



A personal selection of local, British Isles and world, history.

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## TRAINED BANDS<sup>1</sup>



**J**ohn Gilpin was a citizen  
Of credit and renown,  
A train-band captain eke was he  
Of famous London town.

The first verse of one of my favourite poems: *The Diverting History of John Gilpin* by William Cowper, written in 1782. Trained Bands were companies of part-time militia in England, Wales and the Americas. First organised in the 16th century and dissolved in the 18th. The term was used after this time to describe the London militia. In England and Wales, organised by county, they were supposed to drill on a regular basis, although this was rarely the case in practice. The regular army was formed from the Trained

Bands in the event of war, though the inability or unwillingness of many of the bands to serve outside of their home regions often left the army short on manpower compared to the paper strength implied by the Trained Bands rolls. They later became common in the American colonies, where they are normally referred to as *Trainbands*. Similar organisations include the Dutch *Schutterij*, and the Swiss *militia*, elements of which remain in existence today.

Founded in 1572, and organised by county, it was not until the *Exact Militia Programme* of 1625 that they began to have regular training and weapons drill. Even then, standards varied considerably, and depended on the level of financial support by the local gentry. Although Charles I tried to assemble armies of around 30,000 militia for the 1639 and 1640 Bishops' Wars, there was considerable reluctance to serve outside their counties, and a proportion were armed only with longbows. In 1588, the Trained Bands consisted of 79,798 men, categorised by their primary weapon: 36% arquebusiers, 6% musketeers, 16% bowmen, 26% pikemen, and 16% billmen.

A standard drill book was issued in February 1638, which was used throughout the 1639 to 1653 Wars of the Three Kingdoms, together with a muster roll by county. This shows large variations in size, equipment and training; the largest was Yorkshire, which had 12,000 men, then London, with 8,000, increased in 1642 to 20,000. Counties like Shropshire or Glamorgan had fewer than 500 men. In the early stages of the 1642 to 1646 First English Civil War, the Trained Bands provided the bulk of the forces used by both Royalists and Parliamentarians, but were often unwilling to serve outside their home areas. They were rapidly replaced by more professional bodies, the most important being the *New Model Army*.



The above was brought to mind by Shona Rutherford-Edge's article in *The Historian* concerning the Parish Armoury in St Mary's Church, Mendlesham, Suffolk. This armoury (shown above) was in an oak-lined and double-locked *Parvis Room* (see J&T No.25) above the North Porch.

This document of 1578 gives some idea of how the training was organised: *This trayninge to be only appointed twice in the yere by the space of two days together. The view of the hole number trayned to*

be in one place within the shiere if conveniently it may be ij holy days in Whitsun weeke and thother ij days between Bartholomew and Mychelmas. The trayners principallie to spend their tyme in the shott with the bullet. Enlisting able-bodied men was only the first step. They also needed to be armed for battle. Parliament passed another act requiring Englishmen to maintain arms according to their income. Those whose goods were valued at between £10 – £20 had to keep a longbow, arrows, a steel cap, and a black bill ready in the event of war. People who earned less than £10 were expected to club together to provide communal equipment. The armour at Mendlesham is an example of this.

## THE YELLOW BOYS

**A**nother Historical Association feature was on James Skinner (1778 to 1841), the product of a Scottish father and a Rajput mother. Arunansh Goswami writes about this colourful character who began his military career in the service of India's most powerful princely state, Scind. He assisted in two field battles and the storm and capture of five or six forts.

At the Battle of Malpura in 1800 Skinner demonstrated both great military skill and distinguished gallantry. Years later, Lord William Bentinck, a Governor-General of India, wrote about meeting an old Sirdar (a distinguished Indian soldier of high rank) who had been defeated by Skinner at Malpura. Bentinck related how Skinner, 'then a youth, led a charge of cavalry, captured a field battery which the Sirdar commanded, and then, by his humane and decided interference, saved his life'. Bentinck noted how the old Sirdar was *glowing with gratitude* at this memory.



In 1803 the Second Anglo-Maratha War broke out between the Scindians and the British, leading to the dismissal of all soldiers with a British connection from the service of Scindia. Skinner joined General Lake's camp on the side of the British East India Company. Later some more cavalry from the Scindian army came to join the British, and they wanted to be led by Skinner (Sikander Sahib). He agreed to lead them, on the condition that he would never be expected to fight against Scindia, in whose army he had served. The cavalry regiment under Skinner became known as 'Skinner's Horse' or 'Yellow Boys', as their uniforms were yellow in colour. Skinner's Horse is the only regiment in the world which has operated both in the Indian Army and the British Army. Skinner's Horse is now a regiment of the Armoured Corps of the Indian Army.

Skinner was treated quite well by the Scindias but when he joined the British service he suffered from poor treatment. He himself wrote: *In the Mahratta service from 1796 to 1803 I always had hoped of rising, my merits were rewarded, my birth not questioned, when I entered the British service, I thought I had now served a nation that had no prejudices against caste or colour, but alas, I was mistaken.* He went on to explain that the pay, rank and respect offered to him by the British all fell well short of his expectations. Despite this discrimination, for over 20 years from 1803 his regiment of 'Yellow

Boys' had distinguished itself in every possible way. After a major success at the second siege of Bhurtpore in 1826, Skinner was made a substantive lieutenant-colonel. Later he became a colonel. However, despite these belated promotions, his overall treatment by the British remained a source of some bitterness for him.

### QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY

The Salisbury Cathedral chapter minutes contain many references to QAB: eg *Reverend J.H.Maclean applies to QAB for £155 for improving outbuildings and two Glebe cottages at Bramley (in the New Forest)*. Indeed, Salisbury's Bishop Gilbert Burnett (1689 - 1715) campaigned strongly for its introduction. Queen Anne's Bounty was a scheme established in 1704 to augment the incomes of the poorer clergy of the Church of England and by extension the organisation *The Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy* that administered the bounty (and eventually a number of other forms of assistance to poor livings). The charter, below, is in the Lambeth Palace library.



The bounty was originally funded by the *annates monies*: *first fruits* (the first year's income of a cleric newly appointed to a benefice) and *tenths* – a tenth of the income in subsequent years traditionally paid by English clergy to the pope until the Reformation and thereafter to the Crown. Henry VIII, on becoming the recipient of these monies had had them carefully valued and specified as sums of money. This valuation was never revised, and in 1920 the income from First Fruits and Tenths was

between £15,000 and £16,000.

The bounty money was to be used to increase the income of livings yielding less than £80 a year. It was not paid directly to incumbents, but instead used to purchase land (generally £200-worth), the income from which augmented the living. The livings to be augmented were selected by lot from those with an annual income less than £10, or (in the early years of the bounty) those where augmentation by a third party was offered conditional upon augmentation by bounty funds. Parishes worth less than £20 a year were included in the ballot in 1747, those worth less than £30 a year in 1788 and those under £50 in 1810.

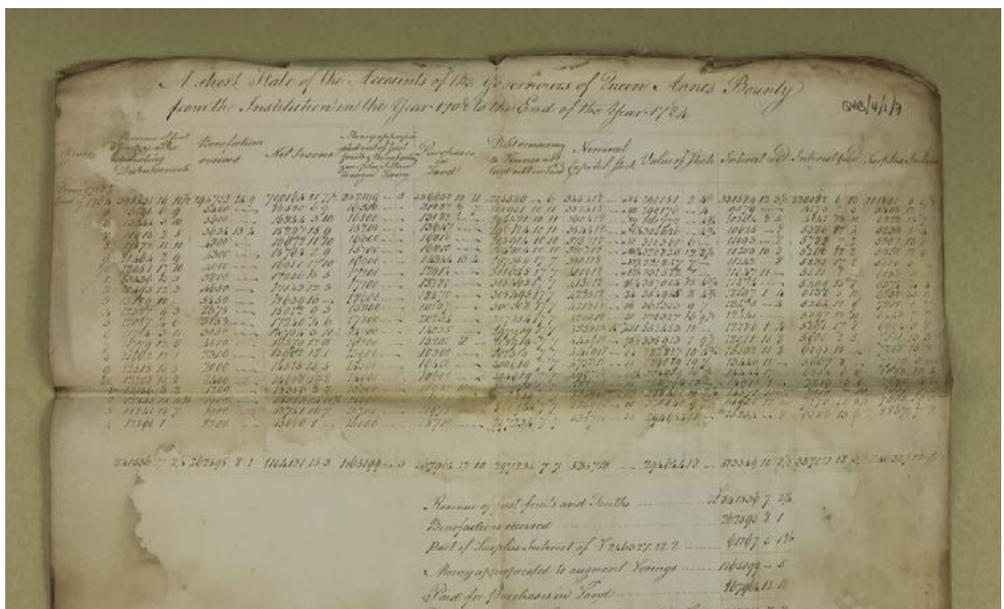
Many of the fine Georgian and Victorian parsonages still in existence were funded by mortgages drawing on the fund after the Clergy Residence Repair Act 1776 was passed to *promote the residence of the parochial clergy, by making provision for the more speedy and effectual building, rebuilding, repairing or purchasing houses and other necessary buildings and tenements for the use of their*

benefices. Known as the Gilbert Act, it enabled the lending of up to three years' income of all benefices for the building or repair of a parsonage house.

Augmented parishes came to find it more convenient to not actually purchase land, but to leave the purchase money deposited with the bounty, which paid a guaranteed but moderate rate of interest. The money held by the bounty was invested at higher rates of interest, the difference between interest paid the bounty on their investments, and that paid by the bounty to parishes going to meet the running costs of the bounty and to increase the funds available for augmentation. In 1829 the purchase money deposited with the bounty amounted to over £1m, which was invested in bank annuities (financial instruments of fluctuating value, then worth over £1.3m); by 1900 the bounty was holding over £7m credited to various augmented livings.

The original (first fruits and tenths) income and that from interest rate differences on money on deposit with the bounty, had by 1815 allowed the allocation of nearly £1.5m of capital (securing nearly £0.5m of third-party benefactions) to augment the income of 3,300 livings. To accelerate augmentation, between 1809 and 1820 Parliament made annual grants to the bounty of £100,000; £1.1m in total. As a result, by 1824 all livings under £30 a year had been augmented and there were funds in hand

to permit the augmentation of all livings worth under £50 a year. By 1841, it was estimated, the operations of the bounty (discounting the effects of the Parliamentary grants of 1809-20) had secured additional church income over ten times that of the first fruits and tenths. Eighteenth century QAB accounts shown right.



On 16 June 2022 the Church Commissioners published an interim report on research into links between Queen Anne's Bounty and the Atlantic slave trade. The report said that Queen Anne's Bounty had invested significant sums in the South Sea Company, which transported 34,000 slaves to the Spanish Americas in the 18th century, and had received benefactions from people with links to slavery, including Edward Colston. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, apologised for the links with slavery identified in the report. In January 2023 the Church Commissioners announced that they were setting up a fund of £100 million to be spent over the next nine years on addressing historic links with slavery, a figure increased to £1B in March 2024 following a report commissioned by the Church Commissioners.

Dr Richard Dale, writing in the Church Times last year, disputes the idea that the Bounty benefitted from the slave trade. The managers studiously avoided this type of profit and did not

purchase shares in the company. In fact according to research undertaken by Grant Thornton for the Church Commissioners, the Bounty's South Sea investments were almost exclusively in the form of annuities (government backed debt). This is an emotive subject and we need to make sure that statements about it are backed up by proper research.

The panel on the north wall of Portchester Castle's St Mary's church (right) has an interesting backstory. Over the centuries Portchester fort with its high perimeter Roman wall was used for housing prisoners on several occasions. In 1653 it was the turn of the Dutch. They were captured in the English Channel by Admiral Blake and were held in such harsh conditions that they finally protested by setting fire to the church. Arranging for repairs and restoration to be carried out took a very long time indeed and it wasn't until 1710 that the church was finally reopened following a petition from the parishioners to Queen Anne. The £400 pound cost included £3.10s "for a hogshead of strong beer to drink the Queen's health" during the opening celebrations and the occasion was recorded by this remarkable panel.



#### DID YOU KNOW??

In Medieval times when streets were narrow and houses almost touching, heavy rainfall could cause a veritable tsunami, washing out the detritus and dead animals that had accumulated. Hence the expression raining cats and dogs. In the north however dogs were associated with Odin and cats with witches and seafarers so 'the jury is out'.

Isaac Newton wrote many curious and embarrassing manuscripts concerning the end of the world and the prophecies of Daniel that after his death they were suppressed by his friends. Devotees of Ben Aaronovitch's *The Rivers of London* series will not be in the least surprised.

Albert Einstein stopped going to school at the age of fifteen and failed his exam to get into Zurich Polytechnic. When he did get in he claimed it put him off science for 12 months. Having scraped through his finals he worked as a tutor and examiner of patents in Bern but after three years came up with his Special Theory of Relativity - there is hope for us all.



The Ancient Romans would commit their curses to stone tablets (left, *defixiones*) before throwing them into deep water or burying them.

No one knows where the Pyrenean Basque language came from, except the Basques themselves, who believe it was the language of Adam and Eve, brought to them by Noah's fifth son, Tubal.



Newspapers and Newsletters often use the title Gazette. This was originally *gazetta*, a small copper coin (right, worth 2 soldi in 1684) used

1. Re-enactment photo courtesy of Norfolk Trayned Bandes. Notes also from Wikipedia.
2. Courtesy of The Reader's Digest's *Did You Know* published with Dorling Kindersley in 1990.