

## THE CAMP INSPECTION, 1893

In July 1893 a party of "top brass" inspected the Chipping camp so as to report to the War Office whether it should be made permanent. Word had got round that one of the visitors would be HRH the Duke of Cambridge and crowds of people came from all the surrounding towns to watch. Alas, the Duke was unable to attend having been delayed by an engagement at York the previous evening, so the duty of inspection was performed by General Sir Redvers Buller, Adjutant-General of the Army, with Lieut-General Sir Francis Grenfell, Deputy Adjutant-General for the Auxiliary Forces and Major General Sir Julian Hall, Commander of the North-Western District plus several other army dignitaries. These gentlemen arrived by train at Longridge at 9.25am, and drove over to the encampment.

"The men, numbering altogether about 1,100, were drawn up in quarter column on the parade ground, and after being inspected they made an attack on the hill facing the camp, that was defended by an imaginary force, which naturally offered but a feeble resistance to the onslaught. The manoeuvres were witnessed by the officers, after which the camp was inspected, and shortly afterwards the distinguished party left and proceeded to Longridge, where they departed by special train for Preston.

The men on parade consisted of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Battalions King's Own Liverpool Regiment, the first mentioned being regulars and the two latter militia. They presented a very smart appearance, and on being dismissed those off-duty indulged in the recreations afforded by the camp. There are excellent facilities for reading or playing games, and a formidable cricket team can be got together. The sounds of firing can be plainly heard, and inquiry elicits the fact that a party of men are undergoing musketry practice at the rear of the hill which had been so recently stormed. The hill hides their position, but the targets can be seen in the breast of the frowning heights beyond, which offer a firm resistance to stray bullets. Another firing party is seen to leave the camp, and as the men march over the crest of the hill and disappear on the other side, their red coats appearing prominent against the dark background, it could be easily imagined as a scene in real warfare.

At considerable distances from each other soldiers can be seen practising and receiving instructions in signalling, and some of them manifested considerable expertness in their manipulation of the flags. The strains of music floating on the air indicate that the band of the Regulars is having a rehearsal in the bandroom prior to giving musical selections in the evening, and a little distance away can be seen the mounts of several Hussars who are stationed at the camp for duty as orderlies. The hospital tents are situated on a slight elevation, but they have not been much requisitioned, the health of the men having been remarkably good. One of the best features of the camp is the uniformly good conduct of the men, between whom and the residents, both in Chipping and neighbouring country districts, there exist the most friendly relations."

A favourable report was given to the War Office and it was expected that by the following year there would be more investment. A larger total of men, 20,000 - 30,000, would visit the camp for training in 1894. During the winter of 1893-4 more permanent buildings were erected, and draining and further road improvements took place. Local labourers were unhappy that the War Office always used outside contractors and never local men.



In the summer of 1894 the regulars based at the camp were again the East Yorkshire Regiment and 2nd Liverpool Regiment, and as before, successions of volunteer battalions came for short periods of 2-3 weeks.

The summer of 1894 ended on a farcical note, with a soldier involved in the "Chipping Pigsticking Case". (see next page)

Who was HRH the Duke of Cambridge who did not come to Chipping?:- Queen Victoria's cousin George, two months older than her. He had a lifetime's military experience and was Commander in Chief of the British Army for almost 50 years. "His thorough knowledge of close-order drill, and his outspoken, not to say emphatic comments, made him a formidable inspecting officer, and kept up a high standard".

Sometimes one can still hear the sigh of relief which swept across the camp when it was learned that His Royal Highness would not be coming.