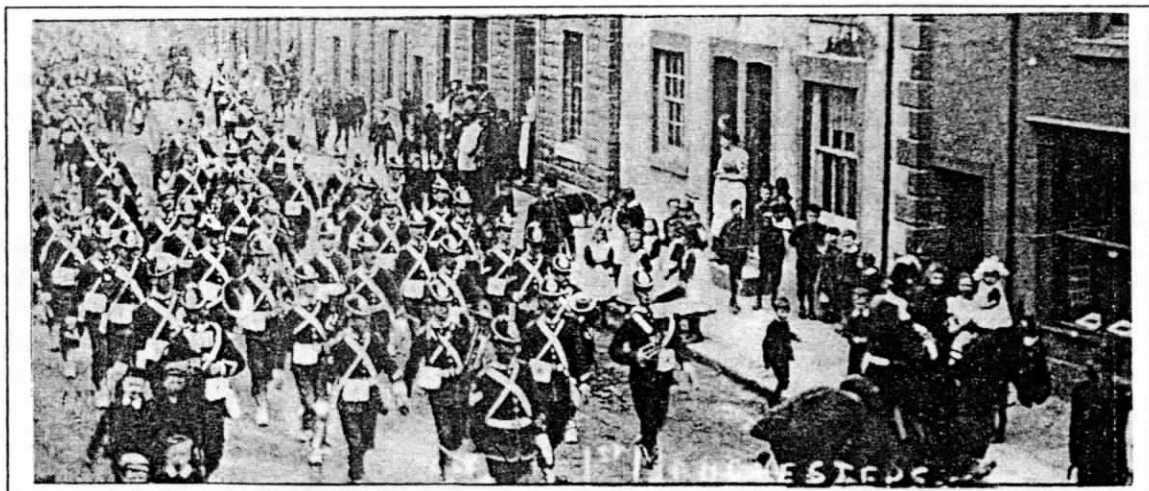


AT CHIPPING CAMP 1895 and 1896

The Army camp at Chipping opened in 1892. By the start of 1895 it received a better report than any other camp in the Kingdom. This was largely due to more extensive draining which had been undertaken by contractors since the previous season to cope with the wet conditions. The ground where the tents were pitched had been mounded and gravelled, and paved furrows and gravelled footpaths 7 feet wide made between the rows of tents. As usual there were favourable comments about the invigorating air and the excellent supply of clean spring water piped throughout the camp. (Villagers were still carrying water from wells!)

Hopes were still high of a railway connection to Chipping from Longridge, to benefit not only the military but also the local inhabitants. The road from Longridge station was "long and tedious", and particularly difficult above Chipping. A railway would allow even better facilities to be provided at the camp. Furthermore, rail access would stimulate the whole district to develop and "draw residential property".

The soldiers were at the camp between late May and early September. Regular soldiers were based there in summer to run the camp. In May 1895 there were about 650 men of the 1st Manchester Regiment, then replaced by the Welsh Fusiliers (23rd) by August 1895. During the summer thousands of part-time soldiers in the volunteers and militias in surrounding towns came during their summer holidays for training alongside the regulars.



The 1st Manchester Regiment, marching through Longridge to Chipping Camp.

The Army was keen to maintain good relationships with the local inhabitants. There are local families who can remember elderly relatives telling them about baking for the troops at the camp and also taking in washing. In August 1895 some of these kindnesses were repaid, as is evident in this account from the Preston Guardian:-

"On the afternoon of August 15th 1895 there was a regimental treat for the local children and their parents given by the Welsh Fusiliers.

Col. Mainwaring and officers had invited the scholars of Brabin's School and St Mary's School, to the camp ground and the invitation had been cordially accepted. The children of the two schools walked there in procession, headed by the Rev. Fr. De Gryse and the Rev. George Burwell, vicar. The colonel and officers received their guests, over 200 in number, and headed by a full band they marched over the parade ground. Here three large tables had been erected, heavily laden with the choicest things and beautifully adorned with flowers.

Operations at once commenced, the officers presiding at the tables. Close by, in the canteen, the mothers of the children, 50 in number, were likewise entertained. Various sports followed, and the events caused much amusement. Substantial money prizes were given. At the conclusion appropriate speeches were given by the rev. gentlemen, and ringing cheers were given to all those who had contributed to the success of an ever to be remembered meeting."