

## SOUTH NOTTS YEOMANRY MEDALS.

BY FRANK E. BURTON, J.P.

**H**AVE much pleasure in exhibiting the medals, two original parchment rolls, badge, two helmets and a pair of epaulettes of the South Notts Yeomanry.

The South Notts Yeomanry Cavalry, like many other volunteer regiments of Cavalry, was raised during the Napoleonic scare. On June 10, 1794, at a general meeting of the County of Nottingham, held at the Moot Hall, Mansfield, to consider plans recommended by the Government for the internal defence of the kingdom, the following resolutions were proposed and unanimously agreed to :—

1. That in the present crisis it is very desirable to increase the internal force of the county, under the sanction of Parliament, by a voluntary subscription.
2. That the mode which appears most adapted to the situation and circumstances of this county is that of raising a Corps of Cavalry, comprised of Yeomen, agreeable to the plan suggested by the Government to the Lords-Lieutenant of the several counties.
3. That a subscription be opened for the above-mentioned purposes, and that subscriptions be received at the different banking houses of the county.

The money subscribed on this occasion amounted to the sum of £8,549 1s. *od.*, a very large sum indeed for those times.

Four troops were raised in Notts, and it is to the South Notts troop that these relics belong.

The first captain in command of this troop was Ichabod Wright, a member of an old banking family in Nottingham, and you will see from the original parchment roll of the troop that he was still in command in 1806, when the troop numbered 73, including the Rifle Corps.

Although only raised in 1794, their services were soon requisitioned, as the following account from the *Nottingham Journal* plainly shows :—

*April 25, 1795.*

“ Saturday evening last, a riot in Nottingham, on account of the present high price of all kinds of food. Riot Act read ; the Chief Magistrate requested the assistance of the Troop of Gentlemen Yeomanry, who at once assembled on parade in the Market Place, and by their diligent exertions for nearly 4 hours the tranquillity of the town was restored.”

Although the Yeomanry did most valuable and important service during the riots, I find from contemporary reports in the local papers that, when they were called up, they never failed to enjoy themselves whenever the opportunity occurred after their military services were over, as the following extract from the *Nottingham Journal* of July 18, 1795, on the occasion of the presentation of their colours, will amply demonstrate :—

“ Tuesday last the 4 troops of Notts Yeomanry Cavalry comprising Nottingham, Newark, Retford and Mansfield met at this place to receive their colours.

“ About 10 o'clock the troops took their ground in Sneinton Fields, from whence they rode in regular military procession to the Market Place, and forming a square in front of the Exchange Hall, the windows of which being elegantly filled by ladies of the first rank and fashion.

“ The sight became truly enchanting. An escort being detached to attend the standards, they were handed from the

windows to Charles Pierrepont, Esq., M.P., and Thomas Webbs Edge, Esq., who, accompanied by the Rev. Charles Eyre as Chaplain, advanced to the centre of the regiment, where they were met by Colonel Eyre, to whom Mr. Pierrepont presented the Royal Standard, on the part of Mrs. Lumley Smith.

“Mr. Edge then presented the Provincial Standard on behalf of Lady Warren, and the Chaplain then proceeded to consecrate the colours. About half-past three in the afternoon they repaired to a splendid dinner prepared for them at Thurland Hall. Towards evening many of the Company retired to dress for the Assembly, which was very brilliant, and where the seductive blandishments of lovely women made ample recompense for the toils of martial glory.

“With beauty and elegance the Assembly Rooms were never so much honoured in celebrity and mirth, the time was never so happily spent. In fact, the Town was one continued scene of bustle and parade.

“The fireworks commenced about 10 o'clock and ended at midnight in the Market Place.”

(I have here two old prints of Thurland Hall, where these meetings were held—one as it was in the fifteenth century, the other of what remained of it in 1750. It is now totally demolished.)

On May 13, 1802, the Nottingham Troop of Gentlemen Yeomanry Cavalry, commanded by Captain Wright, assembled previous to their disembodiment. A sumptuous dinner was provided, of which 100 gentlemen partook and joined in the convivialities usual on such occasions. An elegant piece of plate was presented to their captain as a testimony of their gratitude to him for his politeness and attention to the Corps, 20 guineas to the sergeant and 5 guineas to the trumpeter. Lord Newark presented honorary medals to the whole Corps, “in commemoration of their important services.” Those of the commissioned officers were of gold, and those of the non-commissioned officers and privates were of silver. The obverse on the medal is GEORGIUS III REX, the king's profile, and the date

1802. This profile of the king is similar to the one on the coinage of the period, and doubtless was struck at the Royal Mint. On the reverse, NOTTS YEOMANRY, a representation of the famous Greendale oak, which is still to be seen in Sherwood Forest, and the inscription FOI LOI ROI (Faith, Law, King).

It is curious that the name on the medal and the helmet should be Notts Yeomanry, although the title of the regiment is South Notts Yeomanry and you have on the badge S.N.Y. (South Notts Yeomanry), and this title is still used by the War Office, but locally the regiment has always been known as the South Notts Hussars.

Of these medals I only know of *three* ; one is in my possession ; one belongs to Colonel Leslie Birkin, D.S.O., a member of this Society ; and one is in the possession of the Hadden family, Alexander Hadden being an officer when the regiment was raised.

The two original parchment rolls, dated 1806 and 1820 respectively, are interesting from two points of view :—Firstly, in the short *History of the South Notts Yeomanry*, written in 1891 by Major George Fellows, the first muster-roll published is 1828. Secondly, in the one dated 1806, the Company is described as “ The Nottingham Troop of Yeomanry Cavalry ” ; in the order dated 1820, the Company is described as “ The Loyal Troop of Nottingham Cavalry.”

The officer's badge is *circa* 1800. The helmet with the plumes missing is of the same date. The helmet with the plumes is *circa* 1820. The epaulettes are *circa* 1830.

The Nottingham Company was disbanded in 1802, but was again called up in 1803, and has been in existence ever since, being mobilized annually for drill. A large body of the regiment served all through the Boer War ; in the Great War they served in Gallipoli, Salonika, Egypt and Palestine.