

## **A Glorious Name**

On 19 May 2016 Paul Vickers, former librarian of the Prince Consort Library, began his talk by commenting that the naming of roads and buildings in Aldershot is not consistent. For example, Hospital Hill does not lead to the Cambridge Hospital, North Camp is nowhere near North Town and Redvers Bullers Road is not near Buller Barracks.

He showed us a map drawn up by the Royal Engineers just prior to the Army coming to Aldershot in 1853. This map showed the area as "Aldershot Heath". A few hills such as Gravel Hill and Thorn Hill are named on the map, but little else. In 1854 the area was divided into two camps, North Camp and South Camp, on either side of the Basingstoke Canal; the name of North Camp still survives. The first barracks were wooden huts and were not given names but letters of the alphabet; South Camp with barracks A-Z was the larger of the two camps with North Camp having barracks A-M.

However in 1856 the Army started to build brick barracks (in addition to the wooden huts), a clear statement that the Army was here to stay. By 1859 the town of Aldershot starts to appear, with the first street names such as Victoria Road. The Prince Consort library was established by Prince Albert in 1860. In 1879 the Cambridge Hospital was built, named after another Duke of Cambridge, Commander in Chief of the Army and a cousin of Queen Victoria. A map in 1888 showed these features along with Queens Parade. Camp Farm was marked which was both a sewage farm and a dairy.

A major rebuild of the camp began in 1894 to replace the wooden huts which had stood for 34 years, well exceeding their planned life of 13 years. Evelyn Wood, GOC had complained about the state of the barracks and had campaigned for their replacement, a result of which £15million was allocated for this. He wanted to name the barracks after famous British victories. The Marlborough lines were named after the first Duke of Marlborough (an ancestor of Winston Churchill) and the individual barracks after his famous battle victories in the War of the Spanish Succession - Blenheim, Malplaquet, Oudenarde, Ramillies, Tournay, and Lille. Although these barracks have long gone, many of the names remain, for example Marlborough Park and school, Ramillies Copse, Tournai Close and Blenheim school and park.

The Stanhope lines were also built at this time, named after Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for War, one of the few non Army officers commemorated in this way. The barracks were named after Army victories in the Napoleonic wars, Corunna, Barrosa, Mandora, Maida. There is very little left to remind us of these names only Mandora and Maida Roads.

The cavalry barracks continued with the names East, West and South but after the success of naming the infantry barracks it was felt that they were missing out on battle honours. A committee was set up in 1901 to look into this and the barracks were later

renamed. The East barracks became Warburg, the West barracks became Willems and the South barracks became Beaumont, all named after 18<sup>th</sup> century battles.

Paul went onto the naming of the roads. Centre Road changed its name twice, firstly to Cranbrook Road in 1874 (after the Secretary of State for War) and then to Queens Avenue in 1898 after a particularly fine review by Her Majesty. The roads running west to east from the Farnborough Road were named after GOC's, starting with Knollys Road in the south and including Alison, Cavan, Evelyn Wood, Scarlett, Hope Grant, and Redvers Buller. They ran out of roads to name after GOC's and the GOC had to achieve something special to merit a road name.

The naming process continued after the First World War. The Connaught lines were built. The Mons barracks were built in 1921 for the Royal Signals, Hammersley after Frederick Hammersley who was the first commander of the Army Gymnastics Corps. Other barracks were rebuilt in 1926/8 and named Calyton after General of the Service Corps and Parsons after Major General Parsons of the Army Ordnance Corps. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, all barracks had been given names.

All these barracks continued in use until the 1960's when there was another major rebuild of the camp. The Stanhope lines disappeared and the area became the Montgomery lines, with barracks named after World War II actions, particularly those involving the Airborne forces – Arnhem, Bruneval, Rhine and Normandy. Field Marshall Montgomery opened these himself in April 1965. St Omer barracks were rebuilt in 1960's and named after the town in Northern France which was the general HQ of the BEF in World War I.

Garrison commanders no longer had roads named after them but special mention should be made of John Reed who prevented the demolition of the last Victorian barracks which is now the Aldershot Military Museum, with the John Reed gallery.

Salamanca Park was the site of new married quarters. The names of Wellington's battles in Spain had already been used so roads were named after Wellington's subordinates – Pakenham, Anson and Fermor who were divisional or brigade commanders. Roads in Goose Green Park are named after actions in the Falklands War and after the two V.C. winners.

Another 50 years have gone by and there is now another major rebuild. The 1960's concrete blocks have been demolished. The new H.Q. of Home Command was named Montgomery House in 2016. The new accommodation blocks in St Omer barracks are named after the battle honours of the divisions. First and Second Division are named after World War I battles – Marne, Aisne, Ypres, Sambre, Cambrai and Festubert. The barracks for the Gurkha's are similarly named after their major World War II battles – Cassino & Imphal.

The new Normandy barracks houses medical units. Two of these are named after two Army doctors who each won two Victoria Crosses (the only British officers to do so), Martin Leake and Chavasse. The QARANC unit is named after Dame Margot Turner who was a nurse and a POW of the Japanese in Malaya.

To pay for this latest rebuild most of what was the South Camp has been sold off and 3,800 new homes and two new schools will be built as part of a ten year project. This has now been called "Wellesley" by the developers, Grainger.

Paul was concerned that historic names should be preserved, lost names should be recovered and missing figures should now be recognised. Bellway who are building the houses in the first phase initially planned to call this part "Wellington Gardens". Paul Vickers and Gerald Howarth protested as there is already a Wellington Gardens in Aldershot and this has now been changed to Maida, a battle in Italy.

This showed a worrying sign that Grainger could be failing to preserve local heritage. However Jerome Street, Stuart Lane, Kempt Lane, Oswald Street and Acland Street in Maida have been named after commanders at the Battle of Maida which took place at Calabria, Italy in July 1806.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the naming of the first school where Hampshire County Council have proposed the name David Kirk after a HCC councillor who was involved in education. However he came from Andover and is totally unknown in Aldershot and has no connection with the town - he's not even well known in Andover!

Paul has been advising the developers on possible names to be used in the Wellesley development. He described how the list that he had submitted had gone around to different people and had eventually been sent back to him asking what he thought of these names, not knowing that he had suggested these names in the first instance! Watch this space!