

6th Baron Rokeby of Armagh, Henry Robinson-Montagu 1798-1883 *by Lesley Brooks*

From 1839, Baron Rokeby, a veteran of the Battle of Waterloo and the Crimea, was the owner and occupant of Hazelwood House. Sometime after he had lived there a fire in 1908 destroyed the original building. The rebuilt Hazelwood House, now known as Hunton Park, is still standing just off South Way.

Henry Montagu, from 1847 Baron Rokeby, was a gentleman and distinguished British army officer in the 3rd Foot Guards Regiment (aka the Scots Guards) from receiving his commission as an ensign in 1814, at the age of sixteen, until he retired in 1877.

While still an ensign Henry saw his first engagement on 16th June 1815 at Quatre Bras under the command of Lt-Colonel Charles Dashwood of the 3rd Foot Guards. Two days later on the 18th June at Waterloo, Henry saw action again at the now famous fight to hold the Château d'Hougoumont.

During this second battle the 3rd Foot Guards



Henry Robinson-Montagu, 6th Baron Rokeby (portrait by George Zobel). NPG D39847. © National Portrait Gallery, London



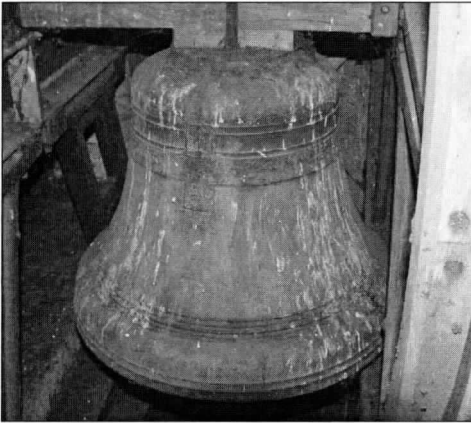
Third Foot Guards. Photo: Tim Brooks

commander Lt-Colonel Charles Dashwood fell wounded and all command fell to Lt-Colonel James Macdonnell of the 2nd Guards Brigade (aka the Coldstream Guards).

Wellington's respect for those who fought at Hougoumont was well known. After the battle he wrote: "You may depend upon it, no troops could have held Hougoumont but the British, and only the best of them."

Baron Rokeby was the last soldier to have the letter 'W', denoting service at Waterloo, before his name in the Army List.

Henry Montagu purchased and moved into Hazelwood House in 1839 with his wife



The bell (with a close-up of the inscription) donated by Baron Rokeby and his wife to St Paul's Langleybury. Written on the bell are the words in Russian (with vowels missing) 'Glory to the King, Jesus Christ, Son of God'. There are also the letters K, T, M and B surrounding the Orthodox Cross. The bell was cast by Kahn of Stodorok, Russia.
Photos: Tim Brooks

Magdalen, who was then pregnant with their fifth child Elizabeth, and their other four children, Edmund, Mary, Harriet and Magdalen (Lily). This was to be their family country house where Henry Montagu would live when not serving away with his regiment, particularly during the times when he was called away for many months to the Crimea.

The previous owner of Hazelwood House was the widowed Lydia Botham, who had no direct heirs. When she died in 1838 she bequeathed her fortune to members of the Gambier and Montagu families, to whom she was related. Hazelwood House was left to her nephew Samuel Charles Gambier, who chose not to live there, but instead sold the house to his cousin Henry Montagu, who used some of *his* £6,000 bequest from Lydia for the purchase.

Incidentally Lydia had spent a great deal of effort in the three years before she died opposing the construction of the new London to Birmingham Railway, which was to cross her estate. She was buried alongside her mother and husband in St Lawrence's Churchyard.

At the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 Baron Rokeby was made a Major-General

and commanded the 1st Division in that conflict.

In 1864 Baron Rokeby and his wife donated a bell to the newly consecrated church of St Paul's Langleybury. This bell was given to Baron Rokeby by his friend Commodore Frederick Beauchamp Paget Seymour who had obtained it in 1855 from a Russian convent while serving in the Crimean War as Captain of the *Brisk* on the White Sea. The bell is still in use as a 'Priest's bell', rung separately from the six chiming bells via a rope which goes down into the body of the Church.

After the Crimean War, Baron Rokeby still played a significant role in the affairs of the now Scots Fusilier Guards and in 1867 was promoted to a full General, a position he would hold for the last ten years of his military career before finally retiring from the British Army in 1877.

His appointment as Regimental Colonel of the Scots Guards came in 1875 – the same year that he was awarded the GCB (Knight Grand Cross of the Bath).

While the couple were on holiday in Nice in 1869 his wife Magdalen died and was buried

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6th Baron Rokeby

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there. Her monument in Nice can still be seen. In retirement Baron Rokeby and his unmarried youngest daughter Elizabeth would share their time between his country home, Hazelwood House, and his house in London at 7 Stratford Place, and also made many visits to Windsor Castle, as his daughter Magdalen was married to Gerald Wellesley, nephew of the Duke of Wellington and Queen Victoria's Chaplain and Dean of Windsor. Through this relationship Baron Rokeby became a personal friend of Queen Victoria.

As a benefactor in Abbots Langley and Hunton Bridge, Baron Rokeby subscribed to the village boys' school and provided employment as a local landowner of seventy-four acres. At the time of the 1851 census his staff of twenty five included maids, batmen, gardeners and a bailiff.

Baron Rokeby was a Patron of the London Homeopathic Hospital, and a sponsor of Mary Jane Seacole, having experienced the 'benefits' of homeopathy personally during his service in the Crimea.

In 1883, at the age of eighty five, Baron Rokeby died, not in Abbots Langley but at his home in London. He had served three Kings, a Queen and his country for sixty three years as a soldier and was buried with full military honours at Clewer churchyard near Windsor. In the procession past Windsor Castle his pall was carried by a Marquis, two Lords, two Major-Generals and four Colonels.

In memory of Baron Rokeby his friends raised a fund of £475, which the Charity commissioners invested to generate an annual income as a parish charity for the relief of the sick and poor, to be divided equally between Abbots Langley and Langleybury. The benefits of this fund remain in use to this day. ■

Lesley Brooks

[Ed.] There is an excellent portrait of the young Baron Rokeby attired in redcoat viewable online at:

<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/forces/armyunits/britishinfantry/scotsguardsrokeby.htm>

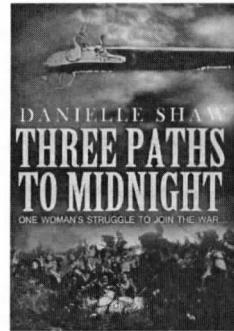
Sources and Acknowledgements

- *Abbots Langley Then 1760-1960* by Clive Clark
- *Hazelwood House, Abbots Langley* by M.Corbey
- Trevor Chandler, Bell captain, St. Paul's Church Langleybury
- *The Church Bells of Hertfordshire* by Geoffrey Dodds
- Pam Rastall, secretary, St. Lawrence Parish Church
- *Baron Rokeby* – from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia
- Hougoumont – A description of the farm and the part it played at the Battle of Waterloo <https://hougoumont.wordpress.com>
- *The History of Hunton Park* – courtesy of Tony Everett of De Vere Venues Ltd

Letters

Battle of Waterloo...

With the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo taking place on 18th June, I have news from author and one-time local resident Danielle Shaw that seven of her published



books are coming out on Kindle. The first, now retitled 'Three Paths to Midnight' is set before, during and after the Battle of Waterloo and is out in time to coincide with the 200th anniversary. ■

Sue Noise