

RORKE'S DRIFT DEFENDERS OF NOTTINGHAM

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Nottingham and its immediate environs is not particularly renowned for its links with the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and it was not until much later, during my latter years of more serious research into this fascinating campaign that I realized the City had any links at all. Several years ago I became absorbed in the lives of soldiers who fought in the Zulu campaign and began research to discover at the very least, their final resting places and/or memorials to their honour. As time went by, I finally met up with those stalwarts of Anglo-Zulu War memorial research, Tim Day (Author of *But Burdens Shouldered*.) Ian (Woody) Woodason and Rai England at a Zulu War weekend, organized by the Anglo Zulu War Historical Society at the Royal Chelsea Hospital, London. These three are collectively known as the Keynsham Light Horse (see website on the AZWHS links page) and it was at this venue that I put faces to names as it were. I had been following in their footsteps for some considerable time and this meeting was to have profound effects upon my own research. As is their way, these three gentlemen freely and willingly gave me many leads which would probably have eluded me for years and in return I was able to provide one or two for them. We have been friends ever since and I was soon invited to join this small but elite band of enthusiasts, thus forming the basis of my research into the Nottinghamshire participants including a few just across county boundaries.

I already knew of Lt. Gonville Bromhead VC and his links with the county. It is well known that despite being born in France, Gonville's family seat at Thurlby Hall is just across the border in Lincolnshire and that he attended Magnus Grammar School at Newark, Notts. There is still a Bromhead house in the school to this day as a mark of respect and admiration for this hero of Rorke's Drift. Additionally, a tunic still in the possession of the school was once thought to belong to Gonville Bromhead, but the medal ribbons tell us that in fact it belonged to his older brother, Major Charles J. Bromhead, also a participant of the Zulu War and who now lies buried in the small churchyard of Thurlby Hall, along with other members of this illustrious military family. A stained glass window to Gonville's memory has also been erected in the church itself. Today, the school has moved to another location in Newark and Gonville's old school is now the Appletongate museum.

Also reasonably well known is the fact that Sergeant Anthony Clarke Booth VC of Myers Drift, Ntombe River fame, lived his early years at Carrington, Notts. However, I have yet to discover the precise location of his former home. Sergeant Booth lies buried in St. Michael's churchyard, Brierley Hill, West Midlands. Some research I carried out for the Keynsham Light Horse resulted in the location of the grave of Captain William H. Tomasson, who not only rode with Baker's Horse, one of the Colonial units during the Zulu War, he also became Chief of Police in Nottingham and was the author of "With the Irregulars in the Transvaal and Zululand," a rare book today which commands a high price. I found his grave, marked with a Celtic cross in the cemetery at Redhill, Nottinghamshire. In Nottingham Castle, the Sherwood Foresters Regiment houses their museum. Included in the artefacts is an old Zulu shield, purported to belong to King Cetshwayo. I have always doubted this provenance as the shield is a uniform brown and this is not a colour generally associated with senior regiments, let alone the Zulu King. Also present is believed to be King Cetshwayo's sceptre and a number of assegais, one with a slightly bent blade which was allegedly picked up in the donga where the Prince Imperial of France was killed. The Sherwood Foresters were not involved in the Anglo-Zulu War as a regiment, but certain officers were seconded to the campaign.

One such was Colonel John North Crealock who was Lord Chelmsford's military secretary. It is believed that the aforementioned artefacts were collected by Colonel Crealock during the campaign. Also housed in this museum are the original watercolours that Crealock painted during the Zulu War. A selection of these has been reproduced in R.A. Brown's (editor) "The Road to Ulundi-*The Watercolour Drawings of John North Crealock -The Zulu War of 1879.*" This is another rather scarce tome. Even Lord Chelmsford himself had connections with this regiment, as did Lt. Horace Lockwood Smith Dorrien, one of only five surviving Imperial officers from the debacle of Isandlwana. A plaque to his memory can be found just across the border in Derbyshire at the Crich Lighthouse, which is a memorial to the Sherwood Foresters. The plaque however, contains no mention of the Zulu War but is instead a memorial to this famous officer who undoubtedly saved many lives by his action at Le Cateau in 1914, contrary to General French's orders. Smith Dorrien later became a full General and was Colonel of the Sherwood Foresters from 1905 until his death in a car crash in 1930 near Bath.

Still just across the border in Derbyshire, at the village of Denby, can be found the family vault containing the remains of Colonel Drury Curzon Drury Lowe, commander of the 17th Lancers who led the charge out of the British square at the final battle of Ulundi. A plaque to his memory is on the wall inside Denby church. Memorabilia to this famous cavalry regiment can be found in the Duke of

Rutland's home at Belvoir Castle, not far from Nottingham. Here are housed Colonel Drury Lowe's campaign medals, a Foreign Service helmet, a tunic, a Martini Henry carbine, and two shields from the Ulundi battlefield. In Marlpool Cemetery, near Heanor, just across the Notts border in Derbyshire can be found the grave of 11/2491 Private Thomas Dring of the 2/4th King's Own Regiment. The latter also fought in the Zulu War and by some strange coincidence, was born in Muston, just across the Notts border near Grantham, Lincs, the very same village where my daughter Joanne was married. Thomas Dring saw service in the Zulu War and was married in Notts at Basford Registry Office on 7th August 1886, not far from the area where several streets and roads were named after the Zulu War. I wrote an article concerning these roads, subsequently published in the AZWHS Journal.

It was whilst undertaking research such as the foregoing that I unexpectedly came across the names of two members of the garrison of Rorke's Drift who came from Nottingham, the main subject and basis for this article. In the late Norman Holmes' *The Silver Wreath*, mention is made of 25B/1315 Private Robert Tongue 2nd 24th Foot who was born at Ruddington, Nottinghamshire. Norman Holmes gave sufficient information to warrant a search in the local churchyard at Ruddington, but I found nothing. Then in 1999, Norman published "The Noble 24th." Unfortunately, Norman died just before the book had its launch at the 24th Regimental Museum in Brecon, South Wales. I had spent much of that day combing various cemeteries in South Wales and photographing a number of graves and memorials of Zulu War participants. It rained heavily most of that day and I arrived in Brecon rather the worse for wear and must have stood out amongst the gathering that evening on account of my dishevelled appearance. As always, the trip to Brecon is very worthwhile and to a Zulu enthusiast the regimental museum is second to none, but on this day, two memorable instances occurred.

Firstly, I met the owner of 25B/1316 Caleb Wood's South Africa campaign medal and secondly, an addition to Norman Holmes's new book, which is a much expanded version of *The Silver Wreath*, gave an account of Caleb Wood not found in the latter volume, namely, that Caleb not only died at Nottingham, but also gave his address as 2, Distillery Street, Ruddington. This was taken from his obituary, but it is now known for certain that the latter address is incorrect and that he in fact lived at 2, Asher Lane. So I now knew that we had not one, but two Rorke's Drift defenders and peculiarly, both living at Ruddington. Their enlistment numbers were also consecutive, giving the hint that they probably both knew each other and enlisted on the same day.

What to do next? I still had only the information found in "The Noble 24th," so I decided to contact my friends in the Keynsham Light Horse with my query. Their research confirmed that both were buried in Shaw Street cemetery and not in the village churchyard where I had previously searched. The KLH also gave me grave co-ordinates and armed with these I visited Ruddington village hall. Here I was loaned a copy of the cemetery plan and began my search in the old section of the cemetery. The numbers on the plan matched only one of the plots and grave co-ordinates from the KLH and it was soon obvious that neither of these heroes had headstones marking their final resting places. Some old gravestones were apparent in the area where I assumed both graves were present so I contented myself with photographing the general area. It was a major disappointment to discover that there was absolutely nothing to mark the final resting places of two brave men who had taken part in what is arguably the most famous action in British military history, albeit thanks largely to the film "Zulu."

During my many years of grave and memorial photography, I had come across numerous graves that caused me concern. Private William Jones VC is in a pauper's grave in Phillip's Park Cemetery, Manchester. He lies with many strangers. Even mention of his Victoria Cross is a fairly recent addition to the horizontal slab over his remains. Robert Jones VC, whose grave is in Peterchurch, Herefordshire, has his stone facing the opposite way to those around him. I have seen it in print whereby the latter statement is untrue, but my photographs show most in the immediate area facing the opposite way. It would appear that this was done because he allegedly committed suicide, although his family vigorously maintain that the headstone was deliberately placed this way round so that visitors would be able to read the inscription of this VC hero from the main pathway. This makes perfect sense and as such I can well understand why the family would resist efforts to have the stone turned. It is also said that his coffin was not allowed inside the church and had to be carried over the low wall that surrounds the cemetery on account of the alleged suicide. Other sources state that the gate was too small for his coffin at the time.

If this is true, then I suspect all other contemporary burials must have followed the same procedure. Apparently, suicide victims at that time were not normally allowed to be buried in consecrated ground and it was only the fact that Robert held the Victoria Cross that the latter was overlooked. Whether or not he committed suicide, and there is some doubt about this, I personally was deeply saddened that such a brave man should be treated thus. So it seems there is even controversy concerning the burial of this brave man. Surely, the actions of both of these famous Rorke's Drift defenders did not warrant this sort of treatment after their demise, however caused? The sadness surrounding these two cases almost caused me to give up my research, but time as usual proved a great healer and here I was, facing two more sad

graves, only this time without markers of any sort. Headstones of course cost money and this was a commodity of national scarcity amongst Victorian working class Britain.

Even though many of these men died during the early part of the twentieth century, money for such luxuries was almost impossible to procure, so many Private soldiers still lie in unmarked graves throughout the world, including many of the defenders of Rorke's Drift. Only the better-heeled of society, such as the officer class, could afford permanent grave markers and church memorials, and this is highly apparent when one scans through the superb Keynsham Light Horse website. By far it is the officer class who are remembered thus, the ordinary rank and file, unless VC holder's, remain all but forgotten to history.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. I was aware that a few previously unmarked graves of Rorke's Drift defenders had recently been marked by various societies with a Zulu War interest and this knowledge spawned the idea of doing something to honour Nottingham's two local heroes. I was acutely aware that very few people knew of these two graves and even less about the men themselves and that a part of our history would be lost forever if something was not done about it, and soon. I was also aware that I faced many pitfalls and possible barriers in my quest. To begin with, I thought the family descendents may not wish the involvement of an outsider, and their permission would need to be sought in any case. Also, the local authorities might register an objection after all this time.

I wasn't even aware if any descendents or relatives existed in the area. Additionally, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has responsibility for military graves and memorials from World War One onwards and families may not be wealthy enough to afford proper headstones. Even at Rorke's Drift, where more than usual, ordinary soldiers are remembered, there are still many Privates who lie in unmarked graves. Caleb Wood for example is only really remembered because of the photograph taken of his appearance at the Gateshead Northern Command Tattoo in July 1934 along with four other Rorke's Drift defenders. These were Colour-Sergeant Frank Bourne, Alfred Saxty, William Cooper and John Jobbins. Unfortunately, Caleb died the following year, as did John Jobbins. Both Caleb Wood and Robert Tongue usually get very brief mention, if mentioned at all. I wanted to correct this and place at least something about them, both in the public domain and also for the benefit of students of the Anglo-Zulu War.

I pondered for some time before resorting to that age-old maxim, *the pen is mightier than the sword*. I wrote an article concerning the lack of gravestones over the graves of these two heroes for the Nottingham Evening Post, which was enthusiastically received. This one article achieved more far reaching consequences than I could ever have imagined. After the article was published, Co-Op Funeral Care offered to supply two headstones with appropriate epitaphs of my choosing, free gratis. This was fantastic news, because in all honesty, I expected to have to set up a fund and give lectures to achieve my goal.

This great news was to be followed by contacts from the actual family descendents of both Rorke's Drift defenders. One in particular, the great granddaughter of Caleb Wood has been a goldmine of information and basically what follows is almost entirely due to her unselfish efforts to discover and pass on freely to me, all the information she has thus far been able to collect about both her illustrious great grandfather and Robert Tongue. To her is due my personal thanks and I consider it a great personal privilege to have met and known her. She does this research primarily for her own personal interest and has particularly requested that she remain anonymous. As campaign medals and other Zulu War artefacts and memorabilia soar in price, she fears being disturbed by collectors and medal hunters alike. Even though she has no relics whatsoever and Caleb's campaign medal is in the private collection of a friend of mine, she feels that this would not deter some collectors. I concur with this and respect her wishes to remain anonymous and will refer to her as Caleb Wood's great granddaughter. During her researches, Caleb Wood's great granddaughter has been in contact with Robert Tongue's grand daughter who has supplied us with original documents and photographs of her famous grandfather. These have been scanned and copied and the originals returned to the Tongue family, where they belong. I would therefore, with the thanks of both these descendents, like to take this opportunity to place before students of the Anglo-Zulu War, some details and photographs previously unknown and certainly unpublished about these two fine gentlemen.

CALEB WOOD

To begin with, almost all published references have Caleb's surname as Woods. This is incorrect, his surname is Wood. He was born on 24th April 1858, the second of five children, to William and Ellen Wood of 4 Olivers Row, Ruddington. His birth was registered in the district of Wilford, Notts. on 14th

May 1858. He attended Ruddington Boys School and by the age of twelve had taken up employment as a framework knitter (there is a framework knitter's museum still in Ruddington today) and thus followed in his father's footsteps who, according to Caleb's birth certificate, was a stocking framework knitter.

Caleb, along with fellow Ruddingtonian Robert Tongue, joined the army in 1877 and as aforementioned, due to their concurrent enlistment numbers, probably joined the same day as each other. However, according to a document in the Ruddington Framework Knitting Museum, Robert Tongue attested at Nottingham on 26th February 1877 and Caleb Wood attested on 6th March 1877. They were both posted to "B" Company 2nd Battalion 24th Foot, also known as the 2nd Warwickshire Regiment. On 26th January, both men embarked with their regiment at Chatham Docks and sailed to South Africa towards a future date that would forever remain indelible on both their minds. They arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on 1st April 1878 and marched towards their ultimate goal of Natal.

As is now well known to all Zulu War enthusiasts, the date of 22nd of January 1879 is the most memorable of the entire campaign that became known as the Anglo-Zulu War. There is not space here to delve into the reasons behind this conflict, but on this unforgettable day, three actions were fought against the mighty Zulu nation. The first, earlier in the day at the Nyezane River, Colonel Charles Knight Pearson's Number One column repulsed a Zulu attack, the only one during the whole conflict where an attack was made on a British column whilst still on the move. The second, the attack by the main Zulu army on the third, or Central column at Isandlwana where almost half the invading British force was wiped out to a man and thirdly, the attack by the Zulu reserve force at Isandlwana on the mission station at Rorke's Drift, an assault that was to continue well into the 23rd January and where our two heroes were to use Martini Henry rifle and bayonet at uncomfortably close quarters. Like most Victorian soldiers, Caleb and Robert were paid but a shilling a day, not a lot for the nightmares endured and then to be forgotten afterwards.

One week after the battle of Rorke's Drift, Caleb was transferred to G Company and on 1st January 1881 he was appointed 'Drummer' for which he received a pay increase of one penny per day. Whether this was a Company drummer or in the Corps of Drums is unknown. Both our heroes also served in the 9th Frontier War or *Kaffir War*, as it was contemporarily termed, and also in Gibraltar and India. I have not been able to discover the whereabouts of their medals for their Indian service (if indeed they were awarded them) but both received the South Africa Campaign Medal with clasp for 1877-8-9. This is rather odd as they apparently were not in South Africa in 1877. Caleb's date of discharge is not known, but he no longer appears in regimental records after 1st May 1883. By this date he would have completed six years with the Colours, but because of the relatively recent Cardwell reforms, instead of doing twelve years with the Colours, he would now be on Reserve for six years.

I have always had a great interest in trying to pinpoint participants' locations on battlefields and as far as I can ascertain, no-one seems to know which part, or parts of the mission station these two defended on that fateful day. Caleb's great granddaughter told me about an oil painting that used to hang in Caleb's son's house. It was a painting of Rorke's Drift and although she is not certain, she has a feeling that Caleb himself may have painted this. If so, it could possibly depict a view that he witnessed and thereby give away his location within the defences. Being members of the armed forces, the family moved fairly frequently and only necessities could be taken, anything else had to be disposed of. Thus the painting, not considered a necessity, apparently disappeared. A search is now on for this lost painting which we hope is still with one of the family members.

After the India campaign, Caleb returned to England in May 1883 and took lodgings in Cambridge Street, New Radford, Nottingham, where he obtained employment as a twist hand in Nottingham's famous lace industry. Whilst in New Radford, Caleb met Emily Jones and they married on December 25th 1883 in the Parish Church of Radford. Emily had been married twice before and both were aged 26 years, she also had a two year old daughter. Emily was born at Bothemsall, Notts on 8th November 1858, the daughter of Thomas Jones, an officer of the Inland Revenue whose wife was also named Emily (nee Mills). An anomaly occurred here which caused a lot of problems for Caleb's great granddaughter whilst researching family descendents. Emily had been Mrs. Jones, and yet all of Caleb's children's birth certificates state the mother's name: Wood FORMERLY WHITWORTH when in fact it was formerly Jones, and for years it seems, everyone had been searching for the Wood/Whitworth certificate, which did not exist.

Caleb's wife, Emily Elizabeth Jones had first married a Mr. Whitworth, about whom nothing but his name is known. Whether this marriage ended in divorce or the untimely death of Mr. Whitworth is not yet known, but Emily's second marriage, to a John Thomas Jones of Cornwall effectively returned her maiden name to Jones, thus causing the surname problem in the records. She had not exactly reverted to her single name. She was in fact Mrs. Jones, the name was right, the title spinster was wrong or at least, misleading. John and Emily Jones lived at No. 2 Loversidges Yard, Newark, Notts. and on 21st August 1881, Emily gave birth to a daughter, Catherine Annie Jones, at Pacey's Row, Newark. Emily next

appears in Independence Street, New Radford, Nottingham, where she married Caleb on Christmas Day 1883.

The marriage certificate states that Emily was a spinster, but this is incorrect, all due to the fact that she had reverted to her original surname of Jones. The condition on the marriage certificate should have read as either widowed or divorced. By 1889, the couple had moved to Tibshelf in Derbyshire, just five miles away from the village of Hardstoft where Caleb's father had been born. Because all of Caleb's relatives lived in Tibshelf, employment may have been the motive for the move there. At least, accommodation should not have been a problem.

Whilst in Tibshelf, Caleb turned his hand to coal-mining and Emily gave birth to their first child, a son, named William John Wood on 26th January 1889. For some reason, the family went on the move again, this time to Lower Brook Street in Long Eaton, on the Notts/Derby border, where Caleb again returned to his former occupation as a twist hand. Another move in 1895 saw them at 7, Sawley Road, Long Eaton and it was here that a second son was born, Arthur Charles Jepson Wood on 7th November 1895. Wilfred Roy Wood, their last child was born on 21st March 1899. The family then moved to Willoughby Street, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, where Catherine, Caleb's step daughter, married Henry Bowley, the son of William Bowley, a fruiterer. On 15th December 1900, Catherine and Henry's first child was born. The fact that this child was named Alfred Caleb says much about the bond between Caleb and his step-daughter.

During the early 1900's Caleb and Emily returned to Ruddington where most records have them living at 2, Distillery Street. It is now certain that this address, which has a modern bungalow on the site, is incorrect, and that the real address was 2 Asher Lane, as aforementioned. Caleb returned to his former profession as a framework knitter. Catherine and Henry remained in Ilkeston as did, it is believed, all three sons. In 1914, at the outbreak of World War One, Caleb again volunteered for service in the army, but as he was now 56 years old, his application was politely turned down. This shows that he was still game to serve his country even at that age.

In 1932 the last nine survivors of Rorke's Drift garrison sent a wreath to the funeral of their comrade in arms, John Fielding (John Williams), showing that indeed they did all keep in touch and never forgot their experiences of 22nd/23rd January 1879. The nine men who sent that wreath were: Thomas Buckley, George Deacon, Caleb Wood, John Jobbins, Alfred Saxty, Henry Martin, William Cooper, George Orchard, and Frank Bourne. Robert Tongue had, by this time, sadly passed away.

In 1934, The Northern Command Military Tattoo was held at Gateshead and part of the programme included a re-enactment of the defence of Rorke's Drift. Lt. Colonel Frank Bourne appeared in the arena with Sergeant Alfred Saxty and Privates William Cooper, John Jobbins and Caleb Wood. Since sending the wreath just a couple of years previously, four of these last men of the Drift had passed away. The same year, 1934, a Ceremonial Parade was organized for the "Laying up of the Colours" in Brecon Cathedral. Caleb Wood attended the parade but by this time his eyesight was failing and he was accompanied by his second son Arthur Charles Jepson Wood, who apparently had to escort his father as the latter was nearly blind. According to Caleb's, great granddaughter's mother, on their return from Brecon, Emily's son gave her a message that he had been entrusted with from the regiment. The message was to the effect that when Caleb died, Emily **must** contact the Regiment immediately.

On 20th February 1935, Caleb passed away in his home village of Ruddington. He had died of Dropsy and valvular disease of the heart. His step-daughter Catherine was present at his death. In accordance with the instructions in the message from the Regiment at Brecon, Emily contacted the regiment, and a gun carriage was apparently sent up for the funeral. The coffin was draped in a flag, probably the Union flag, and troops marched by the side of the gun carriage. Caleb Wood's great granddaughter's mother attended the funeral of her grandfather and this was her lasting memory of it. Unfortunately, there appears to be no record of this at Brecon, but it could have come from a regimental unit in Warwickshire. Caleb is buried in Section 21 plot 24 in Shaw Street Cemetery, Ruddington. It is often stated that many of the Rorke's Drift defenders suffered terrible nightmares or flashbacks of mental stress. Some didn't even want their medals as they became a constant reminder. Equally it can be stated that others perhaps were not so traumatized, Caleb for example. He was apparently a kind and gentle soul and was very softly spoken. Had he been deeply affected by the events at Rorke's Drift he never showed it and it is doubtful that he would have attended the Tattoo or the Colour ceremony at Brecon, as he would have had to relive the nightmare. His friend and comrade in arms Robert Tongue, predeceased him on January 29th 1918 at the age of 60 and is buried in the same cemetery but in Section 28 plot 14. Caleb's second son, Arthur Charles Jepson Wood, who attended the Colour ceremony in Brecon, joined the army like his father, joining the 10th Battalion Sherwood Foresters at the outbreak of war in 1914 and on 21st October 1916 was awarded the Military Medal for his actions at Fricourt Wood, France.

An interesting, and initially unforeseen connection with Caleb Wood and another Rorke's Drift defender came to light after sending a photograph that I had taken of the memorial headstone of 1011

George Chambers, Sergeant Instructor of Musketry, 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, killed in action at Isandlwana, to Caleb Wood's great granddaughter. A second name also appears on this stone which is situated in the cemetery at Brecon, South Wales. This second name is that of Isaac Lewis. Isaac Lewis was the father of Bombardier Thomas Lewis, Royal Artillery who was a patient in the hospital at Rorke's Drift on 22nd January 1879. He had been injured in a wagon accident and as a result, one entire leg was swollen. Isaac Lewis was the father of Bombardier Lewis. So why is Isaac Lewis mentioned on the memorial headstone to Sergeant Chambers? Sergeant Chambers married Margaret Lewis, who was the sister of Bombardier Lewis of Rorke's Drift fame. Isaac Lewis had a brother named John and it was a grandson of John Lewis who married a cousin of Caleb Wood. So this one headstone at Brecon actually connects three participants of the Anglo-Zulu War, one killed in action at Isandlwana and two defenders of Rorke's Drift.

ROBERT TONGUE

Robert Tongue was born in Ruddington, Notts on 3rd June 1857. He was apparently an only child, born to John and Elizabeth Tongue (nee Powdrill), who were married at Gotham, Notts. John Tongue, (Robert's father) originally married Ruth Sharpe, by whom she had a son, Thomas. Ruth then unfortunately died and John remarried Elizabeth Powdrill and they had Robert. Then John died leaving Elizabeth with a son and a step-son. Afterwards Elizabeth remarried to a man named George Parker, by whom she had three children, and then she died too. This of course meant that Robert had a half brother, Thomas, son of John and Ruth.

John and Elizabeth lived in the village of Ruddington. Robert's father died whilst still young and his mother remarried to a man named George Parker, as aforementioned. Sometime around 1867 and she gave birth to one son and two daughters, so Robert had another half brother and two half sisters, George, Ruth and Martha. Elizabeth herself then died sometime between 1875 and 1881, as George Parker is shown as a widow on the 1881 census. This relationship between George and Elizabeth can be verified on the 1891 census when George Parker is shown living with Robert Tongue and his wife Mary. Although the census shows George as "father," in fact George is Robert's step-father. George junior died on November 10th 1887, and George senior died sometime between 1891 and 1901. This is a rather complicated list of offspring but space here is at a premium and really concerns Robert Tongue and his Zulu War connections and life afterwards.

Apart from differing attestation dates, Robert's army career seems to have more or less mirrored that of Caleb Wood except that Robert previously served in the Nottingham Militia. He attested at Brecon on 5th March 1877, although Norman Holme has his attestation date as 1st March 1877 and his attestation papers list him as a Framework knitter, just like Caleb Wood, so in all probability, they also worked together in civilian life. Like Caleb, he was posted to the 2nd Battalion 24th Foot. He is also described as aged 19, five feet seven inches in height, of fresh complexion, eyes grey and hair brown. Also worthy of note is that he had to make his mark on his enlistment papers as he could not write his name, but on his discharge he had gained a 4th class education certificate. It therefore seems likely that the signature on his marriage certificate is Robert's own, thanks to his army service.

He took part in the defence of Rorke's Drift, Natal, South Africa on 22nd/23rd January 1879 and on 1st March 1879 was granted Good Conduct pay at 1 penny per diem. Unlike Caleb Wood, Robert Tongue's military records still exist and these give us further dimensions on the life of this Zulu War veteran. Robert spent 6 years and 4 months with the Colours and 5 years and 8 months on Reserve. He spent 2 years and 10 months in India, 2 years in South Africa and 6 months in Gibraltar. His character is described as very good and was in possession of two badges, probably for good conduct. The paper also states that he was not entitled to a pension, yet another reference to laying one's life on the line, only to be more or less forgotten afterwards. According to his Discharge papers, he was then aged 55 years and 10 months, which seems odd as he was only 19 when he enlisted.

The date on his discharge papers reads 28th February 1889, which should have given his age as 31 years. Perhaps this was his age when he requested an army pension? He was in possession of the South Africa Campaign medal with clasp for 1879. This differs from the medal roll which has his clasp entitlement as 1877-8-9. The current whereabouts of this medal are unknown to the author. His service continued in the South Wales Borderers as the 24th Foot came to be known in 1881. His cause of discharge states termination of period. He was granted Good Conduct pay at 2 pence per diem on 1st March 1883, and then transferred to 1st Class Army Reserve on 21st March 1883. Robert was finally

discharged at Brecon on 28th February 1889. He was placed on Register (No. 96752) at Royal Hospital, Chelsea on the same date as his discharge.

Robert Tongue also had an interesting medical record. Parts of the document are very difficult to read but it appears he was in hospital five times during his service. Interestingly, he seemed to pick up a malady whenever he moved to somewhere new. For the record, I will list these accordingly:

- 1) *10 Days with "logapepsia" treated with purgatives.*
- 2) *3 Days with "tonsillitis" treated with "ashingtonts" (6th-9th Dec. 78, Rorke's Drift?)*
- 3) *6 Days with "Fibrosi Acute ????" treated with "Minlan formulation"*
- 4) *5 Days with "Rubage (?) of foot" treated with "local water" (new boots?)*
- 5) *10 Days with "Abscess" treated with "Maison poultice, carbolic."*

His medical history sheet adds that his chest measurement (over the nipple) was 35 inches, his heart rate was 76 beats and his pulse rate was 18 inspirations. The latter was his state of health as at 6th March 1877. The document is stamped twice with Pension Office, Brecon and then dated 25th February 1889. It would have been interesting to have taken his pulse rate during the Zulu assault on Rorke's Drift and recorded the difference! The document also states that he received no punishments, whether Corporal or by Imprisonment. Robert also gave his next of kin as "brother," but according to the family tree, no brother is present, only a half-brother. Again, this is another reference that a full brother existed, although as aforementioned, this most likely refers to the step-brother Thomas.

After military service, Robert married Mary Wright on 27th June 1884 at Ruddington and according to the family tree, they appear to have been most fruitful, giving birth to ten children between 1884 and 1904. Their names and dates have been extracted from Robert Tongue's own family bible which had been a gift from the Primitive Methodist Sunday School, Ruddington, January 3rd 1875.

The first born was Florance Elizabeth Tongue, born August 16th 1884 and died September 15th 1890:

Then followed Beatrice Rebecca Tongue on September 11th 1885 and died January 23rd 1886:

Then Edith Ellen Tongue born February 23rd 1887 and died 11th January 1888:

Then Ethel May Tongue born 10th May 1889 and died 20th August 1889:

Then Agnes Tongue born April 3rd 1891 and died 12th June 1895:

Then Eveline Tongue born 9th August 1894 but no record found of her date of death:

Then a boy at last, John George Tongue born 20th March 1896 who was killed in action during the First World War on 29th March 1918:

Then Mary Elizabeth Tongue born 13th September 1898 with again no record available of date of death.

Then Jesse Arthur Tongue, born May 11th 1904 no details of date of death available.

This brings the total to nine children. The tenth is a son named Harold and for some obscure reason, is omitted from the family bible. Perhaps this was due to births coinciding with deaths and consequently missed from the bible list. We know of his existence because of an original letter from Harold, addressed to Mary Tongue, which began "Dear Mother, Father and all," the envelope was marked "Harold's last letter," and was dated March 27th 1917. The words "Harold's last letter," are in the same hand as the writing in the bible. If Harold was born in 1901 or just after (he does not appear on the 1901 census) he would not have been of legal age to join the army for World War One, but it is well known that many lied about their age for enlistment. This is not to state that Harold did any such thing, but at the moment he seems something of an enigma. On the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, only one Harold Tongue appears. He is listed as 53494 Harold Tongue, Private, Durham Light Infantry, died 10th April 1918. There are no other Harold Tongue's in any branch of the services. This one appears on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

It will be noted that at least four of these children died very young. In fact it reads like they were giving birth one year and burying another child the next. How sad and how depressing this must have been for the family as a whole. It seems that only two of Robert and Mary's children had any children of their own, one was Mary Elizabeth (the other is still under investigation as a photograph exists of two of Robert's granddaughters taken in 1939 named Nellie and Agnes) who married Thomas Barnes c 1920 at Ruddington, Notts. Mary had five children, of which two were twins, Ruby and Rowland Barnes who were born 9th December 1933, the other three were Eric Barnes, whose birth date is at present unknown

and that he died whilst still young, Mary Barnes who was born 14th March 1925 and is still alive today, as is Evelyn who was born on 26th March 1930. Ruby, one of the twins, married a Bromhead (apparently not related to Gonville of Rorke's Drift fame) and she died recently. At least two granddaughters therefore survive today. One of Robert's granddaughter's has been instrumental in providing original family documents and of special interest are photographs of the man himself, which I believe have never been published before, so that we now at least know what another of the defenders of Rorke's Drift actually looked like in later life.

One of Robert's sons, John George Tongue was born on 20th March 1896. Robert was indeed fortunate to be spared the agonies of knowing that one of his sons died just two months after him, killed in action whilst serving with 16th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers on 29th March 1918. He is remembered with honour at Mendighem Military Cemetery, Belgium. I have a copy of his last letter to his mother. I also have other writings concerning his mother Mary, they make sad reading indeed and one really feels for Mary when reading them. I am still working on Robert's lifestyle when he lived in Ruddington, although we know that he was a Framework Knitter prior to his military service and it seems he returned to this profession afterwards. Robert's state of health and how he died are still under investigation, but we have some interesting notes on his funeral.

Robert Tongue died on 29th January 1918. I have in my possession, copies of original receipts and suchlike for his funeral. One is addressed Distillery Street, Ruddington, (here is that Distillery Street again, only this time referring to Robert) dated February 2nd 1918 and addressed to Mrs. Tongue from Daughter to Arthur H. Burrows, Joiner and carpenter. For Elm coffin, polished, with brass furniture, robe and trimmings. £4-5s 0d. Another from the Registrar and Sexton of Ruddington Cemetery for the internment of the late Robert Tongue in section 28, space number 41. Nine shillings including ringing and tolling bell. Memorial cards with a black surround were also issued, featuring a cannon and union flag and the words "The Last Call" on the front and inside a small poem and the words: In Loving Memory of Robert, The beloved husband of Mary Tongue, who died January 29th 1918 Aged 60 Years. Interred in Ruddington Cemetery.

And so both these men, friends in life, actions shared together in times of war, such as at Rorke's Drift, and again as Framework Knitters, are now reunited again for eternity. Though they were all but forgotten in this small cemetery, they will now be remembered by the words on each headstone, which by the time you read this, will have been installed above both plots of these two gallant soldiers. I hope that by this article and by the erection of such kindly donated headstones by Co-Op Funeralcare, that the memories of these men will no longer fade into oblivion and will provide a focus for those Anglo Zulu War enthusiasts and others interested in the history of our country.

Acknowledgements.

Keynsham Light Horse.

Caleb Wood's Great Granddaughter.