me.

“What have you brought a load of corpses for?”

Fred replied “I’m just the driver, not a Dr. Besides that one twitched. Cant you tell the difference between a dead man and someone with shock?”

Fred doesn’t talk about battle as it is too painful and the next phase of his story saw him captured in Libya with 5000 others, crammed into trains “vomiting, dysentery, awful”. They were taken to a camp in Austria where he remained for the rest of the war, cutting trees.

“It was heil Hitler this, and bloody Hitler that. The guard said “Don’t you hail Churchill in your country? We said no we don’t, it’s a free country and we don’t do things like that. The guard was flabbergasted. They weren’t all bad you know. I suppose there’s good and bad in everyone”

One day “A Yankee soldier” came through the woods shouting. “It’s all over, the wars finished”. We had no idea. We were given pistols from a jeep and told to arm ourselves, then crammed into a big transport plane and flown home....”



Fred was one of the lucky ones who returned home... here a Sutherland Highlander departs on 1st September 1939 for France.

The Richard II Sword



Among the many treasures in Lincoln's historic Guildhall, is a sword so beautifully polished that you would never know it was forged over 600 years ago. Presented by King Richard II to the City in 1385, its craftsmanship has to be seen to be believed. The painting depicting the scene was actually painted in the 1930s, and shows the Mayor accepting the ceremonial sword from King Richard, in the city. It is dubious where the building in the picture is, as the Guildhall was not built until the 1530s. The sword itself hung in the Church of Saint Mary le Wigford for centuries.

Richard was eventually murdered on behalf of his cousin Henry Bolingbroke who crowned himself King Henry IV.

The Guildhall stands proudly in the middle of Lincoln and is open free on Saturdays, for guided tours. A visit is highly recommended.



The Council Chamber built in the 1530s...

Article by Al Garrod, Master, City of Lincoln Waites

Lincoln Musicians perform at Funeral of Richard III

City of Lincoln Waites (the official band of the Mayor of Lincoln) led the medieval funeral procession, of The Kynges Guard, across Bosworth Battlefield on Saturday 22nd March 2015. Naturally, we carried the flag of Lincoln with us.



The Kynges Honour Guard attended the re-interment procession of King Richard III, as he visited for the final time, the Battlefield at Bosworth Heritage Centre and Country Park. The Kynges Guard aimed to provide a respectful and skilled representation of the Nobles of the time, to enable the 21st Century visitors on the day to gain a taste of 15th Century life.

City of Lincoln Waites were at the head of the procession across the Battlefield, in front of an audience of 2200 people, followed by The Kynges Guard and then the earthly remains of King Richard III, in an oak coffin, on a bier pulled by members of the Army Cadet Force.

It all started about six weeks ago, when the band were invited to join The Kynges Guard (the escort to Hys Grayse at Bosworth Field). We were immediately sworn to secrecy, because organisers did not want to spoil the impact of what we were to do, and because of the high security involved in an event where many VIPs would be present, including the Queen's cousin HRH, The Duke of Gloucester.

The Kynges Guard was comprised of Living History participants who were selected from various Living History organisations across England because of their high standards of research, clothing, equipment and their ability to impart information to the public. As this group were all present strictly under invitation only, City Lincoln Waites felt very honoured to be chosen to provide the music for this occasion.

Let me make it clear to anyone who feels the urge to criticise us - this was NOT re-enactment, it was the REAL funeral procession of the last Plantagenet King of England: Richard, Duke of Gloucester, King of England and of France, Lord of All Ireland, Prince of Wales, Hammer of the Scots and Lord of all his Dominions across the Seas. So, to us, all the preparation and what we did on that day, was our special way of paying our respects to a King who was a brave soldier, a respected administrator, a benefactor to the church and a good ruler.

To prepare for the procession Al Garrod (Master of City of Lincoln Waites) arranged some excerpts of a 15th Century Mass for the band to perform - and they quadrupled the frequency of rehearsals. Other members of The Kynges Guard carefully collected

images of paintings that depicted medieval funerals, including a detailed painting of the funeral of Richard II, to enable us to create a procession that was as historically correct as possible. This resulted in the procession that the world witnessed through the marvel of television – The Waites of Lincoln playing solemn 15th Century music, followed by the King’s Champion, The King’s Herald, Black Lion Pursuivant, a (pre-reformation) Priest, then noblemen and gentlemen swathed in black medieval mourning cloaks, carrying religious banners and poles with the Royal Scutcheon (badge) attached to them.



If you want to know why this particular King is so special to us, just reflect - Richard III was the last English King of England. As before him the English monarchy was dominated by Danish and French blood and after him by Welsh, Scottish and German. The two Royal brothers of the House of York - Edward and Richard - alone had four English Grandparents.



Well, on a bright spring day in March 2015, City of Lincoln Waites did our best for our King, and I felt honoured to be involved and so proud that I could burst.

AND we can be content that we were involved in the only event that day that Richard himself would have recognised.

www.lincolnwaites.com

www.facebook.com/lincoln.waites

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*Ricardus Rex Requiesce in pace
Rest in peace, King Richard*

On March the 9th The Daily Telegraph wrote a highly offensive and misleading article about Druids. Thanks to Robin Whitlock for allowing The Vault to publish his beautifully worded response.



It is a rare thing for me to lose my temper outside the pages of Facebook, but on this occasion I went ballistic. So here is a little word or two about Druidry....

The stimulus was an editorial written by Tim Stanley in which he described the Green Party as “a Looney Tunes alliance of druids and trots.” As far as cheap shots go, this is a very cheap shot. The Green Party, unfortunately, are a very easy target, but an even easier target are Druids. It wasn’t just the fact that Mr Stanley, I can barely mention his name now without spitting blood, implied that Druids are just a bunch of loonys, it was also the fact that he compounded the insult in the text by implying that we sacrifice goats “to Sheba the Moon Goddess.” In essence, this was a highly abusive, highly insulting personal attack on a whole community of people, within the UK and abroad, who follow a particular spiritual tradition. In short, religious bigotry and intolerance of the very worst kind. As a Druid myself, I took this very personally, and said so in my response within the comments section below the editorial itself.

Fortunately for the Telegraph, and for anyone else, Druids don’t have to suffer the problem of having an extremist minority that the rest of us have to disown or condemn, who claim to be acting in the ‘interests of Druidry’ or whatever feeble excuse, by blowing up the Telegraph offices or acts of a similar evil nature. In that I would just as quickly like to express my sympathy and friendship with the Muslim community, the 95 percent of peace-loving, warm, friendly Muslims who do have to endure such warped individuals acting in such a despicable fashion and claiming it for Islam. However, I am assuming that in part this means that the Telegraph, on some level, feels it can viciously attack Druids and Pagans at every available opportunity and even feels it has the right to do so. Druids are, as I mentioned, an easy target.

Here is the thing, and it might come as a surprise to some. Druids don’t spend all their time dancing around stone circles in white robes muttering strange bits of poetry. In fact, that white-robed thing, though important in some ways, is merely what I call ‘the public gloss’. It makes us highly visible when we appear in public, celebrating the seasons and conducting ‘rites of passage’ ceremonies such as handfastings (Pagan wedding ceremonies), Namings (Pagan ‘christening’ ceremonies) and ‘passing over rituals’ (funerals). However, 95 percent of Druidic work, so to speak, doesn’t involve

dressing in a white robe. Well, not to me it doesn't, and I imagine that would also be true of many other Druids.

Having said that, it is probably true that, on the basis of the 'white robed thing', Druids have a bit of a PR problem. And that is probably why it is a very good time for me to set some time aside to just explain a few things about Druidry, or what Druidry means to me.

So what is Druidry?

That depends on who you ask. Although Druidry has some common characteristics, one Druid's Druidry may be very different to another Druid's Druidry. A short answer may therefore be 'Druidry is what Druids do'. After that though it gets a little more complicated.

To me, Druidry is a wisdom tradition. It is overwhelmingly rooted in the neo-Celtic atmosphere or energy known to many as 'the western mystery tradition'. A part of this is drawn from Ancient Egyptian mythology surrounding particular deities such as Isis (the goddess consort of Osiris) and Horus and others. As I interpret it, the western mystery tradition is mostly concerned with the 'bardic shamanism' of Irish and Welsh myth featuring particular characters such as the poet Taliesin, the shadowy Merddin Emrys underlying the later Arthurian character of Merlin and Irish heroes such as Fionn MacCumhail (Finn MacCool) and CuChulainn.

Even more so, Druidry is also rooted in nature and the idea that the 'spirits of the land', however you may wish to think of them, communicate partly through the power of language and the vocal arts, which includes language in its written form alongside powerful oratory. In essence, the human capacity for expression in the form of song, poetry and story could potentially be interpreted, and is so in my case, as the 'voice of the land' moving through humans, using them as a 'channel'.



There are much simpler ways of putting this of course: 'Knowledge is Power', 'powerful oratory', the 'sacred power of the word', and so on. You might dismiss this nonsense, but before you do I would ask you to consider the multitude of ways in which words have an effect on you, and the multitude of ways in which those words affect your thinking and your emotions. Even more illustrative are the ways in which, throughout history, powerful oratory and powerful written texts, have moved nations, for good or ill. Think of Adolf Hitler and you will hopefully see how the power of words has the capacity for evil of an utterly terrible kind, but think of Dr Martin Luther King, Steve Biko, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, William Shakespeare, Mahatma Gandhi,

the Dalai Lama and many others and you will see that the power of words equally has moved nations, and arguably the entire world, for the power of positivity and good.

This is the essence of Druidry, rooted in a Celtic framework and in reverence for nature. It's that simple. The Celtic framework in this sense is indeed, in part, romanticist and pseudo-historical. It can involve tales that are often heavily distorted or, in the case of material originating from the 17th and 18th century 'Druid revival' led by figures such as Iolo Morgannwg, are even completely invented with no actual root in recorded ancient myth.

On some level, that doesn't matter too much, because it is the spirit of the thing that is the most important element. However, as far as possible, being an enthusiastic fan of Celtic myth and history and having an academic nature, as well as being a freelance journalist myself, I try as much as possible, wherever I can, to get it right. I might therefore do my Druidry by reciting aloud the John Matthews version (based upon translations by R. A. S. MacAlister, Eleanor Hull and Cross and Slover) of 'The Song of Amairgen', a 27-line invocation in which the poet declares himself to be 'the wind upon the sea' and 'the mound of poetry' and so on. I might instead tell the story of Pwyll and Rhiannon from the 'Second Branch of the Mabinogi' in the Welsh collection of stories known as 'The Mabinogion', or the tale of Diarmuid and Grainne from Irish myth, and so on.

Or I might choose instead a modern song based on The Song of Amairgen called 'The Mabon', composed by Glastonbury band 'Silver on the Tree', or indeed a line or two from W. B. Yeats or Shakespeare.

And I might do this not just at a ritual or ceremony but also while out walking in the countryside, or working in the garden.

And that is the point. Druids are journalists, musicians, singers, storytellers, novelists, poets, gardeners, farmers, foresters, hikers, cyclists, naturalists, historians, archaeologists, artists, carpenters, builders, bankers, technicians, even scientists.

But above all, we are sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, lovers, all united by a love of the land, a love of humanity and the desire to do good. For others, for other lifeforms and for the planet which supports us all, as well as for ourselves on occasion.

And that is why Tim Stanley's editorial is so grievously disrespectful, insulting and abusive.

We should not tolerate it. We will not tolerate it. And that needs to be announced and understood, clearly and comprehensively. And that is all I have to say on the matter, for the moment. Doubtless this debate will drag on in some form, but I now call to other Druids to follow this through and utterly condemn this editorial for the hateful diatribe it is.

So may it be.

Monty – the Field Marshall with two cap badges.

Bernard Law Montgomery is one of the most distinctive leaders in history. The British Army was one firmly set in its ways, traditions and leadership. A vicar's son, so poor as to barely afford drinks in the officers mess, Monty rose through the ranks to become leader of The British Army. *How did he do it?*

Monty became reviled after the war and has become the subject of much debate. He had demons like any normal person and demanded his personal papers be burned after his death, least “they start a third world war”. He had habits that in their time would raise eyebrows. So what shaped a Field Marshall who preferred to wear the uniform of an ordinary soldier?



Like many Victorian children he had a horrific childhood. He had a mother so barbaric that he refused to attend her funeral when she died in 1948. “God will forgive you” she would torment him, cane in hand. “But I won’t”. Beatings became routine after Church. Monty's Father was the Vicar of Kennington Church in London, and as one of five boys he would never inherit any money. Not that his Father had any. So the army seemed a logical career where he joined the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1907. This was the beginning of a career which would last nearly 50 years, and see him rise to the very top of the profession. As Monty wrote in 1958, “If I had my life again I would choose only the army”.

From the start, it was clear Monty was an outsider. He would have been baffled by the Etonian slang, and despite going to a public school, his family could not possibly afford to send him to the institutions such as Eton or Harrow where his colleagues were all schooled. The British public school system is very misunderstood, it has its own bond of habits, a coded language and a fierce sense of rivalry. Imagine being asked if you are coming for sock. An Etonian would know at once that it means meal time. Monty had another problem. He was terrified of women.

Much has been gossiped about Monty and we can state two definite facts. He married a widow some years older than him in 1924, and he absolutely adored her. In 107 years not a single person has come forward and claimed to have witnessed anything untoward to prove that Monty had any involvement with a man or boys. Monty made no secret of his preference for mixing with young soldiers, and permitted nude bathing in the sea, in North Africa. He liked Ballet. Eyebrows were raised over him having a pink flowery chamber pot under his bed. But if he had any forbidden tendencies, which is possible, he never acted on them. His devout religious faith, and terror of losing the career that he had worked so hard to build, would have made any physical intimacy impossible. The Chamber pot was a gift from a French Lady. When he needed to use it she said to keep it, “it is the least I can do, you have liberated my country”. He kept it under his bed for the rest of his life.

Yet almost as soon as his career began, Monty nearly blew it and is certain that this would make him determined never to fool about again. As is normal in groups of drunken young men, things got out of hand one night, and a young officer had his shirt set on fire. Needless to say the lad was badly burned, the building could have gone up and Monty was drawn over hot coals and was likely to be kicked out of the army. He never drank again and hurled himself into his work. For the rest of his life he preferred a glass of water, which of course made him a laughing stock. It is not unusual for young men with more money than sense, to jump into bed with men or women. Monty would never do this. He had a few pounds from his family to live on, and it was estimated you needed fifteen pounds a week to cover the cost of drinks alone. A servant in Edwardian times was lucky to earn Twenty pounds a year!

Commissioned as a Lieutenant, Monty was on his way to India when the Great War broke out in 1914. Within three weeks The Battle of Mons would shape and harden him. He became cynical at once, seeing officers who had no idea what they were doing, imposing rules which made no sense. He witnessed the slaughter of troops for no purpose. "An officer came galloping up on his horse. I asked him what he wanted us to do, and he said he had no idea". This was despite German troops being dug in within earshot over the next hill!

Sent into battle with just a blunt sword, as was expected of officers, Monty at once became determined to change this "absurd practice". By this point swords were purely ceremonial and used for saluting. Monty had never fenced and knew a sword would be no use against heavy field guns. He was refused permission to have it sharpened and ignored this making a trip to the armourer. Upon coming face to face with a German, he opted to kick the fellow in the ribs and take him prisoner.

Did shell shock play a part in Montys irrational personality? For the rest of his life he was terrorized by memories of the soldiers for whom he blamed himself for their deaths. At Mons he was shot several times and a Private went under heavy fire to rescue him. As he was tending Montys severe wounds, he was killed by a sniper, subsequently dying in Montys arms. Montgomery bellowed to his other soldiers to leave him, and not risk their own lives. After two hours he was rescued and shipped back to England for a long recovery.

There is no doubt that this shaped Montys absolute devotion to ordinary soldiers, of whom he often wrote of his love. It would also explain his absolute contempt for senior officers, which became absolute in the Second World War. For the first time in his life he was respected, wanted and belonged to something.

Between the Wars, Monty rose through the ranks, and at this point, at nearly 40, gave in and got married. Despite always wanting a family of his own, his work and lack of a social life had made this impossible. He met Betty Carver in Switzerland. Betty was a widow having lost her husband in the Great War. Monty at once showed more interest in her sons than her, and thoroughly enjoyed teaching them to ski. They were married for 10 years, and at this point two of Montys saddest moments occurred. His work made him unable to devote himself

to his son, and subsequently David was in his twenties before he could spend any proper time with him. In 1936, Betty died of septicaemia, with Monty willing God to spare her, reading the 23rd Psalm “The Lord is my Shepherd” to her. For two weeks he “was broken, his life over”. A viscous battle with his family over adopting David followed.

The fiasco of The Battle of France is without doubt where the iconic image of Montgomery was moulded, and of course El Alamein and Normandy was where it was polished. Over a million soldiers were shipped out to France in 1939; the fiasco wasn't what the establishment would have us believe.

As we know Germany had grabbed Austria and Czechoslovakia. Politicians continued to tell the British that there would be no war, despite urgently building up the army. Churchills cousin, Diana Mitford, was kissed by Hitler in Berlin, the day before he invaded Poland. Viscount Rothermere had written to Hitler congratulating him. Exactly what was going on with the Kings sister in law and the German ambassador is still classified.

France believed it could easily hold back Germany despite having an army “not fit for the last war”, a minimal air force and generals who refused to liaise with the English. Belgium and Holland just wanted to be left alone. Britain knew it could not possibly defend Poland but threatened war with Germany, if Poland was not left alone. Hitler was in fact so worried about this he delayed invading Poland for four weeks, absolute in his belief that Britain could be appeased. He knew that Britain could wreck his entire plans for the whole of Europe, and of course as time proved, they did just that.

Imagine explaining that to somebody loading coal onto a barge on the Thames, for three pence a day. What the hell had it to do with us?

The British Expeditionary Force was woefully equipped. Most of the men had only a few weeks training, and many had none. As Monty wrote, these were not soldiers, they were cooks, bakers, and bus drivers. Fine men, but not soldiers. Due to the lack of lorries, laundry vans were used. Men were stuck in snow filled trenches in France, having been promised there would never be another war. It became noticed that Montgomery wore standard battle dress rather than a tailored Generals uniform. It was simple. He could not afford one.

Monty was almost fired, due to infuriating the clergy. He was a deeply religious man, but not a fool. Venereal disease was crippling the army, as it has done for centuries. So Monty ordered contraception to be distributed at once. This was seen as encouraging promiscuity, rather than an urgent need to keep soldiers fit.

Montgomery set about training his third Division into the toughest unit in France. He drilled them to breaking point, and had them fight against all odds. One freezing day The Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said in a blizzard, “you dont honestly think Germany will attack us in that?”

Monty dryly replied “Of course they will. When the weather gets better.” And of course, Germany did.

Monty then, technically, invaded Belgium. It was obvious Germany was attacking from the north, and the British tried to push into Belgium only to be stopped by a customs official. Due to Belgium being a neutral country, Britain couldn't send in troops. Monty bluntly told the little man in a peaked cap "look, those flames are your country being invaded. We need to get in and kill Germans". He was still refused entry, so ordered a 16 cwt lorry to smash through the barrier.

Everything Monty had detested about the Great War, he changed. Young Officers with no experience of war should never have been commanding thousands of men. Monty fired them all. It wasn't unusual for a 20 year old to find his colleague in a gentleman's club, uncertain where he was being posted. To their bewilderment, soldiers were taken off the battlefield to replace them. This was where Monty became hated by officers and loved by the men.



(right) *The Battle of France was lost, and Operation Dynamo at Dunkirk saw 200,000 troops rescued by little ships.*

As soon as Monty was shipped back to England with his men, he wanted to get back to France and finish the job. But France surrendered.

Monty became great friends with Sir Winston Churchill, the new Prime Minister. In an interesting twist of fate, Monty persuaded Churchill that beach defences along the southern coast of England were essential. The politicians wanted all troops put into Ireland, thus leaving England completely vulnerable. Monty got his way. Four years later Monty's arch rival Rommel urged for better defences in France, and was ignored. Hence the allies liberated France and threw Germany out. The whole point of Germany being there was to stop any potential invasion, which of course, the allies did.

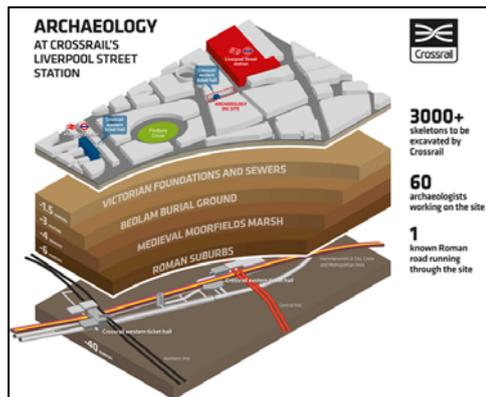
In early 1941 Monty decided to stay at a country house with his colleagues and the owner, a Lord, said he would be delighted to accommodate him. Monty made it clear he wanted the house and he was to keep out of his way. When the Peer refused, Monty evicted him...

In part two, The Desert, Monty gets Knighted and the fiascos of Dieppe and Arnhem...

Greyfriars Dig

Many thanks to the press department at Crossrail for the images

Buried under the streets of London is more archaeology than the world can possibly imagine. The UK's capital city is undergoing going enormous (and often unwanted) development, and the only good thing that is coming out of it is literally barrow loads of information about those who lived there over the last 15 centuries...



Under Liverpool Street Station, is a staggering six metres of archaeology, dating back to the Roman era. The team have only got down to the 17th century, so far! With the amount of work on the crossrail railway project, huge amounts of excavation are being undertaken, and a staggering 3000 skeletons have been found so far.

The Bedlam burial grounds are providing a wealth of detail about the people who lived in the area between 1580 and 1700. A diverse range of people lived there; research has revealed tradesmen, and merchants among the population.



(Right) Map of the area in the 17th century



(above) Archaeologists recovering two of more than 3000 skeletons.

The Donbass Part Two – From Ukrainian Independence to War and Peace in 2014

By Rufus Matthews MA

The early years of Ukraine's independence were relatively secure. This was largely down to the fact that the national policies of the Ukrainian government were fair and reasonable. The Crimea was given autonomous status and had three official languages (Ukrainian, Russian and Tatar).¹ Russian was given a minority language status and in the Donbass Russian was recognised as an official language alongside Ukrainian. The majority there spoke Russian and the majority of the schools in the Donbass were Russian speaking as they had been during the Soviet era.²

Initially in the 1990's the Donbass was affected most by de industrialisation partly caused by the loss of the Soviet manufacturing market. The result for many working people was unemployment and also a fall in living standards as a result of inflation.³ The country's economic problems greatly contributed to the defeat of President Leonid Kravchuk by his opponent Leonid Kuchma. Analysis of the 1994 election results show that beneath the stability of the early 1990s was a deep division. Leonid Kuchma who actually favoured making Russian a 2nd state language received 75.6% of the vote in East Ukraine. In the far West in the regions incorporated into Ukraine in 1939, Kravchuk who opposed Kuchma's language policy received 87.4%. Overall Kuchma won the Presidency with 52.1% of the vote.⁴

Kuchma never achieved his goal of making Russian a 2nd state language. However, under his presidency the interests of Russians and Russian speakers in the east were safe. Unfortunately the economic state of the country improved little. In 2004 the travel writer Andrew Evans wrote that the people of the Donbass '*look back longingly to the stability of their industry*' as it was in Soviet times.⁵

While the people of the Donbass looked back, the people of the West looked forward and westwards. When President Kuchma's 2nd and final Presidential term ended in 2004 the clash between East and West Ukraine began. The two leading candidates for the 2004 Presidential election were Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich. Yanukovich who is from the Donbass region favoured strong ties with Russia and like Kuchma before him favoured making Russian a 2nd official language. Yushchenko favoured retaining the minority status of Russian. He also aimed to take Ukraine into the European Union and NATO. In spite of massive support in East Ukraine Yanukovich was defeated.

In the close of 2004 President Viktor Yushchenko came to power in coalition with his Prime Minister Yulia Timoschenko. The policies of the Orange Coalition were completely at odds with the Russian speaking people of the Donbass and East Ukraine. For them joining the EU was objectionable and joining the NATO alliance set up to oppose the USSR was even worse.

¹ Andrew Evans, *Ukraine The Bradt Travel Guide*, (Chalfont ST Peter, 2004), P 225

² Aparat L. Osipian and Alexander L. Osipian, *Why Donbass votes for Yanukovich: Confronting the Orange Revolution*, (Heldref Publications, 2006)

³ Evans, P 283

⁴ 1991-1994 - President Leonid M. Kravchuk,
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/kravchuk.htm>

⁵ Evans, P 284

The mild nationalism of the government encouraged radicals with nationalist ideas in West Ukraine to express themselves. In 2007 a massive statue of Stepan Bandera appeared in Lviv. Now there are statues of Bandera all over West Ukraine and in many towns across West Ukraine streets have been renamed after him.⁶ Bandera himself had collaborated with the Nazis and had fought against the Poles and the Red Army during World War Two. To Russians in East Ukraine the development of his status as a hero was a real cause for alarm. In the East it was perceived that a neo fascist movement was developing. I was made aware of this first hand by the refusal of my Russian speaking Ukrainian friend to visit Lviv. My friend believes that Lviv is an unsafe place for Russian speakers.

The orange governments re interpretation of the Holodomor great famine of 1933 was also very divisive. The famine killed millions of people in Ukraine but also killed millions in the Soviet Republics of Russia and Kazakhstan. In 2006 the Ukrainian parliament voted for a law declaring the Holodomor to be a specifically anti - Ukrainian genocide by the Soviet authorities. Although President Yushchenko denied blaming Russia and the Russian nation that was not how the new law was perceived⁷ In West Ukraine this fuelled anti - Russian feeling and in the East it greatly angered and alienated people who were already feeling that West Ukrainians were revering fascists. Viktor Yushchenko's parting act as President in 2010 was his most provocative. The President gave official approval to Stepan Bandera by declaring him a hero of Ukraine.

In February 2010, Viktor Yanukovich was surprisingly elected as President. He tried to position Ukraine neatly between Russia and Europe. He rejected NATO but surprised everyone by supporting the idea of eventually joining the European Union. For Russian speakers the language law of 2012 was highly satisfactory. It allowed Russian to be recognised as an official language in any region where Russian speakers made up 10% of the population or more.⁸ Yanukovich also revised the historical interpretation of the Holodomor famine by acknowledging that it wasn't a measure aimed specifically at Ukraine. He was accused by his opponents of breaking Ukrainian law. In November 2013 when Yanukovich changed his mind about joining the EU the protests which eventually led to his ousting began. For the people of the Donbass the ousting of Viktor Yanukovich in February was seen as an illegal coup de tat by an anti - Russian and fascist government supported by the USA and Europe. The perception of the new government as fascist was largely down to the fact that within it were members of the Ukrainian nationalist parties Svoboda and Right sector. Both parties looked favourably on Stepan Bandera. The leader of Right Sector Dmytro Yarosh believes Ukrainian should be the only state language.⁹ Analysis of the Svoboda party programme shows that Svoboda believes the same. Part of their party programme was to introduce a law for the protection of the Ukrainian language. It ruled that all state employees had to know and use Ukrainian. It also proposed putting strict limits on non - Ukrainian media and the withdrawal of state funds to non - Ukrainian schools. No reference to the rights of minorities, were made in the party programme.¹⁰

⁶ Stepan Bandera, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stepan_Bandera

⁷ Ukraine does not blame Russia for Holodomor – Yushchenko, <http://en.ria.ru/society/20091128/157016050.html>

⁸ Steven Pifer and Hannah Thoburn, What Ukraine's New Language Law Means for National Unity (August 21st 2012) <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2012/08/21-ukraine-language-pifer-thoburn>

⁹ Ukraine: Ukrainian should be only state language - 'Right Sector' leader, <https://ruptly.tv/vod/view/10376/ukraine-ukrainian-should-be-only-state-language-right-sector-leader>

¹⁰ All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda" program - "Program for the Protection of Ukrainians" http://www.nachdenkenseiten.de/upload/pdf/140307_Svoboda-Programm.pdf

If you put yourself in the shoes of a Russian in East Ukraine it is easy to see why the appearance of a government which included members of Right Sector and Svoboda felt so threatening. Almost from the start it began to appear that the fears of those in the East could become real. One of the first acts of the new government was to repeal the language law of 2012 on February 23rd, just two days after Viktor Yanukovich had departed.

At that point events started to get out of control. Firstly the Crimea quickly seceded from Ukraine with the help of Russia. In East Ukraine movements of mass protest began and militias forced government forces out of administrative buildings just as Yanukovich's government had been removed in Kiev. It appeared for a while that East Ukraine was likely to secede as the Crimea had done.

Instead the Ukrainian government backed by the new President Petro Poroshenko fought back. In May this year the Donbass regions of Lugansk and Donetsk voted in referendums to leave Ukraine. The Kiev government and the world refused to recognise the results and then the Kiev government set about using armed force to win the regions back. Every day since then civilians in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions have been killed by the shelling of the cities. Three of the worst hit cities are Donetsk, Lugansk and Sloviansk. Now near to 2000 civilians have been killed and thousands have fled the Donbass to Russian refugee camps. Until the eventual ceasefire residential apartments, schools, hospitals and a church have been hit by the shells of the Ukrainian government forces. People were without water and electricity and the first convoy of aid from Russia was obstructed by the Ukrainian government. The resistance to the Ukrainian army has also led to the deaths of many Ukrainian soldiers and tragically anti - aircraft defences accidentally shot down the Malaysian airliner MH 17.

When internal conflicts in other parts of the world such as Serbia, Syria and Bahrain took place, western countries came out strongly in opposition to measures of repression against opposition and minority ethnic groups? In Ukraine's case the west came down heavily on the side of the Ukrainian government. There is no doubt that human rights violations have been committed by Ukrainian government forces. Why have they been ignored by the west? One answer is that it is because of the Pro Russian stance of the people of the Donbass and because of the covert support they received from their fellow Russians across the border. Without doubt the anti - Russian position of the West has been a contributing factor.

It is argued by some that the west's position is also influenced by commercial interests. In 2013 Chevron, Exxon Mobil and Shell signed contracts with President Yanukovich to search for Shale gas in Ukraine. In the Donbass region the people are strongly opposed to fracking. Some there believe that the battle for their land is about the right to explore for shale gas.¹¹ The possibility of an independent Donbass state in which the contracts for shale gas exploration would be cancelled would certainly represent a threat to American commercial interests. The fact that this is an important factor for the US is backed up by the fact that in April this year Joe Hunter Biden the Son of US Vice President Joe Biden joined the board of a Ukrainian gas company.¹² For Europe a gas supply from Ukraine would mean that Europe would no longer have to rely on Russia for its gas. For that reason for Europe too, an independent Donbass region represented a threat to future interests. The consequence was that instead of encouraging the government in Kiev to negotiate peace, the West encouraged

¹¹ Anna Nemtsova, *Before the fear of war, fear of fracking in Ukraine*, (Aljazeera America , August 10, 2014) <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/8/10/long-before-the-fearofwartherewasfearoffrackinginukraine.html>

¹² IBID

Kiev to engage in war for a complete victory, while condemning Russian support for the separatists. The many civilian deaths were ignored.

The manifesto of the New Russia Party of the Lugansk and Donetsk Republics suggests that an independent Donbass state known as Novorossiia possibly wouldn't have allowed exploration for shale gas to take place. The party aimed to be independent of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Its declaration regarding natural resources was that all the resources were to be publicly rather than privately owned, which would completely exclude private US companies exploring for shale gas. The party's language policy was to make Russian an official language but allow Ukrainians to use their language too. The most threatening part of the programme was the declaration on territory, which revealed an idea that New Russia should also include the Eastern regions of Zaporozhye, Nikolayev, Odessa, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kharkiv.¹³ While declaring an affinity with the greater Russian nation the economic policies were at odds with those of the Russian Federation. The manifesto reflects the character of the Donbass. It is very independent and in its desire for public ownership it reflects nostalgia for the USSR.

On the 5th September 2014 a ceasefire was declared. Now the Donbass is to become an autonomous region with special status in Ukraine. It will be largely self – ruled and the use of the Russian language is guaranteed. In the ceasefire negotiations demands were made for a special economic status. The details are not clear so it is unknown whether shale gas exploration will take place. Whether the new settlement will bring long lasting peace is open to question. In West Ukraine there is considerable opposition to the settlement among nationalists who oppose the region's autonomous status and the re introduction of Russian as an official language in the region. The future peace of Ukraine depends on the political success of moderates in both West Ukraine and the Donbass.

¹³ The programme of the Socio-political movement "The Party of New Russia" (24th May 2014), <http://novorossia.su/node/1753>

Lord Lovat – a tribute

Stephen Briggs pays tribute to the charismatic Brigadier who died 20 years ago this month.

Most of us grew up reading comics in which heroic moustachioed officers bravely charged German lines, fearless in the face of danger. They were aristocratic, English, through and through, often with a cigar clamped between their teeth.



Simon Fraser, aka Lord Lovat was a real life example, although he wasn't English. A fiercely proud Scot and the fifteenth Earl Fraser, he was immortalised in the 1962 film "The Longest Day".

(Photo) Left to right - Peter Lawford as Lovatt, the real Lord Lovatt, and Richard Todd beside the real Major John Howard, during filming of "The Longest Day" in 1961

Originally a cavalry officer, he was quickly recruited into the Commandos where his men achieved the only positive thing that came out of Dieppe raid. They were among the few that got back to England having destroyed their target.

Described by Sir Winston Churchill as "The most handsome man to ever slit a Germans throat" Lovat was quite a character. He was almost seven feet tall and distinctively dressed. Along with Field Marshall Montgomery, his name was on a classified German hit list to be executed. He initially didn't get on with Monty, and this could be down to a number of factors. Monty hated virtually everyone. He particularly detested the ruling class, and Lovatts flamboyant and insolent nature would have infuriated him. "We sat as if listening to a boring school master" was Lovats verdict of Montys lecture before D-Day¹⁴ Lovat was proudly Catholic as opposed to Montgomery being devout Anglican.

Upon hearing of Lovats legendary bravery on Sword Beach, Monty grew to respect him.

To disprove critics, Lord Lovat demonstrated his men shortly before June 6th, on a remote Suffolk beach. Politicians and senior officers were stunned as his troops sped up the beach like lightning, putting down a devastating wall of fire. Politicians were choked on smoke and phosphorus grenades, quite likely on purpose. Anyone doubting the men, did not after this event.

Where as the Longest Day is a fantastic movie, it has a few frustrating factors. Despite Lord Lovat being one of its technical advisors, Peter Lawford plays him beautifully but has no moustache, isn't tall and doesn't look anything like him! Piper Bill wears trousers in the film despite Lovats disobedience in the real conflict. Kilts had been banned and when Bill Millin was ordered to pipe the men in wearing his kilt, he said "but it's against the rules" Lovat replied "aye but we are Scottish. English rules don't apply to us!"

¹⁴ Marching Forward – the memoirs of Simon Fraser aka Lord Lovat

When Bill jumped off the launch into the freezing water (believed to be just 5c) he was asked if he was ok. The Piper replied “no, my bollocks are fucking freezing!”

The argument rages; did Lovat really go onto the battle field wearing tailored hunting gear? All of the pictures I can find are of Lovat in either woollen battle dress or in denims, commonly worn in hot weather. I have found a picture of him in a cricket sweater under his battle blouse following Dieppe (1942), but so far after 71 years, no evidence has emerged that Lovat did indeed wear his famous white roll neck, or hunting shoes. His diaries make it clear he wore army boots.

It is more probable is that he did, despite the critics saying that he didn't, have his own armoury with him on sword Beach on 6th June 1944. His diaries and eyewitness accounts suggest he strolled onto the beach with a Sten gun over his shoulder but others have said he used a hunting rifle to drop German snipers. I have heard of him using a Winchester shot gun, and he definitely took on the SS with a carbine, using his pistol when he ran out of rounds. He also dropped what he thought to be a German sniper. Two cows were eating bushes and exposed a man who turned out to be a French spy, complete with notebook and binoculars. Lovat shot him at 400 yards.

Lovat was very highly regarded by his men. He was no snob and mucked in with them at all times. When asked if he had been scared on The Normandy beaches, he replied “of course I was, but you didn't show it...” instead, according to eyewitness reports he charged through gun fire and mortar shells with the words “come on, what are you lot waiting for?”

There can be few more iconic images than Piper Bill Millin playing “Blue Bonnets” as mortars crash all around. I suspect Lovat had a crafty reason for this – he drew the Snipers out then picked them off. He was a superb shot having been a big game hunter. A German conscript isn't really that scary, when you have hunted Lions!

When asked if he was scared on the beaches, Piper Bill replied that he was more bothered about not letting Lord Lovat down. It was a great honour to be his piper and he didn't want to play a duff note!

What has never been filmed is Lovats astonishing leadership on the way to Pegasus Bridge. In just under 10 miles he had so many adventures they warrant an article of their own. He rescued a unit of terrified young Royal Marines who had lost all of their commanders. His commandos cleared a village of snipers, one of who missed him by an inch. They later took on 30 SS, ambushed them, dropped about 10 and took the rest prisoner. Lovats diaries describe him “blazing away with a carbine” and using a pistol when he ran out of ammo.

Critics deny that Lovat shook hands with John Howard on the Pegasus Bridge. The bridge had been captured by the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire light infantry in the early hours of D-Day. The whole liberation depended on it. In true British fashion the men brewed up tea, while the signal was going out that the mission was a success!

Eyewitnesses were astonished to see Lovat calmly strolling along “as if taking a walk on his country estate”, complete with walking stick!

The reason Lovat had his walking stick, was because he had given his famous rifle to a frightened young soldier, who had lost his. Reassuring him, Lovat clasped the rifle into his hand and told the young lad “you’re going to need this”. Imagine if that rifle still exists or even having the honour of owning it!

The Commandos came under heavy fire while crossing the bridge and took terrible casualties. It was thought there was no way that troops could march 18 kilometres through German occupied territory in a few hours. The troops were only one minute twenty seconds late!

Did Lovat really shake hands with Major John Howard and apologise for being late? A quick read of “Marching Forward” states that Lovat and a couple of others first made their way over the bridge to access the situation. It was here he famously apologised for being late. He then went back, led his commandos over the bridge complete with pipes, and this is why critics say he never shook hands with Major John Howard.

The subsequent fight with the SS would have been horrific in the woods around The Pegasus Bridge. Lovat fought through Normandy for another six days until he was hit by friendly fire and nearly killed. This finished off his army career although he remained in the reserves until 1962.

*Brigadier Simon Christopher Joseph Fraser,
9th July 1915 – 16th March 1995*



1940s scrap book...

1940s World met up at The Imperial War museum, South London in March. A wonderful afternoon was had by all, many of who travelled from all over th4e country... editor (right) made a date loaf...



Date bread... you need 4 teacups of flour, 1 teacup of sugar, 2 teacups of dates, 4 tablespoons syrup, 2 teacups of milk and 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda...

If sticking to rations you may want to use watered down condensed milk, although on your display or table, you won't notice the difference. Note the lack of margarine or eggs.

First dissolve the soda in warm milk, then sling it in a bowl with your dates. (I would have soaked them overnight in cold tea for flavour?) Mix the rest of the ingredients together and pour into a well greased loaf tin. The recipe says this will make 2 loaves, bake in a moderate oven for 90 minutes.



Below (left) in the tin it goes... (Right) hard to believe this was such a gooey mess 90 minutes before!

