

## FINDING (CHARLIE) HARFORD'S PAPERS.

'The beetle collector'.

By David Payne

---

In the course of my normal working life I frequently have to use the services of a bookbinder. In late 2005 I purchased both volumes of the 1879 Illustrated London News and these required work to the spine so I took them to a bookbinder for his expert attention. He, when seeing the two volumes asked what my interest was in the year 1879, so I explained it was the Anglo Zulu War. His response to me was "My wife's grandfather served in the Zulu War". My initial reaction was to take this with a pinch of salt as time elapsed since the Zulu War until today would make it most unlikely that this could in fact be the case and I am frequently being told that grandfathers served in the Zulu War when invariably the individuals served in South Africa in later encounters.

When I went to collect the repaired volumes I asked whether or not his wife had found anything relating to her grandfather, he was not sure.

I again visited the bookbinder some six weeks later and learned that his wife had found some 'bits' from her grandfather and it now turned out that her grandfather was none other than Charles Harford - the beetle collector. He suggested that I telephone his wife to make an appointment to visit her.

This I did and Adrian Greaves accompanied me and we took with us some other artefacts that originally belonged to Charles Harford. When we arrived the granddaughter tipped onto a table some medals relating to the Harford family and there amongst them was Charles Harford's South Africa Campaign Medal. Adrian and I were stunned. The granddaughter, obviously realising that we were both intrigued said "Hang on a minute, I have something else". Off she went and came back a few minutes later with Charlie Harford's field telescope, his messing kit and a large wooden carved milk pail which Harford 'recovered' from one of King Cetewayo's homesteads. As can be imagined, Adrian and I were even more incredulous. After chatting generally at length about the items the granddaughter took us through to her library and there, on the table, were stacked the journals of Charlie Harford - all hand-written - relating to his experiences and military career throughout his life.

I subsequently volunteered to collate all of this information into a book, which I have been working on now for the last twelve months and I anticipate it will take me a further best part of a year to collate it all.

The field telescope and messing kit would obviously have been the items that he mislaid in the bush when leading the attack on Sihayo's homestead, which was the first encounter with the Zulus following the expiry of the ultimatum.

I was later involved with an exhibition at the Tenterden Museum over Easter 2006 which related to Sister Janet Wells and we displayed the Harford find as part of the overall exhibition. The grandson and granddaughter visited the exhibition and their timing could not have been more perfect as, in the museum at the same time, were the direct descendants of Sir Bartle Frere and Pte. Williams VC. We were able to introduce everybody and both grandson-in-law and granddaughter were well pleased and as they left the granddaughter came to me and said "We have more".

Ten days later Adrian and I again visited the granddaughter and this time she gave us three suitcases containing all sorts of papers relating to Charlie Harford together with three family photograph albums. Once again, this required a lot more careful research into the contents of the suitcases and the photograph albums, and all of the relevant items found will be incorporated into the forthcoming book.

I still cannot believe our good fortune in having located all of these items especially bearing in mind that Charlie Harford was a firm favourite of David Rattray; both David and Charlie being entomologists.

I continue to find the research absolutely fascinating and it is a pleasure and honour to have Charlie Harford's life and exploits during the Zulu War written by the great man himself.