

NEWS FROM CHIPPING CAMP 1893 & 1894

Chipping military camp began in 1892, but the first year had not been a great success because the summer turned very wet. (see Longer Sen 1991) During the winter of 1892-3 the camp site was further drained and the access roads heavily metalled, so there were still hopes that this summer training camp would become the "Aldershot of the North".

As in the first year, troops started to arrive in late May and the camp was occupied until early September. The regular soldiers based at Chipping throughout the summer were the East Yorks Regiment followed by the 2nd Liverpool Regiment. Also various battalions of volunteers arrived in succession. The hundreds of soldiers' tents like white specks against the hills could be seen easily from Longridge.

The majority of the troops in camp during 1893 were recruits on drill and musketry practice. The shooting was very safe because the targets were placed in the hollow of the hills below Parlick.



Visiting journalists considered the site a very healthy one. The soldiers could spend their spare time exploring the beautiful country, or climbing the hills and "inhaling the invigorating ozone borne on the breezes". The men of the 2nd Battalion of the King's Regiment, Liverpool, who had returned from India a few months previously were expected to be glad of the chance to re-acclimatise themselves in the "fresh invigorating breezes". The only drawbacks were the "unnecessarily large number of clouds" and the high rainfall.

By 1893, some corrugated iron buildings had been erected:- the officers' mess, storerooms and a canteen, where beer was supplied by William Sumner, brewer, of Fulwood. A good supply of spring water was piped throughout the camp.



The problems of access continued to cause concern. But it was still possible that the Preston and Longridge Railway Company would eventually extend the line to Chipping. Meanwhile local carters were kept very busy transporting the huge amount of stores. Barely a week went past without some accident on the narrow hilly roads. Despite the remoteness of the site, large numbers of people came from miles around to watch the soldiers and to hear the band concerts which "mingled strangely with the music of the bells in the Chipping Parish Church tower".

The soldiers found the 7 mile walk from Longridge railway station a hardship, specially after a long railway journey or in very hot weather. There were compensations though in the several public houses on the way:-

Ann Kay, landlady of the Dog and Partridge Inn, Chipping, was charged at the County Petty Sessions at Clitheroe, with selling drink during prohibited hours, and Matthew Flynn, Ernest Allport, and Joseph Fleming, soldiers in the 2nd Liverpool Regiment at Chipping camp, were charged with being on licensed premises during prohibited hours. The police stated that at 4.15 pm on August 15th 1893, the soldiers were found on the premises with a glass of beer each. The defence was that the parties all believed the distance to be over three miles from the camp and the soldiers were bona fide travellers. The magistrates dismissed both cases, cautioning Mrs Kay.



In order to cope with any emergency the police force had been strengthened and it was expected that Chipping village would soon be provided with telegraphic communication with the outer world. However, the behaviour of the men was very good. Drunkenness was the cause of the only offence of theft in 1893 when George Crowther, drummer and private in the Lancashire Fusiliers stationed at Chipping, was charged with stealing a cap, value 1s, the property of James Irving, draper, Chipping. But the case was dismissed at the Clitheroe Court since the cap had been retrieved later, and the soldier was under the influence of drink at the time, and probably had no intention of committing a theft.



In August 1893 the 2nd Battalion of the King's Regiment, Liverpool, held their annual regimental sports in a field adjoining Chipping Camp. The events included a village boys' race. Result: 1.Marsden, 2.Coupe, 3.Procter.