

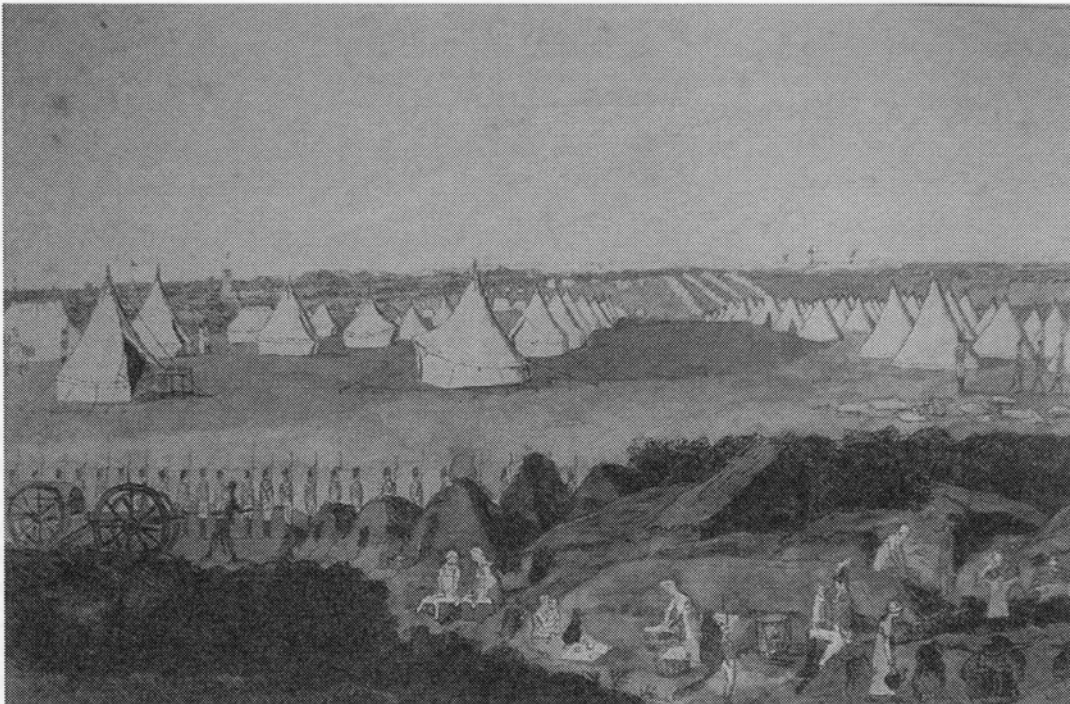
Woodbridge during the war with Napoleon – Part 2

by Vic Harrup

Bromeswell Heath Camp and Local Volunteer forces

Before the barracks were built in Woodbridge army units would camp at Bromeswell during the milder months of the year, but disperse to barracks elsewhere for winter. Celebrations for King George's birthday in June each year took place in Ipswich, where there were already barracks, and the garrison assembled with royal salutes and volleys being fired. In 1800 Lady Nelson attended a dinner given after the outdoor events. However the army was not present in Woodbridge, but assembled on Melton Hills. The Royal Horse Artillery (RHA), a troop of the Suffolk Yeomanry Cavalry, the Sea Fencibles and the Woodbridge Volunteers attended. The following year the troops paraded on Park-field in the town where the church bells were rung and great guns were fired at the Quay. In 1802 there were two celebrations in Woodbridge and noise this time was from fireworks, marking the Peace of Amiens. On the King's birthday three volleys were fired on Market Hill and the Volunteers and Yeomanry Cavalry dined at the Crown Inn *'with much conviviality'*.

After a year of peace war broke out again in May 1803 and with it came the threat of invasion by Napoleon's armies assembled at Boulogne intending to cross the Channel in flat-bottomed boats. Thus in June, after the royal salute, the Yeomanry Cavalry commanded by Captain Edgar, and a detachment of the 7th Dragoons, under Cornet Dukinfield, held a field day watched by Sir Sidney Smith. In July four regiments of infantry marched from Ipswich to the camp on Bromeswell Heath where they attracted the attention of as many as 3,000 spectators according to the *Ipswich Journal*. The local people arrived in barouches, humble tax-carts and on foot, to hear martial music from the four bands and presenting a *'busy and gay scene'*.



The Tented Encampment on Bromeswell Heath.