

Farnell soldier bears (and other wonderful characters)

Leanda Harwood



The bears were kept in a suitcase and as Sir Guy commented in later life “...the suitcase was always propped open so the bears could breathe! It sounds mad, but that’s what we felt about them...they literally were living entities”

LEFT:
Old Mac
ABOVE RIGHT:
Cardinal Richelieu
RIGHT:
Leanda

It is hard to believe that it has almost been twenty years since Peter and I bought the amazing collection of Farnell soldier bears and the other wonderful characters included in this article. I so clearly remember sitting on the floor in our front room, pouring them out and being surrounded by hundreds of little faces.

They had been the childhood companions of twins David and Guy Campbell. The boys were born on 18th January 1910 and were educated at Eton. Their ancestral home “Cefn Mably” was a large 17th century Manor house with secret passages and steeped in history. From an early age they spent most of their holidays in Devon, with their grandmother, in her four storey high Elizabethan Manor house built in 1586. The walls of this huge rambling mansion were adorned with assegais and Sudanese swords, shields and tiger skins, hunting trophies from Africa and India and many large paintings which fuelled the boys’ imagination.

The young twins eagerly listened

to stories about their ancestors heroic exploits. Their grandmother’s late husband had been a big game hunter, commanded the Scottish Rifles and fought in the Zulu war; his adventures were often told. Once, when the boys sat on an elderly cousin’s knee, he described to them that, with his reins cut, he guided his charger back from the Charge of the Light Brigade with his sabre. Their great uncle, Colonel Alfred Walsh, would also reminisce about the Zulu war and about General Gordon and the relief expedition.



LEANDA HARWOOD



i bought my first teddy bear from the Peterborough Antique fair in the mid 1980’s.

My most memorable moment would be buying the collection of 398 miniature bears & friends from the Campbell collection.

We have never had an internet presence and exhibit exclusively at the major UK and European fairs

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In 1915, after Gallipoli, wounded soldiers were also billeted at the Manor. This, along with the events unfolding during the Great War, no doubt inspired the boys to re-enact many adventures with their growing army of bears.

The brothers named their small friends after various characters they knew or had heard about. There were family members, personal friends, sporting heroes, historical personalities, infamous or otherwise.

LEFT:
British Mounted Infantry,
Anglo-Zulu War of 1879

Here are a few of the characters we have in our collection:

“Old Mac”

Old Mac is a 15” WW1 Harwin Ally bear and was originally dressed in a red coat with a Royal Stuart tartan kilt. Guy Campbell was very fond of Old Mac. In the course of his many adventures fighting historical battles with the twins... as Guy noted “something happened”! Now Old Mac wears

a custom uniform made by the boys. A green tunic with hunting Stuart kilt and spats. He has neck, cuff bands and a belt made from great Uncle Alfred’s Somerset Light Infantry uniform sword sash. The gold braid with a red centre line was meant to represent the Order of the Bath. This was because Colonel Alfred Walsh received a CB (companion of the Order of Bath). He also wears Alfred’s South African war ribbon on his tunic. We



medal ribbon to his tunic. Needless to say, Archibald and his father, Great Uncle Alfred were favourites of the boys. Many of the bears’ battles with

awarded know Old Mac was also the Queen’s Medal, the King’s Medal, the Zulu War Medal, The Mons Star and the 1914-18 Service Medal, for his achievements in Guy and David’s imaginary world.

“Smiler”

Smiler was given to the twins by his namesake, Uncle Archibald Charles Mark Walsh, a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Horse Artillery. He visited the boys prior to returning to his regiment in France. He presented them with his childhood teddy bear and entranced them by showing them his damaged hat, where he had previously been wounded. They would have been five years old at that time. He unfortunately died a fortnight later from a wound in the same place at Neuve-Chapelle on the 18th March 1915, aged just 23 years old. Smiler the bear proudly wears Archibald’s identity tag around his neck and a



TOP: Lord Wharton with his Campbell friends
LEFT: Old Mac
ABOVE: Smiler

Zu-
lus

and Fuzzy-
wuzzies were
inspired by

Alfred’s exploits at Sihayo’s Kraal, Isandlwana, Rorke’s Drift and with the Camel Regiment in the Sudan. Smiler is wearing what appear to be original blue pyjamas over his calico body. He is 11” tall, has a lovely long nose and splayed card lined feet which enable him to stand very well.

“Lord Wharton”

This little bear is a very important member of the miniature Campbell clan. Guy called him the “King of the bears”! He was one of the boys’ earliest and favourite bears and they dressed him in old medal ribbons. He was the only bear who always carried his own pearl gripped sword (a hat pin). His namesake was a young Norman knight who carried a white shield and fought alongside Richard the Lionheart in the first crusade to free the city Jerusalem. By the end of the day, during the Battle of Ascalon in 1099, the young knight had slain six Saracens. Richard, in appreciation, granted him with his own coat of arms, saying “you have borne yourself as a lion”. The coat of arms consisted of a red field crossed by a broad white band which was adorned with a lion and six cross-crosetts to represent the Saracens. The motto was *Tinctus cruore Saraceno* (tinted with Saracens blood). The young knight assumed the name of Tynte and this was the origin of the House of Howard and the Dukedom of Norfolk. In 1544, one of the brave knights descendants was created Baron Wharton and Guy and David’s uncle, Charlie Kemeys-Tynte, held the title Lord Wharton.



TOP: Lord Wharton

ABOVE: Cardinal Richelieu



It is easy to see how this dashing medieval relative sparked the imagination of the two young boys and led the bears to have many conflicts with the Saracens hoards and why this little chap became the “King of the bears”.

“Cardinal Richelieu”

This is another one of the twins’ bears, and as Guy remarked, “is identifiable by his lack of legs”. He is very loosely dressed in the remains of an old pink silk ribbon and is obviously one of the earlier bears the boys enacted battles with. Clearly the three musketeers and d’Artagnan must have caught up with the Cardinal, in Guy and David’s version of the exciting novel by Alexandre Dumas.

The bears lived with the twins throughout their lives, a constant reminder of those innocent days between the wars when battles were just a game. It is no surprise, after their childhood, that they went on to have celebrated ca-

reers in the Armed Forces.

Major E.F David Campbell, M.C.,

E.R.D., Late The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) died in 1991.

Colonel Sir Guy Campbell, Bt., O.B.E.,

M.C., Late Kings’ Royal Rifles (60th Regiment) died two years later in 1993.

I am still an avid collector of Farnells, particularly from the mascot series and other old teddy bears and toys with history. There is something magical though about the little mascot bears that became such popular toys and keepsakes during a time of great conflict and loss. They have captured the hearts and imagination of teddy bear collectors all over the world. Needless to say, I have kept a small army of these Campbell bears in my own collection.

Although it is sometimes hard to part with them... I do try to have examples from the mascot series available, along with a large selection of other bears and animals, in our stock-rooms.