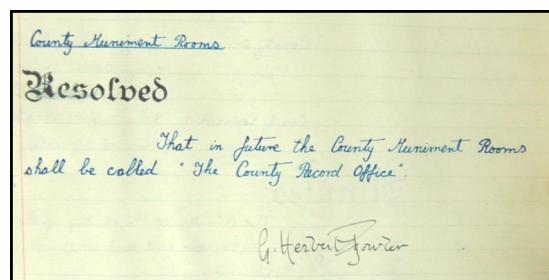


WHAT'S IN A NAME?

That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet

Notice anything different? No, well that's good because nothing has really changed; we have just simplified things a little. Over the last 100 years the county record office for Bedfordshire has had several different names. Originally known as *Bedfordshire County Muniments* our first change of name took place in 1930 when we became *Bedfordshire County Record Office*. This name lasted until 1997 when Luton Borough Council became a unitary authority and it was felt that we should reflect that we were funded by both Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council. At the time there was also a wish to show that we operate both a records management service for semi-current records and a service for those records that have been selected to be kept permanently as archives. This led to the adoption of the very long name *Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service*.



CRM2 County Records Committee Records 1930



CC2264 Plan of Luton in the county of Bedford 1839

Although this name reflected the funding arrangements for the service and the two branches of the service it always caused problems. It was too long and people were tempted to shorten it to an acronym that meant nothing to anyone. I have been with the service long enough to distinctly remember the staff meeting that declared that we would never use the acronym ourselves but when restricted to a tight word limit even we succumbed. Secondly people thought that because Luton, a town that has always been in the historic county of Bedfordshire, got a special mention it meant that our office was based in Luton, which has confused lots of people when trying to find us.

In April 2009 Bedfordshire County Council ceased to exist. The service became hosted by Bedford Borough Council and funded by Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough councils. What to do? We could not make the name even longer to reflect the new funding arrangements and, in a time of great change, it was considered that some stability might be good and so our long and outdated name remained.

Why change now? The frustrations caused by the name have continued. Regularly we have to ask authors, editors and in some cases staff to correct the mistakes they have made in our name and in spite of pleading that no one uses the acronym it keeps popping up. In preparing to apply for Archive Service Accreditation it seemed an appropriate time to make changes so that documentation submitted for the application was in the name we wished to have. Therefore it was decided that, from our 102nd birthday on the 24th October 2015, we would simplify our name to *Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service*. However, to make things even easier for credit lines and so on, we will also use the shortened forms of *Bedfordshire Archives* when only referring to the archive service and *Bedfordshire Records Service* when only referring to the internal records management service. We will not be using any acronyms!

It doesn't mean that we love Luton less. *Bedfordshire Archives* has recently increased its holdings of Luton material significantly and has worked with Luton Cultural Services Trust to put on a range of events in Luton, while *Bedfordshire Records Service* continues to administer hard-copy records for the authority.

Pamela Birch, Service Manager

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

At this time, when we reflect on this country's part, with our French allies, in putting an end to the delusions of a megalomaniac and his German hordes it is refreshing to consider this country's part, with our German allies, in putting an end to the delusions of a megalomaniac and his French hordes. One hundred years ago Britain was over a year into a four and a quarter year struggle. Two hundred years ago saw the triumphant culmination of a struggle which had lasted nearly two decades.

On a Sunday morning at midsummer, steamy with the deluge of the previous day drying in the sun, a motley collection of British, Dutch, Belgians, Hanoverians and Brunswickers, uniforms ranging from scarlet to blue to green to black, were contemplating a fight to the finish against a man who had conquered most of mainland Europe and his re-energised French army. Few can have been confident in victory. By the day's end 3,500 of them lay dead, another 10,200 were wounded and 3,300 had run away. Yet these statistics - a casualty rate of 25% - were those of a triumphant army. No wonder at the end of the struggle people who usually asked "Who's been killed?" asked "Who's still alive?"

The allied army comprised 68,000 men of whom 25,000 were British. It was commanded by the Duke of Wellington who had fought a successful campaign against the French in Portugal, Spain and southern France from 1808 to 1814. Many of the Dutch, Belgian and German troops had been part of Napoleon's army only two years before and their loyalties were unsure. The British troops were largely raw recruits, Wellington's veterans having been largely shipped to America to fight against the former colonists in the War of 1812.

One of the untried units in Wellington's army that morning was the 3rd Battalion, 14th Foot. This unit had had an affiliation with Bedfordshire until 1809 when the colonel decided to switch the affiliation to Buckinghamshire in exchange for the old Buckinghamshire Regiment, the 16th Foot, becoming associated with Bedfordshire. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that men from this county were still in the ranks of the 14th Foot as, indeed, they were in many other regiments.

The battle was a brutal slugging match with little in the way of manoeuvre. Wellington was pinned to his position because he knew that 50,000 Prussians were on their way to assist him. This army had been defeated by Napoleon just two days before but had retreated in good order and, as Napoleon turned his attention to crushing the Anglo-Allies, was able to march to the battlefield, though it would take them most of the day to get there.

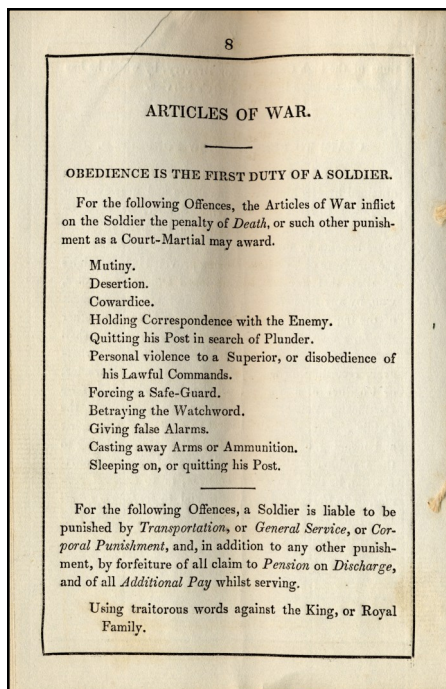
Napoleon was a past-master of manoeuvre but not on this day. To this day no one quite knows why he left the conduct of the battle to his deputy Marshal Ney. Some think the emperor had an attack of piles, some that he was ill with the early stages of the stomach cancer that killed him less than six years later, others that he was too contemptuous of the force against him and did not deign to think too seriously about them. Perhaps it was some combination of these factors.



Marshal Ney was known, rightly, as the Bravest of the Brave and was a charismatic leader of men. But he was no tactician. Napoleon famously said of him that the youngest drummer boy in the army knew more of strategy and tactics than did he. This was proved at Waterloo by the way Ney allowed huge and repeated attacks by the flower of the French cavalry which were doomed to failure because they were unsupported by infantry and close range artillery. His repeated and pointless bludgeoning of the allied line cost time and many lives. He also allowed fighting for the Chateau of Hougomont to suck in far more men than was necessary, launching repeated and costly assaults when all that was necessary was to screen it with a fraction of the men to keep it quiet.

Z50/141/89 John Pym, of the Hasells, Sandy, Lt 13th Light Dragoons, killed at Waterloo

Nevertheless Wellington was close to defeat by early evening either because Napoleon himself took the right decisions or because Ney finally did so and mounted a combined-arms attack on the centre of Wellington's position which succeeded in taking a key position, the farmhouse of la Haye-Sainte. Fortunately it was at this precise time that the Prussians arrived, attacking the French right flank and drawing away reserves which would have secured Napoleon victory against Wellington's weakened line. More time was wasted in calling up Napoleon's ultimate reserve the Imperial Guard, which had never known defeat.



These élite troops marched straight for Wellington's crippled centre. Fortunately they were headed for Wellington's own élite troops, the British Foot Guards. The clash between the two was epic and could have gone either way had not Colonel Colborne of the 52nd Light Infantry seen his chance and, wheeling his battalion round ranged them along the flank of the Imperial Guard and let fly with a devastating volley. Slowly the Guard gave ground and then began an outright retreat. This unprecedented event stunned the rest of the French army and, coupled with the devastating blow of the Prussians' arrival finally broke their will and they began to flee the field. Napoleon's reign was over.

Ironically when Wellington met the Prussian commander Blücher after the battle neither could speak the other's language. So both spoke French: "Quelle affaire!" the Prussian commander said, which summed it up well, as did Wellington's later verdict: "It was a close run thing".

Martin Deacon, Team Leader (Archives)

Z1081/1 Pocket book of Matthew Clay, Bedford resident, who fought at Waterloo

CONSERVATION CORNER

Red Rot, the condition where the leather starts to crumble on books and stains anything it comes into contact with, is a very common occurrence for books held in an archive and at home. Red Rot does not affect all leather bound books. It primarily affects volumes produced from the 1850's, whereupon cheaper acid based products were used in the manufacturing process to cater for the vast quantities of records and books required for the mass of organisations that arose out of industrialisation.



Within Bedfordshire Archives, our poor law records, which consist of approximately 650 volumes, are a good example of the requirements for large newly emergent organisation to keep records – and they are also a good example of a collection that has a lot of Red Rot. Of the 650 volumes that we hold, approximately 400 of them are affected with Red Rot!

Once a book has Red Rot, and the leather has degraded and crumbled, nothing can be done to restore the leather. However, the leather can be consolidated to stop it degrading further and thus prevent staining to other volumes.



At Bedfordshire Archives we make up our own consolidant to treat the leather to ensure that any chemicals or materials are pure, and that they will not have a negative effect on the leather.

As you can imagine treating over 400 volumes is a large job. However, with the help of two of our volunteers, Linda and Helen, we are hoping to treat all 400 by September next year!!

Vicki Manners, Conservator

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Weaving Narratives

In 2016 Bedfordshire Archives will be launching 'Weaving Narratives', a community art project.

Participants will be given special access to our collections at a short series of workshops to inspire them to create textile based art. The project will culminate in a touring exhibition of the completed works across the county. If you or someone you know would be interested in taking part, please email us at archive@bedford.gov.uk or call us on 01234 228833 to register your interest and receive updates on the project.



BTNeg3899/3, Lace making class at Ampthill, 1949

Christmas 2015 Opening Hours

The Festive season will soon be upon us, although it appears to have arrived already in most of the shops! Our opening hours this Christmas and New Year are below.

Monday 21st, Tuesday 22nd & Wednesday 23rd December 2015 - open as usual

Thursday 24th December 2015 - closed as usual

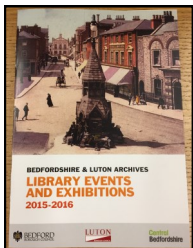
Friday 25th December 2015 - CLOSED

Monday 28th December 2015 - CLOSED

Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th December - open as usual

Thursday 31st December 2015 - closed as usual

Friday 1st January 2016 - CLOSED



BLARS Library Events

Don't forget to check our website for information on our upcoming talks at libraries around the county www.bedford.gov.uk/archiveevents or pick up one of our leaflets with all the details of the talks and the exhibitions we'll be holding here at the Archives throughout 2015 and 2016.

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

Our new exhibition, *Fighting for Freedom*, runs from October to January. On Thursday 12th November 2015 at 1pm, archivist Martin Deacon will give a free lunchtime talk looking at the experience of the 14th Foot at Waterloo and the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment at Loos 100 years later. If you wish to attend please let us know by emailing archive@bedford.gov.uk or by telephoning 01234 228833.

We welcome ideas and material for future issues. Published by Bedfordshire Archives Service, Riverside Building, Borough Hall, Bedford MK42 9AP. Tel: (01234) 228833 E-mail: archive@bedford.gov.uk Online at: www.bedford.gov.uk/archive

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