

Rifles Museum Visit – Working Group Member Chris Penney

Wellington Museum & Local History Society member Chris Penney has been investigating the history of The Rifles ahead of the regiment parading through the town next month. He visited their museum at Winchester, Hampshire, which covers the period from their formation in 2007 to the present day as well as the history of the British Army's largest regiment. Right next door is the associated Royal Green Jackets Museum that details the history of riflemen in the British Army from their official establishment in 1797.

Rifles rather than muskets were first issued to the 60th (Royal American) Regiment. Formed of recruited German and Austrian mercenaries, they were employed as light troops and wore camouflage green rather than the traditional uniform red. The 60th pioneered new infantry tactics for fighting in close combat with the enemy where manoeuvre was as important as using the new weapon. The army's traditional method of communicating orders to troops by drummers, which still features during the Sovereign's Birthday Parade of Trooping the Colour to this day, was dispensed with. Instead signals were sent to forward-deployed riflemen using hunting (bugle) horns – the symbol of the modern regiment.

