

## Editorial for Journal 41.

It is with pleasure that I write this editorial for the 41st Journal. As ever, I have had a busy year answering members' queries and helping with a number of projects 'in progress' for members intending to write or lecture on the subject, or intending to visit the battlefields.

Following the recent publication of Katie Stossel's book '*A Handful of Heroes*' a number of members have asked for the picture and papers referred to in the book of Sgt. Cooper 1313 1<sup>st</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment – see front cover. According to the Regimental records, Sgt. Cooper was killed at Isandlwana – the same designation as for Lts. Coghill and Melvill, whereas Cooper's surviving memorial service cards state (see the front cover) his death was at Rorke's Drift, which is supported by a letter to his relative from Maj. Upcher, then in charge of Rorke's Drift, which included the area known as Fugitives' Drift. No other such 'notification of death' letter is known to exist. The general belief, shared by well-known historians Ron Lock and Prof. John Laband, to name but two, is that this documentation suggests that Sgt. Cooper was most likely 'the dead soldier found near the bodies of Coghill and Melvill' as indicated by Col. Glyn in one of his reports and other witnesses who left accounts. At this point, we don't know exactly where Cooper was killed, although the likelihood is that he died at Fugitives' Drift, within sight of Rorke's Drift, alongside the two officers. At the time, and for army purposes, Fugitives' Drift came under the command of Maj. Upcher of the 24<sup>th</sup> at Rorke's Drift.

Notification of the deaths of Lts Coghill and Melvill were sent to relatives by Maj. Upcher during April, the same time as that of Sgt. Cooper. Had Cooper been killed at Isandlwana or along the Fugitives' Trail, his body would not have been found until the bodies of the slain 24<sup>th</sup> men were buried at the end of May.

**For your diary;** there will be an exhibition of '*Art of the Zulu War of 1879*' towards the end of summer 2017 in Kent. This will include works of art, paintings and sketches from the British and Zulu sides which should make a spectacular exhibition. The venue will be Tenterden & District Museum ([www.tenterdenmuseum.co.uk](http://www.tenterdenmuseum.co.uk)) in Kent and will run from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October until Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017, both dates inclusive.

The South Africa Campaign medal of Sgt. Cooper will be available for members to see, along with the associated paperwork, at this *Art of the Zulu War* exhibition. The medal has been authenticated by Spinks.

*Adrian Greaves*

Dr Adrian Greaves  
Editor.