

Lewes in the Boer War, 1899–1902

by Daniel Waley

The paper takes Lewes as a microcosm for a study of British involvement in and attitudes towards the Boer War. The population was notably patriotic and social occasions such as smoking concerts and rejoicings to mark victories became an important feature of Lewes' social life. A Roll records 214 Lewesians as having served in the War. Of these, volunteers (some of whom had been members of local Volunteer units before the War) had most publicity, but almost certainly 'regulars' were more numerous. The local papers printed many informative (and uncensored) letters from local men serving in South Africa. In many ways the War was perceived as a sum of individual patriotic enterprises rather than as an instance of a state at war. The letters of Trooper B. Moore, which show some disillusionment in the face of hardships and disappointments, illustrate the attitudes of a volunteer. Nine Lewesians died through sickness and three were killed in action (but it is difficult to draw lines in attributing death to service). Participation was also financial; there were many charitable appeals. The Sussex Volunteers Equipment Fund purchased life insurances to cover volunteers and made a grant to the wife of a volunteer to compensate for lost pay. Criticism of the War was expressed at an early stage by Quakers. Critics ('Pro-Boers') had to face local unpopularity, extending to protest by 'Rough Music' demonstrations. From the summer of 1901 more doubts were expressed and conversions were made to the ranks of the critics.

A tablet in Lewes Town Hall commemorates the twelve Lewesians who died in the South African conflict usually known as the 'Boer War'. The scale of that conflict, as measured by the numbers involved, was not large, yet its impact on the public consciousness was considerable because it brought to a confident imperial power shaming and quite unexpected defeats and then prolonged defiance by a financially and technologically weak enemy. It seems worth investigating the effect of the war on the people of a small county town, with the intention of eavesdropping on the beliefs and activities of those strange foreigners, our ancestors of a century ago.

Something must be said about the origins of the war because these had some influence in determining attitudes — particularly critical ones — towards the conflict. Essentially the *casus belli* was the status of the 'Uitlanders', the newcomers — mainly British — to the gold-rich Transvaal, a virtually independent republic dominated by Dutch settlers. Negotiations over this question between Paul Kruger's regime and the British High Commissioner in Cape Town, Alfred Milner, lasted from March to August 1899, but Milner saw the Boers as irreconcilable and seems to

have been anxious to bring matters to a head with them. The British despatched troops to South Africa in September of that year, first from India, then from England, and war broke out in October.

LEWES IN 1899

The population of Lewes at this time was around 11,000.¹ The town had recently (1881) been incorporated as a borough, but had lost its own parliamentary representation under the redistribution scheme of 1885. With a nucleus of small-scale industry as well as of artisans and shopkeepers, no longer a port yet still a market and social centre for farmers, the place had a local oligarchy of sternly Protestant tradesmen, yet lay much within the spheres of influence of landed families, Gages, Brands, Nevills and Christies. There was no clear predominance for Conservative or Liberal in the traditions of the town, yet the Mid-Sussex constituency saw three successive uncontested Conservative victories, the last of these being in the 'Khaki' election of 1900. The strongly Protestant tradition was very marked indeed and Christian practice and belief was a much more topical and

controversial issue for Lewesians than colonialism and the scramble for Africa, which in any case tended to be considered in terms of religious rather than economic interest.

Interrogation of a Lewesian in 1899 about the town's military involvement would probably have evoked the initial reply: 'We have the Volunteers'. The national Volunteer force had been brought into being in 1859 and the following years as an auxiliary body for home defence in the event of invasion. The Volunteers had come to be accepted, largely for social rather than military reasons, as an institution to which a town should give encouragement, but nobody expected they should become involved in warfare beyond the sea.² The Volunteer units based in Lewes were the Lewes Artillery Volunteers (the 7th (Lewes) Company of the 1st Sussex Volunteer Artillery), who had a depot at Southover and numbered about sixty members in 1899, and D (Lewes) Company of the 1st Cinque Ports Rifle Volunteers, whose strength was much the same. The drills and other activities of both these bodies were reported at length in the local papers, but their problems too were well known. They tended to lack officers (gentlemen were reluctant to serve), uniforms were expensive and working-class volunteers needed financial assistance, whilst employers were notoriously reluctant to release men for attendance at the summer camps.

If the Volunteers were well known in Lewes this was partly because they could be seen locally in their uniforms and because membership was felt to be meritorious and public-spirited. There must in 1899 have been an at least equally large number of Lewesians serving in the regular army, a great many of them in the local infantry regiment, the Royal Sussex. Yet this career (as Kipling emphasized) had little prestige and families were more likely to talk proudly of the son in the Volunteers than of poor Tommy, unskilled and jobless, who had been reduced to taking the Queen's shilling. One theme which will emerge in the following pages is the gap between Lewes' perceived involvement in the War, emphasizing the role of volunteers and in particular of former members of the town's Volunteer companies, as contrasted with an actual involvement in which there was a numerical predominance of regular soldiers. This failure to notice that the regulars in South Africa greatly outnumbered the more attractive volunteers, who in fact provided only about one in four or five of the soldiers involved, was a national and not merely a Lewesian

phenomenon. This exaggerated emphasis on the role of the Volunteer element was perhaps connected with the hopeful belief that the War demonstrated that 'volunteers armed with modern weapons . . . could hold their own against the finest troops in the world'.³

With this point about perceptions in mind, it may be well to consider Lewes' attitudes to the War, and also the celebrations and ceremonies to which it gave rise, before proceeding to questions about actual participation and about opposing, critical views. The flavour of Lewesian patriotism was Protestant and enthusiastically parliamentary, as well as royalist. A bust of Queen Victoria in the Town Hall, commemorating the Diamond Jubilee, was unveiled soon after the outbreak of war (December 1899) and the same year saw the laying of the first stone of an ambitious memorial to the town's Protestant martyrs. Prominent in the historical memory of the time too was a national hero, King Alfred, who was thought of as the founder of the English navy; the millenary of his reign had recently been celebrated. Trafalgar Day, St George's Day, the Queen's Birthday were all important annual occasions.⁴ These various themes came together in the stained glass for the Town Hall presented by the Mayor, Mr George Holman, to mark the Queen's eightieth birthday (24 May 1899); among the principal figures were the participants in the battle of Lewes (1264), Simon de Montfort, King Henry III and the latter's brother Richard Earl of Cornwall. An alderman proposing in the borough council the acceptance of this gift referred to the battle and 'thought Lewes people did not make sufficient of that important event, which brought about, as they knew, the representative government enjoyed by the country and which had proved so beneficial'.⁵ A year earlier a loyal address presented to the Duke of Connaught, one of the Queen's sons, contained the claim that 'the Borough of Lewes may be regarded as the cradle of the system of Parliamentary representation in this country, a system on which is based our glorious Constitution, which under the rule of Your Royal Highness' ancestors has been the foundation of the period of liberty and progress the country has so long enjoyed'.⁶

Combined with this self-confident patriotism was a strong consciousness of Empire, assisted by the fact that a high proportion of Britons had relatives who had left the Mother Country in this great age of emigration. Involved in imperial pride there was also more than a trace of Teutonist racial feeling, which provided an awkward paradox during

the War, since the Boers were incontrovertibly of Germanic stock. At the prizegiving of the Artillery Volunteers in 1899 Major-General A. E. Turner confessed that 'it was a matter for greater sorrow and regret because it was two Christian nations which had sprung from the great Saxon root — which ruled the greater part of the world — that were now in conflict with each other'.⁷ By the same token, such racist feelings could lead to doubts about the Uitlanders on behalf of whom the War was being fought; the Liberal John Burns, a leading 'pro-Boer', confessed 'I thought I had landed myself in a synagogue when I went to the Commission'.⁸

PATRIOTIC ATTITUDES AND OCCASIONS

The War was a glorious opportunity for those who enjoyed making patriotic speeches. 'Lewesians are nothing if not patriotic', said the *Sussex Agricultural Express* (28 May 1901), though the attitudes displayed by their orators often seem ingenuous and self-righteous to readers made sceptical by exposure to a further century of propaganda and education. 'I am sure that we all hope that the churlish insolence of the Boers will soon be suppressed', said the Borough Society's 'Bishop' on Bonfire Night 1899; he rejoiced 'that the honour and dignity of the country is to be upheld and the ultimatum received from the most arrogant and rapacious government in the world hurled back in their teeth'.⁹ Perhaps cautious nuances should not be expected on such an occasion, when the effigy of Kruger was about to be consigned to the flames, but the speeches made at a debate a fortnight later, organized by the Man's League of All Saints church, hardly suggest a more critical approach. It is not surprising that the Rector thought the Transvaal War 'entirely righteous', nor that the Warden (the Rev. C. F. Nolleth) believed it 'an extraordinary thing that the grandest empire the world has ever seen should be invaded by one of the most contemptible people on the face of the earth'. But Mr M. S. Blaker, Town Clerk and an extremely prominent Lewesian, was confident that 'the Boers had no business there', whereas the British had a right to dominate 'savages', because they 'colonized in a true sense, while other countries seemed to do their best to seize all they could to acquire territory and do nothing with it'. The discussion was on 'The right and wrong of war' and all the seven speeches reported were pro-War.¹⁰

At a farewell dinner at the Royal Oak for departing reservists, ten speeches were made, no less

than three of them by the Mayor. Mr W. W. Grantham 'hoped they would help to bowl out the Boers, and that when Paul Kruger said "How's that?" the umpire would call "Out!"' — though one might think that under conventional cricketing rules Kruger's appeal would be directed against the British side, whom the speaker would have wished to be 'Not out'. But such an approach is too rational. Views about the War arose directly and naturally from the confident patriotism mentioned above. Speaking at a smoking concert soon after peace had been signed, the then Mayor, William Gates, proclaimed that 'this country started on the war with the view of spreading that good government which their empire enjoyed', whilst Blaker (at the annual dinner of Lewes Priory Cricket Club) rejoiced at the War's 'wonderful effect . . . consolidating the British Empire', a reference to the large volunteer contingents sent by Canada, Australia and New Zealand.¹¹

Alongside this vein of straightforward chauvinism ran another, much less amiable, which accused the Boers of cheating. Indignation that the enemy had 'laid waste the farms of our fellow-countrymen' (as the Rector of St John-sub-castro complained at a Thanksgiving Service after the relief of Mafeking) shows an unwillingness to face the fact that the same complaint could be made against the British. As happens at times in all wars, the usages which should govern the white flag were defied and Boer 'treachery' in such matters was often reported. Meanwhile an alleged Boer plan to place a bomb on a ship conveying reinforcements to South Africa was recorded in the *Lewes Sussex Agricultural Express* as a 'diabolical' and 'dastardly plot'.¹²

Prize-givings, annual dinners, talks to schools — with or without lantern slides and 'patriotic selections on the gramophone'¹³ — were all prime occasions for speech-making. The young may have found so much patriotic oratory wearisome, but there is no reason to suppose that they greeted it with scepticism and indeed it may have provided a relief from a straightforward diet of religion and morality. At least the provision of exciting news of 'adventure' was welcome and one Sussex newspaper reported convincingly that 'almost every boy has his favourite general at the Front'.¹⁴ A most characteristic social institution of this time, which conveniently combined fund-raising with good cheer, song and eloquence, was the Smoking Concert. This was not an innovation, but throughout the thirty months of the War innumerable smoking concerts were held in Lewes, of which only a few

illustrative examples can be cited here. The one at the Lamb Public House in Fisher Street on 2 October 1900 was typical. The singing included a rendering of 'When the boys in khaki all come home' by W. N. Barnard, a Corporal in the Volunteers whose voice was an indispensable feature of such occasions. A collection made 'for Lewes men at the front when they return home' raised £1 7s. 6d. On 23 February 1901 a smoking concert was held at the Crown Inn to bid farewell to the contingent of Volunteers about to leave for South Africa. Many songs were sung, including 'Comrades in arms' and 'The Old Brigade', and 'Saved by a Woman (an incident of the Boer War)' was recited. It was announced that Mr Towner of Newhaven had presented a Balaclava helmet for each of the men going. Dr Burbidge made a foolish speech in which he pronounced that 'the very fact of having to scrap for their food will make them fit'. Presumably he was unfamiliar with the sickness figures from South Africa, but in that very day's *Sussex Agricultural Express* he could have read the news of Private Floyd's death from enteric fever at Bloemfontein. A later favourite smoking concert song was 'Baden-Powell's Scout'. Not all smoking concerts, however, were war-oriented. At a Cyclists Club 'Smoker' (23 January 1900) a speaker remarked that 'the Lewes Cyclists Club had always been a patriotic institution. With a membership of 220 they had five volunteers', a joke that was greeted with laughter.¹⁵

Nor, of course, were all concerts 'Smokers'. The Mayoress, Mrs Holman, organized a concert in December 1899 in aid of the Mayor's fund for refugees, widows and orphans in South Africa.¹⁶ About £60 was raised, together with £20 from a collection for the *Daily Mail's* fund. NCOs of the Volunteers acted as stewards. Many songs were sung, most but not all of them patriotic, and a special performance was given of Rudyard Kipling's very recent 'The absent-minded beggar', for which music had been composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan; this song was written in aid of the fund for assistance to the troops and their dependents and first appeared, in the *Daily Mail*, on 31 October 1899.

It was couched in Kipling's characteristic mixture of apparent plain speaking with euphemistic evasiveness. The purpose of his 56 lines was to persuade the listener or reader to

'Kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
For a gentleman in khaki ordered South.'

This gentleman, the soldier, was 'an absent-minded beggar' and

'There are girls he married secret, asking no

permission to,

For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did.

There is gas and coal and vittles and the house-
rent falling due,

And more than rather likely there's a kid.

There are girls he walked with casual. They'll
be sorry now he's gone,

For an absent-minded beggar they will find him,
But it ain't the time for sermons with the winter
coming on,

We must help the girl that Tommy left behind him.'

The poem of course referred to a real problem and presumably contemporaries understood that Kipling was saying that soldiers often neglected the institution of marriage and that there would be many young women who had been abandoned by men now posted to South Africa. 'The absent-minded beggar' was to echo around the land in the following years and to be closely associated with memories of the War.¹⁷

On Trafalgar Day 1900 a 'Patriotic Concert', organized by the local Volunteer rifle and artillery companies, was held in the Assembly Room of the Crown Hotel.¹⁸ The Mayor delivered a speech, complacently proclaiming that 'he was glad to have been the means of stimulating patriotism among the young men of Lewes'. The omnipresent Corporal Barnard sang 'The Death of Nelson' and other songs included 'Dear old Bobs' (in honour of the commander-in-chief in South Africa, Field Marshal Lord Roberts), 'Marching through Pretoria', 'The Royal Sussex' (presumably the regimental march 'Sussex by the sea'), 'The boys of red and blue' and 'Soldiers, sailors, volunteers'.

One Bonfire Night speech has already been quoted, and naturally the annual celebration on November 5th was an occasion for patriotic display. 1899 was the great year for this, since the War had just begun. Three of the Societies, Borough, Cliffe and Commercial Square burned effigies of Kruger and their tableaux also referred to the War, the title of one being 'Briton or Boer' and of another 'Kruger delivering his last speech'. As for the remaining Society, Southover, the puzzled report of the *Agricultural Express* on their tableau states that the general opinion was 'that in some remote way it was an allusion to the Transvaal Rebellion'. A year later there were again patriotic speeches. The 'Lord Chancellor' of the Southover Bonfire Society claimed (improbably) that Kruger had sent the Pope a diamond, whilst the 'Lord Bishop of Lewes' in his anti-papal oration rejoiced that 'among the many

good things resulting from the war in South Africa by no means the least important is the growth of patriotism to which it has given rise'. In 1901 there was more justification for seeing the War as nearly won and the 'Archbishop of St John sub castro' thought himself perhaps 'wrong in using the word war, for it is now nothing more than a mere Boer hunt'. Southover was still burning an effigy of Kruger and the 'Lord Bishop' took the opportunity to criticize bitterly the Bishop of Hereford and the Dean of Durham (both moderate 'pro-Boers') for expressing 'their disapprobation of the present war and their sympathy with the King's enemies'. By November 1902 the War was at last over, but the Southover Society was still able to find a foreign foe worthy of burning, in the person of the 'Mad Mullah', a Muslim sheikh who led a rebellion in Somalia against European administrators and Christian missions.¹⁹

Many of the patriotic occasions during the War were of course religious ones, church parades, services for departing Volunteers, services of celebration and thanksgiving for victories, and so on. In January 1900 a number of churches synchronized collections on behalf of the Transvaal War Fund. Union Jacks were displayed, the National Anthem sung and appropriate sermons preached. At St Anne's the preacher, a clergyman from East Grinstead, explained that the Dutch in South Africa had failed to christianize the Kaffirs and Hottentots and disliked the British for having abolished slavery. Three Anglican churches and the (Congregationalist) Tabernacle held services of thanksgiving for the relief of Mafeking. When St Anne's held a service for Volunteers about to leave for South Africa the text chosen for the sermon was Judges 5.1, 'Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves'.²⁰

An instance of the universal penetration of patriotism is provided by the celebration of Christmas Day in the Lewes workhouse. In 1899 Mr Francis Verrall, as he mentioned in his report, thought that 'the children looked particularly well, and he advised them all to study hard and learn discipline, as there was a grand chance for any boy who wanted to be a soldier'; the speech is a reminder of the background whence the English expected their regular army to be recruited. The following year the workhouse staff made a special effort with the decorations. Portraits of Lord Roberts and General Baden-Powell were displayed on the walls, surrounded by mottoes such as 'Welcome Home to Lord Roberts', 'Success to England's Defenders' and 'Long Life to

the Hero of Mafeking'.²¹

Mention of the hero of Mafeking brings us, belatedly, to Colonel R. S. Baden-Powell, the defender of Mafeking during the town's long siege (October 1899 to May 1900). Mafeking was a town destined to give a new word to the English language, to 'maffick' being (*Oxford English Dictionary*) 'originally used to designate the behaviour of the crowds (in London and other towns) that celebrated with uproarious rejoicings the relief of the British garrison besieged in Mafeking'. It so happened that the hero had Lewes connections. Mr H. J. Powell and Mr R. H. Powell, who lived respectively at 118 and 82 High Street, and Mr T. Baden-Powell of nearby Newick (who was president of Lewes Chess Club) were all cousins of the Colonel. Mr R. H. Powell was very active at St Michael's church as choirmaster and was a member of the Schools Central Maintenance Board. It is clear that the Lewes members of the Baden-Powell family were pleased to join in this reflected glory.

In recounting the joyful celebrations which marked, at Lewes and elsewhere, some British military successes, it is worth emphasizing that much of the initial news from South Africa had been bad. Unexpected news of costly defeats had come crowding in during 'Black Week' (10–15 December 1899). Thus the word 'relief' was appropriate to the rejoicings of 1900. Soon after 10 on the morning of Thursday 1 March the news reached Lewes by telegram that the previous day the garrison of Ladysmith in northern Natal had been relieved after a lengthy siege. Let the *Sussex Agricultural Express*, whose special service of telegrams was responsible for the receipt of the news, take up the story (3 March 1900):

'The gladsome news spread like wildfire . . . Flags and bunting were at once displayed at the public buildings and leading hotels in the borough, while by order of the Mayor "Old Gabriel" [the bell of the market tower] was rung in honour of the auspicious event. At the residence of the Mayor, "The Rowans" on the Wallands, a large Union Jack was at once hoisted, while on the four turrets of his residence the Scotch and Irish flags and the Union Jack and Royal Standard were also displayed. At a number of schools in the town the happy intelligence evoked loud cheers on the part of the juveniles, who heartily joined in the singing of "Rule Britannia" and the National Anthem, while in several instances a half holiday was proclaimed in honour of the

occasion . . . [unsurprisingly, the] 'lads . . . are anxiously looking forward to the relief of Mafeking in order to still further give expression to their pent-up feelings of loyalty and enthusiasm . . . By order of the Mayor, the Town Band performed a number of patriotic selections in the High Street . . . while quite a large number of pedestrians were to be seen wearing national favours. Church bells were rung and mortars frequently discharged, the general tone of gratification the good news evoked being of much greater depth than has been witnessed in the town for many years.'²²

As the day wore on, 'delighted bands of school children paraded the principal thoroughfares singing snatches of patriotic songs' and 'in the hotels . . . scenes of jubilation and irrepressible outbursts of ardour and patriotism were very remarkable'. The word got around that a torchlight procession would be held, 'it being almost a tradition of the town to celebrate national events in this particular way', and that members of bonfire societies and others available were to assemble in fancy costume at the top of St Anne's Hill at 8.30. Nearly three hundred marched to the Cliffe 'to the inspired strains of martial and patriotic airs' provided by the Town Band, and then back to the White Hart, where a vast crowd had gathered. A framed portrait of General Buller, wreathed with laurels, was displayed at County Hall. Blazing torches were thrown. The Mayor made a speech, inaudible to all but his immediate neighbours, from the balcony of the White Hart. Three cheers were given for the Queen and for the victorious generals, White and Buller. Corporal Barnard 'gave a characteristic rendering of "The absent-minded beggar", his unique and vast audience joining in the chorus with remarkable effect'. More singing and rejoicings followed, calm being restored near midnight after a final National Anthem and 'Auld Lang Syne'.

It may have been felt that 'Ladysmithing' (a word which somehow never came into being) was not an easy act to follow, whatever the anticipation of lads with 'pent-up feelings of loyalty'. It was perhaps fortunate for organizers of rejoicings and participants that eleven weeks passed before Mafeking was relieved. This time the news reached Lewes' Mayor through his son who arrived by the mail train from Brighton, but it was not generally known in the town till the following day, 19 May, when it was proclaimed at 6 a.m. by the booming of miniature cannon on Cliffe Hill and Brack Mount. Soon church

bells and the steam hooters of the Phoenix Ironworks and the Southdown & East Grinstead Brewery joined in and 'in an incredibly short space of time the town was decorated with flags and bunting from end to end'. Decorations and inscriptions abounded. On Councillor Pelling's residence 'appeared the words in red letters, on a white background with a blue border: "Good news from a far country; Let us do or die"', together with the less obviously appropriate sentiment: 'Long live the Mayor and Mayoress'. Lamps and flags adorned the Powell residences in St Anne's Hill, a placard at Mr R. H. Powell's returning to cricketing metaphors with 'Mafeking! Baden-Powell not out, 216; Kruger retired hurt, 0'. Large portraits of Roberts and Baden-Powell outside the *Sussex Express* offices were accompanied by poetical inscriptions which included the couplet:

'How shall we rank thee on glory's page

Thou more than soldier, but just less than sage'²³

The temptation to continue with a fuller account of the visual display and the eloquence which characterized these occasions must be resisted, though a historian cannot help remarking that if these had dated from 1500 rather than 1900 they would constitute standard source-material for many theses and learned articles.

As with the Ladysmith celebrations, these also culminated in a torchlight procession, the planning of which benefitted from the preparations already in train for the Queen's birthday (24 May). An effigy of Kruger was carried, apparently under the command of the 'Lord High Chancellor of Southover', who was arrayed as one of the Guards at the Crimean battle of Inkerman (fought on 5 November 1854). The procession paused to cheer at the Powell residences in St Anne's. Again the Mayor spoke from the balcony of the White Hart, there were cheers for Colonel Baden-Powell, Lord Roberts and the Mayor himself, and Corporal Barnard, in khaki, accompanied the chorus of 'Rule Britannia' with the bugle.

Later the Mayor, George Holman, was to remember this period as a time of constant amazing scenes, 'personally he did not believe he slept for three weeks'. Certainly one has the impression of satiety when reading of the celebration of the capture (5 June 1900) of Pretoria, the seat of the Transvaal government. This was only a fortnight after Mafeking. Naturally the flags, church bells and cannons were again in evidence and the Town Band played 'patriotic selections' in the High Street. There was, however, 'no general attempt at illumination'

and the decision to stage a torchlight procession was not reached till well on in the evening. Consequently the procession did not assemble till 10 p.m. and there were rather fewer participants. Nevertheless the stalwarts were there, in fancy costume and with a bugle band, and the rejoicings had the now customary climax outside the White Hart, where Corporal Barnard 'asked those present to sing the National Anthem and to give three cheers for Lord Roberts and his army and the hundred odd Lewes men at the front'.²⁴

A very long time elapsed between the Pretoria celebrations and those which marked the War's conclusion (Peace of Vereeniging, 31 May 1902). The negotiations had been lengthy and peace disappointingly delayed. It so happened also that preparations were in train to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII, which was planned for 26 June, though in the event it had to be postponed owing to the King's illness. Yet a torchlight procession was mounted on a very large scale (2 June) to mark the Peace, and as usual the Mayor spoke, this time apparently in the Town Hall.²⁵ A congratulatory telegram from the borough was sent to the King and 8 June became 'Peace Sunday', when thanksgiving services were held in several churches.²⁶

THE PARTICIPATION OF LEWESIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A good deal had happened between 1900 and 1902 to make the Lewesian in the street a sadder and wiser man. To understand this we must turn to the actual involvement of Lewesians in the campaign. Much caution is required in attempting quantitative answers in this field. For example, some young men joined up in Lewes but had little connection with the town, in other cases the parents were Lewesians but the soldier himself not a Lewes resident; roots were not necessarily deep or hardy and they might be in the surrounding country rather than the town itself. Such factors explain varying estimates of how many Lewesians went to war. But the Roll of Honour compiled by the patriotic Corporal Barnard 'of Lewes soldiers who have served or fallen in the war in South Africa', which records 214 names, is an inescapable starting-point.²⁷ Barnard's list records name (with initials) and rank and in most cases army number. Usually the unit is included in the case of infantry and cavalymen, but in other instances (Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Field Artillery, Army Service Corps or Ordnance Corps, etc.) only

the arm or corps may be recorded. Barnard rarely goes into more detail, but does record deaths, some other casualties, and some awards of decorations.

I have attempted to analyse Barnard's rather informal (and quite unofficial) Roll in such a way as to separate pre-1899 regulars from wartime volunteers. The undertaking is not easy and the verdict on quite a high proportion of those who served must be: 'Don't know'. The 1st Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment was serving in Malta on the outbreak of war but was soon sent to South Africa and reached the Cape in February 1900. Forty-two Lewes men served in the 1st Royal Sussex at the front, some of whom were recalled reservists, though certainly most had been with the colours when the War began.²⁸ Thirty-nine men served in other regular units, mainly in other regular infantry battalions (four of these were in the 2nd Bedfordshires, three each in the 2nd Royal West Surreys and the 2nd Buffs) though there were some in the cavalry (six in the Dragoon Guards, five in Hussar regiments, two in Lancer regiments). Perhaps to be ranked with these regulars — and in any case not volunteers in the normal sense — were the members of the Militia. These men had served by compulsion through a system of choice by lot, parishes having to provide a fixed quota of men for militia training. Militiamen had no obligation to serve overseas but could (in wartime) volunteer to do so. The Sussex Militia was embodied as the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1899 and was given training in England; in 1900 those who volunteered for active service were sent to South Africa. They served on the lines of communication, then in 1901 were moved to St Helena to act as guards to Boer prisoners of war. Fourteen Lewes men were in the battalion in South Africa, so that at least 95 of the 214 names on the Roll were regulars, reservists or militiamen.

The volunteers are more difficult to identify. Eighteen Lewes men served in the Imperial Yeomanry, five of whom had been peacetime members of the local infantry (Cinque Ports) Volunteers. Thirteen members of the same unit went in the two Active Service Volunteer companies (six in the first group, seven in the second); a third contingent was despatched but only reached South Africa at the time peace was signed and saw no active service.²⁹ To this minimum number of 31 volunteers must be added a good many others who arrived by less normal routes. A number of the colonial enlistments (in the Cape Mounted Rifles and Police, the South African Constabulary, Natal Rifles and

Bechuanaland Rifles, not to mention units from Ceylon and Canada) — which totalled eleven — should probably come under this heading. Would-be volunteers in England were by no means always successful and they needed much persistence. Mr Louis Avenell of the (Cinque Ports) Volunteers left for South Africa in January 1900 as part of the West Kent contingent of the Imperial Yeomanry (only one Lewes man served in the Sussex contingent) after twice failing the compulsory riding test and then securing the cancellation of his indentures as an apprentice. More and more the utility was realized of men accustomed to riding. Trooper R. P. Blake, who died in South Africa, had joined the Imperial Yeomanry after having ‘worked zealously to make himself efficient as a horseman and marksman’. At one stage the Rifle Volunteers advertized for men to serve in a mounted infantry Company: ‘Men joining must provide their own horses, which should, if possible, not exceed 15 hands’. After three months only 20 had been found of the 35 recruits needed. Even for these service abroad was not guaranteed; the men had to volunteer for three years, to go into camp yearly and to provide forage as well as harness when in camp.³⁰

Many Lewesians are recorded in Barnard’s list merely as having served in the Royal Artillery (also Royal Field Artillery and Royal Horse Artillery), Royal Engineers, Royal Army Medical Corps, the Army Ordnance and Army Service Corps, and, with no indication of the unit, it is not possible to know how many of these had been in the army at the outbreak of war.³¹ There is another complication about the regular/volunteer ratio. In wartime there was much more recruitment into the regular army; are men who signed on in these circumstances to be seen as volunteers rather than regulars?

Perhaps it is best to turn now to the national figures (themselves in part guesswork) in order to test the surmise that Lewesian regulars in South Africa greatly outnumbered volunteers. The official statistics record 380,577 men as having served in South Africa.³² Of these at least 250,000 were regulars from Britain (including those who had been serving in India) and at least 30,000 men who had joined as volunteers. The balance included colonial forces and militiamen. In whatever ratio the ‘unknowns’ are divided between regulars and volunteers, it is evident that among Lewesians the former element greatly exceeded the latter and that this was characteristic of the country as a whole. Yet attention in the local press was concentrated on the wartime

volunteers in a way which underlines Kipling’s contention that Tommy Atkins, his ‘absent-minded beggar’, was still a neglected and disdained individual.

Lewes’ 214 men were not all in South Africa at one time. The total built up by degrees and lists compiled by Barnard and published in the *East Sussex News* put the numbers at 117 in March 1900 and 134 in June of that year.³³ These participants, and particularly the volunteers, were reported on with much interest in the local press, in which the War appears as a sum of individual patriotic enterprises rather than as a single one organized and carried on by the state. This attitude, which seems so alien to those accustomed to the Leviathan of our own day, shows not only in the press but in more fundamental matters such as the private financing of many aspects of the war effort. This has already been met in the form of the man serving with his own horse and harness, and the same man might be transported to Africa on a vessel provided by a patriotic shipping line, whilst his life might be covered with the cooperation of a patriotic insurance company.³⁴ Even family allowances were sometimes provided by private initiative. A striking case of this occurred when Colour/Sergeant Willis left to serve in South Africa with the second Active Service Company attached to the Royal Sussex. Twenty-one of his comrades in the Volunteers banded together to contribute 1s. each per week so that he might receive 21s. a week ‘towards the maintenance of your wife and family for the period of one year, commencing the day you embark, or in the event of your earlier return, until such time as you arrive in England’. Willis was asked to accept this offer ‘as a token of esteem and regard’.³⁵

Lewes papers — and not merely Lewes ones³⁶ — reported the departure and return of individual soldiers and kept readers in touch by printing, often at some length, their letters to family and friends. These were recent letters, since mail by sea took little more than three weeks (whereas urgent news, including notification of casualties, came by cable). The *Sussex Agricultural Express* specialized in the letters of Lieutenant A. F. A. Howe, a local dentist, to his professional partner Mr Beckley. Between May and October 1900 at least eight of Howe’s letters were quoted and good patriotic reading they made.³⁷ At Bloemfontein, he reported, ‘the best sight of all is the dear old Union Jack flying over the town’ and it was ‘impossible to describe the feelings of patriotism . . . among all ranks’. But less enthusiastic letters were also quoted. Driver Wimhurst of the

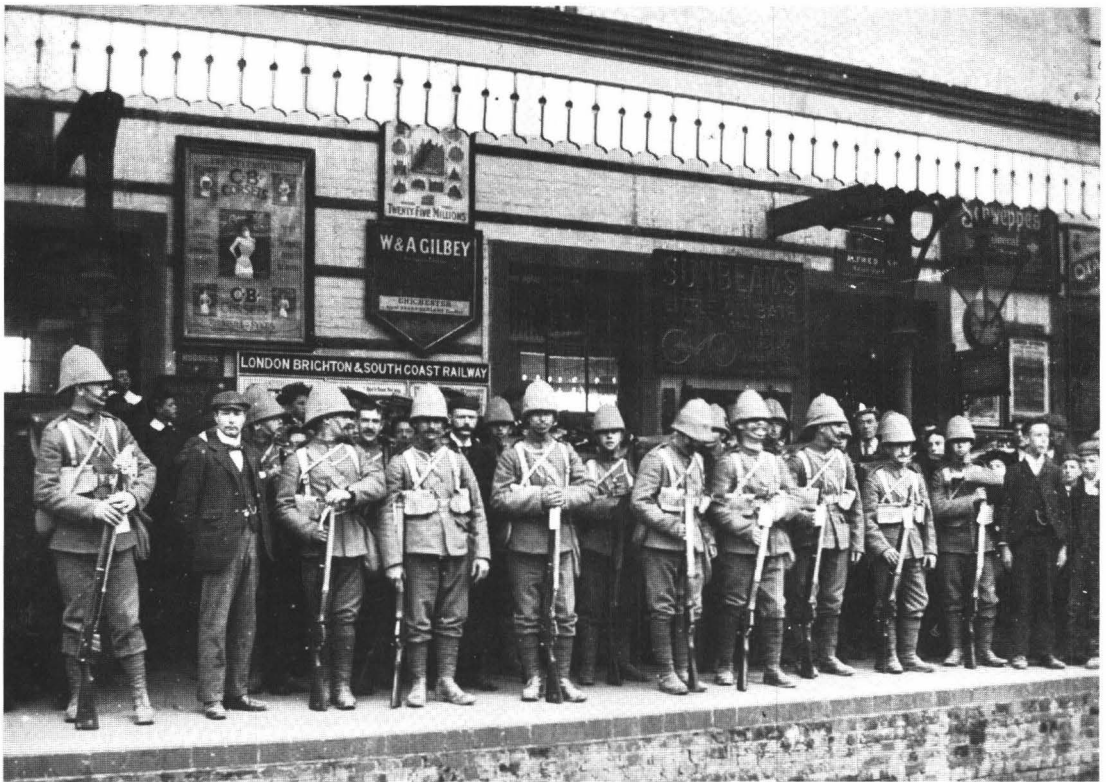


Fig. 1. The departure from Chichester of the second Active Service Volunteer company, 27 April 1901 (WSRO, RSR, PH 4/13).

Royal Horse Artillery reported to his parents that 'we are nearly starved. We get one biscuit and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of flour a day. We have had that this last fortnight. There is plenty of meat, but nothing to eat with it, and I am quite a light weight now'. Yet more alarming was the letter of a former Lewes man, Cpl Carpenter (then with a Rhodesian Regiment) to his parents in Worthing: 'with our acclimatized troops over 75% have been through hospital sick or wounded' and some hospitals were very full, 'mostly fever and dysentery'. In general there was a willingness not to shirk descriptions of dangers and hardships. Shoeing-smith Venness of the 6th Dragoon Guards told his mother that in heavy shelling a man standing three yards from him had been killed and Pte Humphreys told his 'young lady' that in a recent battle 'we had 98 men killed and wounded in our Regiment', whilst Pte Kenward of the Imperial Yeomanry related that the horses were 'as thin as crows' and once 'twenty horses dropped dead in the gallop'.³⁸ Other letters criticized British officers (but not their courage) and guns.

The rites of leave-taking and returning reflect in

the same way the view of the War itself as the sum of many individual endeavours. The local papers reported the departure for the War of small groups and even individuals; there was no notion at all that the publication of such items could be considered of interest to the enemy, indeed 'security' in that sense appears to have been non-existent. The Phoenix Ironworks Company organized a farewell smoking concert for four employees who were recalled as reservists; those present subscribed towards 'pocket money' for the four and the sum donated was doubled by the owner of the firm and his son. Such gifts became the norm: another local man, leaving with the Imperial Yeomanry, was 'presented by his fellow employees with the regulation pound of "Navy Cut" and a silver-mounted pipe'. The departure of the first Active Service Volunteer company was marked with greater formality, the Mayor himself entertaining the six men (a Lieutenant and five Privates) at a dinner at the Royal Oak, for which tickets (at 3s. 6d.) could be purchased. A few days later the same party was stood breakfast at the White Hart by the proprietor

before marching to the station, accompanied by a band and bugler. The Mayor was on the platform to see them off (for the departure from Chichester of the second Active Service Volunteer company, *see* Fig. 1).³⁹

A still grander occasion was the departure from Arundel of the Duke of Norfolk. The town was decorated with flags and an arch of evergreens bore the inscription 'May God protect our noble Duke in the hour of danger is the fervent wish of his employees'. The Duke was driven in a carriage from the castle to the station, where he was presented with farewell addresses and made a speech. To the tune of a band and to cheers he departed by special train for Southampton. Unfortunately the Duke had a fall from his horse a few weeks after reaching the Cape and had to return home.⁴⁰ He was then able to resume his duties as Postmaster General.

Returns from Africa were reported on in the same style as departures. 'Back from the Front', announced the *Sussex Express*, giving news of the 'unexpected return' of Pte Webb of the Active Service Volunteers company. The *East Sussex News* apologetically explained that 'his return was unexpected and consequently no demonstration took place when he arrived'; Webb had been invalided home. Corporal Tanner of the City Imperial Volunteers was at least met at the station by his brother but, if proper notice was given, even an individual return could expect a more formal reception. Pte J. Wood was a South Street resident who had been recalled as a reservist to the Royal Sussex: 'A considerable crowd had assembled at the station to meet him, and he was loudly cheered on his arrival at 7 o'clock. After an affectionate greeting with his relatives he was conveyed in a cab to his home, a band accompanying'.⁴¹ Naturally groups returning received a yet warmer welcome. The first Active Service Volunteers were met by hundreds at the station and given a military reception, after which they marched via Friars Walk and School Hill to the Town Hall, where the Mayor and Howe (now a Captain), on behalf of the contingent, made speeches. The streets were 'gaily if not lavishly decorated', flags and streamers flew, welcoming messages proclaimed 'Well done, Active Service Company', 'There is no place like home', 'Welcome Home', 'Lewes is Proud of You' and other appropriate sentiments (*see* Figs 2 & 3). A meat tea followed at the White Hart, where the same contingent, then two stronger, had breakfasted before their departure. Five days later the group were guests at a reception and dinner at the Corn Exchange, the Mayor again presiding. There were more speeches,

commemorative medals were presented and a smoking concert followed.⁴²

The second Active Service contingent did not return till after the conclusion of the War, which no doubt explains its quieter reception, though they too rated a dinner, at the White Hart. Lewes' homecoming celebrations culminated in September 1902 with a dinner and smoking concert at the White Hart. Nearly fifty men who had served in South Africa were present on this occasion, but the Active Service Volunteers were special guests and probably they alone were the recipients of the medals subscribed by townspeople. The Mayor proposed the health of 'the Reservists and other returned Lewes men', but once again the Volunteers provided the framework for the occasion and secured the limelight.

Probably many who had been seen off with ceremony were greeted similarly on their return. More than two and a half years after the departure dinner at Harvey's brewery, at which he had received cigars, cigarettes and a cheque, Cpl Parks was dined and toasted there on his return.⁴³

HOW IT SEEMED TO A SOLDIER

Despite the occasional quite ample quotations of soldiers' letters in local newspapers it is not easy to secure a consecutive view of the campaign in South Africa as it appeared to a British participant in the ranks. One is therefore all the more grateful for the preservation of the text of 19 letters written in 1900 by Trooper Benjamin Moore of the 33rd Company (East Kent) Imperial Yeomanry to his elder sister Emily Florence (Mrs Urry). A copy was made of these letters in an exercise book, perhaps by the recipient.⁴⁴ Trooper Moore (born 1867) had served as a regular in the Royal Sussex (2nd Battalion) and received his discharge in 1891, probably after eight years with the colours. His years on the reserve would have been completed in 1895, but he seems to have hastened to join the Imperial Yeomanry soon after the outbreak of war in the Transvaal. His parents had kept the 'Welcome Stranger' public house (now no. 23) in Eastport Lane, Southover, and in 1900 his sister was resident either there or at Spring Gardens, Southover.

Ben Moore's letters to his sister are informative and affectionate. The first six (25 January-28 February 1900) are written from England. Thanks to them we can follow his moves, first to the School of Musketry at Hythe — where 'the Colonel asked

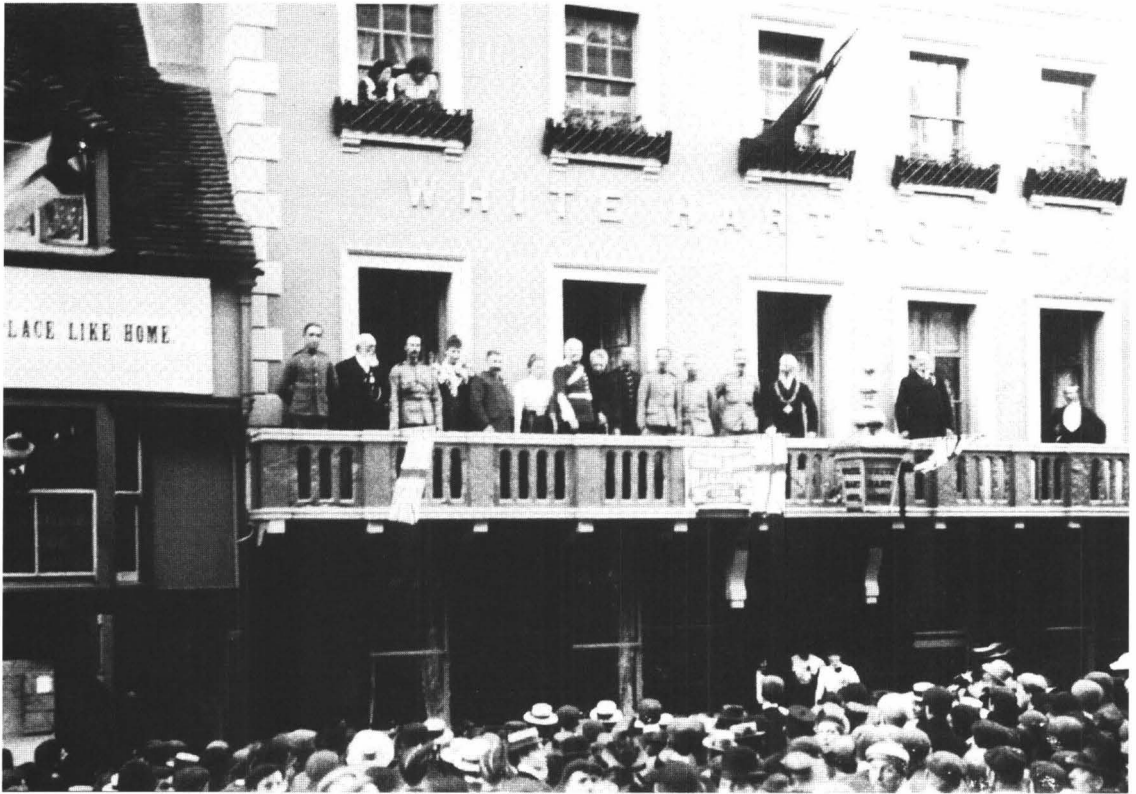


Fig. 2. The ceremony of welcome for the returning Lewes contingent of the first Active Service Volunteer company, 12 June 1901 (the White Hart) (Edward Reeves, Lewes).

me to go out with him . . . he said it does not matter about me passing [the course] for he intends to take me if I have no objection and I have told him I will go' — and then to Canterbury. There 'we have to sleep out in Private Lodgings, we have to find that ourselves out of 35 shillings a week and all food found so it is not so bad', but at mealtimes they were terribly crowded and 'I dont want to stop in this hole much longer'. He had a brief period of leave when at Canterbury and was generously sending his sister money from there (£3 on 25 February). He mentions, just two days before his unit was due to move for embarkation, that 'we have got about 25 absent today, but I suppose they will turn up alright'.

Moore wrote again from Liverpool on the day he embarked (28 February) and twice during the voyage on *S. S. Cymric*. The first of these letters (4 March) reported 'a splendid voyage up to now'; the ship was then nearing the Canaries. On 19 March he wrote that they were due to dock at Capetown around midnight, after 'a splendid voyage all the way', though the conditions for the horses had

evidently been appalling. There were some 500 horses on board, of which several died and many fell sick; they had been 'packed in a little box just room to stand' and got no rest. Moore's unit had only 40 horses with them and would need more on reaching the front, but the poor state of those which they had brought out was a sign of troubles to come.

By 3 April he wrote again, from Maitland Camp, now in less good spirits, with indignant expressions about the lack of food and rueful jokes about sand in what there was of it ('the sand at Brighton is a lot better than the sand of South Africa it comes in allright at dinner time serves us for pepper but I dont care much for it'). Though the troops were at work more than twelve hours a day their daily ration was only 'four ounces of meat which is supposed to be a pound and three spuds, 1 pound of bread . . . some times we only get about 2 ounces and yesterday I got nothing so you can guess I am getting my weight down'. A fortnight later he reported 'the horses are very small, they are not really strong enough, 2 or 3 weeks hard work will kill them quite,

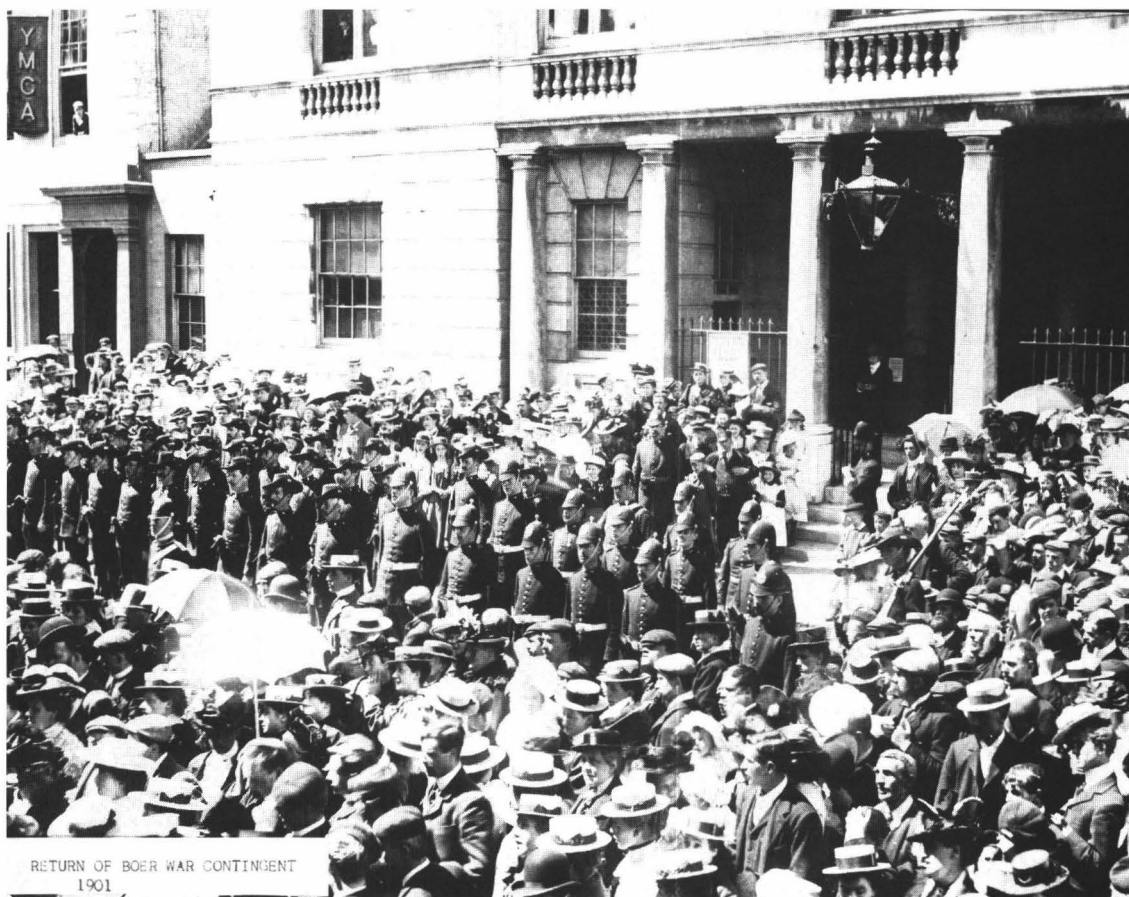


Fig. 3. The same occasion as Fig. 2, seen from the White Hart (Edward Reeves, Lewes).

some of them are nearly dead now'.

In early May, still ill-fed, Moore was on the move and expressing sentiments about Abroad familiar to many generations of British service men: 'Well Flow (sic) if they give me the whole of Africa what I have seen they couldnt get me to stop, nothing but Kogges all through the country, now and then a farm house but I cant think how people can live in such a place'. Soon after this, still short of food ('its nothing to go all day with only a biscuit or two'), he saw some action. In one engagement:

... didnt they let us have it, I cant think how we only lost 2 horses and one man wounded, it is fine sport but I would rather be out of it, especially when the bullets are flying around as I have (sic) one or two narrow shaves but as long as they dont come any closer I shant care...

In a later action, described in a letter written on 9 August:

... didnt they pepper us not half we wasent more than two hundred yards and we had to mount our horses and slide just as fast as they could carry us in nothing but a shower of bullets and not a man was hit not even a pony.

Moore mentions in several letters the possibility of joining the police and staying on in South Africa. The pay offered (10s. a day) was good, but 'one would want nearly all that to live on some places', with bread at 3s. a loaf, and anyway there was 'nothing like old England'. Like so many fighting on the British side, he felt that there was a peculiar malignity in the formation of the terrain: 'I never saw such ground in all my life and the worst of it is we cant see them before we are shot at'. By July he had heard rumours that a return to Britain was imminent. At this stage the commanders were extraordinarily optimistic. 'I dont think we shall be much longer so you had better get my clothes aired

now' (12 July). However the campaign continued and by September Moore was reporting on the poor state of British uniforms; one battalion had such ragged trousers that some men were reduced to wearing sacking.

'They are always telling us we are on our way home' (1 September), but by then he was becoming pessimistic and 'I dont believe we shall get home before the end of the year prehaps (sic) not then'. Moore usually ended his letters with an affectionate word about his nephew 'little Jim' and he even wondered 'when is little Jim going to be ready for a soldier?'. Sadly, the author of this series of letters was taken ill and died at Frankfort on 1 January 1901.⁴⁵ At least the preservation of the letters has served to preserve his memory.

CASUALTIES

Of the 214 participants named in Barnard's Roll, three are recorded as killed in action and nine as having died.⁴⁶ Also nine had been wounded and several had been prisoners of war, usually for a brief period only.

It has been and still is difficult to establish criteria for compiling a list of casualties, as a few examples will demonstrate. Private G. Sinden, a reservist who had served seven years as a regular, was recalled to the 2nd Battalion, Royal West Surreys; he was 28 and had been employed by Mr Kent of the Cliffe. He was wounded in action, later contracted enteric twice and was invalided home and admitted to Netley Military Hospital. Enteric fever, a term which includes typhoid and paratyphoid, was the main cause of death on the British side during the War. The hospital discharged Sinden on 26 June 1900 and he died at home in Mallng Street nine days later. He was still a soldier and was buried with full military honours, hundreds of spectators lining the route.⁴⁷ He is recorded as a casualty of the War in Barnard's list and on the tablet in the Town Hall. Private S. Williams, also a reservist, had served with the 1st Royal Sussex. He too had been invalided home and at some stage must have been discharged from the army. He died of consumption in the Victoria Hospital, Lewes, on 5 October 1901. His widow had no money for a burial and applied to the Poor Law authorities, but Williams escaped the stigma of a pauper's grave because the news reached William Barnard and, through him, the Mayor, who himself provided the necessary funds. Williams counted as a victim of the War on the town's

memorial tablet but since he was not a soldier at the time of his death his name does not appear on the Royal Sussex Regiment's Boer War memorial in Regency Square, Brighton. Private F. I. Thompson was another reservist (he had enlisted in 1888 and served six years in India) who had been recalled to the 1st Royal Sussex in January 1900. He became ill with enteric in South Africa and was invalided home in January 1901, later contracting consumption also, of which he died at his home on 23 May 1902, aged 31. He had been discharged from the army six weeks before his death, therefore military honours could not be rendered at his funeral; Barnard and Captain Howe made enquiries but were warned that such honours would be against regulations. The coffin, covered by a Union Jack, was borne to the churchyard at All Saints by men who had served with Thompson in South Africa. Thompson and Williams had attended the celebratory banquet at Lewes in June 1901. Neither is recorded on the regimental memorial.⁴⁸

Such episodes, which cannot have been rare, presumably reflect among other things a War Office policy of discharging from the service those whose death when in uniform would have had pension implications. A small disability pension was payable to men who had served at least fourteen years with the colours when the invalidity was the result of their service. If a regular was killed on active service his widow was granted one year's pay as a gratuity. In practice a more important financial resource for widows was probably the £5 (with £1 for each child) paid during the War to each widow of a ranker by the charitable Royal Victoria Patriotic Fund.

Two weeks after Thompson's death, John Cox, aged 21, died in Lewes prison whilst awaiting trial for 'a misdemeanour'. Cox, who was not a Lewes man, had served with the 3rd (Militia) Battalion of the Royal Sussex in South Africa, where he had broken a leg and, like so many others, contracted enteric; he had been four months in hospital at Bloemfontein. Invalided out of the army, he had fallen foul of the law and died in gaol of pneumonia following erysipelas.⁴⁹ It seems most unlikely that he is recorded in any list of victims of the Boer War.

The death of twelve of Lewes' 214 participants (to adopt Mr Barnard's criteria for inclusion) was probably close to the national average. However the statistics of casualties in the Report of the Royal War Commission (p. 99, App. 5) include only 'killed', 'died' and 'invalided', while omitting all commissioned

officers. By these rather eccentric criteria, about 72,000 of the men who served in South Africa, or about one in six of the total, became casualties. Of these, about one in 13 (5,256) were killed. The deaths in action work out at rather more than 1% of those involved, for Lewes and for the nation as a whole.⁵⁰

It seems worth remarking, à propos Lewes' nine deaths through disease, that some such deaths would have been likely in the age group involved over a period of two and a half years even without the rigours of an active campaign. This is confirmed by the deaths of two members of the local Volunteer force (one of them of consumption) during the same period, whilst not on active service. Moreover it was not peculiar to the Boer War that a very high proportion (about 75%) of the deaths on campaign were not directly due to enemy action. Much the same proportion had applied in the Crimea and during the Indian Mutiny. Even in peacetime, because the army tended to be recruited from the less robust and to live in more unhealthy conditions than civilians, its mortality rate was higher than that of the civilian population.⁵¹

To bring together the figures for Lewes' direct participation in the War with those for casualties, it would seem likely that of the town's population of some 11,000, no more than a quarter of these (probably less) would have been males of military age. If the suggestion is hazarded that Lewesians within this category numbered rather over two thousand, then somewhere around 10% of them served in the Boer War campaign (though a figure of about 14% has been guessed for the country as a whole).⁵² Of the 214 participants, twelve met their deaths through the War, i.e. rather over 5%. Hence perhaps one in 200 of male Lewesians of military age died as a direct result of the campaign. The proportion may seem low, but there was nothing unreal about the anxiety of the time.

FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION

It would be misleading to measure Lewes' contribution solely in terms of military service. Several forms of money-raising characterize the strikingly 'private enterprise' nature of the War.

We may begin with the Sussex Volunteer Equipment Fund launched by Lord Abergavenny, Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, to assist with the equipment of the Sussex element of the Imperial Yeomanry. This was a county enterprise but it involved Lewesian occasions such as the Patriotic

Entertainment organized at the Lecture Hall, with singing, conjuring, ventriloquism and slides of the War. The initial appeal 'for aiding the equipment of the Force now being raised for immediate service in South Africa' was soon widened 'to complete the equipment and make other provision for Sussex Volunteers going to the seat of war in South Africa'. One very considerable item was life insurance. In February 1900 it was decided to insure for £250 the life of each of the Volunteers going to the War, the premium per head (agreed at favourable terms with the Prudential) being £5 per annum. Premiums were duly paid in respect of three officers and 147 other ranks of the Special Service Company of the Royal Sussex, the 1st Sussex Engineering Volunteers and the 'Bearer Company' attached to the Royal Sussex's Volunteers, at the cost of £733 7s. 11d.. These policies were renewed (when appropriate) and new insurances made: 238 lives were covered at £5 each by February 1902 and eventually £5700 was paid over to beneficiaries, the Prudential's involvement being demonstrated 'in a most liberal manner'.⁵³

Considerable sums were spent from the same Fund on equipment and warm clothing for the Sussex (69th) Company of the Imperial Yeomanry and, as a number of Sussex men had enrolled in the contingents of other counties, grants were made to such of them as were in the Middlesex and Hampshire Companies: these equipment grants amounted to £900. Over £3000 was raised by the first appeal, but the cost of insurance premiums necessitated a further appeal in February 1902 and eventually receipts were £4657, leaving the Fund with a balance of rather over £300. Though most of the money had been expended in the ways described above there was a certain elasticity of definition; for instance a grant of 6d. per day was made to the wife of Colour/Sergeant Instructor Willis 'in recoupment of loss of pay'. The major sums for this county Fund came from Brighton and Hove, Hastings, Worthing, Rye and Chichester. It would be difficult to keep trace of all forms of philanthropy concerned with the War; for example the decision of Lewes' Sons of Temperance to pay from incidental funds the routine sick pay contributions due from reservists who had been recalled was probably typical of many such measures.⁵⁴

Meanwhile there were other charitable appeals in the form of the national Transvaal War Fund, on behalf of which several Lewes churches held special collections on 7 January 1900, and the Mayor of Lewes' own Funds for Refugees and for Widows and

Orphans. The Mayor's Funds reached over £500 by late November 1899, well over £600 by mid-December, thanks to smoking concerts and to donations from Bonfire Societies, firms, churches, 'racing lads', schoolchildren and private individuals.⁵⁵

All this was in addition to the routine charitable activities of the Lewes branch of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, which acknowledged gifts totalling over £50 from some 30 donors at about the same time. Also an appeal for clothing for the troops came from the Hon. Mrs Charles Brand at Glynde Place and Viscountess Gage at Firle Place. The two ladies were 'putting together a parcel' and wanted flannel shirts, tam o' shanters or fishermen's caps and knitted socks. Definitions of 'comforts' for the troops were very loose. When kind people in Newhaven launched an appeal for these they provided a long list of articles beginning with 'cholera belts' and concluding with 'pocket money', taking in on the way various items of clothing, 'housewives' for darning and repairs, stationery and tobacco.⁵⁶

The necessity for private initiatives of this sort is illustrated by a letter received by the secretary of the 'Wives and families' fund launched at Hastings for the succour of the dependants of those who had gone to the War. Q. M. S. Hatton, a builder at St Leonards who seems to have been the moving spirit of this body, which raised more than £300, explained that the parents of a certain Mr Martin, who had joined the army, 'have had their only support (their son) taken from them to go to the war' and they 'should be looked after, as they are very respectable and steady people'.⁵⁷

There were also cases which illustrated the truth of Kipling's 'The absent-minded beggar'. A report in the *Sussex Express* (13 Jan. 1900) under the heading 'A Sad Case' related the story of a young woman who pleaded guilty at the Lewes Assizes to attempting to commit suicide. The accused 'had been deceived by a soldier at present in South Africa'. She had found a permanent situation and the court gave her a discharge.

Requests for money did not only concern the welfare of the living. Even before peace had been signed, a Royal Sussex Memorial Fund was set up with the object of erecting a monument in memory of the men of the county regiment who had died in the War. Contributions to the Fund were channelled through nine district offices, one of which was at Lewes. Many old soldiers contributed and rather over £2600 was raised by the autumn of 1905. Of

that sum about £1500 had at that time been paid to the sculptor, C. L. Hartwell (£509), to a builder, and an architect and for work designed and carried out in bronze; the monument is in Regency Square, Brighton. The residue was placed in a Benefit Fund, the income from which was to be used to assist men 'who have served or shall serve in the Royal Sussex Regiment, including Militia, Volunteers and Yeomanry'.⁵⁸

CRITICISM AND DOUBTS

Towards the end of the War a Medical Corps Major gave a talk at East Grinstead and was courageous enough to say that 'we had 250,000 men in South Africa and they were not all angels'. This piece of information should not have been found surprising, but many patriots would have found it shocking and its proclamation ill-timed. No doubt the fact had come to the attention of Lewesians in various circumstances, among them an episode which led to a case coming before the Brighton bench in January 1901. A trooper of the 10th Hussars had been arrested as a deserter and sent to Lewes to await escort. The escort party, including a corporal, duly arrived, but instead of undertaking the prescribed journey to Woolwich they went to Brighton and got drunk, with unfortunate consequences. The deserter himself assaulted a ticket collector at Brighton station and this was the cause of his appearance before the magistrates.⁵⁹

Meanwhile doubts about the War itself were not voiced readily even when they were felt. They started among the sort of people who had doubts about all wars — and, in some cases, about all imperialism, though this was a less significant factor in view of a fairly general acceptance of British and other 'white' colonialism.⁶⁰ The nationwide split in the Liberal party between the 'Liberal Imperialists' and the 'Pro-Boers' (as critics of the War were opprobriously called) was as deep and embarrassing at Lewes as elsewhere. In December 1899 a lantern lecture had been arranged by the Lewes Liberal and Radical Association on the all-too-germane topic of 'The British Empire'. The attendance was sparse and the lecture itself seems to have passed off peaceably, but disagreement arose in the subsequent discussion. A Mr Virgo thought that 'the present war was one of the most ungodly that had ever taken place', whereas Mr T. R. White, in the chair, 'was of the opinion that if the British Government had obeyed the Boer ultimatum they would be lowering their

national honour of prestige'.⁶¹ The curious phrasing of the newspaper report cannot mask the paradigmatic nature of this Lewes occasion.

Criticism of the War in the country as a whole, organized initially by the Transvaal Committee, was taken up by the South Africa Conciliation Committee, the Stop the War Committee and the League of Liberals against Aggression and Militarism.⁶² National figures such as John Morley, John Burns, Lord Bryce and Lloyd George were involved, as was the newspaper editor W. T. Stead. There were certainly Lewesian sympathizers with this cause, such as Mr Virgo, but the organizations concerned were mainly active in London and other cities and do not appear to have sprouted local branches in towns. No trace seems to survive of there having been any pro-Boer meetings at Lewes.

One early expression of opposition to the War was a circular published by a meeting of Sussex members of the Society of Friends. The Rev. Dr Belcher, Rector of St Michael's, made public his rejoinder (in a letter to a Friend) to this circular, of which he had been sent a copy, and later the *Sussex Express* published the text of the original circular. The very prominent Lewes Quaker Mr J. G. Hopkins was also successful in persuading the *Sussex Express* to publish a Minute of the yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends 'expressing sorrow on account of the South African War, appealing to the government to remove misunderstandings and praying for the establishment of an early and durable peace'.⁶³

Lewesians came to know who were the pro-Boers, as is clear from an episode during 'Ladysmith Day' reported in the *Sussex Advertiser* (10 March 1900) under the headline 'A Pro-Boer in Hot Water':

A member of one of our local boards, who has pronounced pro-Boer views, found himself in pretty hot water on Ladysmith day last week. A large number of working-men assembled outside his residence in North St. and treated him to what is called 'rough music' on a motley collection of instruments, musical and unmusical. As the crowd gathered round rather threateningly, the object of their attention hastily barricaded his downstairs windows and retreated to his bedroom, from which coign of vantage he assailed his opponents with cold water. After enjoying the fun for some time, and finding that the besieged gentleman would not vacate his stronghold, the crowd dispersed and subsequently took a demonstrative part in the

patriotic procession.

Unfortunately it is not possible to identify with certainty the victim of this demonstration. Considerably the most likely candidate seems to be Samuel Thornton, a boot maker, who lived at no. 12 North Street; he was a Liberal and a conscientious member of the Board of Guardians who decided against seeking re-election at this time. Two other residents of North Street who also had Liberal and Nonconformist connections cannot be ruled out: they are Henry Card (no. 10) and Clement Mannington (no. 69).⁶⁴

The affair in North Street was mild compared with some 'rough music' elsewhere; at Midhurst, for instance, disturbances occurred during which hundreds of people thronged the streets. At Tunbridge Wells, on Pretoria night and the two following (5–7 June) there were violent demonstrations against Councillor Dodds. A consequence of this sort of thing was the abandonment of a planned pro-Boer meeting at Hastings under pressure from the local authorities. Lewes was spared the most violent manifestations of both rejoicing and protest. At Newhaven the Mafeking procession led to the appearance in court of four men who were found guilty of having 'used very obscene language and started fighting among themselves', whilst at Robertsbridge several people received severe injuries from improvised bombs ('pieces of metal gas piping charged with gunpowder') during the Ladysmith celebrations.⁶⁵

The Lewes town council's first meeting (6 June 1900) after the news of the capture of Pretoria was a potentially embarrassing occasion. It was clear that congratulatory messages should be sent to the Queen and the commander-in-chief, but the Mayor and his deputy happened to be absent, hence the chairman for the occasion was Caleb Kemp, a Quaker (a former Mayor). Kemp explained that 'it had been remarked to him since he came on the premises that some few words would be expected from the occupant of the chair' about the military successes. 'As his friends knew very well he approached war and warlike proceedings from a different viewpoint than the majority of Englishmen'. He then took the opportunity to express his own minority views. Apart from a fervent prayer that 'peace might be lasting and durable', he hoped that under the British flag 'rule might be maintained of justice and of magnanimity and liberty to all classes of the people', with 'equal rights to all people there, as far as possible, even including the coloured races (hear,

hear and applause). After this unwonted reference to the vast majority of South Africa's population, Kemp's motion proposing the congratulatory messages was carried.⁶⁶

It was not till 1901 that the pro-Boer cause was reinforced by awareness in Britain, thanks mainly to Miss Emily Hobhouse, of the conditions prevailing in the camps in which the Boer civilian population had been interned. Emily Hobhouse's campaign was assisted by the protest of the Liberal leader Campbell-Bannerman, first in a speech to the National Reform Union and later in the Commons, against 'methods of barbarism'. Disillusionment at the prolongation of the campaign must have been another factor. Certainly criticism of the War came much more into the open in Lewes from around the time of Campbell-Bannerman's famous outburst (14 June 1901). Opposition by Liberal women had begun on a national scale in May, when the council of the Women's Liberal Federation passed by a large majority a motion criticizing the conduct of the War and the demand for unconditional surrender. This was echoed in June at the monthly meeting of Lewes' Women's Liberal Association at the Co-operative Hall. The Association was a body normally concerned with such matters as the evils of drink, but on this occasion it passed unanimously resolutions in favour of women's suffrage, peace and arbitration. Unanimity on the controversial question of the War suggests that very strong feelings had been aroused. A large part in this must have been played by Miss Hobhouse's campaign.⁶⁷

By the late summer of 1901 objections to the War were being expressed more openly and widely and some unexpected conversions were made. Mr John Burder of Barcombe, who was a member of the Lewes Board of Guardians and of the Chailey Rural Council, was a public-spirited gentleman who, in the words of the *Sussex Advertiser's* 'Notes by the Way', 'has always struck me as being a Conservative familiarly known as the "good old sort"'. Yet at the meeting of the Board on 23 August he gave notice of a resolution: 'That this Board of Guardians respectfully memorialize H. M. Government to offer such terms of peace in South Africa as may be acceptable to a brave and struggling people; and further to grant such a measure of self-government (free from Colonial Office control) as may tend to consolidate the vast Empire of our gracious King, and to bring about that peace, goodwill and harmony which are consistent with the aspirations of our Christian brotherhood'. At the next meeting

(6 September) the chairman not surprisingly ruled that Mr Burder's resolution — the phrasing of which seems to have been entirely his own work — was 'out of order'. This was hardly a motion for a body concerned with the application of the Poor Law, nevertheless Mr Burder's action was an interesting straw in the wind.⁶⁸ In the same month the Rev. Dr Belcher complained in his sermon at St Michael's (22 September) that 'this town of late, and his parish included, had been placarded with appeals inviting them to be of a peaceable spirit'. He believed that 'these appeals had been put there by persons for whom he had the greatest respect' (he was not more specific about the nature of these notices or what organization inspired them), but 'the peace they desired was that there should be peace at all hazards', whereas 'true Christian peace' was not always the same as this. He thought the history of the Roman Empire a warning of the dangers of a lengthy peace since as a result of this 'an Empire fell to pieces like rotten cheese'.⁶⁹

By the last winter of the War prevalent feelings had changed considerably and the very patriotic Mayor, William Gates, was clearly reacting to Miss Hobhouse's campaign when he spoke defensively of 'the kindness which the Boer women and children had received in the concentration camps'.⁷⁰

PEACE

On 2 June 1902 the Mayor, aldermen and burgesses were able at last 'to offer to His Majesty their respectful and sincere congratulations on the restoration of Peace'.⁷¹ There was now a different emphasis in the mayoral speeches. 'They would say to the Boers: "Come with us, brothers, and let us join together in this great empire."' The Boers had shown great valour' and the British 'were anxious to hold out the hand of fellowship'. This admirable willingness to abandon the bellicose note which had marked Gates' earlier official pronouncements was accompanied by predictable statements of general relief. The chairman of a meeting of Lewes Nonconformists which had originally been called to protest about the Education Bill said that 'a great, grim load had been lifted off the nation's heart by the glad news of peace'.⁷² One has the impression that a good many people had felt doubts about the prolongation of the War but had been too cautious to rock the patriotic boat by expressing their doubts in public. The sermon delivered at a thanksgiving service on 8 June by Mr J. P. Morris, the minister

of the Eastgate Baptist church, is interesting in this connection.⁷³ Mr Morris suggested that the circumstances of the War could now be dispassionately considered. There was 'little room for British boasting'. The Boer had been 'a brave, self-reliant, resourceful, and, in many respects, a much-to-be-admired opponent'. As 'our thoughts naturally turned to widows and orphans in Africa', the preacher proposed that the churches in England should initiate a fund for them. 'Such an action would magnify the British character and give to the "peace" declared a sacred importance'.

Mr Morris' proposal does not seem to have borne fruit, but his sermon is an impressive instance of impartiality and magnanimity. The mood was a chastened one and the voices which now spoke out were distant from the characteristic patriotism of the previous three years, when the Boers had been 'contemptible people' who 'had no business' in South Africa.

AFTERMATH

In some ways, not all agreeable for them, Lewesians had grown up in the years 1900 to 1902. After 'peace Sunday' (8 June 1902), with its many sermons, the War was still much in mind, with soldiers returning from Africa and recruitment to the Volunteers high. When the customary municipal party undertook the ceremonial 'Treading the Bounds' ten days later, it was understandable that the minutes should describe them as having come to resemble 'a Boer commando rather than a body of respectable citizens of the borough of Lewes'.⁷⁴

In 1904 the commemorative tablet (paid for by public subscription) based on Barnard's Roll of Honour was unveiled in the Town Hall; an earlier suggestion of commemorative chalk figures on the Downs, of rampant lions, came to nothing.⁷⁵ There was no topographical extension of Lewes in these years, hence the town lacks the street names which recall the Boer War in so many places, for instance Mafeking Road, Kimberley Road, Ladysmith Road, Natal Road, Redvers Road, Buller Road, Baden Road and Milner Road, all of which lie in northeast Brighton in the angle between Lewes Road and Bear Road.

A good deal of anxiety had been felt as to whether those who had left jobs to serve in South Africa would get them back. As early as the summer of 1900 an Active Service Volunteer, Private A. Williams, wrote to the Mayor, of whom he was a

former employee, to ask about his chances of employment as a clerk on his return. This question was one which was to exercise the next Mayor, Gates. At a dinner in honour of returning Volunteers he mentioned his sincere hope that 'those men who left their employment to fight for their country would find work now that they had come back. If any of them who had returned had been unable to obtain work he hoped the fact would be made known in order that something might be done. He should do his best to help them in this matter. (Cheers)'. It is not clear whether this speech had consequences, or indeed whether there were instances of out-of-work ex-soldiers, but a month later, at the St Michael's Cricket Club dinner, the Mayor again appealed to employers and others to do all they could to find work for soldiers who had come home from the war. He asked them not to believe that soldiers were unfit for work.⁷⁶ In the absence of other evidence (and in an age of casual employment rather than long-term unemployment) it is likely that Gates, who incidentally commanded the Newhaven Volunteers, was simply being benevolent in a generalized sort of way, without having encountered instances of unemployment.

The unfortunate Trooper Moore had considered staying on in South Africa and undoubtedly some Lewesians did this, though it is difficult to trace them or the length of their stay. At least two members of the Volunteers enlisted in the South African Constabulary and one of the Active Service Volunteers, Private Ansell, did not return with his contingent because he had joined the South African Scouts; however, Ansell was back in Lewes by September 1902.⁷⁷

Only 12 years passed between the Peace of Vereeniging and the outbreak of the 'Great War', in which a far greater proportion of Lewesians was involved and casualties were more catastrophic. In the folk memory of regulars and reservists on the Western Front in 1914-18 the Boer War was a quite recent and often-mentioned event.⁷⁸ The 1914-18 Lewes War Memorial at the top of School Hill records six names which are on the Boer War roll of service: J. Moore, J. Thorpe, J. Wood (all Royal Sussex), A. Page, A. Richardson (both Dragoon Guards), F. Funnell. The surnames are sufficiently common for there to be a clear possibility that a homonym, rather than the same man, was involved, but certainly some of these had returned safely from South Africa only to perish in the greater conflict.

Some of the 'fever wagons' which had been used

as horse-drawn ambulances in South Africa were later shipped home and, oddly enough, one which had been disembarked at Newhaven ended up in the 1930s near Firle, serving as a caravan for Eric Ravillious, that unsurpassed painter of the South Downs, and his friends.⁷⁹

The choice of Lewes as a microcosm seems justified by its typical share of participants and casualties, as well as by the characteristic roles of hectic celebration after early military disappointments and the slow emergence of doubts and criticism. Certainly not a great turning-point in British history nor even an episode which left a very deep impression, it serves conveniently as a sort of chronological magnifying-glass beneath which we can perceive in detail the attitudes and institutions, now so strange to us, of our ancestors a century ago,

so full of enthusiasm and enterprise, so deficient in scepticism.

Acknowledgements

The extracts from Tpr Moore's letters are published by kind permission of Mrs V. C. Davey and the West Sussex Record Office and the illustrations by that of Mr L. S. Davey, the West Sussex Record Office (Fig. 1) and Edward Reeves (Castle Studio, Lewes). I have received generous assistance in my research from Prof. Olive Anderson; Dr C. Brent; Mrs J. Brent; Mr L. S. Davey; Dr John Ramsden; Mr C. H. C. Whittick; Mrs Margaret Whittick; Prof. Glyndwr Williams; the staffs of the East and West Sussex Record Offices, the Brighton Reference Library, the library of the Sussex Archaeological Society and the Newspaper Library, Colindale (British Library).

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NOTES

¹ *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* (London, 1899), 442.

² Captain Gates, later mayor of Lewes, 'proceeded to condemn the apathy of the young men of the town to the Volunteer movement . . . It was a standing disgrace', *Sussex Advertiser* (hereafter *SAdv*), 22 Jan. 1900. Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force. A Social and Political History 1859–1908* (London, 1975), *passim*.

³ Statement by speaker at East Grinstead, *Sussex & Surrey Courier*, 24 Feb. 1900.

⁴ *Sussex Agricultural Express* (hereafter *SAE*), 30 Dec. 1899; East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO), BLE/A1/3, f. 84; *SAE*, 7 Oct. 1899; the celebration of Trafalgar Day at Lewes appears to have been an innovation of the mayor George Holman (*SAdv*, 23 Oct. 1899).

⁵ ESRO, BLE/A2/19, f. 82v. A speaker at the Rifle Volunteers prize distribution in 1899 'believed it was owing to the battle of Lewes that the Houses of Parliament were in the excellent condition they were now in' (*SAdv*, 30 Oct. 1899).

⁶ ESRO, BLE/A1/3, f. 18.

⁷ *SAE*, 21 Oct. 1899.

⁸ Quoted in S. Koss, *The Pro-Boers* (Chicago/London, 1973), 95.

⁹ *SAE*, 8 Nov. 1899 and 28 May 1901.

¹⁰ *SAE*, 25 Nov. 1899.

¹¹ *SAE*, 17 Feb. 1900, 7 June 1902, 29 Oct. 1901.

¹² *SAE*, 26 May 1900, 15 May 1900, 28 Apr. 1900.

¹³ *SAE*, 22 Dec. 1900.

¹⁴ *Brighton & Hove Guardian*, 17 Apr. 1901.

¹⁵ *SAE*, 6 Oct. 1900, 26 Feb. 1901; *East Sussex News. Brighton Observer & Hove Mail* (hereafter *ESN*), 22 Feb. 1901; *SAE*, 27 Jan. 1900.

¹⁶ *SAE*, 9 Dec. 1899.

¹⁷ *SAE*, 9 Dec. 1899 (see also *ESN*, 19 Jan. 1900). *Rudyard Kipling's Verse* Definitive Edition (London, 1943), 459–60. On Kipling and the War see G. Shepperson, 'Kipling and

the Boer War' in J. Gross (ed.), *Rudyard Kipling: the Man, his Work and his World* (London, 1972), 82–8. Official permission to marry was normally restricted to six men in each Company of 100 (A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home. The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1856–1899* (London/Montreal, 1977), 30–31).

¹⁸ *SAE*, 27 Oct. 1900.

¹⁹ *SAE*, 4 & 8 Nov. 1899, 6 Nov. 1900, 6 Nov. 1901, 8 Nov. 1902.

²⁰ *SAE*, 26 May 1900, 26 Feb. 1901.

²¹ *SAE*, 30 Dec. 1899, 29 Dec. 1900.

²² *SAE*, 3 March 1900 (for Mr R. H. Powell see *SAdv*, 9 Oct. 1899 etc.).

²³ *SAE*, 22 May 1900.

²⁴ *SAE*, 9 June 1900, 18 Jan. 1902; *ESN*, 8 June 1900.

²⁵ *SAE*, 7 June 1902.

²⁶ ESRO, BLE/A1/3, ff. 222–3 & BLE/A2/20, f. 83r & v.; *SAE*, 10 June 1902.

²⁷ *ESN*, 13, 20, 27 June 1902 and reprinted as separate publication (made available to me by the kindness of Mr L. S. Davey).

²⁸ In 1899, 98% of reservists rejoined, a total of some 80,000 men. The treatment of both C. H. Madden, 'The Volunteer Forces in Sussex', *Sussex County Mag.* **13** (1939), 639–42, and G. Pass, 'The Royal Sussex Regiment in the Great Boer War', *Sussex County Mag.* **18** (1944), 100–102, is necessarily very brief.

²⁹ For the Active Service Volunteer companies see E. A. C. Fazan, *Cinque Ports Battalion* (Chichester, 1971), 66–81.

³⁰ *SAE*, 27 Jan., 3 March, 5 June 1900; *SAdv*, 30 Oct. 1899, 17 Dec. 1900 (Blake).

³¹ For those whose units are not recorded (only the corps being given) it would be difficult to attempt research at the Public Record Office or regimental repositories since vast numbers of men are involved, the surnames are often common ones (and some lack army numbers).

³² M. H. Grant, in *History of the War in South Africa, 1899–*

- 1902 **4** (London, 1910), App. 14 & 15 (677–9). These figures probably omit troops raised in South Africa and perhaps those from India. Compare the figures in Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home*, 301. Skelley suggests a total of 448,000, composed thus: regulars and reservists from Britain, 238,000; regulars from India, 18,000; colonials, 30,000; raised in South Africa, 52,000; British militia, yeomanry and volunteers, 110,000. Compare also R. C. K. Ensor, *England 1870–1914* (Oxford, 1936), 347, for an estimate of 450,000 as a total, of which 250,000 were British regulars.
- ³³ *ESN*, 9, 16 & 23 March, 22 June 1900; also *SAE*, 27 Feb., 9 June 1900.
- ³⁴ E. M. Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815–1914* (London, 1980), 239 (shipping); for insurance see below.
- ³⁵ *SAdv*, 29 Apr. 1901. Since Willis was serving with the Active Service Volunteer company his wife may have been ineligible for the normal 6d. per day separation allowance (plus 2d. per child) due to regulars in respect of active duty abroad: see Skelley, 216.
- ³⁶ On 23 Jan. 1901 the *Brighton and Hove Guardian* reported: ‘Mr G. C. Morphett (Royal Sussex Regiment) sailed again for South Africa last Saturday. It will be remembered that Mr Morphett was invalided home some time ago . . .’.
- ³⁷ *SAE*, 5, 15, 26, 29 May, 9 June, 7 July, 4 Aug., 27 Oct. 1900.
- ³⁸ *SAE*, 7 Apr., 2 June 1900; *SAdv*, 26 March, 7 May 1900; *ESN*, 13 Apr. 1900. The *SAdv* rather specialized in publishing letters to family and friends (e.g. 26 March, 16 & 23 Apr., 7 May, 4 & 11 June, 2 July 1900).
- ³⁹ *ESN*, 19 Jan. 1900 (letter of E. Reed); *SAE*, 10 & 20 Feb., 3 March 1900.
- ⁴⁰ *SAE*, 3 Apr. 1900; Fazan, *Cinque Ports Battalion*, 69–72.
- ⁴¹ *SAdv*, 5 Nov. 1900; *SAE*, 7 Dec. 1901.
- ⁴² *SAE*, 28 May, 2, 15, 22 June 1901.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 28 June, 5 July, 20 Sept (and 7 Oct. for similar dinner at Rye), 11 Oct (*cf.* 10 Feb. 1900) 1902.
- ⁴⁴ West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), RSR, Mss 1/106 (unfoliated). I have taken some liberties with Tpr Moore’s — or his copyist’s — punctuation, to make for easier reading. For information about the family I am greatly indebted to Mr and Mrs L. S. Davey of Burgess Hill. Mrs Davey is a granddaughter of Emily Florence Urry. The discharge papers are RSR, Mss 2/23. For the Spring Gardens (later St Pancras Gardens) address, *ESN*, 11 Jan. 1901 and *SAdv*, 14 Jan. 1901.
- ⁴⁵ The cause of death is recorded as ‘cancer on the liver’ or ‘abscess of the liver’: *SAE*, 12 & 15 Jan. 1901; *ESN*, 11 Jan. 1901; *SAdv*, 14 Jan. 1901; Roll of Honour (Barnard).
- ⁴⁶ To the three killed should perhaps be added the name of Tpr H. White of the 19th Hussars, severely wounded on 1 Oct. 1901 but ‘reported from South Africa and twice afterwards confirmed by the War Office as being killed’ (Barnard Roll). However his name was not included on the memorial tablet.
- ⁴⁷ *ESN*, 6 July 1900; *SAE*, 10 July 1900.
- ⁴⁸ *SAE*, 12 Oct. 1901, 24 May 1902; *ESN*, 23 May 1902.
- ⁴⁹ *SAE*, 10 June 1902; *ESN*, 13 June 1902. For pensions see Skelley, 52, 206–10, 216–18, 233.
- ⁵⁰ R. J. S. Simpson, *The Medical History of the War in South Africa* (London, 1911), 48–9. The statistics in the official *History of the War in South Africa* **4**, 680–97, exclude the category of ‘invalided’ and are even more unsatisfactory; their criteria produce a total of about 55,000 casualties.
- ⁵¹ *SAE*, 22 Sept. 1900 (Pte J. Smith), 20 Apr. 1901 (Bdr Reed). For losses in other wars see Spiers, *Army and Society*, 158 and Simpson, 53, 55, 57.
- ⁵² M. D. Blanch in P. Warwick (ed.), *The South African War. The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (London, 1980), 229.
- ⁵³ *SAE*, 13 Jan., 3 March 1900; ESRO, LCV/6/EW 11 & LCV/1/EW 4; *ESN*, 21 Feb. 1902. A delighted soldier wrote: ‘Yesterday . . . we were all insured for £250 by the county’ (*Sussex & Surrey Courier*, 24 Feb. 1900).
- ⁵⁴ ESRO, LCV/6/EW 11, LCV/1/ EW 3–4; for private subscriptions in aid of Mrs Willis see above; *ESN*, 24 Nov. 1899.
- ⁵⁵ *SAE*, 31 Oct., 11, 15, 21, 28 Nov., 2, 16 Dec. 1899. There are archival remains of Sussex’s contribution to the national (Lord Mayor of London’s) Transvaal War Fund in ESRO, C/C, 54/7, but none of this relates to Lewes.
- ⁵⁶ *SAE*, 2 & 8 Dec. 1899; *SAdv*, 22 Jan. 1900.
- ⁵⁷ WSRO, RSR, Mss 5/37 (Hastings Fund for Volunteers (Cinque Ports) and dependents).
- ⁵⁸ WSRO, RSR, Mss 11/6.
- ⁵⁹ *Sussex & Surrey Courier*, 15 March 1902; *Brighton & Hove Guardian*, 30 Jan. 1901.
- ⁶⁰ Note the opinion of K. O. Morgan in ‘Wales and the Boer War’, *Welsh Hist. Rev.* **4** (1969), that ‘at the high noon of Anglo-Saxon imperialism, some Welshmen, too, sought to claim their place in the sun’ (380).
- ⁶¹ *SAE*, 2 Jan. 1900.
- ⁶² See Koss, *Pro-Boers, passim*.
- ⁶³ *SAE*, 24 Feb., 3 March, 16 June 1900: for Mr Hopkins see D. Hitchin, *Quakers in Lewes* (Lewes, 1984), 80.
- ⁶⁴ There was a briefer report, not naming the street, in *ESN*, 9 March 1900 (‘it having been rumoured that his sympathies were with the Boers’). For residents of North Street see Kelly’s *Directory of Sussex* (1899), 446–54. For Thornton’s decision not to seek re-election *ESN*, 16 March 1900. The episode was not reported in the *SAE*. See also ‘Rough Music’ by E. P. Thompson in his *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), 467–538 (with a reference to rough music visited upon ‘pro-Boers’ in Sussex, 531).
- ⁶⁵ *SAE*, 3 March & 2 June 1900; Sussex Archaeol. Soc. Library, album ‘War Cuttings etc., 1899–1915’, ff. 5, 7 (Midhurst); Koss, 114–15, 118; R. N. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working-Class. Working-class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899–1902* (London, 1972), esp. 139–40.
- ⁶⁶ ESRO, BLE/A2/20, f. 83 & v; BLE/A1/3, ff. 113, 120.
- ⁶⁷ Koss, 207–10; *SAdv*, 24 June 1901.
- ⁶⁸ *SAdv*, 26 Aug., 11 Sept. 1901 (for another reference to Mr Burder, 10 March 1902); *ESN*, 13 Sept. 1901.
- ⁶⁹ *SAE*, 24 Sept. 1901.
- ⁷⁰ *SAE*, 22 Feb. 1902.
- ⁷¹ ESRO, BLE/A1/3, ff. 222–3 and A2/20, f. 83 & v.
- ⁷² *SAE*, 7 June 1902.
- ⁷³ *ESN*, 13 June 1902.
- ⁷⁴ ESRO, BLE/A2/22, ff. 95–6; for the ‘Mad Mullah’, see above.
- ⁷⁵ *ESN*, 2 Nov. 1900.
- ⁷⁶ *SAE*, 9 June 1900, 20 Sept. & 25 Oct. 1902.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28 June & 20 Sept. 1902; *SAdv*, 12 May 1902.
- ⁷⁸ See, for example, David Jones, *In Parenthesis* (London, 1937), ix, 136, 142–3, 183 (concerns the Royal Welch Fusiliers).
- ⁷⁹ Helen Binyon, *Eric Ravillious* (London, 1983), 68–9.