

# The King's Stone

- **Press cutting**

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- **Photographs**

By courtesy of Kit Martin, Brian Mizon and West Wickham & District Local History Club

- **'The Royal Flying Corps First Field Exercise'**  
*by Bruce Robertson, 1992*

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There is also information on the manoeuvres at :

- 'The Army Manoeuvres of 1912' on

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/online/worldwar1/army-112.htm>, particularly the map of the exercise area.

- A film at [www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/543](http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/543)

- 'Army Manoeuvres of 1912' on

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army\\_Manoeuvres\\_of\\_1912](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_Manoeuvres_of_1912)

*Cambridge Chronicle*, December 1912 press cutting

### **King's Stone in Churchyard Wall**

A commemorative stone has been placed in Horseheath Churchyard wall recording the visit of King George V to inspect troops on Army manoeuvres.

Miss Solari, Mrs. Wayman Parsons and Miss Borrer showed their usual interest in the parish by volunteering subscriptions towards this act of loyalty, as also did Mrs. McKenny-Hughes, who kindly wrote the epigram for the stone, which was placed in the wall on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

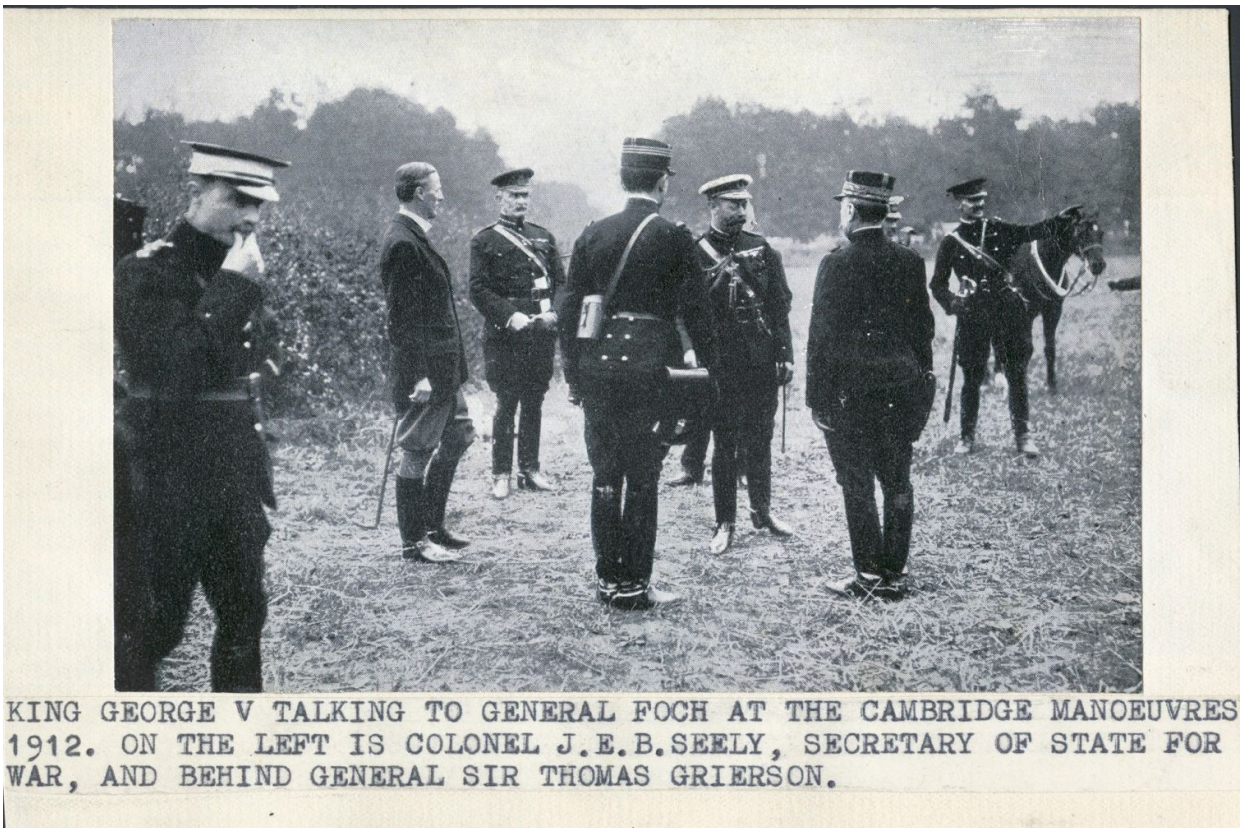
In a cavity behind the stone, Miss Catherine Parsons has placed a sealed bottle containing a newspaper account of the King's visit to Horseheath, a portrait of the King, together with emblems of peace and prosperity.

# The Army Manoeuvres of 1912



In 1912, two years before the start of the First World War, the British Army carried out a full-scale war exercise. The exercise was fought on the fields of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. The army was split into two forces, 'Red' and 'Blue,' which were led by British generals who would later go on to become famous due to their part in the Great War.

King George V himself visited Cambridgeshire to watch some of the exercise and, rather ironically given what would happen two years later, he invited his cousin Kaiser Wilhelm II to be his guest.



King George V speaking to General Foch of France during the exercise. (Cambs Collection Q.C.K12.1085A)



The King stayed at Trinity College. Here is his car leaving the college. (Cambs Collection 19430)

The area to be covered by the exercise was huge. The Army Council had contacted all the local parish councils a few months before, to warn them that there would be a mock military campaign.

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# MAP OF THE ARMY MANŒUVRES AREA, 1912

REDLAND TROOPS have invaded the Territory from the West, and BLUELAND TROOPS are opposing them around Cambridge

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Map of the area covered by the 1912 exercise.

A circular letter was read by the Chairman as follows:  
War Office,  
London, S.W.,  
25<sup>th</sup> January, 1912

Sir,  
I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that it is in contemplation to hold Manoeuvres during the summer of 1912, and in accordance with the provisions of Article 1 (2) of the Military Manoeuvres Act, 1897, to enclose a draft of the Order in Council to be issued in due course. It will be observed that the area included in

Burrough Green Parish Council minute book, showing the entry mentioning that an exercise would be taking place. (Cambs Archives P17/AM1)

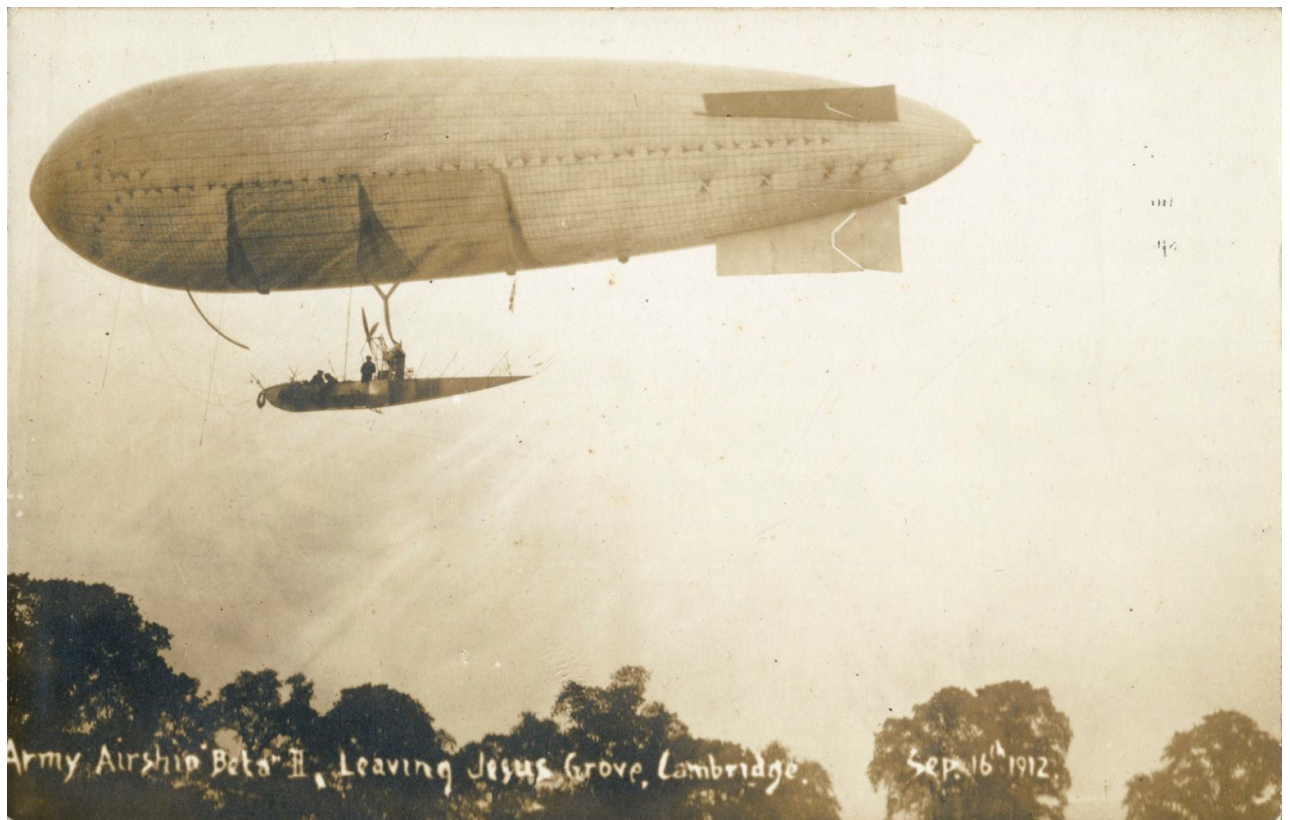
203  
the Schedule is the same in every particular as that scheduled last year, but as no manoeuvres were executed in it under the Order in Council made in 1911, the use of the same area is permitted by Sec. 1 (2) of the Military Manoeuvres Act, 1911.  
I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
E.W.D. Ward.  
The Clerk to the  
Parish Council,  
Borough Green.

Page 2 of the above entry. (Cambs Archives P17/AM1)

General Sir Douglas Haig commanded the 'Red' army, which was decisively beaten by the 'Blues' led by General Sir James Grierson. One of the reasons why Grierson won was his use of aerial reconnaissance; to find out where Haig's troops were Grierson used aeroplanes and even an airship.



The airship Beta II at Jesus Green in Cambridge, preparing to take off. (Cambs Collection Q.C. K12 1085a)



Beta II flying over Cambridge. (Cambs Collection Q.C.K12.13100)

Mrs Fanny Lucretia Wale watched the exercises from her property in Little Shelford. " A great many [aeroplanes] passed over Shelford flying about 200 feet high, and there were no accidents," she wrote later. "A constant stream of horses passed the Lodge corner going to water at the shallows in the Granta at the Great Shelford Bridge, and troops of cavalry, infantry and artillery came by, with long trains of commissariat and ambulance wagons."

#### THE AUTUMN MANOEUVRES.

About the 11th July, 1912, the troops began to arrive; the Engineers and Sappers were encamped at Newton in a field belonging to Harold Hurrell, Esq., and later on a large number of cavalry regiments were camped in his park for there was good grass, and a copious stream of fresh water which lasted well all the time of the manoeuvres, and the soil being gravelly the ground here and at Shelford was good for camping upon, and the rain prevented the roads from being dusty; the sun was hidden by a layer of thick white clouds all over the sky, and there was no wind to wreck the aeroplanes. A great many passed over Shelford flying about 200 feet high, and there were no accidents. A constant stream of horses passed the Lodge corner going to water at the shallows in the Granta at the Great Shelford Bridge, and troops of cavalry, infantry and artillery came by - with long trains of commissariat and ambulance wagons; many of these bivouaced in the Hall park near the stone diggings, and on the 4th Sept. the "Scots Greys" had a rest for about 2 hours in the Camping Close. F. L. Wale and the other people living round the field, boiled their kettles for them, and gave them tea and apples; it was then 10 o/c in the morning, and they had eaten nothing since 6-30 p.m. the day before. The inhabitants of the Shelfords lived out of doors watching the Manoeuvres while they lasted, and felt dull when they were over.

The entry from Fanny Wale's History of Little Shelford. (Cambs Archives 23/Z2753)

The exercise was the first one to involve Cyclists Battalions.

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