



Peninsula Barracks - The Guard Room.

ABOUT THE HISTORY OF PENINSULA BARRACKS

In 1858, the Barracks became the home base and the training Depot of The King's Royal Rifle Corps and The Rifle Brigade.

Following the years the Regiment had spent at Bushfield Camp whilst the Green Jackets Brigade Depot was renovated in 1961-64, Mr. Weston Lewis, the architect, wrote the account of the renewal of the Barracks.

In 1965, a year after the completion of the renovation, a booklet was published that includes most interesting and valuable information about the Barracks themselves as well as the City of Winchester.

The reader of this KRRC Journal will find that Mr. Weston's description of the Peninsula Barracks is reproduced in full.

To furnish you with the current circumstances, two pages of a brief chronology of the Peninsula Barracks site have been provided by the RGJ Museum that follow Mr. Weston's article.



Peninsula Square today.

Members will recall that Peninsula Square was once the Regiment's former Parade Ground.

History of Peninsula Barracks Winchester



The King's House in 1838.

On 19th December 1894 the King's House was destroyed by fire.
After being re-built, the Rifle Depot was re-opened in 1904.

THE GREEN JACKETS BRIGADE DEPOT

WHEN THE DEPOT was formed at Winchester in 1858 it was the home and training centre for the King's Royal Rifle Corps (60th Rifles) and the Rifle Brigade and was called the Rifle Depot.

Both these Regiments had four Regular Battalions so from its inception the Depot was larger than normal as it had to train recruits for 8 Battalions.

In 1922 both Regiments were reduced to two Battalions each.

During the 1939-45 War units of the American Army amongst others were quartered in the Barracks.

In 1951 the name of the Depot was changed to The Green Jackets Depot and in 1958 on the formation of the Green Jackets Brigade by the addition of the 43rd and 52nd, to The Green Jackets Brigade Depot.

In addition to training recruits for the three Battalions of the Brigade (all in 1965 overseas) the Depot also houses the Brigade,

Regimental Colonel and his staff, the Museum, the recruiting staff and the Regimental Headquarters.

On the return of the Depot in 1964 from its two year sojourn at Bushfield Camp whilst the Depot buildings were being renovated, the old and rather dull name of "Upper Barracks" was changed to Peninsula Barracks, chosen because all three Regiments had earned great fame under the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsula War against Napoleon.

The account of the renovation of the Depot which follows was written by Mr. Weston Lewis, the architect and includes most interesting information about the City of Winchester as well as about the Barracks themselves.

The History

Winchester, associated with the Green Jackets since 1794, and their home since 1858, is a City that is one of the most ancient in all England. It is perhaps of interest to Green Jackets who last year returned to their traditional base, after an enforced two year stay at Bushfield Camp to know something of the turbulent events that have been enacted on and around the piece of ground, now simply shown on Ordnance Survey maps as War Department property.

Milner, the 18th century historian of Winchester writes "Without having recourse to romantic legends, or traditionary songs, it is a sufficient commendation of the antiquity of Winchester, that it extends beyond the reach of every certain and authentic record, and is lost in the mist which envelops the first population of this island." At its centre and on the ground now occupied by the Depot was the Royal Castle and Palace of the Kings of England. Alfred the Great had his capital in Winchester, and William the Conqueror very soon after his coronation at Westminster, came to the City to keep his Court and subsequently to build the Castle.

The City it has been claimed was founded by a King of Britain named Ludor Rous Hudibras, 892 years before the birth of Christ. The very existence of such a King is doubtful, and the claim made fifteen hundred years after the period, by British writers, is probably no more than fabulous. What is certain, however, is that South Britain was first



In 1067, William the Conqueror built a Royal Castle on the site that is now Peninsula Barracks.

occupied, from the opposite coast of Gaul, by Celtic Gauls embarking from Unelli, the present day Cherbourg. From there they must often have seen the white cliffs of the Isle of Wight, near which they landed at Caer Peris (Porchester), the only ancient city on this coast. From there, they infiltrated up the country in a north-west direction, until they found a well-watered valley, with fertile fields capable of supporting themselves and their animals. They found too, extensive downs with good cover and an abundance of wild life, and dense and shady forests, essential for defence and for the mystical rites of the Druidical religion which they practised. Here they made their chief settlement, which they called Caer Gwent, (Winchester) and which in their language, one of the most ancient in the world, means the White

City, a reference to the chalky cliffs that surround and overhang its approach. [The term city, is somewhat ambitious, for then and for several centuries after, it was no more than a collection of long cabins, built of mud and covered with reeds. These cabins were sheltered by the overspreading boughs of the dense native forest, in which situation the earliest British cities were invariably built.] Here then, in each hut, a number of families herded together, their dress a single cloak, formed of hide, thrown over their shoulders and fastened at the neck. For arms they carried swords or battle-axes made of stone and sometimes brass, and their principal decoration were the figures of animals tattooed over every part of their bodies, with a blue infusion of their native woad. From these early beginnings came the City which was over the centuries to become the ancient capital of all England and around which grew the British Empire.

The first event in the history of this City was the total change of its inhabitants and government by foreign invasion. This event took place a century or so before the Christian era. The invaders were the Belgae, originally a German nation, who having conquered a third of Gaul, crossed the narrow sea dividing Britain from the continent and expelled the original Britons, from the whole of the maritime counties from Kent to Cornwall. The chief city of these was established in the central province of Hampshire at Caer Gwent, which they re-named Gwent Bolg.

The Belgic Britons were considerably more refined and introduced the practice of agriculture, growing corn for making both bread and beer. This single circumstance of their applying to agriculture instead of the chase, by confining them more at home, greatly contributed to the improvement of their dwellings, and so the City grew.

By the time of the first invasion of Britain by the legions of Julius Caesar in B.C. 54, the Belgae of the West were well united, and there is no record to show that the Romans at this time were able to penetrate as far as Gwent Bolg. Between the first and second Roman invasions, the importance of the City was increased by the establishment of the chief foreign market for the staple commodity of

tin, in the Isle of Wight. At this time the Island was accessible from the land at low tide and was subject to the City.

With the second Roman invasion A.D. 43, the City was taken by Vespasian, then an officer of no great rank in the army, but who here laid the foundation of his future greatness. The City was re-named Venta Bulgarum, and during the next six years was reconstructed in the square form of a Roman camp. The walls were fortified with flint and strong mortar, parts of which still exist today. The area now occupied by Lower Barracks was within the City boundaries, the line of the Roman wall being on the line of the embankment which now divides Upper and Lower Barracks. The Romans finally withdrew from Britain in A.D. 418 and abandoned the country to marauding raids from land by the Picts, and from piratical invasion by the Saxons.

In 513, Venta Bulgarum was taken by the Saxons under the command of Cerdic, who landed in the Hamble Creek. Among other changes which then took place, was the adoption of the name of Wintanceaster, now contracted into Winchester. In the year 800, Egbert succeeded to the West Saxon crown and began the process of uniting by war, the whole country under one monarchy. After a series of bloody battles fought throughout the land, he asserted his claim to the undivided rule of the country and in 827 in Winchester Cathedral he became the first ruler to be crowned as King of all England. In commemoration, an edict was published, abolishing all distinctions of Saxons, Jutes and English, and he commanded that all his subjects should be known by the latter name only.

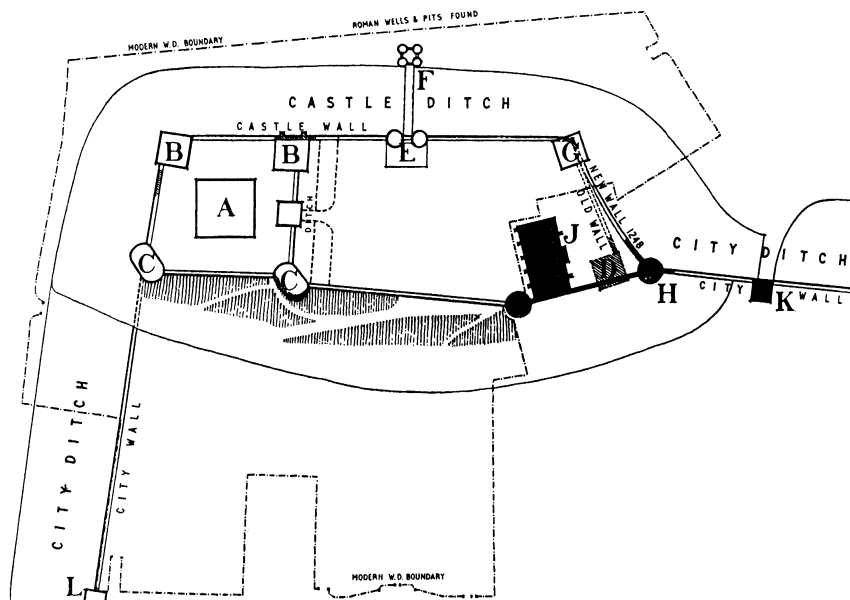
Now began a series of invasions on this island by the Danes and Normans, who inflicted as heavy casualties on the English, as their predecessors had inflicted on the Britons and Gauls, four hundred years before. On the death of Ethelred, Alfred his youngest son, was crowned in Winchester in 872. Within one month of his coronation, he had engaged the Danes and had put them to rout in a battle near Wilton. By 878 however, under continuous Danish pressure, he was obliged to retreat and in disguise as a common soldier, sought asylum

in the fens of Somersetshire. Here various adventures occurred which he took great pleasure in relating in later years, among them the episode of the burnt cakes. In that same year, he returned and fought and defeated the Danish army near Chippenham. So complete was this victory that the surviving Danes, were either converted to Christianity or were forced to quit the island. Winchester at that time had been reduced to heaps of rubble by the destroying Danes. Alfred, the Great, as he was called, was unrivalled as a warrior, a legislator, a scholar or a saint, soon restored the City to its original state and dignity. It again became the seat of government, and the depot site again became a Royal residence.

It was from this Palace that in 1034, Canute, angered by the false flattery of his Court, took his nobles to Southampton and in vain commanded the flowing tide, not to approach his feet, thus proving their stupidity in describing him, lord of the ocean. The first recorded coronation sermon, took place at the crowning of Edward the Confessor in Winchester Cathedral in 1042.

The splendour of Winchester as a city increased, rather than diminished, with the Norman invasion. The Normans had at this time become the most polished and learned as well as the most powerful in Europe. Instead of extinguishing the arts and sciences as the Danes had done, they soon rendered the country famous for their cultivation. William the Conqueror, having been crowned in Edward's new Abbey at Westminster, came soon after to keep his Court in Winchester, and was crowned a second time. In 1069, he began to build the Castle, the foundations of which still survive beneath the parade ground of Upper Barracks. Most Castles in the south of this country stand in the centre of a town. William, however erected his Castle at Winchester, on the highest point which was immediately without the City. He selected this particular site with a view to controlling the two great highways of Roman origin which were of immense strategical importance, namely the road from Southampton to the north, and the road to the west, via Sarum. He was also concerned to overawe the stalwart citizens of Winchester, whom a Norman writer describes as "brave and perfidious".

MEDIAEVAL



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| <p>A. The Great Tower 1070
(probably earlier).</p> <p>B. & C. The Castle Keep.</p> <p>C. Oval Towers. Edward III 1350
William of Wykeham.</p> <p>D. Old Gate.</p> <p>E. New Castle Gate Henry III 1240.</p> | <p>F. Outpost Barbican and Bridge.</p> <p>G. Black Tower.</p> <p>H. Henry III Tower.</p> <p>J. Castle Hall.</p> <p>K. The Westgate of the City.</p> <p>L. The Southgate of the City.</p> |
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The Castle gradually developed, and was described as “a gallant but not great Castle, bravely mounted upon a hill for defence and prospect”. It was 850 feet in length from North to South and 250 feet in breadth and it occupied the whole of the area on which Upper Barracks now stands. The Keep was at its southern end, near the newly built Sergeants’ Mess and had towers at each of its four corners, and a fortified gate leading into it. The base of the south wall of this Keep was exposed in two places in 1962 when excavations were made for the reinforced concrete foundations for the new Sergeants’ Mess. The main gate to the Castle was on the western side facing up the hill towards the railway cutting. A bridge led from the gate, over the city

ditch to a fortified outpost tower on the other side. Its position is now almost exactly occupied by the new P.O.L. (*abbreviation for Petrol, Oil and Lubricants*) Store at the rear of Long Block. Beyond this, in fact where the railway cutting is now, lay the Castle green. This was the training ground for archers and men-at-arms, and was the scene also of many bloody State executions, which took place after trials in the Great Hall. All that now remains above ground of the mediaeval Castle is the Great Hall, now called the County Hall and used for the Assize Courts.

During the reign of Henry I, Winchester attained the zenith of its prosperity. It was the chief seat of government, where the King wore his crown and assembled his nobility at the principal festival of the year, Easter. Here in the Castle, and not in London, were the Treasury and the royal mint, and here the public records were kept.

The Castle was greatly developed during the twelfth century, and in its long history has been the scene of many battles and intrigues and it has frequently been a rallying centre, a tradition continued under the Green Jackets during the two recent world wars. In 1141, the Empress Matilda after feigning illness and death, escaped "enclosed like a corpse in a sheet of lead", from a besieging army of her cousin King Stephen. Here in 1194, Richard Coeur de Lion on his return from the dungeons of Trivallis, was crowned with unusual magnificence. Henry III spent much of his time in Winchester. He was born in the Castle, and apart from his affectionate regard for his birth place, he was also actuated by political motives, in laying out vast sums of money on the Castle. He had little respect for the citizens of London, and feeling conscious of his unpopularity there, spent as much time in Winchester as the political situation would allow. The Palace built by Henry II had by this time been destroyed by fire, and he resided in the Castle. He frequently had to give up his accommodation to make way for itinerant judges, whose successors still attend the Assizes in the same County Hall today. Numerous records show that he was always anxious to make additions to the already strong fortifications and to improve and repair the Royal Palace situated in the northern portion of the Castle. "In doing which he spared no pains to render it at once

a secure retreat and a luxurious residence.”

In 1265, during the Barons war, Winchester was again sacked by the younger Simon de Montfort. Under Edward III, William de Wykeham, Surveyor of the King was responsible for much rebuilding.

In addition to the two colleges at Winchester 1382 and at Oxford, which he built and endowed, he was also responsible for re-building two towers of the original Keep. The original form of all four towers built by William the Conqueror was the usual square shape in the Norman style. In 1797, when the Castle had become a barracks, two officers of the garrison who possessed a taste for antiquarian research, employed (misappropriated might be a better word) a large number of their soldiers opening up various parts of the Castle site, for the express purpose of tracing the ancient towers and walls and incontestably proved that the north-east and south-east towers had been altered into a circular form. This was a style used by Wykeham at Dover and Windsor Castles. The outline of the north-east tower is preserved to this day by the curved embankment and retaining wall at the south-east corner of the Junior Ranks Clubs.

Henry V was educated at Winchester College. Much of his short and turbulent life was spent on the continent, but it was at this Castle that he received the pompous archbishop of Bourges, ambassador of Charles I of France, with his insulting gift of tennis balls. Roused, Henry gathered the Hampshire bowmen and men-at-arms at the Castle before embarking at Southampton for their victories at Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt.

His son was Henry VI, pious and learned, whose love of literature and devotion found ample expression in the college and cathedral of Winchester. His principal concern was to learn the economy, discipline, and plan of studies, established by Wykeham. He was determined to build another establishment based upon the same plan, near his Palace of Windsor. This was Eton College founded in 1440, and William Waynefleete, formerly headmaster of Winchester College was appointed headmaster of Eton, and subsequently served as

provost.

After the defeat of Richard III, the last of the Plantagenets, at Bosworth Field, the triumphant Henry Tudor brought his wife Elizabeth of York to this Castle, so that his first child should be born in the ancient capital of England. In an attempt to increase his slender claim to the throne he named the child Arthur, claiming descent from that great King, an act responsible for the revival of the legend of the Round Table, which hangs in the County Hall to this day. With the dissolution of the religious houses 1536-9 under Henry VIII, the effects were no more disastrously felt than at Winchester, and it is chiefly since his reign that the city has declined in Royal favour. Elizabeth the last of the Tudors, showed no great partiality for the City, and under a suit granted to Sir Francis Walsingham declared the City a Corporation. The death of Elizabeth on the last day of the year 1602 ended the attempts to prevent the accession of the House of Stuart to the English throne. Sir Benjamin Tichbourne, then high sheriff of Winchester was prominent in supporting the Scottish Kings unquestioned right to the crown, and on his accession in 1603 James I made a gift of the Royal Castle to him and his heirs for ever.

His son, Sir Richard, gave up the Castle at the outbreak of the Civil War to be fortified by the Royalists. He himself joined the defenders under Lord Ogle.

In 1645, after the battle of Naseby, Cromwell was sent to reduce the City and Castle to the authority of Parliament. He appeared before the City on the 28th September, with an army consisting of four Regiments of Foot and three of Horse. Having called upon the Mayor to surrender and being refused, a few shots were fired into the City to intimidate the inhabitants. The chief attack, however, was upon the Castle, six days later. This attack lasted two days, the defenders on one occasion making a sortie and beating the besiegers from their guns, but they were driven back. From a much nearer battery Cromwell kept thundering at one spot with his cannon and eventually made a breach in the wall near the Black Tower. The foundations of this Tower were uncovered during the recent excavations in 1962 for the foundations of the new Rank and File Mess. Cromwell's account of the action is contained in this despatch to General Sir Thomas Fairfax:

"Winchester 6th October 1645.

Sir,

I came to Winchester on the Lord's day, the 28th Sept, with Colonel Pickering, commanding his own, Colonel Montagues and Sir Hardress Waller's regiments. After some dispute with the Governor we entered the Town. I summoned the Castle; was denied; whereupon we fell to prepare batteries, which we could not perfect (some of our guns being out of order) until Friday following. Our battery was 6 guns, which being finished, after firing one round, I sent in a 2nd summons for a treaty, which they refused. Whereupon we went on with our work, and made a breach in the Wall, near the Black Tower; which, after about 200 shot we thought stormable, and purposed on Monday night to attempt it. On Sunday night about 10 of the clock, the Governor beat a parley, desiring to treat. I agreed unto it, and sent Colonel Hammond and Major Harrison in to him, who agreed upon the enclosed articles.

Sir, this is the addition of another mercy. You see, God is not weary in doing you good. His goodness in this is much to be acknowledged; for the Castle was well manned, with 680 horse and foot, there being near 200 gentlemen, officers and their servants; well victualled, with fifteen hundred weight of cheese, very great weight of meat and beer, near 20 barrels of powder, 7 pieces of cannon; the works were exceeding good (aid strong. It is very likely it. would have cost much blood to have gained it by storm. We have not lost 12 men. This is repeated to you, that God may have all praise, for its all his due,

*Sir, I rest,
Your most humble servant,
Oliver Cromwell,*

(Lieut.-Gen. Cromwell's Secty., who brings this letter, gets £50 for his good news.)"

Immediately after its surrender, Parliament ordered that the Castle should be destroyed. The greater portion however, remained for several years after the siege. Charles I, the last King to stay within its walls, lodged there in December 1648, with a strong body of escorting soldiers on his way to trial and eventual execution in London. The possibility of its further use as a Royalist stronghold, was the cause of much anxiety to Parliament In the years 1649 and 1650. Its demolition began in earnest late in the year 1650 and a letter written by Richard Major, a Hampshire magistrate entrusted with the demolition, slates "the foundations of the Castle are discovered to be so low, and the walls so thick. underground, made with flint stones, that it is very difficult to get beneath them". He informs the Council that the work will take a long time, at a vast charge, and suggests that "it will be sufficient to throw down the walls level with the ground, fill up the wells and remove all stone, timber and other saleable material". Cromwell has much to answer for, for it was by no foreign invader or even by the ravages of time that the renowned Castle of Winchester finally fell. A Castle so intimately connected with some of the most memorable associations of English history.

With the restoration of the Monarchy a new era began for Winchester, Charles II paid frequent visits to the City, and stayed, at the deanery. He added a new brick, building at the south end of the Great Hall (the only part of the mediaeval Castle to survive the destruction by Cromwell) for the accommodation of Mrs. E. Gwynn. In 1682, he decided to make Winchester his ordinary residence, when public business did not require his attendance in London, and for this purpose of building himself a palace on the spot where the former Castle had stood. A deed of conveyance dated March 17th, 1682 was passed between the City and the Crown in which "Richard Harris, Esq., Recorder of the City, William Craddock. Edmund Fyfield and William Taylor, aldermen with three other citizens authorized for this purpose, sell to His Majesty and his heirs, in consideration of the sum of five shillings, the said Castle as it stands, defaced and erased with the walls, stones and other loose materials belonging to it; as likewise the Castle green and ditch, containing by estimation, eight acres." Sir Christopher Wren was appointed architect, who drew a plan and

elevation for the building, modelled partly on Versailles, in a style of Royal magnificence. The Palace was designed on the axis of the Cathedral, facing the West end. The nobility and gentry who attended court, were anxious to follow the King's example and to have houses built, suitable to their rank. Wren therefore planned a broad avenue, 200 feet wide, extending between the Palace and the Cathedral which was to have accommodated these "illustrious personages".

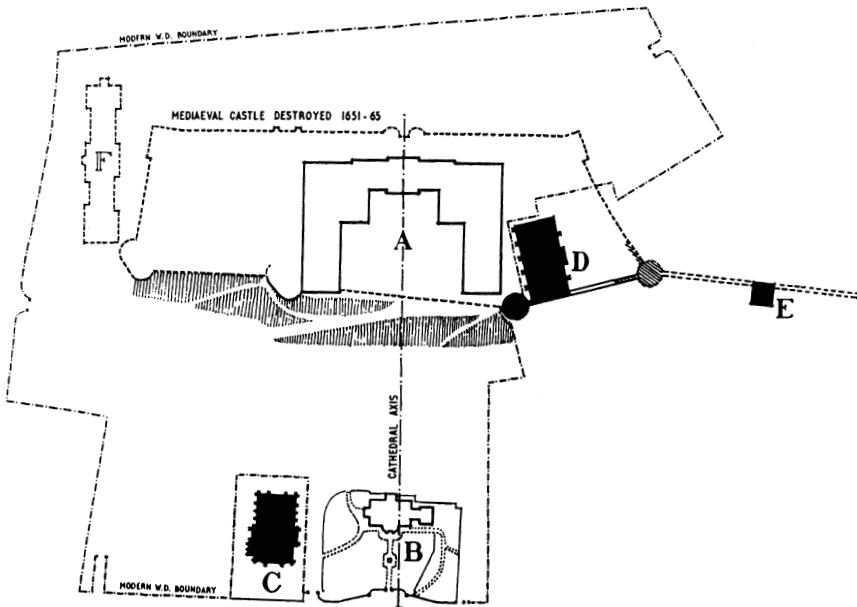
In addition it was intended that a river was to be brought through a park, from the downs, descending by a 30 foot cascade, into the former Castle ditch, which was to be converted into a fine canal over which four bridges were to be built. These plans being approved, Charles himself laid the foundation stone on March 23rd, 1683. The work proceeded very rapidly, but then, unfortunately and only two years after the work had begun, Charles died in 1685, and the work was stopped. Evelyn wrote soon after the King's death: "I went to see the new Palace the late King had begun and brought almost to a covering. It is a stately Palace of three sides and a corridor, all built of brick and cornished, windows and columns and the break and entrance of stone. I believe there had already been £20,000 and more expended, but his new Majesty did not seem to encourage the finishing it." There can be no doubt, that had the royal palace been finished according to Wren's design, with its offices and houses for the nobility, for which the ground had already been purchased, and had the intended park West of the Palace, which was to have been laid out stretching to the top of the downs in view of Stockbridge, been completed, then this Palace, topped by a cupola 30 feet above the roof, so as to have been seen from the sea, would indeed have been the most magnificent of all the Royal residences in this country, and a worthy rival to Versailles.

This was not to be. The short reign of Charles ill-fated brother and successor James II, was too turbulent to think of building Palaces, and apart from completing the roof, the work was suspended.

In the reign of William III, Winchester sank into great obscurity and the building remained neglected. On her accession in 1702, Queen

Anne after personally inspecting it, had an estimate prepared for its completion, intending to settle it upon her consort, Prince George of Denmark, but the expense of a great continental war and the premature death of the Prince prevented it. By now, much of the land purchased for the development between the Palace and the Cathedral had been re-sold, and houses began to be built on the area once reserved for Wren's grand Avenue. One of them was Serle's House erected about 1730. This was built more or less on the Palace-Cathedral axis although no part of Wren's scheme, and it is now the Regimental H.Q. of the Royal Hampshire Regiment.

RENAISSANCE



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| A. The Royal Palace Charles II
1685 Sir Christopher Wren. | D. Castle Hall.
E. Westgate. |
| B. Serle's House. | H. Officers' Mess circa 1820. |
| C. St. Thomas's Church. | |

An event occurred in 1756 which put paid to any remaining hopes that the Palace might ever again become a Royal residence. Milner

writes "At the breaking out of the seven years war (1756-63), a prodigious number of French prisoners having been taken, and government being distressed for proper places to confine them in, the King's House was pitched upon for this purpose and degraded into a prison of war, where no fewer than 5,000 men were confined." It continued to be used as such in George III's reign during the American War of Independence 1775, and was successively occupied by French, Spanish and Dutch prisoners. In 1779, when Britain was engaged in the maritime wars with France and Spain, a French hospital ship the S. Julie was taken and "numerous sick men and the crew were landed at Poole and taken to the King's House, and thus brought into it, a malignant pestilence which swept off the prisoners and their gaolers in great numbers." They were buried in the ancient Castle ditches, "and contributed greatly to reduce their depth".

In the year 1792, George III permitted the King's House to be used as a hostel for up to 1,000 French refugees, mostly clergy, who had been banished during the French Revolution. Here they lived for four years and it was said that "they were wont to chant their offices together, and their voices could be heard as a mighty roar of sound all over the City," a sound echoed today by the "mighty roar" of drill sergeants on Upper Barracks Parade ground.

In 1796, the building was first used as a purely military establishment. In that year the Napoleonic wars were being fought, and a large central barracks being required, the French priests were re-housed and the King's House was fitted up to accommodate British troops, "where from two to three thousand of them are more commodiously lodged, than perhaps in any other barracks in the Kingdom".

In 1810, the interior underwent a series of alterations, the principle one being the division of the first floor (formerly State rooms 20 feet high) into two separate floors, making a building of four stories, in place of the former three. The main branch of the South Western Railway was opened to Southampton in 1839. The cutting, one of the deepest in the line, was taken through a former airing or parade ground. When the cutting was being formed, skeletons and skulls

were found of those who had died of the plague in 1797. A platform was constructed beside the railway for the use of troops.

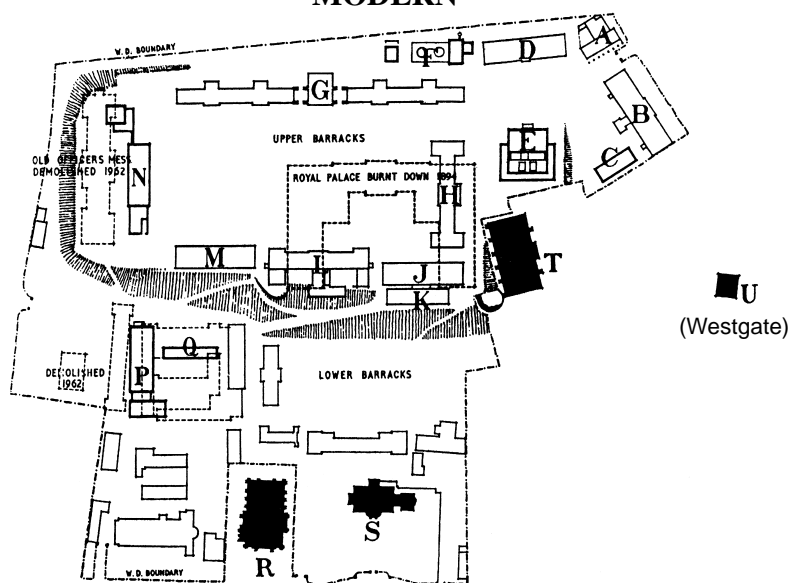
Great improvements were made during the next twenty years, and then a second building was added to the barracks. This was a handsome new three storey building built on the South side of the parade ground, the Officer's Mess. This building sited on the old Castle ditch, began to settle within a few years of its erection, and was a constant problem for a succession of Garrison Engineers before it was finally demolished during the recent contract to be replaced by the new Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Mess. Other buildings followed (about 1850) a new hospital block was built on the north side of the barracks alongside Romsey Road (the result of the influence of Florence Nightingale). Also erected were a "large and convenient barrack for married soldiers" in Lower Barracks "together with a large Chapel and schoolroom, at the south-west angle of the grounds."

On the 19th December, 1894, just after midnight, fire broke out in the former King's House. Reporting the event the Daily Graphic, Friday December 21st, 1894 states "About 400 rooms, with a quantity of arms and books, were destroyed by the fire which broke out in the central block of the barracks at Winchester on Wednesday. The building designed and built by Sir Christopher Wren in 1685, was originally intended as a Palace for King Charles the Second. At the time of the fire it formed quarters for unmarried men in the depots of the Hampshire Regiment and the Rifle Brigade. When after a considerable delay, a full supply of water was obtained for the firemen who had arrived, it was found impossible to extinguish the flames in the burning wing, and the men devoted all their efforts to save the Historic Dereham Hall (County Hall) built in the reign of Henry III. In this the firemen were eventually successful, but the barracks themselves were almost entirely gutted. The building being situated on an elevated spot, the country was lit up for miles around."

The Rifle Depot was moved to Gosport, while the Barracks were rebuilt. It was decided to replace the original King's House with two new buildings, which came to be known as Long and Short Blocks.

Wren's style of architecture and details were faithfully reproduced, and parts of the columns, architrave and frieze, from the rear and side elevations of the original Wren building were salvaged from the burned outer shell, and built into the new buildings. An inscription on Long Block reads "This stone was laid by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on 8 June, 1899 A.D. These buildings were erected in 1899-1902 to replace a building called the King's House which was originally designed by Sir Christopher Wren as a palace for King Charles II, subsequently converted into soldiers' barracks and finally destroyed by fire in 1894. Portions of the original stonework have been built into the present structure."

MODERN



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| A. Guard House (Romsey Road Gate). | K. Miniature Range. |
| B. North Block (old Military Hospital). | L. Junior Ranks Club. |
| C. Offices. | M. Instruction Shed. |
| D. Headquarter Offices and Museum. | N. W.O.s' and Sergeants' Mess 1964. |
| E. Rank and File Mess 1964. | P. Officers' Mess 1964. |
| F. Boiler House and Fuel Tanks 1964. | Q. Officers' Garages 1964. |
| G. Long Block (R & F Barrack Block). | R. St. Thomas's Church. |
| H. Short Block (Medical, Dental, Q.M.). | S. Serle's House. |
| J. Gymnasium. | T. Castle Hall. |

An inscription on Short Block reads "The arms in the pediment over this (the South) entrance are those of George III and were recovered from the old King's House which was destroyed by fire in 1894." The buildings in Lower Barracks were built during this period, and it was nearly ten years before the Depot was again stationed in Winchester in 1904.

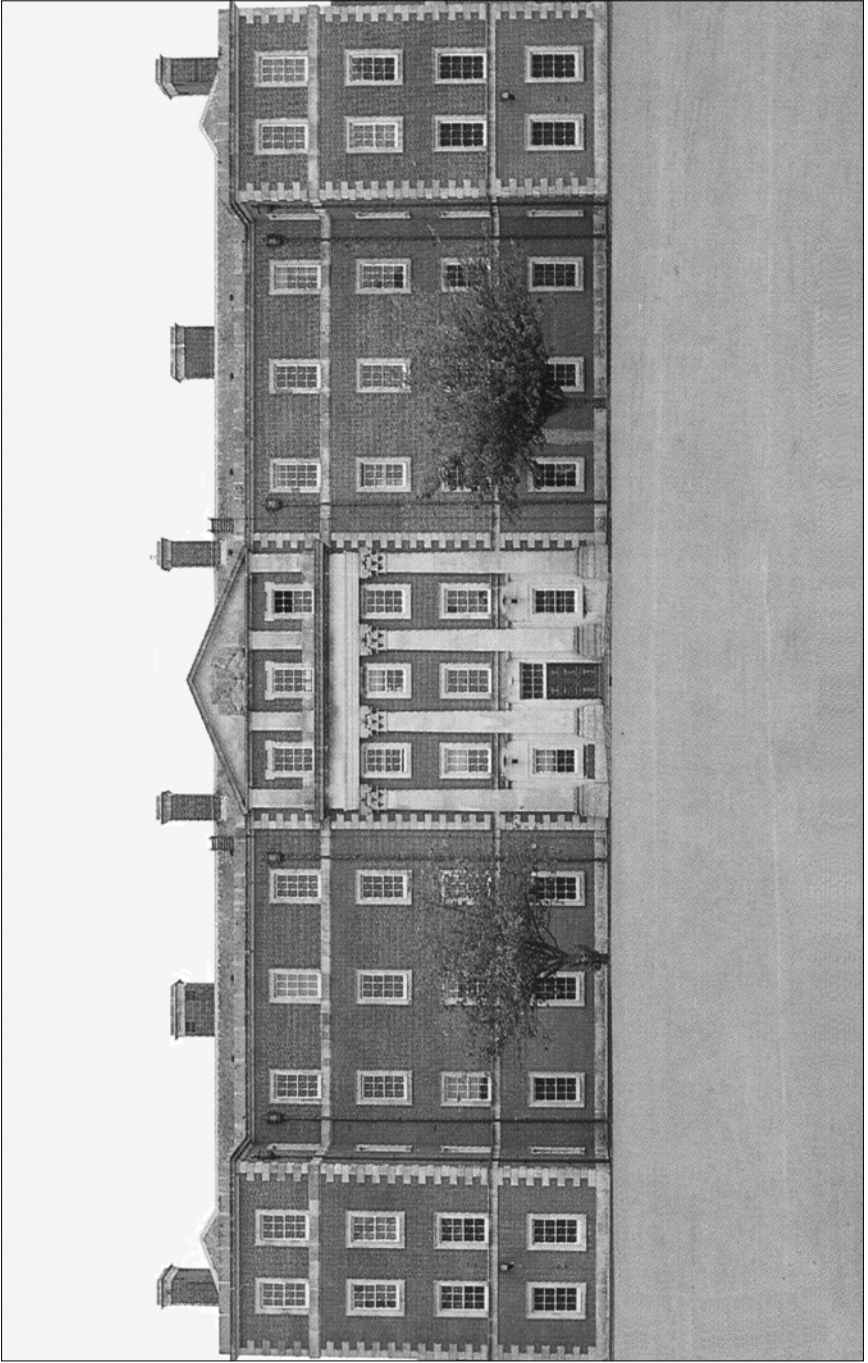
The latest chapter in the history of this great site, followed the decision to reorganise the British Army on a Brigade basis. In 1958 the die was cast, when it was announced that the 43rd and 52nd, the King's Royal Rifle Corps and the Rifle Brigade would be amalgamated to form the new Green Jackets Brigade, and that Winchester would become the Brigade Depot. A Master Plan was drawn up under the personal instructions of General Sir George Erskine, Colonel Commandant of the K.R.R.C, for the modernisation of the barracks to equip it for its new role. Work started in January 1962, the Brigade having moved to temporary quarters in the hutted camp at Bushfield. The Officers' Mess had by this time been condemned as a dangerous structure and the inevitable decision to demolish it, resulted in what is probably the most drastic change in the Depot. It has been replaced by the new Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Mess. The problem of adequately enclosing the south end of the parade ground with this much smaller building, was resolved by linking it with a new Band Practice room, the two buildings being roughly equal to the length of the former officers' mess. Warned by the sad fate of this building, which had begun to settle within a few years of its erection, the new buildings are sited almost clear of the old castle ditch. In addition, they are founded on a series of bored piles, some of which are over thirty feet deep. During the period April/June 1962, when these piling operations were being carried out, the foundations of William the Conquerors' mediaeval castle were once again exposed to the light of day. They were found to be so massive and so strong, that the foundation arrangements for the new buildings had to be revised, and modern piles now straddle either side of the ancient wall.

Wren's foundations too, had their share of renewed interest. The former N.A.A.F.I. and Museum building, now the Junior Ranks Club

on the East side of the parade ground had been showing signs of serious settlement. It was at first thought, that the steep embankment, (the line of the old Roman city boundary) at the rear of the building was giving way, and that if this continued, the building was doomed to the same fate as the former Officers' Mess. Historical records indicate the possible presence of old foundations and trial holes were dug, along the whole front of the Junior Ranks Club. Four walls were found running under the centre of the building at right angles to the main facade. They were the foundations of the South wing of Wren's Royal Palace. At one point there was an arched opening, the roof of a former cellar, with the white limewash decoration still very much in evidence. The Junior Ranks Club, a comparatively modern building, built in the early 1900's had its foundations actually resting on the old Palace walls. The surrounding area was filled ground, part of the artificial terracing carried out by Wren. The building had settled on this "bad" ground and had this been uniform over its entire length, it is unlikely that the building would have suffered seriously. Unfortunately the centre portion bearing on the old Wren foundation, resisted settlement and the building was virtually beginning to break its back over this obstruction. Further movement has now been arrested by consolidating the surrounding ground to a depth of twelve feet, by injecting neat cement under controlled pressure.

In Lower Barracks a site was cleared for the new Officers' Mess, by demolishing "the large and convenient barrack for married soldiers", together with a number of single storey buildings immediately to the north. One of the buildings in this latter group, virtually a single large room, was claimed to have been used by Florence Nightingale after her return from the Crimea, and thus to have been Winchesters first military hospital.

In Upper Barracks, a new Rank and File Mess, now occupies the site of the Black Tower, from the ramparts of which, men had once commanded the northwest approach to the Castle. The nearby grass embankment north of this Mess, marks the line of the wall breached by Cromwell's guns.



Part of Long Block of Peninsula Barracks after the renovation.

The Peninsula Barracks Site

A Brief Chronology

On the historic site, on which The Royal Green Jackets Museum stands, William the Conqueror built a royal castle (1067), which was extended by King Henry III (1216-72). The castle was besieged by Oliver Cromwell during the English Civil War (1645) and, after its occupants had surrendered, was partially demolished in 1651.

In 1683 King Charles II chose the site for a palace overlooking Winchester Cathedral. The palace was designed in the manner of Versailles by Sir Christopher Wren, but, following King Charles II's death (1685), it was never completed.

In the 18th century the palace, known as The King's House and in an increasingly neglected state, was used to accommodate French, Spanish and Dutch prisoners captured during the Seven Years' War (1756-63) and the American War of Independence (1775-83).

In 1796 the site was leased from the Crown for use as a military barracks.

Thereafter:

1796-1856: The barracks housed 3,000 troops during the Napoleonic Wars and numerous regiments temporarily between 1815 and 1856, including the 43rd Light Infantry and the 60th Rifles (King's Royal Rifle Corps).

1839: The main railway line from London to Southampton on the western boundary of the barracks was opened with a platform available for use by the troops in the barracks.

1856: The 2nd Battalion, The Rifle Brigade, arrived from Portsmouth.

1858: The barracks became the home base and training depot of The King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRRC) and The Rifle Brigade (RB).

1872: The barracks was officially titled The Rifle Depot.

1894: The King's House was destroyed by fire. The depot was closed and the troops moved to Gosport while the barracks were rebuilt.

1899: The Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) laid the foundation stone for the new barracks.

1904: The Rifle Depot re-opened with The King's House re-built in similar style to Wren's original design.

1914: At the outbreak of the First World War 5,000 reservists were mobilised, clothed, equipped, armed and posted to their regiments in five days. Subsequently 30,000 volunteers destined for service in the KRRC and RB passed through the gates of The Rifle Depot by the end of September 1914.

1939: At the outbreak of the Second World War so many recruits came forward to join the KRRC and RB that it became necessary for the KRRC recruits to be trained at Bushfield Camp, two miles outside Winchester.

1943-4: The barracks were vacated by The Rifle Depot and used to house the 60th Infantry Regiment of the 9th (US) Infantry Division which was preparing to take part in the 1944 D Day landings in Normandy. RB recruits were trained near York.

After the war recruit training resumed at The Rifle Depot.

1951-86: The Rifle Depot was variously re-titled: The Green Jackets Depot (1951-58); The Green Jackets Brigade Depot (1959-65); The Rifle Depot (1966-82); and The Light Division Depot (Winchester) (1983-6).

Between 1961 and 1964 the Depot moved to Bushfield Camp while the barracks were modernised.

In December 1985 Peninsula Barracks closed down, and in 1986 the Depot and Training function moved to the newly and purpose built Sir John Moore Barracks, Andover Road North, Winchester, known as Flowerdown.

1994: The Ministry of Defence relinquished its occupation of most of the site for private residential use, with the area of the former parade ground landscaped and renamed Peninsula Square. Three buildings were retained to accommodate some MOD offices, including the Regimental Headquarters of The Royal Green Jackets, and Winchester's Military Museums.

Today the site continues to accommodate some MOD offices, including the Regimental Headquarters of The Rifles, and Winchester's Military Museums.

Peninsula Square with its smart houses and landscaped gardens is also one of the most desirable places to live in Winchester.