Minutes of BMS meeting 6th February, 2020 and Summary of Talk:

1. **Welcome:** to all and guest Mrs D.J. Davies.
2. **Apologies received:** from P.Wilson, R.Painter and M.Harrison.
3. **Stats:** Present 27, M 16, D 5, ONS 1.
4. **No new members.**
5. **Matters arising previous meeting, Library requests and Research questions:** One member is requesting if anyone has an original George V Efficiency Medal clasp, please could they let R. Perry know.
6. **Functions/Visits:** – Nil.
7. **Committee points:** Some members had been to the late J. Barker’s funeral in December, 2019. Discussion and vote re: the President’s Cup [PC] and whether to move to a later date between September and December, 2020. In favour 12, against 7 and 3 abstentions. Membership vote carried in favour of moving PC from July, 2020.
8. **Tonight’s topic:** - President Roger Bragger welcomed the secretary to give his talk.
9. **Next month’s meeting:** Change of topic – This talk will be entitled ‘Military Research on the Internet’ by Dave Seeney.

**Siege of Ladysmith, Nearby Battles and Associated Medals by Dr C. M. Davies.**

Chris introduced his subject referring to the main events to be covered in his talk, namely, the Battle of the Platrand [Battle of Wagon Hill], the Siege of Ladysmith and the Battles of Talana, Elandslaagte and Spion Kop. It has just been the 120th Anniversary of these events and will soon be 120 years since the siege of Ladysmith was lifted. He referred to the various Queen’s South Africa Medal bars relevant to his talk: ‘Talana’, ‘Elandslaagte’, ‘Defence of Ladysmith’, ‘Relief of Ladysmith’ and ‘Tugela Heights’ – the first two are the rarest with bars issued of 4932 and 3309 respectively.

That Ladysmith itself is a place named after someone rescued just after a siege years before [Badajoz in 1812] is fascinating in itself. She was Juana Maria de los Dolores de Leon who met, was offered protection by and then married Captain Harry Smith of the 95th Regiment. ‘Mrs J.M.Smith’ would become Lady Smith in 1843 after her husband was knighted for his services in the Gwalior campaign.

Sir Harry Smith was to be Governor of Cape Colony between 1847-1853. They both had towns named after them.

**Importance of the era:**

Chris referred to the military importance of the ‘Boer War’ [‘South African War’] in terms of the transition to 20th Century warfare with each side having magazine rifles, machine guns, and automatic 37mm cannons [the ‘Pom-pom’]. There was a good deal of mutual underestimation: For the British, of the natural horseman and shooting skills of the untrained Boers; and for the Boers, the resistance of the British and their determination to fight]. The difficulties facing General Buller’s relief column are not always fully appreciated.

It was to be a steep and necessary learning curve for the British Army and its preparedness for the Great War 1914-1918.
Chris showed some pictures of Natal and the Drakensberg Mountains showing the great natural beauty of the country but also to emphasise the difficulty of the terrain.

**Picture above:** The Underberg hills - gateway to the southern Drakensberg mountains.

He showed a map of the region’s territories circa 1885. The names of various battles or places of this area of Natal stand out when looking at a modern roadmap eg: Chieveley, Colenso, Talana and Rorke’s Drift to name but a few.

Chris explained the Boer’s preference for siege tactics in that this had been very successful in the First Boer War ['Anglo-Transvaal War'] 1880-1881. They genuinely believed the British would capitulate. He referred to the three main sieges of the South African war Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking and their associated ‘Defence of’ bars. Interestingly’ the short siege at ‘Wepener’ is given the bar ‘Wepener’ but not ‘Defence of Wepener’. Medal groups were then shown.

**Above Left:** Cape of Good Hope medal Clasp ‘Buchenanaland’, QSA ‘Defence of Kimberley’ and Mayor’s Star hallmarked letter ‘a’ to 186 Pte W. Sharrock, Cape Police.

**Above centre:** QSA 3 bars ‘Orange Free State’ [OFS], Defence of Mafeking and Transvaal to 68 Tpr H. Jenner of ‘C’ squadron, Protectorate Regiment Frontier Force.

**Above right:** Nice ‘ghost dates’ on QSA to 5097 Private F. Small, Gloucester Regiment.

The Queen’s South Africa medal ['QSA'] was discussed in general. Most were issued in silver, some were in bronze. Very commonly seen are ‘ghost dates’ which referred to the campaign dates ‘1899-1900’ being just visible. These dates were chiselled off in 1901 when it became clear the campaign would last longer. Some [64 at the last count] are found with the dates in relief – most of these were issued to ‘Strathcona’s Horse’, a Canadian Colonial Regiment who were returning home in February,
1901. Their medals were presented by King Edward VII – also present at that ceremony was Lord Roberts of Kandahar, V.C.

The dated QSA to Sergeant F.E. Curtis of Strathcona’s Horse was shown. In 1916, his cousin the 4th Baronet Curtis died – F.E. Curtis then became the 5th Baronet – His Great War pair are named to ‘Major Sir E.F.E.Curtis Bt’! [see pictures below].

Prelude to the conflict in 1899:

Chris explained the Boers were a tough frontierspeople who wished to be and remain independent of British Rule. Hence, events such as the ‘Great Trek’ 1836 and the development of two independent Boer countries of ‘Orange Free State’ and ‘Transvaal’. Other major events of the area in the 19th century were the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1869 and gold in Witwatersrand in 1885. These started a good deal of tension in the area as part of the ‘Scramble for Africa’ [the resources and territories of Africa] as well as the political non-representation of ‘uitlanders’ [the outsiders who worked in the mines]. The British represented and tried to negotiate on behalf of the latter but they presented increasingly difficult and unacceptable terms to the Boers so much so that a war was looking unavoidable by July, 1899.
With their wealth, the Boers had invested heavily in weapons, in particular, ‘Creusot’ and ‘Krupp’ guns and ‘Mauser’ rifles.

*Above*: Pictures of a ‘Long Tom’ in Long Tom Pass, Mpumalanga, Northern Transvaal. [Pictures Allan Gordon – Thank you].

Chris referred to the Boers having professional artillery the ‘Staats Artillerie’ but their fighting men were a ‘Militia’ force mustered from the civilian population. To be eligible, they had to be between ages 16-60, have a horse, a rifle and a number of days supplies – in addition to skills mentioned earlier, the Boers had knowledge of local terrain and were very mobile. In contrast, the British had vulnerable supply lines with a limited railway network for the sheer size of the country. Their baggage train was very slow and, in terms of equipment, the new Lee-Enfield rifle was found to have a sighting error requiring correction whilst on campaign.

**Where to defend?**

The ‘Tugela line’ of the Tugela River was favoured by some [eg Buller who commanded the British forces initially]. However, two months of supplies had been located in Ladysmith, so although on a plain surrounded by hills, Ladysmith was chosen. There were two important political considerations about defending Ladysmith itself, namely, that if Ladysmith were to fall, this would amount to a tacit message to the Cape Boers to start a general uprising and, also, the 750,000 estimated nearby Zulus would be respecting whoever won the fight.

‘What ifs?’ - I’ll refer to some instances throughout the talk – some events could have ended differently!

**Terminology of the wars and battles:**

This can be confusing!

The ‘First Boer War’ = the ‘First Anglo-Boer War’ = the ‘Anglo-Transvaal War’.

The ‘Second Boer War’ = the ‘Second Anglo-Boer War’ = the ‘South African War’.

The ‘Battle of Talana Hill’ = the ‘Battle of Dundee’ [also sometimes called the ‘Battle of Glencoe’].
The ‘Battle of Ladysmith’ - we know as ‘Mournful Monday’ comprising the disasters at ‘Nicholson’s Nek’ and ‘Lombard’s Kop’ – These battles are now called the ‘Battle of Tchrengula’ and the ‘Battle of Modder Spruit’ [which itself is sometimes still called the ‘Battle of Farquhar’s Farm’].

The ‘Battle of Wagon Hill’ is now referred to as the ‘Battle of the Platrand’ comprising the battles for Wagon Hill and Caesar’s Camp.

**Battle of Dundee [‘Talana’] 20.10.1899.**

![Medals](image)

**Above left:** QSA 4 bar ‘Talana’, Defence of Ladysmith’, Laing’s Nek’ and Belfast’, KSA with usual date bars to 1341 Sapper G Hills. RE [engraved naming on QSA. This is not uncommon for RE].


Lt-General Penn-Symons was in command and very much underestimated the Boers’ fighting abilities. It was a British victory but is often thought of as the first ‘fail’ of the war in terms of casualties sustained set against achievement. Penn-Symons ordered an assault on Talana once the Boers had dragged their guns up the [unoccupied] mountain and started shelling the British camp. The British assault stalled. Penn-Symons was mortally wounded when he went up to encourage his troops to advance.

There were communication difficulties with our own artillery resulting in friendly fire casualties. Three hundred British cavalry were taken prisoner.

**What if?** Boer General Erasmus with 1500 mounted men was on nearby ‘Impati’ mountain but although he could hear events, he couldn’t see because of mist. His troops could have changed the outcome on Talana Hill.

British losses KIA [killed in action] 68, W [wounded] 168

Boer losses KIA 49, W 86.

Mist was to play a significant part in the Battle of Spion Kop as well. ‘Big weather’ such as heavy storms intervened in the Battles of Elandslaagte and the Platrand.

General John Yule took over command. It was soon apparent he would have to withdraw his forces to Ladysmith. The next medal displayed was a ‘no-bar Talana’ QSA to a civilian telegraphist H.H.Paris.
Above left and right: Naming of H.H. Paris’ QSA and QSA

Paris was instrumental in sending telegrams to General White in Ladysmith and went back to his office to do so on three occasions. He also sent messages to deceive the Boers into thinking the British force would move to Glencoe quite the opposite to the intended movement. The 4th time he returned to his office was under fire from Boer artillery. Paris had been assured by Yule that he would be informed once the retreat started but this didn’t happen. A military scout informed them of this late evening 21.10.1899 and they were soon on their way to join the retreating column!

Paris was to witness the injured Penn-Symons asking for champagne or whisky and the horribly injured of both sides.

Retreat to Ladysmith 22-26.10.1899:

This was a 4 day forced night-time march crossing three rivers. Fortunately, there was much plunder for the boers at Dundee and no strong pursuit. General Yule used further deception tactics to hinder any pursuit – he left the camp lights on. He also left all his wounded including Penn-Symons. Four and a half thousand soldiers returned to Ladysmith raising the number of defenders to 13,500 approximately. This was a significant contribution even though some 2000 would be casualties or POW’s even before the town was invested on 2.11.1899.

Battle of Elandslaagte 25.10.1899:


General Kock and the Johannesburg commando had captured a train and occupied Elandslaagte. General White had sent a force out of Ladysmith to protect Yule’s line of retreat by attacking these Boers. It was another British victory. It is often described as a textbook battle with artillery bombardment preceding an infantry advance [of the Devons, Manchester Regiment and Gordon
Highlanders] in ‘open order’ under Ian Hamilton [himself a ‘Majuba’ 1881 survivor]. Then the cavalry charged to attack the retreating Boers – the latter action by the 5th Lancers and 5th Dragoon Guards provoked much criticism because of the Boers slaughtered.


**Above:** W. Poulter wearing his medals circa 1907 [from a regimental photo].

British KIA 50 W 213.

Boer KIA 60 including General Kock, W 200 and POW 200.

**Battle of Ladysmith 30.10.1899 [= Battles of Tchrengula and Modder Spruit]:**

As mentioned earlier, these actions were disasters for the British. General White could see with his observation balloon that the Boers were amassing on the hills to the north and decided to try to give a ‘knock-out blow’. It was a three-pronged attack with night marches comprising Ian Hamilton to attack ‘Pepworth Hill’ in the north, Colonel Grimwood’s force to attack ‘Long Hill’ in the east and Colonel Carlton’s column to harass any retreating Boers through ‘Nicholson’s Nek’. The latter force occupied ‘Tchrengula’ mountain but their pack mules bolted in the night on which were their mountain guns, reserve ammunition and heliograph. When daylight broke, they realised they were surrounded by higher hills on which were the enemy. They couldn’t signal for help, their 20 rounds/man was insufficient for any effective defence and they were forced to surrender. There were 900 POW’s mainly in the Gloucester Regiment and Royal Irish Fusiliers.
Above: Plan of Ladysmith showing the defensive positions after its investment, positions of Nicholson’s Nek and Lombard’s Kop disasters, Boer gun positions and position of Intombi camps [civilian and military]

Similarly, in the attack on Long Hill, part of Colonel G. Grimwood’s force became separated and lost in the night march. The Boers, now under Louis Botha [as General Lucas Meyer had relinquished command because of illness] had moved from Long Hill and then attacked the British from Modder Spruit. Colonel Hamilton’s attack on Pepworth had to be abandoned in favour of helping the inexperienced Colonel Grimwood’s retreat. The British withdrew in total disarray.

Another ‘what if?’ - General Joubert could have pursued the retreating British but chose not to do so – Commandant de Wet was encouraging him to do just this to which General Joubert is said to have spoken his famous phrase ‘When God holds out a finger, don’t take the whole hand’.

**Role of Captain Percy Scott and the British naval 4.7” guns:**

In response to General Sir George White’s request for some bigger guns to match the Boer artillery, the innovative and resourceful Captain Scott rapidly designed and made carriages to adapt naval guns for land use. The two naval 4.7’s arrived on the last train into Ladysmith before its investment and were a significant contribution to the town defences. The naval 4.7” gun fired a 45lb shell which had a maximum range 12,000 yards at 24 degrees elevation.
**Boers shelling:**

This had a ‘chivalrous’ element in that the shelling was just in the daytime and never on Sundays reflecting the Boers’ strong religious conviction. There were some ‘celebrity’ targets in the town namely Colonel Frank Rhodes [the brother of Cecil Rhodes] and Dr Leander Jameson who led the failed ‘Jameson Raid’ of 1896. Deaths and wounded from the shelling were 62 and 232 respectively so, relative to the number of shells fired into Ladysmith [over 12,500], the risk of being killed was low thus the effect of shelling was to terrorise the population.

British forces developed methods to give advance warning of incoming shells. By observing the Boer guns for muzzle flash or dust cloud when guns were fired or even an observed change in direction of a gun barrel could trigger alarm bells to be rung, whistles to be blown or flags to be waved. Boer gun nicknames included ‘Puffing Billy’, ‘The Stinker’, ‘Nasty Knox’ and ‘Weary Willie’. The naval 4.7’s had been christened ‘Lady Anne’ and Princess Victoria’. The British supply of 4.7” shells was 556 at the start of the siege – they had only 42 remaining when the siege was lifted.

A ‘Long Tom’ shell caused multiple casualties to the Gloucester Regiment when it exploded amongst them at breakfast on 22.12.1899. Nine were killed and 4 seriously injured including 5097 Private F. Small whose medal was shown. Also shown is a commemorative cross from the siege purporting to be a piece of Long Tom shell.

In response to the shelling, there were two successful raids on Boer artillery positions on 7 and 10.12.1899. The latter raid involved the Rifle Brigade and possibly 4377 Private E. Evans of that unit whose medal was shown. Evans died of disease 6.2.1900 at Ladysmith.

**Above left:** QSA single clasp ‘Defence of Ladysmith’ to 4377 Pte E.Evans Rifle Brigade. Died of disease at Ladysmith 6.2.1900.

**Above right:** Naval 4.7” gun platform mounted at Ladysmith.

Pictured below: siege of Ladysmith Commemorative Cross; P. of L.T.S. said to mean ‘Piece of Long Tom Shell’.
The ‘Privations of the Siege’:

These are often stated as ‘November – Novelty’, ‘December – Ennui [Boredom]’, January – Desperation’ and ‘February -Starvation’. The soldiers really wanted to fight but had to wait for Buller’s relieving force. There was increasing despondency with their successive failures.

The physical and nutritional state of the troops steadily worsened through New Year 1900. This was apparent in the time taken to move the naval 4.7” gun. This took 100 people 1 day at the beginning of the siege but 200 people couldn’t complete the task in less than two days after New Year, 1900.

The medals to 6099 Private William McPherson were shown. He certainly wanted to fight but wanted to fight almost everybody! I’ve awarded McPherson the ‘DCM’ for ‘District Court Martial’ as his conduct in army life was anything but distinguished. His army records indicate 2 instances of FGCM [Field General Court Martial’] as well as two convictions in the civil courts. On discharge from the army 31.8.1907, he had forfeited all benefits from his service except his QSA/KSA medals.

Above: QSA 3 bar ‘Defence of Ladysmith’, ‘Laing’s Nek’ and Belfast’ and KSA usual date bars to 6099 Pte William McPherson 2nd Gordon Highlanders. His DCM was a ‘District Court Martial’.

The Natal Relief Force 30k troops led by Sir Redvers Buller:

The middle of December, 1900 was dubbed by ‘Black Week’ by the media. This included the disaster at Magersfontein and defeats at Stormberg and Colenso. The latter was Buller’s contribution to Black Week and his first attempt to cross the Tugela. Some of the key points at Colenso were the concealment and position of the Boer defensive trenches, the poor positioning of Colonel Long’s guns, their subsequent loss and the death of Lt. Freddie Roberts, the only son of Lord Roberts in the attempt to save some of the guns.

After Colenso, Buller had sent a bleak, defeatist telegram to General White advising ‘firing away as much ammunition as you can and to make the best terms you can’. This was to signal for a change in leadership with the appointment of Lord Roberts of Kandahar, VC. Black week triggered important reactions at home leading to the formation of the ‘Imperial Yeomanry’ and, in the colonies, Volunteer Regiments from the Colonies [eg Strathcona’s Horse]. Interestingly, the recruits from Empire outposts could be considered similar to the Boer fighters with their natural horseman and rifle skills.

For the Boers, they had to move forces from the Ladysmith siege south to reinforce the Tugela line.
‘Wagon Hill’ the Battle of the Platrand 6.1.1900:

As the siege had not forced the Ladysmith defenders to yield, the Boers decided to make a serious attack to force the town to surrender. They decided to try to seize the key position of the Platrand the long plateau overlooking the town from the south. In the early hours of 6.1.1900, experienced and barefoot Boer attackers crept up the steep slopes of the Wagon Hill and Caesar’s camp ends of the Platrand. There followed hours of a desperate and confused firefight so intermingled were the forces. The Wagon Hill gunpits were taken and retaken by both sides through the morning. At a critical point, there was a shoot-out involving Ian Hamilton, Major Millar-Walnut, Lt Digby-Jones, Trooper Albrecht for the British and J. de Villiers and de Jager on the Boer side. Only Hamilton survived but the British held the position. Finally, after a torrential storm at around 4pm, Colonel Park was asked to lead three companies of the Devonshire Regiment in a bayonet charge to clear the remaining Boer sharpshooters from the southern crest of Wagon Hill. Had this not happened, the Boers could have reinforced their position overnight.

Park was the only uninjured Officer. Of the 189 Devons who took part in the action, 17 were KIA and 35 wounded. Park’s description of the Boer fusillade was striking ‘... can only compare it to the crackling of a dry gorse bush thrown on a fire’. There were five VC’s won at the Battle of the Platrand. For Wagon Hill, Digby-Jones [RE] and Albrecht [ILH] received posthumous awards, Lt. Masterson of the Devonshire Regiment received the third VC there.

Wagon Hill is notable in that it was the first battle in which field telephones linked the various defensive positions with their Commanders.


Above centre and right: Wagon Hill Cemetery Memorial to Gordon Highlanders with Burgon’s name circled in red and Memorial to the fallen of the South African War, York, England which includes Burgon.
Of all the medal groups shown today, several were probably at Wagon Hill but only one was definitely there. He was Private J Burgon of 2nd Gordon Highlanders. He is buried in Wagon Hill Cemetery and, that night, would have been in the troop escort of the naval gun. Other Gordon Highlanders were later reinforcements at Caesar’s Camp that day. Burgon features on two other monuments, one outside Edinburgh Castle and the other near York Minster.

The Platrand now has a modern monument to the Boer fallen in the Natal campaign. [Photo below]

Overall casualties: British 179 KIA and 320 W: Boer 133 KIA at least. Deneys Reitz’ book suggests at least 300 KIA.

**Battle of Spion Kop 24.1.1900:**

Spion Kop was known to the early Boers as ‘Spy Glass mountain’. It rises to a height of 430m. This battle was Buller’s second attempt to break through the Tugela line with General Warren in command. A brief summary of some important points follows. Warren had taken 37 hours to cross the Tugela at Trichardt’s drift. This had given the Boers some time to prepare their defences. The assault was at night and the mountain top shrouded in mist early on 24.1.1900. Poor knowledge of the rocky terrain, lack of entrenching tools and sandbags and poor positioning of the defensive trench were the start of a confusing, disastrous day for the British. Just who was clearly in charge throughout the day was one of many problems which reflected on poor communications and being fired at by well positioned, heliograph co-ordinated Boer guns. Lyttleton had ordered an attack by the King’s Royal Rifles [‘KRR’] on the ‘Twin Peaks’ northeast of Spion Kop – This objective was achieved but Buller ordered the force to withdraw.

**Above left:** View northeast from Spion Kop with ‘Aloe Knoll’ in the foreground [distance 300 yards] and ‘Twin Peaks’ beyond [distance 2 miles].

**Above right:** ‘Twin peaks’ enlarged to show steepness of the assault terrain for the KRR.
Another what-if? – The Twin Peaks action could have turned the battle in favour of the British. Neither side was aware of the outcome on Spion Kop at the end of the day’s fighting. It was Thorneycroft, whose regiment had suffered heavily, ordered the retreat to vacate the position.

Of note, three important soon-to-be world leaders were present at Spion Kop – Louis Botha, first Prime Minister of South Africa in 1910, Winston Churchill significant politician and Wartime leader 1939-45 and Mahondas Gandhi, a volunteer stretcher bearer on 24.1.1900, who would subsequently have a major role in Indian politics and Independence movement.

Above: Spion Kop from the west from Three Trees Hotel. Distance about 3 miles. Monument to the British fallen encircled in red.

The British losses were appalling with 272 KIA, 1103 W and 358 POW – Boer losses 68 KIA 267 W.

Other late effects of the siege:

Dietary changes happened of necessity in the form of horsemeat from cavalry horses from New Year, 1900 and the preparation of ‘Chevril’ a ‘soup’ of horsemeat extract plus other ingredients. There were food and drink auctions which were much too pricey for the ordinary soldier – a bottle of whisky sold for £5 and 10s in February, 1900 [equivalent to £680 in 2019 prices]. Soldiers were dying from gastrointestinal diseases at the rate of 13 a day through January and February, 1900. [note ‘Enteric’ is typhoid fever and ‘Dysentery’ is bloody diarrhoea which can have a variety of causes].

Overall casualties in the siege were as follows: Total killed 785, 841 W and 14 POW; of those killed 563 [72%] from disease, 218 KIA and 62 from bombardment;

The final month of the siege:

The tide was turning in favour of the British through February, 1900. News was received that Lord Roberts had entered the Orange Free State 13.2.1900 and the Siege at Kimberley was lifted 15.2.1900. On the Anniversary of ‘Majuba’ 27.2.1900, Boer General P. Kronje had surrendered at Paardeberg Drift [4k POW] and Buller’s relief column had finally broken through at the Battle of Peiter’s Hill. The siege ended on 28.2.1900 after 118 days – General Sir George White really had ‘kept the flag flying at Ladysmith’.
**Tactics:**

Were the Boers cautious? From my reading, they were fighting in their own unconventional way – through the 19th Century, they had had many different enemies and were naturally careful to seek out any enemies weakness and act as a natural hunters. Even though they were an untrained militia, there are many instances of Boer extraordinary commitment and bravery for example at the Battle of the Platrand at Wagon Hill where they also used the different tactic of night-time assault.

Many Boer Commandos were disillusioned with their leaders’ tactics – They could have pressed their mobility advantage early in the campaign when numerically stronger and before British reinforcements had started to arrive.

Both side’s Leadership also exhibited a tendency to miss opportunities or not to follow up advantage eg General Erasmus could have intervened at the Battle of Dundee where the Boers also could have significantly hampered the British retreat from Dundee; General Warren’s negative view of Lord Dundonald’s cavalry action at Acton Homes just before the Battle of Spion Kop, General Buller’s withdrawal of the King’s Royal Rifles after they had successfully assaulted Twin Peaks during Battle of Spion Kop and Buller not pursuing the Boers after breaking through at the Battle of Pieter’s Hill. Five important ‘what-ifs’ are in this paragraph.

**Important outcomes of the South African War:**

For the British Army, there were important changes in firearm’s training ahead of the Great War 1914-1918. The Armed Service Corps [ASC] was improved as was the Army hierarchy at senior level. Organisation of reservists led to the development of the Territorial Service in 1909. Churchill was impressed by the Boer commando mobility and strike-power that led to the formation of our own ‘Commando’ force with similar capabilities in the 1939-1945 War.

‘Kops Ends’ appeared at many football stadia and development of field gun races seems to have originated in the Boer War era as seen at various military tattoos. In Ladysmith, Natal, there is the annual ‘Wagon Hill Challenge’ where a field gun is manoeuvred up the hill.

**Conclusions:**

In our medal collections, researching and interest in military history, the siege of Ladysmith 1899-1900 will live on.

On a final note, on the day of the Allied success at the Battle of Bardia [North Africa Campaign 6th January, 1941], Mr Winston Churchill sent the following telegram to General Sir Ian Hamilton:

‘I am thinking of you and Wagon Hill when another 6th January brings news of a fine feat of arms. Winston’.

**Members’ medallic and other contributions:**

First up was another raised dates QSA to Hugh Lancelot Robinson of Strathcona’s Horse purchased at a provincial auction house. Also, being sold separately[!] was the same soldier’s Great War pair which our member was able to purchase for a very reasonable price!
Above left and right: Dated QSA 4 bar to 612 Pte H Robinson, Strathcona’s Horse and Great War Pair obverse and reverse. QSA bars ‘Cape Colony’, ‘OFS’, Belfast and SA 1901 [Copy clasp].

Next up was a no bar Kings South Africa to Conductor J.P.Stark in the ASC. It is very unusual to see this medal without the usual date bars.

Above left and right: No bar KSA to Conductor J.P.Stark ASC.

There followed a long group with MSM to Bugler George Watkins of the 2nd Middlesex Regiment. His 6 bar QSA had the following bars ‘Cape Colony’, ‘Tugela Heights’, ‘OFS’, ‘Relief of Ladysmith’, ‘Transvaal’ and ‘Laing’s Nek’, No fewer than four monarchs featured on his medals! The Middlesex Regiment lost 40 KIA at Spion Kop. There was also a photograph of the ‘sergeant survivors of the 2nd Middlesex Regiment’ which must have featured Watkins but hadn’t been annotated. He was also entitled to a Great War ‘Services Rendered’ Badge. His Meritorious Service Medal featured the obverse of George VI.

Apologies as no photo.
A Colenso DCM to 2254 William Robertson 7th Battery Royal Field Artillery was shown next. In this action, there was the highest number of gallantry awards issued in the South African War in a single action – 13 DCM’s and a VC.

**Above:** Colenso DCM, QSA 6 bar ‘Cape Colony’, ‘Tugela Heights’, ‘OFS’, ‘Relief of Ladysmith’, ‘Transvaal’ and ‘Laing’s Nek’, KSA with usual date bars to 22054 Dvr W. Robertson, 7th Battery RFA. He was wounded in action.

Other notable VC’s at Colenso were to Lt Freddie Roberts and Corporal Nurse.

Another DCM to Sgt Major William Parker of the 4th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment featured next. There was no citation with the DCM as is often the case with Boer war DCM’s. The awards being made for ‘general bravery’ during the campaign. His DCM had been presented by King Edward VII on 29.1.1901. His QSA had 3 bars ‘Cape Colony’, ‘Orange Free State’ and ‘South Africa 1901’ [see picture below].

**Above:** Obverses of Victorian DCM and QSA to Sgt Major William Parker of 4th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
A long group to Allan Lanhan was displayed next and some detailed discussion followed about his career. He’d been twice married [to the same woman] and was made MBE in 1927. There were four balloon sections in the Royal Engineers [RE] at the time of the South African War three of which were sent to South Africa. He served in one of the balloon sections.

Above: Medal group to Allan Lanman [see next page for full listing and his photo.]

| AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF FLYING OFFICER ALLAN JOHN LANNAN MBE AFC |

ROYAL ENGINEERS No 1679. ROYAL FLYING CORPS No 13, ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE No F606 AND ROYAL AIR FORCE

Order of the British Empire (Member) Military (1st type) London Gazette 3rd June 1927 Page 3611

Air Force Cross

London Gazette 10th October 1919 Page 12527

Queen's South Africa Medal: Cape Colony and South Africa 1901 Named to 1679 Sapper A Lanman RE

1914 Star with Aug. - Nov. Clasp Named to F 606 A Lanman CPO Mech 2 RNAS

War Medal Named to WO 1 A Lanman RNAS

Victory Medal With Mentioned in Despatches Oak Leave Named to WO 1 A Lanman RNAS

Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal Named to F 606 Allan Lanman CPO 2nd Grd. HMS Pembroke

PROMOTIONS

Sapper Royal Engineers No. 1679.

Sergeant Royal Flying Corps No. 12.

Warrant Officer Royal Naval Air Service No. F 606.

Flying Officer Royal Air Force.
President Roger Bragger thanked the secretary for his talk and thanked all other member contributions. Meeting closed at 21.15hrs

Above left and right: Robison and Curtis’ Strathcona’s Horse dated QSA medals temporary reunite!!

Typed 10-16.2.2020.

With my usual apologies for any factual errors or omissions!

C.M. Davies
BMS Secretary.

For those who aren’t supersaturated with Ladysmith, I will issue a link to my Powerpoint presentation for anyone whose wishes to see all the slides!

Quite a big document so best to download to a PC.

The list is https://drive.google.com/open?id=12piHa8Y0YLBrd3jy58LQQDLTtecWyZg6

PS If anyone is aware of the following missing medals, I’d be delighted to hear from you.

KSA’s to 4365 P. Moran, Royal Dublin Fusiliers and to 4419 Pte W. Bradshaw, 1st Manchester Regt.

QSA Elandslaagte/Defence of Ladysmith/Belfast/ KSA with usual date bars to 2412 L. Corp. William Poulter, Devons.