Introduction.

When serving in Britain, the Georgian army conformed to a set of movement patterns which hardly varied from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. The dictates of physical and social geography generally and population densities in the various regions, economic fluctuations and their accompanying social unrest, an as yet unimproved and archaic road network, together with a general lack of quarters large enough to house great numbers of troops, and the vagaries of crises, the international wars and disputes, rebellion, local riots and disorders- these were the factors that most significantly affected the patterns of troop movements and camps. Whereas the geography provided the framework- the points of embarkation around Britain’s shores, the crossings between England, Scotland and Wales, the main march corridors the army used in Britain and to some extent the duty areas occupied- it was civil events that dictated the rate of movement and activated the motor mechanism setting the army in motion. In the 1790s, the most imminent threat to Britain came from the forces of revolutionary France, and so Horsham became an important staging post as it was situated at the crossroads of two military logistic routes: that between London and the south coast embarkation points; and that between Chatham and Portsmouth naval depots. Sussex had traditionally quartered a regiment of cavalry at any given time, dispersed in billets on anti-smuggling duties, and detachments operated as far north as the Surrey border to choke off inland smuggling arterial routes, but it now began to accommodate ever more soldiers as they concentrated towards the south coast, both in defence and as a preliminary to transport abroad.

The road system of eighteenth century England was complex, but there were almost no long single surfaced highways. There was, rather, an intricate web of smaller parish roads, with villages and towns along them that had for centuries served as halting places for travellers. Although small, they tended to be well supplied with inns and stables for the relief of travellers. During the course of the seventeenth century it had come to be regarded as one of the fundamental rights of an Englishman that troops (lewd licentious unbridled fellows by definition) could not be quartered upon private householders without their prior consent and permission. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, this right had been recognised in law, and any infringement was regarded with severity. In consequence, since barracks were virtually unknown, and great numbers of troops (whatever their character) had to be sheltered- the Government had to make shift for their dangerous charges by visiting them upon the other criminal class- inn keepers.

The troops then, were quartered, or ‘billeted’ in public houses- specifically, ‘inns, livery stables, alehouses, victualling houses, and all houses selling brandy, strong waters, cyder or methglin by retail to be drunk on the premises, and in no other’, as the Mutiny act had it. The innkeepers, however, raised continual complaints, largely over the small sums received as payment for their unwanted guests; humble petitions were frequent and, in parts of Sussex off the beaten track, ‘it had become a practice with the publicans, as a class, to take down their sign-boards and throw up their licences upon the approach of troops’.
The absence of any extensive or adequate barrack facilities greatly influenced the quartering pattern of the Army in Britain. As the army grew in size through the century a few new barracks were built and a few old buildings were bought for the purpose by the Board of Ordnance (which body was charged with their erection, maintenance and administration, and with the supply of furniture, utensils, candles and heating); but the building of barracks was never intended to keep pace with the growth of the army, since building was expensive and, as Marshal Wade put it, ‘the people of this kingdom have been taught to associate the idea of Barracks and Slavery so closely together that, like darkness and the Devil, though there be no manner of connection between them, yet they cannot separate them.’

So what produced the change that saw an explosion of barrack building in the last decade of the eighteenth century? Between 1789 and 1814, the army grew from 40,000 to 225,000 men, while the militia - a local force for self defence as embodied in 1793, numbered 100,000 by 1797. With the addition of other auxiliary forces such as the volunteers and yeomanry, by 1805 it could be claimed that there were 810,000 men under arms in the British Isles.

The Barrack Master General was a new creation of 1793. He has been characterised as a builder of police stations. For the unrest created by the French Revolution, by Thomas Paine, and the British Jacobins greatly increased magistrates’ demand for troops for police duties; fear that troops would be disaffected if allowed to mix too freely with the habitués of alehouses where they were normally billeted, added to the claims of magistrates, created a demand for barracks. The Ordnance Department, which had hitherto built barracks, could not keep pace with the demand. Hence the creation of a new department. The thorough going bad management of the Barrack Master General, Oliver De Lancey, has caused the history of this office to be uncommonly well documented, up to a point. In fact, its notorious corruption caused parliament to institute a series of enquiries into all departments of the army and navy. The Commissioners of Military Enquiry uncovered much foolish expenditure, much bad building, and many bad contracts. But the establishment of barracks, although done in piecemeal fashion and without plan, did give troops a home of their own, and it did make discipline, easier and better.

Large barracks were built in 1796 on the Horsham-Worthing road, but even their capacity of 2000 infantry proved insufficient to meet demand, and some regiments sought accommodation in camp on the common to the north of the town.

In 1800, a body of volunteers from 14 other regiments met at Horsham (later moving to Blatchington) to form the Experimental Rifle Corps under Sir Coote Manningham. This experiment bore fruit in the shape of the famous 95th Rifle regiment, later the Rifle Brigade, and today reincarnated as the Rifle Regiment, the largest regiment in the British army.

**History of the Barracks.**

The preparations against expected French invasion were largely focussed in the South-east, although in the event, the only ineffectual attempts were made in Ireland and Wales in 1798. Sussex became quite heavily militarised, not just by barracks, but by storehouses and armouries and depots for munitions. In common with Arundel, Bognor, Chichester, Petworth, Shoreham, Steyning, Aldwick, Worthing, Playden, Rye, Seaford, Littlehampton, Pevensey, Hastings, Winchelsea, Hailsham, Lewes, Brighton, Eastbourne, East Grinstead and other places (twenty-three in total) in Sussex, Horsham
became home to barracked soldiers. From 1796 when the barracks were built, until July 1815, when they were pulled down, Horsham was never without a garrison of soldiers, excepting two very short periods when the barracks were occupied solely by the barrack master.

The following is a list of the names of the Regiments given in consecutive order as they came to Horsham barracks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Regiment</th>
<th>Date of first entry.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derbyshire Militia</td>
<td>January 1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Essex Militia</td>
<td>March 1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire Militia</td>
<td>April 1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55th Regiment</td>
<td>October 1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire Militia</td>
<td>December 1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorks Militia</td>
<td>Feb 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Middlesex Militia</td>
<td>April 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Middlesex Militia</td>
<td>May 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery Militia</td>
<td>July 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucstershire Militia</td>
<td>August 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Artillery</td>
<td>August 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Surrey Militia</td>
<td>December 1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th regiment</td>
<td>July 1799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herefordshire Militia</td>
<td>July 1799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52nd Regiment</td>
<td>November 1799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Norfolk Militia</td>
<td>November 1799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th regiment</td>
<td>January 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56th regiment</td>
<td>January 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Regiment</td>
<td>April 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kent Militia</td>
<td>July 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64th Regiment</td>
<td>October 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Battalion Royals</td>
<td>November 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49th Regiment</td>
<td>May 1801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Regiment</td>
<td>October 1801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster Militia</td>
<td>March 1802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48th regiment</td>
<td>October 1803</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
57th Regiment  January 1804
Dorset Militia    June 1804
3rd Line battalion KGL December 1804
5th Regiment    December 1804
23rd Regiment    November 1805
3rd Battalion Royals October 1806
90th Regiment    December 1806
Royal Bucks Militia December 1807
Leicestershire Militia December 1807
Monmouthshire Militia December 1807
Royal Bucks Militia February 1808
Sussex Militia April 1808
N.B. Volunteers July 1808
26th regiment February 1809
76th Regiment February 1809
32nd Regiment February 1809
50th Regiment February 1809
23rd Regiment March 1809
West Middlesex Regiment June 1809
51st Regiment September 1809
63rd Regiment October 1809
36th regiment December 1809
22nd Regiment January 1810
37th regiment June 1810
102nd Regiment December 1810
75th Regiment January 1811
Warwickshire Militia January 1811
24th Dragoons January 1811
29th regiment November 1811
89th Regiment November 1811
45th regiment January 1812
87th Regiment  March 1812
44th Regiment  July 1812
24th Regiment  July 1812
61st Regiment  July 1813
1st Surrey Militia  October 1813
20th Light Dragoons  December 1813
99th Regiment  December 1813
46th Regiment  February 1814
98th Regiment  March 1814
3rd Veteran battalion  June 1814

This list is from the Horsham Parish registers. It does not entirely correspond with the recorded movement of troops."

About sixty-nine regiments passed through over the next nineteen years. There were frequent reviews on the Common, for instance,

March 11th 1805, a grand review of troops including the King's German Legion at Horsham by the Duke of Cambridge.

23rd April 1808, the Duke of Norfolk inspected the Sussex militia on Horsham Common.

And there was occasional drama, as on 31st March, 1810, when a late night message was received relative to disturbances in London in connection with the imprisonment in the Tower of Sir Francis Burdett, who was engaged in radical politics. At midnight the Horsham regiment marched for London to assist the civil power in suppressing disturbance.

The barracks were kept fully occupied from their inauguration until 1798. In May of that year they were occupied by the 55th Regiment, the West Yorkshire Militia, and the Middlesex supplementary militia. The town had billeted on it two troops of the Oxford Light Dragoons and the residue of the Derby militia.

In February 1801 the barracks were empty except for the barrack master and a skeleton staff. At this time an agricultural crisis had sent the price of provisions high and suppressed wages. The Sussex Weekly advertiser said, 'The poor no longer able to purchase meat are now seen daily extremely grateful to butchers who will indulge them with the purchase of a few sorry bones that would blunt the tooth of a dog to pick.' A riot appeared imminent at Horsham led by a country labourer called Hodge who complained that his weekly wage of 8s was unequal to keep him in flour at 3s 6d per gallon. There being no troops at the barracks, an urgent summons was sent to Midhurst for a company of the Sussex militia and to Arundel for two troops of cavalry to quell the threatened disturbance. These, after marching all night, arrived at Horsham on the morning of 28th February to find the crowd dispersed. The barracks was swiftly reoccupied and by May was being used as a depot to receive stores of food. Not for Hodge or his starving family, but for the troops there to keep an eye on him.
In March 1802 the peace of Amiens between France and Britain was concluded, and by the end of that year the barracks was empty for the second time. But in May of 1803 the war broke out again with renewed severity, and Horsham was to be in the thick of troop movements until the end of it. In December 1804, the First Consul of France, General Bonaparte, became Emperor Napoleon, and assembled an armada to invade England. On the coast of Sussex he was daily expected to land; English soldiers were drilled up to their waists in the sea preparing a reception for him, and all branches of the Service, cavalry, infantry, artillery, militia and volunteers were under arms and ordered to hold themselves in readiness for action at a moment’s notice. Beacon fires were made and kept ready for kindling, including one at St Leonard’s forest near Horsham. Farmers and carriers were all ready with their horses and waggons for conveying women and children inland, and on at least one occasion, so keen was vision rendered by fear, that at Chichester the invading fleet was said to have been seen at sea off the coast. The waggons in consequence were drawn up for service near the town. Provisions were handed out and Horsham prepared for war on its doorstep.

**Before the Barracks.**

For many years before the barracks were built, Horsham had been a halting place, and Horsham Common, then a square mile of land on the north and east of the town had been a camping ground for troops when marching from one station to another. Sometimes these camps lasted for the summer, sometimes they would pitch their tents for one night and be off again in the morning, and smaller bodies would be billeted on public houses in the town, especially in the winter when it was considered injurious to the troops’ health for them to camp. These infrequent camps afforded some entertainment to the town, affording a pleasing change to the rural nature of the neighbourhood in the manner recorded by Thomas Hardy thirty years later in The Trumpet Major. Regiments were not always a nuisance, and if a well behaved regiment happened to be quartered in town over Christmas, a collection would be made in the town for the wives and children of the regiment to celebrate.

From 1793 and the commencement of the wars with revolutionary France, the frequency of these camps and troop movements accelerated dramatically. Something of the nature of these movements can be seen in the accounts presented at the Quarter sessions at Horsham in July 1795, for the conveyance of soldiers from camp to camp, by commandeered waggons and carts.


April 30th. Surrey militia, Horsham to Dorking.

May 16th. Wiltshire Militia, Horsham to Brighton.

May 18th. Ditto to ditto.

May 19th. West Essex Militia, Horsham to Brighton.

May 20th. Hereford Militia, Horsham to Brighton.

May 23rd. Dorset militia, Horsham to Brighton.

May 28th. First Regiment of fencible cavalry, Horsham to Brighton.
June 8th. Sussex fencible cavalry, Horsham to East Grinstead.


June 11th. Tenth Light Dragoons, Horsham to Brighton.


June 18th. Wiltshire Militia, Horsham to Dorking.

June 19th. Ditto to ditto.

July 4th. Fourteenth regiment of foot, Horsham to Petworth (all conveyed in a waggon with four horses) (Two horses to draw a cart at 3d.)

Total Cost of above £52 1s 9d

Again at the Quarter Session’s accounts at Horsham in July 1796, there appear the following entries:

February 17th. West Essex Militia, Horsham to Steyning. East Middlesex Militia, Horsham to Dorking.

April 25th. Somerset fencibles to Dorking. First regiment of fencibles to Brighton.

April 26th. Huntingdon militia to Lindfield.

June 10th. Huntingdon Militia to Shoreham.

June 23rd. Montgomery Militia to East Grinstead.


Total £22, 15s 3d.

On all the lanes and roads of Sussex, these teams of horses and waggons plied their part in the movement of regiments with all their paraphernalia and baggage. The bands, camp followers and wives frequently rode on the wagons. These last named, mostly young women, would increase their families in a natural and unceremonial manner. Taken in labour as the regiments marched along, they would be accommodated and cared for by the regimental surgeons. On 20th January 1806, a regiment came to Horsham, two soldier’s wives were delivered each of a child, one on a baggage waggon as it entered the town, and the other at an Inn immediately on her arrival. viii

When were the Barracks built?

The building work commenced in August 1796. Stone or brick built barracks required a ‘rest’ before being occupied, but the wooden barracks could be immediately used, and troops seem to have been at Horsham before the end of the year. The first regiment marched into the new barracks on 5th December 1796.

How were they built?
The barracks erected all over Sussex were largely buildings of a temporary nature, for the accommodation of regulars and militia. Volunteers were usually expected to live at home, or, when on duty in camps. The Sussex barracks were all similar in construction but differed in size. Those at Horsham, among the largest, consisted of eight ranges of two storey buildings 112’ by 33’ each. One officer’s quarters of 93’ by 33’, a hospital about the same size, a range of mess apartments, a range of stables 270’ by 26’, servants buildings, barrack master’s stores, canteen, guardhouse, kitchens, magazine and so on.

Construction of the buildings was carried out by private contractors, chosen more with an eye to speed than economy. The Barrack Master General DeLancey felt that preparing plans and advertising for competitive bidders took too much time. He had a preference for London firms, and for dealing with only a single general contractor on each project. Once completed, the buildings of each barracks were entrusted to barracks Masters appointed by the War Office. They were in charge of maintaining them; furnishing them with bedding, utensils, coal and candles; and providing the troops with beer and the horses with feed and forage. They were charged by the Barracks Office with submitting a variety of weekly, monthly and quarterly returns about their buildings, contracts and tenants. These returns seem to have been lost with the rest of the Barracks Office papers.

Who built them?

The architects for Horsham were James Johnson and John Sanders. The builder employed for Horsham Barracks was John Scobell, additions were made by Ralph Jones and Nicholas Whitmore. Scobell appears to have sub-contracted to another because the main contractor was Thomas Tomlins who is listed in Parliamentary report as erecting ‘Horsham Barracks for infantry’ beginning in August 1796. He charged the Barrack master’s office £19,502 and submitted his accounts 23rd May 1802.

Changes in the Barracks after building.

The first regiment marched into the new barracks on 5th December 1796, after being ordered there in November as part of ‘The Army of the Reserve’ reinforcement of 2000 men. Some of the information regarding capacity of the barracks after the initial construction is contradictory. By March 1798, there was accommodation for just 1740 infantry instead of the 2000 specified in 1796. In February of 1800, it is described as ‘temporary barracks for 2400 infantry’. Feb 1803 sees just the barrack-master present with his family, and then in June 1803, the capacity is again reckoned at 2400.

Dismantling the Barracks.
On 27-28th July 1815, immediately following Waterloo, the barracks stores were sold at auction by Messrs Verral of Lewes, and subsequently the buildings followed. By 29th October 1816 the ground was completely clear, and the lease of the land was surrendered three years short of its term of expiration. xvii

The records of the sale have not been found. A similar barracks, but smaller, at Lewes, realised £3000. xviii Another sale by Verral is advertised in the Sussex Advertiser of 17th April 1815.

The new Providence chapel was erected at Charlwood 15th November 1816. xix
Other survivals from Horsham.
The three octagonal cookhouses were all rebuilt elsewhere. Two have been identified as surviving today. One as an entrance lodge at Leonardslee, Lower Beeding, and another as a cottage at Old Park Farm, Maplehurst. The third was rebuilt in 1815 as a Congregational Chapel at Jengers Mead at Billinghurst. It was located on land behind the present day Post Office in Jenger’s Mead and known as Jenger’s Chapel. It closed in 1889 and has since been demolished.xx

The building of the military depot on the Common close to the road now known as Depot Road, was begun on 6th August, 1804, and was completed by the 25th March 1805. These buildings, unlike the Horsham Barracks were built by the Board of Ordnance, and were of substantial construction, and intended to be permanent. They consisted of:
One large building as armoury for 10,000 stand of arms, furnishing room and lobby.

Armourer’s rooms.

Storekeeper’s rooms.

Barracks.

Officer’s quarters.

Storerooms for packing materials

Two workshops for repairs with forges.

Ammunition magazine.

The buildings for quarters and barracks had underground kitchens and conveniences, and the Depot was surrounded by a 9’ 6” brick wall surmounted by iron spikes. It was about 3.5 acres in total. The buildings were of brick with slate roofs and stone foundations.  

These depot buildings shared the fate of the Horsham barracks. The stores and arms were removed in February 1819, and the property sold by auction in April 1827. In 1947 the entrance gate and pillars and two lodges survived on Depot Road, but they were later demolished. Two pictures of these survivals are seen in Albery.

The Armoury houses, one stood each side of the gates.
The Depot entrance gates.

Details of construction.

From historic England Listing: CHAPEL ROAD 1. S387 (north-west side) Providence Chapel TQ 2441 5/6 II* 2. Erected in 1816 as "Charlwood Union Chapel" but was brought from Horsham and appears to date from circa 1800. One storey weather boarded on brick base. Hipped slate roof with brick chimney, the roof forming a veranda to the south-east elevation supported on 8 wooden columns. Three shuttered windows. Left side 4 panelled door and central 6 panelled door. Central path of Charlwood stone. The interior contains 2 vestries. The minister's vestry has an early C19 fireplace with reeded shelf. The octagonal pulpit at the north-east with pointed arched backboard and the table pew with square splay-sided table and flanking box pews date from the early C19.
There exists a very fine plan of the barracks preserved in Horsham Museum, and it is possible to draw off the scale of the Guardhouse to see whether it matches that of Providence chapel. It is titled, ‘A survey of the Barracks at Horsham in the County of Sussex, erected Sept 1796 on the estate of Nath. Tredcroft Esq., taken down Sep 1815, W Joane Surveyor, Horsham.

It is reproduced in the appendices, but here are two details with measure.
It appears that the Guardhouse does not match Providence Chapel. The chapel has a floor space of 1354 square feet, whereas that of the guardhouse is 1426 square feet without including the veranda, and 1860 when including it. However, if one subtracts the three 'black holes', or cells for solitary confinement (4 above) from the total, then one arrives at a figure of 1350 square feet.
including veranda. A near exact match for the chapel. I therefore propose that the cells no longer form part of the building, having been rejected at some point.

‘They were built entirely of timber except the foundations which were of brick, and the roofs of pantiles. Each of the eight main buildings contained eight rooms, four upper and four lower; the upper rooms had no ceilings but the pantiles were pointed with mortar to keep out the weather. The beds in the upper room were placed like hutches in two tiers, one above the other, on each side of the room for two men in each bed. ...The whole of the barracks buildings cost £60,000 and covered about twelve acres of ground, which were leased to the government by Mr Tredcroft for a period of twenty-one years. All the timber arrived in sections for putting together; about 300 men were engaged on the buildings, and the whole of the work was completed in about six weeks.’

Owing to the paucity of information on Horsham specifically, it has been necessary to approach the detail from examination of other temporary barracks. The best research on construction detail as practised the Barracks Office by has been completed by Dr Breihan in his work on Dorset and Devonshire barracks, and to a lesser extent by Douet. As all of these works are very hard to get hold of now, and expensive, the relevant sections have been copied and these are reproduced as appendices for the use of your architect. All rights remain with the authors and these copies are purely for research purposes. It is important to distinguish between the work of the Ordnance Office on barracks pre-1793 and after that period for their own buildings and artillery barracks as opposed to that by the Barracks Office. The two methods of construction are usually confused.

Recently, archaeological reports into the temporary barracks at Berry Head fort have revealed some interesting details. The relevant reports have been attached in three further appendices.

It was also possible to examine some of the handful of other temporary barracks building survivals.

Maidstone.

In the early part of the war, the Barracks Department’s architects built six barracks which, despite being of timber rather than stone or brick, were referred to as being ‘established’, by which they meant permanent. As the fourth Commissioners of Military Enquiry’s report into the Barrack master general’s office established, there was no significant distinction between temporary and established barracks, except a vague undertaking to conduct improving works on the latter to upgrade them to ‘permanent’ at some later unspecified date. The first were at Chelmsford and Colchester in Essex, in 1794, followed by Sunderland, Romford and Croydon a year later, and Maidstone in 1797. The last three were cavalry stations and quite small, but the infantry barracks were substantial and comparable to Horsham. Sunderland had a capacity of 1528 men, probably in nineteen large barracks rooms housing thirty-six men each in double berths, and twenty serjeants’ rooms each sleeping four men in two-level bunks. There is evidence of their construction at Maidstone where the officers’ quarters survive. Apart from the brick chimneys and slate roof, the building was entirely of wood, with a pine balloon frame clad in white weatherboarding. Flights of stairs divided it internally into three, and there were service wings to the rear. The officers had small plain rooms with a fireplace in one corner and a built-in cupboard in the other, and they were issued with bedding, a table, bellows, fire irons and a chamberpot. It is noteworthy that the architectural
Exeter

Exeter, higher barracks, former forage barn.

Formerly known as: Town Barracks HOWELL ROAD. Forage barn, now store. 1794, for the Barrack Department. Brick with weatherboarded front, and a slate pyramidal roof Square, single-depth plan. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; 1-window front range. Weatherboarded front and brick sides, C20 central vehicle doors and small casement window to right of right-hand door. Right-hand return has ground and first-floor window, the latter with C19 metal frame. INTERIOR: has a heavy roof with king post trusses and a wide right-hand side stair with uncut string. HISTORY: Forage barns were important components of cavalry barracks; the only other known examples, more altered than at Exeter, are at Hounslow Barracks, Greater London. This is a rare component of the least altered example of the cavalry barracks built as part of the first army barrack-building campaign in England, at the start of the Revolutionary War with France.
A Blind Alley or Dead end.

It was suggested to me that some papers found at WO55/2317 and 2318 describing a set of military buildings at Horsham referred to the barracks. On examination it was found that these papers form part of the ordnance series, and as such refer to the arms depot constructed on Horsham Common by the Royal Ordnance. They have no relevance for Horsham Barracks, but I have reproduced one page here to illustrate from whence some misconceptions of the barracks have arisen.

‘A Guard House with 4 single births (sic), and a Black Hole at each end, containing together. – In length 25’ 5”, in width 11’ 5”.

2 Sheds in front for keeping Arm Chests etc.- In length 41’, in width 8’ 6”

2 Ditto in rear for Ditto.- In length 34’ 6”, in width 8’6”

The whole of the Buildings are built of Brick and Mortar.

(signed) Buckell”xxvi

Barrack Life.

Life in barracks centred around the daily bugle, and roll, calls at reveille in the morning, retreat in the late afternoon and tattoo at night. In between there were alternating periods of drill, idleness, and
for cavalry troopers, the care of their horses. We have been extraordinarily lucky in finding a surviving set of barrack orders for Horsham which are reproduced as an appendix. There are repeated prohibitions of various activities, which indicates that the soldiers persisted in them. Drunkenness, casual urination, gambling, poaching, ball-paying, stealing vegetables from local gardens, and staying out after tattoo were all subjects of constant censure.

Minor punishments sanctioned by regulation. ‘Commanding officers do not place a soldier in the Cells, with or without hard labour, solitary or otherwise, for a longer period than One Hundred and Sixty-eight (168) hours, in addition to any Minor Punishment they are authorised to award. Solitary confinement, or confinement to the Black Hole, are as much as possible reserved for cases of Drunkenness, Riot, Violence, or Insolence to Superiors. Other punishments are, Confinement to Barracks, extra Drills (if with knapsack, for fourteen days only) and Duties of Fatigue or Drudgery; it being understood that the whole period of confinement shall not exceed one month.’

‘When a man is brought drunk to a Guardroom by a non-commissioned officer, the latter is to direct, not to act. He is not to lay hold of the Prisoner, who, under the influence of liquor, may use abusive language, or strike his superior. The Escort will, if necessary lead or carry the Prisoner to confinement, and if placed in a solitary cell, he is to be visited at least every two hours by the Non-commissioned officer of the Guard.’

A list of the regiments quartered at Horsham is given above. It is sometimes overlooked that the army in England spent as much time on internal repression as they did on preparing to fight the French. Radical politics were a real threat to the established order, and in the early 1790s there was popular enthusiasm for the French revolutionary ideals. Thomas Paine, well known in Sussex had published his reply to Burke in ‘The Rights of Man’ and other stirring works. The effects in Horsham persisted a long time. A letter dated Horsham 3rd July 1812 from a young lady to her father, speaks of a theatrical performance at which, ‘There was a great uproar with the Officers present on account of the peoples not taking their hats off when God save the King was sung: they drew their swords and a great disturbance they made.’ Not everyone in Horsham was a fan, and his effigy was paraded around Horsham on a donkey and burned on the Carfax. The government was rattled, and between 1793 and 1797 many repressive measures were taken, but the propagation of ‘liberty, fraternity and equality’ and of Republicanism went on in England and Ireland.

The spirit becomes visible at Horsham barracks in 1797 for in June of that year the Derbyshire Militia, then quartered there, issued a circular offering a reward for the incredible sum of seventy guineas for, ‘the apprehension of any person or persons concerned in distributing seditious publications or by any other artful means tending to excite discontent and disaffection in the regiment to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. The money will be paid on conviction of those offending for which purpose the following voluntary subscription is entered into, etc’. 

Regiments.
Anecdotes.

The Horsham Museum contains the private and domestic papers of sometime Constable John Browne of Horsham, 1821-1873, and included in this are some tedious moralising sermons that have this to say of the effect of the barracks money on the locals inhabitants,

'They (the barracks) produced a state of immorality bad enough to be incredible. The state of mentality was worse than is conceived. It produced dishonesty in every shape among moneyled individuals; doctors without character, lawyers who would engage in trials which they knew were contrary to law and justice. This state of things went down to the lowest labourers: he that could cheat the government was the most lauded. C., a butcher, made £80,000, leaving his four daughters £20,000 each, it never made one of them respectable.'

The avaricious feelings of the local publicans had been excited, but it is unlikely they were shared by the inhabitants generally, for the encampment of soldiers on the Common in pre-barrack days had frequently disturbed their peace. Under discipline, in their fine uniforms, led by their pretty bandsmen, the regiments on arrival afforded spectacular satisfaction, but when they succeeded this by displaying the cunning skills of the highwayman and burglar, using their bayonets as jemmies and to stab, threaten and harass the locals instead of fighting the French, the allure soon wore off. The march out of town was even more popular than the march in had been.

One of the most notorious regiments that visited Horsham was the 52nd regiment of foot, in 1782. Some of its soldiers indulged in burglary, highway robbery and muggings. At night-time, disguised in their greatcoats, they would waylay and rob the locals, taking their purses and clothes. Their depredations made it impossible to cross the Common after dark. The Green Dragon Inn was broken into and robbed of £10, and from bayonet marks on the frames, it was concluded that soldiers were to blame. The colonel called a parade and offered a £5 award to any informer. One man duly came forward to peach on his comrades. He, and they, were drummed out of the regiment with halters round their neck and sent to the navy. The informer received his £5 reward and 150 lashes into the bargain. It is recorded that the departure of this regiment was ‘exceedingly agreeable to the inhabitants.’

The long spell of hostilities that Britain engaged in against revolutionary France and her allies led to shortages in army and navy recruitment. One of the stopgap measures resorted to, to raise recruits for the army, was the substantial increase in ‘bounties’ the payments to recruits, whether from they were labourers from the field, or enlisted into the Regulars from the Militia. This bribe became more substantial the further the wars progressed, and so the new recruit found himself cash rich. The old soldier also experienced famine and feast conditions for his pocketbook. While abroad his pay had a tendency to accumulate to his credit and be paid to him upon his return. There was no savings bank or post office available at Horsham for them to use, and private banks were not much concerned with soldiers. There were occasions then, when hundreds of men would receive their money on the same day and then contrive to get rid of it as soon as possible. On 21st November, 1803, for example, hundreds of the Lancashire Militia volunteered into the regular army, receiving a cash bounty of £7 10s, and were allowed a week to ‘enjoy’ it. All too often these conditions led to an orgiastic spree on arrival in barracks that had useful consequences for the local landlords, and less salubrious results for the local inhabitants who were not in a position to take financial advantage of the soldiers. The resulting scenes of drunkenness and insubordination are best described by William Albery in his influential history of Horsham, where he has plundered the period newspapers, Quarter
session accounts, and those of the assizes without unfortunately, providing references. The thoroughness of his approach is to be recommended, and my glances at the Quarter session papers in Chichester confirm that he has missed little, so I have no compunction in leaning on him heavily in this section.

‘Between them Boniface and Tommy Atkins were able to create and maintain scenes of drunkenness and insubordination with which the constables and headboroughs of Horsham were frequently unable to deal and the military authorities found hard to subdue. Sometimes the townspeople were called upon to lend a hand, and the result was in such cases a general melee inside and outside the public house, in which perhaps twenty or thirty a side would be breaking, or trying to break each other’s heads. The nature and frequency of these affairs, which, it is said, usually ended in a victory for the townspeople, originated the elegant expression ‘Hurrah for Hell or Horsham’. These encounters and similar affairs seem to have increased in severity as time passed, for in a brief PS to a business letter dated 30th April, 1814, a gentleman writes, ‘There has been sad work between the soldiers and the townspeople. About 250 of the former attacked the town with clubs, stones, etc. but were repulsed.’

Some of the drunken freaks and gallantries of the soldiers were of an entertaining if vulgar nature. One of their favourite refreshments was that of gin and brandy mixed with gingerbread and one pound notes to which, with spoons, they helped themselves in public from a domestic vessel, more appropriate to the bedroom than the street. Other times they would enjoy an expensive smoke by purposely setting fire to their pipes with a bank note; at another time they would fancy a high priced freak sandwich, eating a one pound note between two slice of bread and butter. One of these soldiers was one day treating his comrades to drink when perceiving that the note the proffered the landlady in payment for liquor was dirty, he gallantly burned it, declaring that it was not fit to offer a lady and selected a clean one in its place.

Drinking, smoking, and burning and eating banknotes were not the only ways known to the soldiers of getting rid of their money. At the clocksmith’s shop of Michael Bromley, in West Street, they would sometimes buy a silver watch with which, tiring quickly of it, they might soon afterwards playing hopscotch on the barrack ground, or cooking it in grease in a frying-pan at one of the cook houses just for a lark. A party of four soldiers, in August, 1799, went to Phillips the printer, in South Street, and asked what he would charge to print some mottoes. He quoted 6d each, but they demurred at the price and offered him 4d each, swearing that he was trying to impose upon them knowing they had plenty of money, and that rather than be so treated, they would go to London for their printing. Accordingly they posted by coach) off to London, and after applying at three or four printing houses where they were asked 1s each for the work, they returned and gave the job to Phillips, remarking to him that the journey had cost them six guineas, but that they did not mind that as they had satisfied themselves as to the alleged imposition.

In the same year another small party of soldiers out for a walk called at the Crabtree Inn, Lower Beeding, and requested to have something nice to eat; but the house was unprovided with a suitable luxury, or the landlady was unwilling to provide such accommodation. They were about to go away when their attention was attracted by the beautiful singing of a fine canary bird in a cage. They asked the lady the price of it; she at first hesitated to say professing a high regard for the little warbler, but afterwards named half a guinea. One of the soldiers instantly paid her the money, snatched the little creature from its cage, wrung its neck and demanded of the landlady that it should be plucked and cooked for them. This was accordingly done, and the dainty morsel was divided between them. Such tender-hearted gentlemen can hardly be called gormandizers on
account of this delicate feast, but gourmandizing as well as drunkenness figured in their many ways of entertaining themselves, and the public, whilst waiting to meet the French.

At about the same time as an intoxicated corporal of the Herefordshire Regiment fell from the Barrack upper window and broke his neck, a private in the East Kent regiment engaged for a wager to eat twenty-four gooseberry tarts, each weighing five ounces—about equal to three loaves of bread—in half an hour: he ate seventeen of the tarts in twenty-three minutes when a violent nosebleed and sickness prevented his continuing and lost him his bet.

At other times there were mutinies in the barracks which took ugly turns. On 21st May, 1797, an outbreak was occasioned by the confinement of two of three men from the Derbyshire regiment, who had been for some days at every meal complaining of the quality of food served to them. Soon after their confinement the whole of the men of the Derbyshire and Bedfordshire regiments clamoured for the release of their comrades. Their demand not being complied with they kept the whole barracks in an uproar till 10 o’clock at night when an attack upon the guardhouse was planned. When the mutineers, however, went to carry out their intention of forcibly releasing the prisoners, they found the whole picket guard armed; three companies of infantry, with bayonets fixed and two cannon loaded with grapeshot with fuses burning, were opposed to them. Hostilities at this stage were suspended, and an order came from the Commanding Officer for the release of the prisoners. The soldiers then returned to their quarters. Again, on 27th July, 1797, there was a mutiny in the barracks upon one man being ordered to the guardroom. A large party of the Surrey Militia, well primed with strong drink, resisted their superior Officers, and on the following day renewed disturbances had to be quelled by a troop of cavalry.

Should the reader think these hardly the kind of soldiers to have conquered Napoleon’s troops he might perhaps place more confidence in Lieutenant Aiken and Ensign Armstrong of the Bedfordshire Militia who, after quarrelling at the mess, fought a terrible duel on Horsham Common. Each fired a pistol at the other without hitting him when their seconds, Officers of the same regiment, intervened, to the intense relief of the duellists and the satisfaction of their outraged honour without the spilling of a drop of blood. Then there is the case of Ensign Bunn of the 64th Regiment also stationed at Horsham. This gentleman somehow got his family escutcheon tarnished by contact with a theatrical lady at Horsham described as ‘of considerable attractions’. He appears to have thought the disgrace could be wiped out only by someone’s blood and so determined to shoot, as soon as possible, the lady’s husband, Mr George Stanton, described as, ‘a comedian now residing at Horsham.’ Meeting him in a Horsham street on 21st December 1800, he presented a loaded pistol at him and pulled the trigger. Somehow he missed fire and there resulted in something of a scrap for both were summoned to appear at the Quarter sessions at Chichester in the following January to explain their proceedings. Bunn, who swore a charge against Stanton, ‘for that he was violently assaulted, beaten and ill-treated by him at Horsham aforesaid,’ did not appear; his bail of £40 was forfeited and a warrant was issued for his arrest. At that time his regiment was ordered under foreign service, and Ensign Bunn preferred this order to taking his trial at the Quarter sessions. On 14th January, therefore, he marched away from Horsham to Portsmouth with his regiment a week before the trial was due. Here he evaded capture until the middle of February, when he was taken by two constables who had traced him aboard his vessel. He was quickly rescued by his comrades, who compelled the constables to quit the ship under a threat of keel-hauling. The constables, however, returned, bringing sufficient assistance and authority, and captured the gallant officer, whom they found doubled up and concealed in a small hole in the cabin, whence he was admitted to the Petworth house of correction. He was subsequently tried at the Quarter Sessions and sentenced to one month’s imprisonment. It is refreshing to read that on the departure of Ensign
Bunn’s regiment together with the 1st battalion of the Royals ‘From Horsham to Portsmouth to embark for service in the expedition now fitting out. good discipline and orderly behaviour distinguished both regiments... and there can be little doubt of both being an honour to their country and a terror to their enemies.’

Further variety is given in the conduct of twelve soldiers, who in July 1798 waylaid Sadler, the Horsham-Worthing carrier, ransacked his van, took what they thought to have, and then allowed him to go home. And again in some facetious members of an Irish regiment, who ran about the barrack square, jabbing with their bayonets some comrades of the 13th foot, dancing them round in the most lively manner, wounding several, and nearly killing two or three. Or again, there were 500 men who in August 1807, volunteered from the Royal Lancashire Militia into the line regiments. Some of these, coming from Chichester, literally fought their way into Horsham. Halting at Stopham Bridge on Sunday 23rd, they got drunk, abusive and quarrelsome. The landlord of the public house there could not serve them fast enough, so they turned him out and helped themselves. They ate and drank of everything they could find, and then sacked the place completely, smashing everything. The constable at Pulborough got a few countrymen together armed with agricultural implements, and a miniature pitched battle took place in which, though none was killed, several were injured. These 500 men were paid their bounty money at Horsham, and then there was the devil to pay. Some of them took to drink, and at one public house alone, spent £200 in three days. This was most probably at the Crown Inn, which had not long since removed to its present position from the South-east corner of West street; or the Lamb inn, then called the Lamb and Shepherdess. Which then stood on the site at the North-west corner of the Carfax- these were the two favourite public houses of the soldiers. Well-primed with taproom courage they took to smashing up anything that came handy; some of them attacked and demolished a carriage and two carts that were being driven through the town; they stole and wantonly killed geese and chicken; stripped orchards, smashed windows, chairs, pots and glasses, wherever they went. The Officers of that regiment subscribed £10 each towards the damage; half of the total amount was given to the poor and half to the replacement of the smashed windows, crockery-ware etc. One of the soldiers, more conscientious than his comrades after having had his fill of this amusement, went up to the gaol and asked to be hanged. We may imagine the deep regret with which so nice a disciplinarian and humane officer as Mr Smart, the Governor of the Gaol, was obliged to refuse such a request. This soldier’s desire having reached the ears of his comrades, they quickly resolved he should not be disappointed. Accordingly they got some rope, and brought him opposite to the Lamb, and there surrounded by his appreciative comrades, some of them seated on top of the sign post about 16’ high, drinking hot brandy, presumably in honour of the event, they strung him up to a tree from which perilous position he was rescued, black in the face, only just in time to save his life.

Other affairs, some even worse, took place at or in the neighbourhood of the barracks. One in particular is recorded for their part in which three Irish soldiers, John Cullen, Patrick Shea and Michael Donellin, on August 25th 1800, after trial at the Assizes, were hanged together on Horsham Common in the presence of over 1000 people. One of them encouraged the hangman in his job, observing to him, ‘you are trembling more than I am’.

Flogging sometimes very severe from 125 to 600 lashes were ordered by Courts martial for military crimes- forging a furlough for leave in the former case, and desertion in the latter. These floggings were inflicted in the barrack square on the soldiers in full view of their comrades. Some would receive their punishment without a groan, but the cries of others were heard by people living as far away as the cottages on Tower hill. In 1795 thirteen soldiers of the Oxford Militia were all committed to Horsham Gaol charged with riotous assembly and with stealing and carrying away
large quantities of wheat, flour, and other goods. Tried at a special Assize at Lewes on June 8th, three were sentenced to be hanged and were duly executed at Horsham, one, a semi-idiot, was reprieved, another forgiven, and six more were afterwards flogged, each with from 500 to 1,500 lashes (a virtual death sentence), and two were shot. These military executions were carried out on June 12th, at Goldstone Bottom, Hove, where a hollow military square of men half a mile long was formed. The doomed men with their coffins were driven in a cart to the square, and accompanied by a clergyman were marched from one end of the square to the other, and then back to the centre where each knelt on his coffin and after a few short prayers, both were shot.

Epidemics.

Most soldiers stayed in their rooms when not drilling, preferring the warmth of closed windows to the healthful ventilation constantly ordered and urged by their superiors. The barracks rooms were in fact a perfect breeding place for disease. Horsham suffered terribly in 1810 and 1812. I have appended a report on the 102nd Regiment of Foot, who were dreadfully affected during their sojourn in Sussex.

Regulations to be observed by troops in Barracks.

‘His Majesty’s Warrant, dated 25th of December, 1807, Copies of which have been supplied to every Regiment, contain the regulation for Troops in Barracks, and must invariably form part of the Documents to be kept for Reference at the Headquarters.

Of these Regulations the strictest observance is required, and it is presumed that a just Consideration of the Liberality, with which Government has provided for the Comfort and Accommodation of the Soldiers, will excite on their part a proper Care of the various Articles (the property of the public) which are furnished for their Use and Convenience, as well as of the Buildings themselves and the Fixtures contained in them; and to these important Objects the Attention of Officers in Command is most earnestly required.

The constant attention of Officers in Command of Brigades and Regiments is to be paid to the Cleanliness and State of Repair, of the Barracks occupied by the Troops under their Command, and particularly to the Quality and Condition of the Bedding, a circumstance of the utmost importance to the Comfort and Health of the Soldiers.

It is incumbent on these Officers by their own personal Inspection, as well as by reports of their Orderly officers, to make themselves perfectly acquainted with every Particular respecting the Articles of Barrack Equipment, delivered for the use of their Men; and in case of any deficiency, it is the Duty of the Commanding officer of the Regiment to make Application for the necessary Supply through the General officer Commanding; but though t accords with the Liberality of Government, and the Gracious Intentions of His Majesty, that the Soldier should be supplied with everything that is requisite, it is the Duty of every Individual to guard most strictly against unnecessary Expenditure. These applications, therefore, should not be made without the most minute previous personal inspection, and, in the case of a Requisition for the Article of Bedding, it will be proper that the Necessity of it, and the Cause which produces it, should be especially ascertained, and certified by the Commanding officer of the regiment.
Whenever it may be Considered expedient to destroy Bedding, which may have been used by men affected with any contagious disorder, the Medical officer shall represent the Circumstance to the Commanding Officer on the spot, who will report to the General Officer Commanding, in order that he may cause a Board to assemble for the purpose of determining the Propriety of destroying the Articles:- the Board is to consist of one Field Officer and two Medical officers (one of whom must be of the Medical Staff).

On the Inspection being closed, the resident will cause the Articles condemned as unfit for further use to be destroyed in the Presence of the Board; and will annex to the proceedings a Certificate to that effect, setting forth the exact number of the Respective Articles. The President will deliver the Proceedings to the Barrack-Master as his voucher, and report the result to the General officer.

The general Practice of washing the Floors of Barrack-rooms having been found very prejudicial to the Health of the Soldiers, by exposing them to a Damp Atmosphere, this pernicious custom is to be discontinued, and Dry Rubbing is to be substituted in its place.

No wine, beer, or spirituous liquor, is to be sold within the Barracks to the non-Commissioned Officers or Private men of any regiment stationed therein, except at the established Canteen, where a regularly licenced Sutler is appointed by the Commissioners for the Affairs of Barracks, for the Purpose of supplying the Soldiers, at fair and reasonable Market Prices, with Provisions, Liquors etc, which are required to be of the best quality. No Tippling is to be allowed in any of the Barrack-rooms allotted for the use of Non-commissioned officers and Soldiers.

Interior.

Against expectation it has been possible to glean much information on the interior of barrack rooms and their contents. Some of this information has been attached as appendices, including some reconstructive drawings, and some WO papers dealing with supplies intended for barrack rooms.

The guard house would typically have been equipped partially as a barrack room, the expectation being that most of the guard would sleep at night. The guard being turned out when necessary. Separate rooms were available for the officer, and for arms racks. The Horsham guardroom had three exterior cells accessed from the outside. Much further information can be found in a lively series of articles by Robert Henderson which, while dealing mainly with Canadian barracks of the same period, contain a great deal on barracks life and equipment.

Hyde Park barracks asked the archaeologist Robert Varman to paint us a picture of how the guardhouses were furnished and fitted out, based on marks, holes and gouges in the brickwork. Robert’s drawings, shown below, are sketchy but accurate and give us some idea of how convict guards and later caretakers made use of this cramped room, by attaching shelves, cupboards and fireplace furniture to the brickwork and leaving tell-tale traces.
North guardhouse interior before 1819
North guardhouse interior after 1819
North guardhouse interior after 1848

These drawings are reproduced from Robert Varman’s *Background report toward a plan of management west compound wall and structures Hyde Park Barracks* / Dr Robert V J Varman for the Hyde Park Barracks 1994 (with later illustrations). Report held in HHT’s Caroline Simpson Reference Library.

**Notes on Sources:**

WO Papers.

Records of the Barrack Office- no original correspondence has survived, but there is a general series of out-letter books, 1804-25 in Ordnance Office, Out letters (WO46/111-134). The same class includes also entry books of letters from the Barrack Office to the Commissioners of Military Enquiry 1807-10 (WO46/154-55). Ledgers of the Barracks Office 1804-29, are in the class Ordnance Office: Ledgers (WO48-325-338) and accounts of the Barrackmaster General 1794-1808, in Ordnance Office: Various accounts (WO49/245). A collection of statistics on the costs of barracks, 1809, is in the same class (WO49/247). Daily order books of Colchester barracks 1796-1809 and the cash book of the
barrackmaster 1788-1823, are in the class Various Private Collections (WO79/51-60). Papers relating to the Barrack Office will be found in the classes Selected Unnumbered Papers (WO40) and Selected VOS and OS papers (WO43). Plans of barracks are to be found in the classes Maps and Plan: Misc (WORK38/1-6) and Maps and Plans: Army establishments (WORK 43).

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