The Life of Major General C. G. Blackader, 1869–1921

Robin Jenkins

This paper attempts to piece together a life of a formerly much revered officer of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. In doing so, it recreates the life and career path of the late Victorian and early twentieth century infantry officer. However conventional or typical that story may be in parts, it is by no means a predictable tale.

Charles Guinand Blackader was born on 20 September 1869, at number 2, St Ann’s Villas, Richmond, Surrey. The address was probably that of a small private boarding school kept by his father, Charles George Blackader.

Although he was the son of a military man (Colonel Charles George Blackader) Blackader’s father had chosen to follow an academic career. From 1846 until 1849 Charles George junior had been employed as Assistant Master in the Military and Civil Department at Cheltenham College. In 1849 he went up to St. John’s College, Cambridge but, on receiving his BA in 1853, he returned to Cheltenham. His academic success appears to have been accompanied by a genial temperament, Rev. H. E. Tuckey recording his pleasure at meeting Blackader and a party of his pupils at Aberystwyth, ‘as he is a very decent cove’.²

In 1861, the census shows that the unmarried Blackader was a teacher of mathematics, with four boarding pupils, living in Painswick Lawn, Cheltenham. He later moved to Clifton College and in 1865 there followed a period as private tutor, perhaps occasioned by his marriage to the German born Charlotte Elizabeth Dorothea Guinand.³

The 1871 census reveals the Blackaders at 22 Carlton Crescent, Southampton. In addition to his parents, our Blackader had two older sisters; Mary (4) and Catherine (3). His father also had increased to nine the number of his boarding pupils. The domestic staff included Rebecca Seymour who was the children’s nurse, and two maids. A foreign flavour was added to the family – if not also its food – by Mary Stupakoff, the German cook, who had perhaps accompanied Mrs Blackader into the household.

¹ This at least is the date on his birth certificate. Blackader himself seems to have believed his birth date to have been 19 September: see National Archives (henceforth NA) WO374/6825 and Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) DE5891/1.
² Diary of Rev. H. E. Tuckey, 23 June 1859; unpublished – ‘Aberystwyth online’.
³ The 1871 census shows Charlotte Guinand to have been German, though a later reference to Blackader being “half French” and his facility with both languages may suggest Miss Guinand’s origins to have been in Alsace or Lorraine, territory recently acquired by Germany in 1871.
The previous year Blackader’s father, described in the census return as a ‘Teacher of Classics, Mathematics, &c.’, had secured the post of Principal of the Education Department of the Hartley Institute, which later blossomed into Southampton University. Blackader himself received some education at the hands of the Rev. Mr. Hastings at Aldin House School, Slough before his family removed again, this time to the Beaurepaire School, Boulogne.4

Yielding perhaps to atavistic tugging, Blackader enrolled at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, early in September 1887. The marks recorded for the December 1887 Probationary Exam and Final Exam of July 18885 give a clear impression of Gentleman Cadet C. G. Blackader’s abilities and potential. His conduct was ‘exemplary’ and though the total number of marks available is no longer known for this period, Blackader’s scores in each subject do indicate his strengths and weaknesses.

It seems no great surprise, given his family background, that Cadet Blackader scored what was probably the maximum of 300 for French (colloquial and paper). He was similarly successful in ‘tactics’, ‘fortification’, and other academic subjects, such as military law and administration. His score in ‘Military Topography (Sketch and Paper)’ was lower but it was in drill, gymnastics and riding that he scored lowest – though it must be added that the available totals may themselves have been lower. It is interesting that over a quarter of his final total was granted by his ‘Professor’, given at discretion for general good conduct.

In August 1888 Blackader passed out of the Royal Military College and was appointed, on 22 August, as second-lieutenant, to the 1st Battalion The Leicestershire Regiment. On 6 September 1888 his battalion sailed for Bermuda but Blackader remained at home where, on 2 October 1888, he married Marion Ethel Melbourn, the Batavia-born daughter of a deceased East Indies merchant.

The marriage was by licence at the Marylebone Register Office. Bride and groom both gave their address as 94, Gloucester Place, Marylebone – an address of convenience perhaps or a sign that they met as fellow lodgers. There is much to suspect about the wedding. Blackader lied about his age; adding two years to his nineteen, to bring himself closer to his bride’s twenty-three. Furthermore, although there is no evidence of a leisurely repentance, the marriage was undoubtedly in haste. The couple may have been spurred on by Blackader’s imminent departure for Bermuda but the chief reason must have been the anticipated arrival (which occurred on 23 April 1889) of Dorothy Marion, the first child of the marriage.

After two years in Bermuda, the 1st Leicesters moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia. There Blackader was gazetted lieutenant on 21 March 1890 and appointed by his colonel, W. M. Rolph, adjutant and quartermaster of the Musketry Camp.6 His second daughter, Joan de Corlies, was born on 17 April 1892.7 The work of the

5 The results were kindly supplied by Dr A R Morton, Archivist and Deputy Curator of the Sandhurst Collection.
6 ROLLR: DE5891/1.
7 NA: WO374/6825.
Musketry Camp proved fruitful too, as during the musketry year 1891–92, the battalion was judged seventh of all the battalions in the Army.  

The Leicesters moved station again a year later, arriving in the West Indies at the end of March 1893. The battalion was divided; the headquarters and four companies going to Barbados, one company to St Lucia and ‘A’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ companies, with Blackader, to Newcastle Camp, Jamaica. Blackader was appointed adjutant to the Jamaican wing of the battalion. It was an early sign that Blackader’s bent for efficient administration had been noted.

At the end of 1895 the Leicesters began to prepare for another move, this time to South Africa. Blackader however was posted home, after one month at the Cape, for leave and training. His captaincy was gazetted on 3 March 1896, the same year as his officer’s certificate in musketry at Hythe. Then, on 25 November 1897, Blackader departed, with forty other officers and n.c.o.s, aboard the Elder, Dempster & Company steamer Volta for West Africa.  

At Lokoja on the Niger River, Blackader joined the group of Special Service officers gathered together by Sir Frederick Lugard, to create the West African Frontier Force. The WAFF was intended to ensure British interests in Nigeria against the French. In 1907 Lugard recalled Blackader’s reputation, “I always heard you spoken of as one of the very best of a particularly good lot of officers and I remember your keenness and the pluck with which you accepted the hardships of those times, and the results of the climate which, in your case, were particularly hard to bear”.

Blackader’s immediate superior, Colonel T. D. Pilcher, was equally complimentary. It was Pilcher who raised the 1st Battalion of the West African Frontier Force at Lokoja and while Lugard may have had doubts about Pilcher, Pilcher had none about Blackader, “I found him tactful, painstaking, capable and energetic. He always got on capitally with all ranks, white and black, and was exceedingly popular, besides being a good disciplinarian. I saw him under most trying circumstances, for 35 per cent of the Europeans I took with me were killed or died during the year, but I never saw Major Blackader otherwise than cheery and anxious to do his work...”

Having devoted much effort to training and equipping, ‘Sardine’ Pilcher’s battalion of the WAFF was despatched against the slave-trading emirs of Lapai and Argeyah. Both rulers submitted hastily in the face of British maxims and seven-pounders. The fortress of Lapai was taken on 21 June 1898 and its defences levelled. Three days later Argeyah fell. The followers of the emirs, having suffered ‘considerable’ casualties, were reported by Reuters to be ‘fleeing north’. The WAFF losses were ‘nil’.

---

8 ROLLR: 22D63/32.
9 Times 25 November 1897, p. 6.
10 ROLLR: DE5891/1.
12 ROLLR: DE5891/1.
13 Times, 8 July 1898, p. 5.
The climate proved a far more formidable foe, West Africa having long been regarded as a destroyer of lives and reputations. According to Lugard, Pilcher’s officers had been sent out, almost wholesale, by the War Office with little thought about their suitability.\footnote{M. Perham \textit{Ibid.}, p. 643.} Presumably Blackader’s willingness to serve in so unhealthy a posting was due to the chances it presented of action and advancement.

After nearly two years Blackader left the Niger, returning to Liverpool on the Elder, Dempster liner \textit{Accra} on 14 January 1899.\footnote{\textit{Times}, 16 January 1899, p. 6.} He had earned the East and West Africa Medal, with two clasps, and the goodwill of his commanders. The climate of West Africa and its endemic diseases had taken their toll however and Blackader also carried with him the beginnings of an interesting medical history of dysentery and recurrent malaria.\footnote{NA: WO374/6825 Medical Case Sheet.} That Blackader was hit particularly hard is evident from the remarks of Lugard ten years later.

Blackader rejoined his old battalion, after six months’ leave and recuperation, assuming command of ‘G’ Company, near the town of Dundee, Natal, on 5 October 1899. War was confidently expected with the two Boer republics of the Transvaal (South African Republic) and Orange Free State and the Leicesters, as part of the Natal Field Force, had been rushed up to the frontier. On 12 October war was declared and eight days later the camp at Dundee was attacked. Although initially driven back, albeit at heavy cost, the Boer forces were growing in strength and far superior in heavy guns. On 22 October the British force abandoned its camp and after what the Leicesters’ regimental history laconically termed “a very trying & arduous march...being 20 miles a day; and torrents of rain the whole time”,\footnote{ROLLR: 22D63/32 p. 170.} reached the garrison town of Ladysmith four days later.

Although they were housed in the corrugated iron barracks that gave the military district of Ladysmith its nickname of ‘tin town’, Blackader’s battalion was in a poor state. Little had been salvaged from the abandoned camp at Dundee, as one visitor to the officers’ mess recalled:

“...there was no sort of furniture either in the mess room or ante-room. If you wanted to sit down you did so on the floor. We each got hold of a large tin mug, and dipped it into a large tin saucepan of soup...spoons not existing...Next you clawed hold of a piece of bread and a chunk of tongue...knives and forks there were none...Add to this two or three tallow candles stuck on a cocoa tin, and the fact that none of the officers had shaved, or had their clothes off for a week...”\footnote{W. C. Hannah (letter) \textit{Leicester Daily Post} 4 December 1899.}

There followed the engagement with the Boers on ‘Mournful Monday’, 30 October 1899, which cost the Leicesters three dead and eighteen wounded, as well as their machine gun. The garrison’s commander Sir George White’s plan to drive back the encircling Boers before his force was isolated ended in a chaotic, disheartening retreat and the jaws of the trap closed about Ladysmith.

Blackader, like those of the garrison who survived, was to endure 118 days of boredom, bombardment, disease and gradual starvation. There was little to relieve
the pattern of three days watching and waiting in the trenches and sangars of the
front line, followed by two days and a night of recuperation in the lee of the hills
that encircled and protected the town.19

Occasionally there was a chance of action. On 7 December four companies of
the Leicesters sallied out to attack suspected Boer positions, though in the event
they were found to be deserted. On 6 January the besiegers made one of their rare
assaults on the defences but while elsewhere the attacks were pressed home with
uncharacteristic vigour, against the Leicesters’ defences the Boers soon drew away
on the death of their leader.20

The appearance of the eccentric Chief Observation Officer, W. A. Tilney, in
the Leicesters’ lines, must have enlivened matters considerably. Having narrowly
escaped the attentions of a persistent Boer sniper, Tilney sought Blackader’s
assistance in getting his revenge. Blackader found Tilney the regiment’s best shot:

“Together we made out the distance to be 1,000 yards, and that evening, when we
had seen the sniper depart, I got some explosive bullets and successfully hit his
lair...I waited a week...Blackader told his men not to frighten ‘the bird’...some of
the Headquarters Staff came up about 11.30, and I told them to watch my sniper
leave his lair, as his time had come. The sniper that day just sauntered from his
post, and with the first shot I got him, as far as we could see, stone dead”.21

At the end of February 1900 Sir Redvers Buller’s relief force finally arrived and
Blackader, with the rest of the battalion, was sent down the railway for a month’s
rest at Colenso. They then formed part of Buller’s army for his advance into
northern Natal. Having learned a painful lesson before Ladysmith and supplied
now with sufficient men, guns and transport, Buller was able to by-pass carefully
trenched Boer positions and enter the South African Republic. With Lord
Roberts’s army also successful in the Orange Free State, the war entered a new
phase, as the Boer forces divided and British columns set off in pursuit.

By mid October 1900 the Leicesters were established as part of the garrison of
Middelburg. They were to remain there nearly a year. Blackader’s company
worked hard at the defences of Middelburg and joined in the small expeditions
which, as the battalion history dryly observed, ‘did not succeed in doing much
more than burning a few farms, and driving the enemy back a few score of miles,
who returned on the column returning to Middelburg’.22

In March 1901, despite continuous torrential rain, which precipitated an
almost complete breakdown of supplies, the battalion took part in John French’s
‘drives’ across the eastern Transvaal. The attempts to trap the Boer commandos
against the swollen rivers of the Swaziland border ultimately failed and the
Leicesters retired again on Middelburg.

From April 1901 the Witbank railway station, some nineteen miles from
Middelburg on the line to Komatipoort, was placed in the care of the Leicestershire

19 The pattern is described by Pte. L M Chamberlain of Blackader’s battalion in a letter reprinted by
the Leicester Daily Post 27 March 1900.
22 ROLLR: 22D63/32 p. 191.
Regiment. Blackader was appointed Station Commandant, including in his responsibilities direction of the 1,500 black and 60 white employees of the Witbank collieries, whose output fed not only most of Natal’s railways but also steamers coaling at Durban.

In July 1901 the Leicesters moved on, joining a ‘sweep’ up the Pretoria to Delagoa Bay railway line. Blackader however did not proceed beyond Balmoral, where he was appointed Station Staff Officer. In addition, he also took charge of one of the newly established concentration camps (one for blacks, the other for whites) alongside the railway there. The camps were created as part of Lord Kitchener’s scheme to deny sustenance to the Boer guerrillas still in the field, by destroying isolated Boer farms and their livestock and bringing their inhabitants into central camps.

The creation of the camps did not achieve the desired military result and brought upon the British the embittered scorn of its victims (which persists amongst their descendants to this day) many of whom died in poorly supplied, insanitary camps. Not all the camps were incompetently or callously managed however and the available figure for Balmoral’s ‘white’ camp, of 427 deaths in the fifteen months of its operation, by comparison with other camps suggests at least that it was not amongst the worst.23

At the conclusion of the war in South Africa Blackader once again returned home. In addition to the two campaign medals he sported the Distinguished Service Order, having been created a companion of the order ‘in recognition of services during the operations in South Africa’. He had also been twice mentioned in despatches.24 Once again Blackader had impressed his commanders as a vigorous and efficient officer. Major General Howard, Blackader’s brigadier in Ladysmith, recalled him as ‘one of the few whom I placed, whenever possible, in any special important and unpleasant independent post’;25 while Pitcairn Campbell, who had commanded one of French’s columns in early 1901, also spoke highly of Blackader, “He performed his duties very well indeed, was hardworking, self reliant, always willing and ready, was in touch with those under him, and he managed and looked after the interests of his men well.”26

As early as December 1900, while still at Middleburg, Blackader had applied for the post of adjutant to his regiment’s 1st Volunteer Battalion. Nearly a year later, in August 1901, his appointment was approved – subject to his gaining a signalling certificate – as soon as ‘his services can be spared’. In November 1901, Kitchener himself, commander-in-chief in South Africa, wrote that Blackader

---

23 D. Hall *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg) 1999 p. 220. It has proved impossible to find a report on the administration of Balmoral’s camps, or even a total figure for their populations. Alas Balmoral’s were not amongst those camps visited by Emily Hobhouse or the government’s commission, though that may itself be some indication of a more satisfactory state of affairs. By way of comparison, though of limited value due to differences in local circumstances and total numbers of internees; Vryburg camp (operating from July 1901-December 1902) recorded 251 deaths, Heidelberg (same period) 499 deaths, Aliwal North (Jan. 1901-Nov. 1902) 712 deaths and Bethulie (April 1901-Jan. 1902) 1,737 deaths.

24 Creagh & Humphris *op. Cit.* p. 195.

25 ROLLR: DE5891/1.

26 Ibid.
'cannot at present be spared' but would ‘be sent home as soon as his services can be dispensed with’. It was therefore not until 7 June 1902 that Blackader left South Africa, travelling back from Cape Town aboard the steamer Bavarian, as part of the Coronation Contingent.28

On 1 August 1902 Blackader commenced duties as adjutant of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment. The Leicester Guardian noted the appointment and cheekily observed ‘this gentleman will have to be very careful not to make his language too strong in addressing the men, or they will find their own way of pronouncing his name’.29 Whether this was a hint that something of Blackader’s reputation had preceded him is unclear. However, it does seem that Blackader’s period as adjutant with the Volunteers left two clear impressions – oddly combining both the concern for his men evinced by Campbell and the Leicester Guardian’s hint at linguistic directness. According to the historian of The 177th Brigade; ‘Colonel German’, who had begun his military life in the Volunteers, ‘never forgot his one-time Adjutant’s dictum – “Don’t b—— your men about!”’30

Herbert Simpson, another officer of the Volunteers and a good friend to Blackader, also noted his efficiency, “Besides being a thorough gent he is a very competent business man, with great administrative ability, tact & firmness of character not only is he used to controlling & managing men but he has the happy knack of doing or seeing things are done without unnecessary worry or fuss.”31

After two years and five weeks of organising training, annual camps, shooting competitions and parades at The Magazine in Leicester, as well as giving evidence to the Royal Commission on Militia and Volunteers,32 Blackader received his majority on 10 September 1904 and orders to rejoin his regiment in India. The new Major Blackader sailed, with a draft of the Gloucestershire Regiment, aboard the ‘Assaye’ from Southampton, on 17 January 1905.33

Blackader was destined for detached duty again however and was posted to the Bombay Presidency, where he served as commandant and cantonment magistrate of the Purandhar Sanatorium, near Poona [Pune]. He was again able to leave the stamp of his administrative efficiency upon the place, such that two years later Lieutenant-General Richardson, commanding the Poona Division, was able to write to him that as far as ‘the good work you put in in command of the Purandhar Sanatorium’ was concerned, ‘the hall-mark of your administration still remains’.34

Blackader returned home again in November 1906. This time he travelled with his battalion, actually commanding it on the journey from Southampton to Shorncliffe, while Colonel Scott remained behind to hand over their ship, ‘the Dongola’.35

27 NA: WO374/6825.
28 Times, 11 June 1902.
29 Leicester Guardian 23 August 1902. The rather laboured joke presumably punning on ‘black-guarder’.
30 J. P. W. Jamie The 177th Brigade (Leicester) 1931 p. 69.
31 ROLLR: DE5891/3/1–3.
32 Times, 11 December 1903, p. 6.
33 Green Tiger I, no. 3, p. 5.
34 ROLLR: DE5891/1.
35 Green Tiger II, 13, p. 6.
It may be that peacetime soldiering, with little prospect of speedy promotion, seemed unattractive to Blackader and in July 1907 he applied for the post of chief constable of Leicestershire. Despite an extensive field – there were seventy other candidates including twenty-five army officers36 – Blackader at first felt confident, telling Herbert Simpson, his old Volunteers ally: ‘as far as I can gather I run a good sporting chance.’37 As the interview grew closer his confidence waned. Blackader

36 B. Beazley *Peelers to Pandas* (Derby) 2001 p. 84.
37 ROLLR: DE5891/3/3.
wrote again to Simpson, ‘I am feeling distinctly nervous about this interview...I am afraid I don’t really stand any chance against the array of police talent that are my opponents.’

In the event Blackader’s pessimism proved well founded and he returned to duty with the 1st Leicesters at Shorncliffe. The regimental magazine, *The Green Tiger*, offers a glimpse of Major Blackader’s activities in the Shorncliffe Garrison and (from 1910) at Aldershot. Although Blackader clearly did not neglect his professional duties and development, taking part in the 1909 regimental tour and summer manoeuvres, as well as passing both of the Tactical fitness for command exams (in March and August 1908) and attending the senior officers’ class at Hythe in May 1909; the impression given by the *Green Tiger* – is of a sporting and social whirl.

With so little evidence to go on, concerning his temperament and personality, it is worth dwelling for a moment on this side of Blackader’s character. For years Blackader and E. L. Challenor, a fellow company commander from South African days, dominated the Shorncliffe Garrison’s tennis scene. In September 1908, Blackader particularly ‘in grand form’, the pair defeated the Royal Field Artillery to capture the Regimental Challenge Cup for the second time and carry it off for permanent display with the regimental silver.

Tennis was not however Blackader’s only sport. In 1909 he won the Folkestone Golf Club putting competition and captained the battalion’s foursome that drew with the Royal Artillery. Blackader tried his hand at billiards (joint top score against the sergeants in April 1910) soccer (his officers’ team defeated that of the sergeants’ in 1909) and cricket (the analyses of both batting and bowling suggest that Blackader –though he occasionally shone – was not at his best in flannels).

There seems little doubt though that Blackader’s true interest, as a spectator, lay in the ring. As President of the Regimental Boxing Club, he was clearly regarded as something of a sage, ‘BD’ reporting in January 1908 that ‘Major Blackader is in communication with an exceedingly clever boxer, who fought Jack Palmer for the Championship of England...’ Just who this boxer was; who opposed the World Heavyweight Champion, and with what result, is not recorded. In 1913 the *Green Tiger* reproduced a telling photograph of the Leinster Regiment versus Leicesters boxing tournament, showing a pensive Blackader comfortably seated in the front row.

The only sport that seems to have prompted Blackader to take up his pen however was that of the ‘shikar’, the hunting of big game in India. In “‘Le Dernier Cartouche” A Panther Experience’, he describes lying in wait for a panther, only to find that growing darkness prevents a clean kill. Blackader finally pursues the wounded beast into the bush, “I was down to my last cartridge, so something had to be done. Cautiously I approached the bush, and by the light of the lantern could just distinguish the animal’s head. He was then lying exhausted, and a careful shot

38 ROLLR: DE5891/3/2.
39 *Green Tiger* IV, no. 1, p. 4.
with the muzzle of the rifle at his head finished a somewhat exciting hour’s experience.” The tale of the destruction of the panther, ‘a fine animal...a little over 7 ft. in length’ must have thrilled the mess on many a night, until at last someone dared to go into the bush after Blackader and suggest that it merited a wider audience.

The more complete record of the regiment’s social life offered by the Green Tiger also brings into prominence the rôle of Mrs Blackader and eventually the Misses Blackader. Marion Blackader appears to have been a popular figure. In January 1908 the Green Tiger’s report of the annual Children’s Christmas Treat noted the presence of both Mrs and Miss Blackader and recorded that ‘at the close of proceedings, cheers were called for Mrs Blackader (on whom had developed [sic.] the task of selecting the many presents). The following year the Blackader ladies were again ‘the life and soul of the party; the tree and tea, thanks to them, was most beautifully done’.

On 10 September 1912 Blackader received his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel and a posting to the 2nd Battalion Leicestershire Regiment in India. Having sailed on the HT ‘Rewa’ to Bombay, Blackader at last reached his new battalion at Madras on 16 December. The battalion moved soon after to Bareilly before settling into the Alma Barracks, Ranikhet.

It was while commanding the 2nd Leicesters at Ranikhet that Blackader took advantage of company training to try his hand at panther hunting, with the consequences – both literary and ecological – that we have seen. The involvement of his family in regimental life also continued. In December 1912 Mrs Blackader distributed presents at the Army Temperance Association Christmas Treat and Tea, and at a concert, given at the Ranikhet Club and also at the Regimental Theatre, Joan Blackader, now 21, led the chorus of bridesmaids in Gilbert and Sullivan’s ‘Trial by Jury’.

This agreeable peacetime routine was brought abruptly to an end at 11 o’clock on the morning of 9 August 1914, with the arrival of orders to mobilise. Within hours the battalion was medically inspected, its boots hobnailed and its bayonets sharpened. Blackader had also begun his struggle to assemble all of the equipment and clothing required for active service. On 5 September the battalion entrained for Karachi and on 21 September sailed, aboard the steamships ‘Devanha’ (which carried Blackader and his battalion HQ) and ‘Elephanta’ for Port Said and Marseilles.

Blackader’s battalion, forming part of the Garwhal Brigade of Lieutenant General C. A. Anderson’s Meerut Division, disembarked at Marseilles on 12 October 1914. On 26 October they moved to Lillers and then Calonne, relieving the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment in the firing line early on 29 October. The Great

40 Green Tiger, IX, August 1913, pp. 113–114.
41 Green Tiger, IV, Feb. 1902, p. 17.
44 Green Tiger, IX, 1913, pp. 21 and 161.
45 ROLLR: 22D63/134/2 War Diary.
War was already twelve weeks old and the newly arrived Indian divisions were being hastened to the front in an effort to stem the tide of the German advance south of Ypres.

From the first Blackader’s battalion came under heavy shellfire and continuous sniping as they struggled to repair their ill-defined and crumbling trenches. Within twenty-four hours one officer and three men were killed and nine men wounded.46 On 24 November a major German breakthrough was narrowly averted by a counter-attack led by two companies of the Leicesters.

Blackader’s battalion was then relieved and sent for rest to billets at La Coutere. For the past few days Blackader had taken over responsibility for the central section of the Meerut Division’s lines; assuming command of parts of three Indian battalions as well as his own. On 31 November two companies of the Leicesters were inspected by the King, whose observation that they were ‘looking war-worn’ must reveal how desperate the fighting around Ypres had been.47

On 19 December 1914 the 2nd Leicesters, supported by a half battalion of Gurkha Rifles and one company of pioneers, were pushed forward in an effort to capture a section of the German front line. Blackader’s own account of this raid, recorded in the battalion’s war diary and printed at length in its history,48 shows how active a commander he was. He caught up with the leading company soon after its capture of a German support trench:

‘...as it could be seen that a main enemy’s trench flanked its right, I ordered it to be made into a fire trench as well as to be traversed...It was not long before the enemy started on it with heavy bombs from mortars and bringing a maxim up the trench blew the barricade down. We were steadily pushed back along it, until finally we only held 30 yards of it’.

The situation of Blackader’s leading company and its accompanying Pioneers steadily worsened. The Germans counter-attacked, threatening to overwhelm the hastily built barricades. ‘The conclusion was now being forced on me that unless an attack was initiated on the right and the enemy’s trench in that direction held the position was untenable and I reported accordingly, with the result that is already known. The retirement was well carried out without loss.’

That Blackader led from the front does not seem in doubt. The good work of his battalion was also noted; the Indian Army Corps commander making special mention of several ‘brave Leicester officers and men’, including ‘Colonel Blackader, who led his battalion and withdrew it skilfully’.49 News of Blackader’s reward also reached the 2nd Leicesters through their corps commander, Sir James Willcocks, who addressed the battalion at Ecquebecques, on 4 January 1915:

‘I heartily congratulate you on your invariable good work throughout the campaign. Both in fighting and in discipline you have distinguished yourselves and

46 ROLLR: 22D63/134/2.
47 ROLLR: 22D63/134/2 p. 18.
49 Wyly op. cit., p. 115. The German machine gun captured by Blackader’s battalion that day is still a prized item in the Royal Leicestershire Regiment’s museum.
no other regiment has done better than you. The honours list which will shortly
appear will contain the names of many of you...Your commanding officer,
Colonel Blackader, has been given the command of a brigade and from that you
know that the Regiment has done well...”

Blackader’s promotion to be temporary Brigadier General, commanding the
same Garwhal Brigade in which he had served, was published in the London
Gazette on 26 January 1915, with effect from 8 January. Three weeks later the
Gazette reported Blackader’s receipt of a brevet colonelcy.

Strengthened by the arrival of the 3rd Battalion of the London Regiment,
Blackader’s Garwhal Brigade was thrown into the forefront of the next ‘push’, at
Neuve Chapelle in March 1915, followed by attacks at Festubert in April. By June
1915 the Indian Corps had suffered over 25,000 casualties for a gain of 600 yards.
The effort had crippled the original British Expeditionary Force and its supporting
Indian army Corps.

For much of the summer the Garwhal Brigade was withdrawn from the firing
line for rest and war training. On 15 August Captain Donald Weir, commanding
‘C’ Company of the 2nd Leicesters wrote home with an account of ‘a most
interesting “joy ride” a couple of days ago with General Blackader’. Weir’s letter
shows the Garwhal brigadier also in need of relaxation. The trip turned into a
reunion of old ‘Leicesters’:

‘Left here at 12 mid-day in a very fine car and started north, some 10 miles away
we called on Gen. Croker (who used to be our colonel, you remember during the
latter part of Belgaum) and had lunch...Also met Tidswell, his brigade major, of
the regiment...then General Croker accompanied us still much further north and
well into Belgium where we met Col. Challenor [he of the tennis partnership a
decade before] Captain Clarke and Yalland. Also Grylls and Buxton. The two
latter...just happened to have come over for the afternoon...started back about
5.30 getting back in time for dinner after a very jolly ride’.

The lull that seemed to have descended on the Garwhal Brigade’s sector of the
line came to an abrupt end with the explosion of a mine beneath the German lines
at Bellewarde Farm, at 4.30 on the morning of 25th September. The assault by
Blackader’s brigade, occupying the right half of the main attack foundered against
a combination of stiff German resistance, thick fog, and a belt of uncut wire. Of
the 2nd Leicesters alone, no fewer than 20 officers and 427 men became casualties.

At the end of October 1915 the Garwhal Brigade was again pulled out of the
line. The battered Indian Corps was to be employed in another theatre of war
altogether. Blackader travelled with the Corps to Marseilles and then on to Port
Said. However, as a rather petulant letter from Blackader to the War Office
reveals, all did not go according to plan: ‘at Port Said I received orders to hand
over my brigade...and return to France. This I accordingly did...where I was
informed that I should receive command of a brigade...’ The burden of
Blackader’s plaint now was that having ceased to be paid as an ‘Indian’ brigadier,
he was anxious that no time would elapse before his pay began as a ‘British’ one.

51 ROLLR: DE2913/7/2
52 NA: WO374/6825.
As in South Africa a decade and a half before, Blackader’s successes had come to the notice of higher authority. On 7 January 1916 General Douglas Haig himself, commanding the British Army in France, wrote a letter in his support to the War Office. ‘Brevet Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General C. G. Blackader’, he wrote, ‘should be noted for the command of a Division in the field...[he] has proved himself to be a most efficient Brigade Commander on active service, and I consider that he is qualified in every way for higher command.’ 53

53 NA: WO374/6825. Haig had visited Blackader’s brigade HQ at Le Touret in March 1915 to discuss the planned offensive at Neuve Chapelle and recorded in his diary Blackader’s belief that ‘all ranks were keen to go on’: G. Sheffield & J. Bourne (eds.) Douglas Haig War Diaries and Letters (London) 2005, p. 105.
Notwithstanding such support and in the absence perhaps of a suitable division, Blackader received instead command of the 177th Brigade; the 2/4th and 2/5th Battalions of both the Lincolnshire and Leicestershire Regiments. The appointment was gazetted on the same day as his appointment as an Aide-de-Camp (Extra) to the King.

Blackader seems to have busied himself however in preparing the brigade for service in France. In March the brigade was transferred to Codford, near Warminster, and was in camp there awaiting its full equipment for active service, when news arrived of the Easter rising in Dublin.54

The brigade arrived in time to assist in ‘mopping-up’ operations, capturing – amongst others – Countess Markievicz and Eamon De Valera. For Blackader the final ceasefire on 30 April was succeeded by an even more disagreeable duty than firing upon misguided Irishmen. Having declared martial-law in the wake of the rising, the commander-in-chief in Ireland, Sir John Maxwell, then determined upon the trial of its ringleaders. Blackader was to preside over half of the courts-martial held in Dublin.

The impression given must, more than anything, have been one of haste. Crammed into two tiny rooms at Richmond Barracks, Dublin, the courts-martial heard the cases of no fewer than 186 Irishmen (and one Irish woman). In the first two days of the hearings, Blackader presided over the trials of seven of the rebellion’s ringleaders – all of whom received a verdict of guilty and sentence of death by being shot.55

That Blackader found the work uncongenial it is scarcely necessary to say. The Countess of Fingall, who entertained him to dinner occasionally at Killeen Castle, recalled Blackader as ‘very emotional, and terribly affected by the work he had to do.’56 On 2 May 1916 Blackader dined with the Countess, having sentenced Patrick Pearse to death. The dignity of Pearse, who offered no defence besides a speech that admitted (indeed, if anything, exaggerated) his role in the rising, greatly affected Blackader. “I have just done one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. I have had to condemn to death one of the finest characters I have ever come across. There must be something very wrong in the state of things that makes a man like that a rebel...” 57

The sentencing of John MacBride may also have caused Blackader some disquiet, though if Tim Healy (the Irish statesman and first Governor General of the Free State) is to be believed, the court had little alternative. MacBride seems to have joined the rising on a whim and to have declined an opportunity to melt into the crowd at its end. It may be that the rebel leaders knew that they were more valuable to their cause dead than alive. Healy declared his view that Blackader’s court did its best to save several of the rebels, ‘especially Major MacBride, but the accused wished to die’.58

---

54 J. P. W. Jamie The 177th Brigade (Leicester) 1931.
55 B. Barton, From Behind a Closed Door (Belfast) 2002, p. 38.
56 Quoted in B. Barton Ibid., p. 33.
57 Ibid., pp. 109–110.
58 Quoted in D. P. McCracken MacBride’s Brigade (Four Courts Press) 1997 p. 163.
Blackader also enjoyed the dubious privilege of presiding over the trial of Countess Markievicz, the sole Irishwoman to be charged with armed rebellion. Accounts of the hearing, on 4 May 1916, vary considerably. The official account suggests that Markievicz conducted a dignified defence, defiantly declaring that she had acted for Ireland and did not care what would happen to her. More entertaining are the contemporary rumours, which have the countess in floods of tears, imploring Blackader’s pity. The chief prosecutor, William Wylie, clearly found Countess Markievicz very tiresome and left an amusing, if not entirely convincing account of the trial, ‘We quite expected she would make a scene and throw things at the court. In fact I saw the General [Blackader] getting out his revolver and putting it on the table beside him. He did not have trouble as she curled up completely. ‘I am only a woman. You can’t shoot a woman. You must not shoot a woman.’ She never stopped moaning the whole time...’

The picture Wylie paints is an appealing one, though what he imagined Blackader might achieve by drawing his revolver – except perhaps greater comfort in a constricting chair after a heavy lunch – is unclear. In fact, Markievicz deserved the death sentence as much as the other ringleaders of the rising (if not more than some) but Blackader’s court returned the curious verdict that though guilty and sentenced to be shot, ‘the court recommend the prisoner to mercy solely and only on account of her sex’.

Blackader however was not to remain in Ireland much longer. Haig’s support at last bore fruit and Blackader returned to France. The battle for Mametz Wood on the Somme had cost the 38th (Welsh) Division not only 4,000 battle casualties but also their commander, Major General Ivor Philipps, who paid the price of the offensive’s failures. Blackader assumed command of the division on 12 July 1916 but it was a division in name only, shattered by the blood-letting around Mametz Wood. The loss of 4,000 men, including seven battalion commanders, from what had in effect been ‘the Welsh equivalent of the ‘Pals’ battalions’, left Blackader almost to recreate the division.

On the day of his arrival, Blackader’s new division was moved out of the front line, first to Coigneux and then to a comparatively quiet sector south of Gommecourt. After a month, the division was withdrawn from the Somme altogether and transferred to the northern flank of the Ypres salient. For nearly a year the 38th Division was to devote itself to recovery, retraining and refortification. As Lieut.-Colonel H. E. ap Rhys Pryce, Blackader’s chief of staff, recalled:

“...the Division soon turned a mass of muddy trenches into dry, comfortable ones which earned the special commendation of Lord Cavan when the Division became part of the 14th Corps. The Division spent a comparatively quiet time here, punctuated only by raids which were gradually carried out more frequently and on a larger scale as time went on.”

59 Quoted in B. Barton op. cit., p. 79.
60 Ibid., pp. 80–81.
In June 1917 the division was withdrawn to St Hilaire for training. This was training for a specific purpose however, as Blackader’s division had been selected, with the Guards Division, to lead the attack of the 14th Corps north of Ypres. The advance was to be on a broad front, south of Ypres too, with the Passchendaele ridge that dominated the country to the east of the town as a final objective. The training was also specific in nature, the division practising its attacks – including the new tactic of an advance under cover of a machine gun barrage – across a carefully constructed replica of the battlefield to come, complete with trench systems and strong-points, laid out behind the lines.

Aided by this careful preparation and ‘the plentiful bombardment by gas shell of enemy batteries’ the division achieved its first objectives with little loss. Pushing deeper into the German defences, Blackader’s troops encountered stiffer resistance. By the end of the offensive’s first day, 31 July 1917, the 38th was one of only three divisions, to have taken all their objectives. It was an achievement made all the more remarkable, since the main target of the division had been the German stronghold of Pilckem Ridge; one of those barely noticeable features of the peacetime landscape that came to dominate in time of war. The ridge had been held by fresh troops of one of the Kaiser’s favourite regiments, the ‘crack’ Guards Fusiliers.

The division was left in control of Pilckem Ridge. Fresh British attacks and German counter-attacks flowed around them as torrential rain once again submerged the hopes of a break-through in a tide of mud. A final effort by the 38th Division at the end of August 1917 was similarly washed away by the slime, ‘The weather that had been moderately fine in the morning became so bad during the course of the day that when the time came to advance, the men who had been lying in shell holes which were gradually filling with water found great difficulty in getting out and advancing and keeping up with the barrage’.

The division spent the remainder of the year and much of the following spring engaged in what their History rather oxymoronically terms ‘trench warfare pure and simple’. Blackader was occupied with divisional training, much of which was disrupted by the continuing downpour, and the construction of defences – which could not have been helped by the weather either. Blackader also played host to two of the newly arrived United States’ major-generals, with their respective staff officers.

In October 1917 Blackader left his division for a month, probably returning home on leave. He returned to France and resumed command on 22 November, plunging into the frenzy of construction work that occupied the entire British line until April 1918: ‘...the Division was heavily at work in constructing rear lines of defence as far back as the northern bank of the Lys and an almost inconceivable amount of concrete and barbed wire was erected.’

63 Ibid., p. 24.
65 Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Munby op. cit., p. 27.
66 Ibid., p. 29.
67 Ibid., p. 31.
Blackader must have seemed a remote figure to the front-line soldiers of his division. The opinions of such lowly figures are seldom heard. However, on the 6th February 1918 the 2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers joined the division. Sadly, by then both Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves had left the battalion but two of that most literary of battalion’s writers remained to cast some light on Blackader.

On 9 February 1918 Captain J. C. Dunn, the battalion’s medical officer and author of the monumental, *The War the Infantry knew*, recorded their transfer: ‘We are in the XV corps again: Lt. Gen. du Cane...inspected us: he looks urbane, and was complimentary. Dunn’s impression of Blackader, the ‘G.O.C.’, or General Officer Commanding the division, included a ‘professional’ assessment: ‘The G.O.C. looks a *bon vivant* first and last, possibly a sick man’.68

There is little else to indicate Dunn’s view of Blackader. In April 1918, he records the abrupt departure of a temporary replacement for their injured Brigadier, Carton de Wiart, ‘chased away by the G.O.C.; he was not a success in his last brigade’,69 which may hint at a degree of approval on Dunn’s part of a no-nonsense manner. The report, the following May, that ‘now that we have shivered for a month “The G.O.C. has approved the issue of greatcoats” ’70 suggests at best irritation with the tardiness of Blackader’s response to prolonged inclement weather, or worse, a feeling that he lacked concern for the welfare of his men.

This, however, was certainly not the view of the other chronicler of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Private Frank Richards. He hadn’t the opportunity afforded Dunn for a close inspection of Blackader but he could compare life in his present and previous divisions. Blackader’s scored where it mattered most: ‘The 38th Division was better for rum issues than the 33rd and we were also getting a better bread ration...There was also an excellent Divisional Concert Troupe’.71 As Dunn said, ‘the G.O.C. looks a *bon vivant*’ first and last.

On 20 May 1918, the 38th Division was withdrawn from the frontline on the Ancre Valley for a fortnight’s rest. The same day Blackader left for Paris. His dog, which had licked Blackader’s hands and face, had developed rabies and the Major-General now was sent for the painful and debilitating treatment at the Pasteur Institute. Lieut.-Colonel Munby, the 38th Division’s senior staff officer, at least, was sorry to see Blackader go:

‘It was not known when he left that this course [of treatment] would be of a lengthy duration and would necessitate his relinquishing command of the Division...[there was] therefore no opportunity of bidding him farewell or of expressing their unbounded regret at the departure of their General, who had commanded the Division with such success for two years and who had during that time become beloved and respected by all.’72

The treatment Blackader received in Paris undoubtedly dealt a severe blow to his constitution. He had endured fifteen injections and emerged, on 4 June 1918, ‘much

69 ibid., p. 465.
70 ibid., p. 477.
72 Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Munby op. cit., p. 45.
run down and in need of rest and change’. On 24 August 1918 he was again examined by a medical board and sent home to rest. Field-Marshal Haig’s assessment followed him on 20 September 1918, the Commander-in-Chief reporting to the War Office: ‘Major General Blackader has rendered consistently good service in France as a Brigade Commander, and until recently as a Divisional Commander. On first taking over the command of the 38th Division he did a great deal to raise its fighting efficiency and proved himself to be a successful commander.’

However glowing his praise for Blackader, Haig’s reservations were devastating: ‘I am of [the] opinion that as a Divisional Commander he is not now up to the standard required under the present conditions of warfare, and I do not feel justified in asking for his return in view of the continually increasing strain on officers holding these appointments. I can, however, confidently recommend him for employment where conditions are less strenuous and exacting’.

Blackader’s reputation stood him in good stead. A few days after Haig wrote his report to the War Office, Sir Charles Harington, Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff interviewed Blackader and minuted his views: ‘I think he was tired when he came home, both from strain and the Pasteur treatment he had just been through. He is fit now & looks a different man....I think he shd. get a Division at home when one is available.’

It was not until 20 November 1918, nine days after the Armistice, that Blackader received his next assignment. He was appointed ‘Commander Southern District’ of the Irish Command, at a salary of £1,500 per annum.

Based in Cork, the Southern District of Irish Command was responsible for the logistics, supply and billeting of soldiers. Not perhaps an arduous posting for Blackader but nor was it a good time to be soldiering in Ireland. As Cole and Priestly observed in their *Outline of British Military History*: ‘the role of the regular military garrison was peculiarly difficult. Its function was to support the civil power, but the civil power had ceased to exist.’

By mid 1919 however Blackader had been appointed to the command of the Portsmouth District. On 6 August his presence was noted amongst those seeing off the Prince of Wales aboard HMS Renown for his tour of Canada and the USA. He was also in the party to welcome back the Prince in December.

In the autumn of 1920 Blackader’s health deteriorated. By the end of February 1921 he was complaining of a general feeling of ill health, characterised by evening nausea, occasional spitting of blood and abdominal swelling. On 4 March 1921 Blackader was admitted to the Queen Alexandria’s Military Hospital, Millbank. From then Blackader’s ‘Medical Case Sheet’ makes dismal reading.
On 21 March a Colonel West carried out a laparotomy, an exploratory incision, which revealed cancer of the liver.

Over the next ten days Blackader’s condition worsened. An old comrade recalled his visits for Wyllie’s regimental history: ‘I went to see him at Millbank Hospital shortly after he was admitted, suffering from the hateful disease which eventually killed him; he was as cheery and interesting as ever, talking over old times and old friends; but in a few days he became worse and worse, and had to be given morphine continuously.’

On the last day of March 1921, Colonel West removed Blackader’s stitches but found that ‘the wound gaped so badly that the abdominal contents protruded’. The wound was re-stitched but Blackader, now jaundiced, was clearly much worse. He lingered, drugged and in great pain, another two days. At 6.30 p.m. on 2 April 1921, Charles Guinand Blackader died.

On 5 April 1921, The Times carried the notice of the death of ‘Major General C. G. Blackader, CB, DSO, (late Leicestershire Regiment), the very dearly beloved husband of Ethel Blackader’. A funeral service was to be held at the Millbank Hospital Chapel at 1.30 p.m. on 7 April, followed by the interment at Putney Vale Cemetery at 2.45 p.m.

There is no publicly held collection of Blackader papers, save for a few incidental survivals in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. In the absence of personal letters or memoranda, it is hard to come to any firm conclusions about personality or character. There are however some clues.

Blackader’s appearance, from photographs, was that of a burly, bluff Englishman. His build and height (which was just over 5 foot 10 inches according to the cadet Register at Sandhurst), coupled with dark brows and moustache sometimes giving an almost bear-like impression. There was clearly something of this in his make-up. This was the Blackader who ‘chased away’ unsuitable brigadiers in 1916 and who impressed a succession of superiors with his no-nonsense efficiency and business-like attitude to the administration of South African railways, concentration camps, and Indian cantonments.

There was also a jovial, charismatic side. This was the ‘cheery and interesting’ Blackader of Millbank Hospital; the Blackader of the Christmas parties and agreeable motor tours behind the lines in 1915; the ‘bon vivant’ diagnosed by Captain Dunn and perhaps the young beguiler of Ethel Melbourn – if that is the way it was.

Wyllie’s History contains a heart-felt analysis by ‘a brother officer’, which is worth quoting at length:

‘A very keen soldier himself and well up in all the latest theories of tactics and administration, he soon made what is often dull routine an affair of life and intense interest. His lectures kept us spell-bound...I well remember in France his extraordinary gift for grasping the essentials of any situation. The Regiment loved ‘old Black’ and he got their devotion not from any particular kindness in his make-up but because all ranks realized what a splendid leader he was; he had a rare gift of inspiring confidence. Blackader had a forceful personality and in any company

80 Wyllie op. cit., p. 145.
he was always noticeable, and without any apparent effort or seeking he made his influence felt. \(^{81}\)

Part of Blackader’s nature (as well as a linguistic ability) came perhaps from his continental mother and childhood residence abroad; certainly it was an element in his character identified by the Countess of Fingall at the time of the Easter Rising in 1916. She saw Blackader as a dining companion: a ‘charming, sympathetic person, half-French, very emotional, and terribly affected by the work he had to do’. \(^{82}\) There is a glimpse of a more vulnerable side too in his letters to his friend, Simpson, at the time of Blackader’s application for the Chief Constableship of Leicestershire, confessing to ‘feeling distinctly nervous about the interview’. \(^{83}\)

Blackader’s family background perhaps gave him a head start in his linguistic endeavours too. His mother’s nationality and father’s decision to remove his family to France stood him in good stead. As early as 1889, as a new second-lieutenant, he passed the army exams in both French and German. \(^{84}\)

\(^{81}\) Ibid., pp. 144–145.

\(^{82}\) Elizabeth Countess of Fingall Sixty Years On; quoted in B. Barton From behind a closed door (Belfast) 2002, p. 33.

\(^{83}\) ROLLR: DE5891/1.

\(^{84}\) Times, 14 November 1889, p. 8.
There is scant evidence for Blackader’s tastes, besides an evident interest in sport. He clearly enjoyed boxing as a spectator (as well as a reputation as a connoisseur of the ring) but, like many another Edwardian gentleman, he himself played – and won – at lawn tennis, golf and cricket. Perhaps, as a true professional, Blackader had little time for other pursuits.

As for Blackader’s profession, there seems little doubt that he took it seriously and – from Sandhurst days onwards – worked hard and efficiently at it when the occasion demanded. The many testimonials, at the time of his application to the Leicestershire Constabulary, confirm that he was respected by his superiors as a man upon whom they could rely. ‘I saw his work when he first got the 38 Divn. It soon improved out of all knowledge’ wrote Sir Charles Harington in 1918, and even Haig, who was sending him home, added ‘Blackader has rendered consistently good service’.

Blackader’s conduct occasionally surprises, though perhaps it would not have raised the eyebrows of his contemporaries. His preoccupation with arrears of pay, or the possibility that he might not receive any at all, due to the switch from Indian to British control, seems bizarre as Europe was engulfed in war, but perhaps such are the concerns of professional soldiers. Certainly Blackader valued his profession. It was probably Blackader more than anyone, who engineered the removal of the amiable E Clive Atkins, a territorial, from command of the 2/5th Leicesters (brigaded under him in Ireland) on the grounds that he was ‘not so competent to command, as would be a Regular officer with experience of modern warfare’.

It should be added too that Blackader had not come from a rich family. His concerns over pay, which may seem petty at a time of World War, probably reflected a simple need to provide for his family. The gross value of his estate at the time of administration, in May 1921, was just over £431; hardly a fortune, especially considering the wartime inflation. It is tempting to see a financial need and a desire to provide for his family, as the motive behind many of Blackader’s career moves.

Blackader’s army service lasted over thirty-two years. His was a life, in the words of his memorial, ‘given to the service of his country and to the welfare of the Regiment’. All but four of Blackader’s years in the army were spent with the Leicestershire Regiment and it is in the regimental chapel of Leicester’s cathedral that his monument is to be seen. From its wording, ‘in proud and loving memory’, the plaque must have been erected by Blackader’s regiment and his widow. Considering his length of service and such glimpses of his character and attributes as are given above, it is not hard to understand, or even associate with, the final sentiments of the memorial: ‘His memory is honoured and his loss mourned by his loving wife and his comrades and friends.’

85 NA: WO374/6825.
86 ROLLR: DE6007/266/1.
87 Letters of Administration, 4 May 1921.
ROBIN P. JENKINS, BA, MA, DAS, has been on the staff of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland for twenty years – since January 1992 as Keeper of Archives. He is a contributor to the new Oxford Dictionary of Biography, has edited a local Boer War diary for the Army Records Society, and is the author of several books of local photographs. He is Honorary Archivist to the Rutland Local History & Record Society and sits on the committee of the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society.