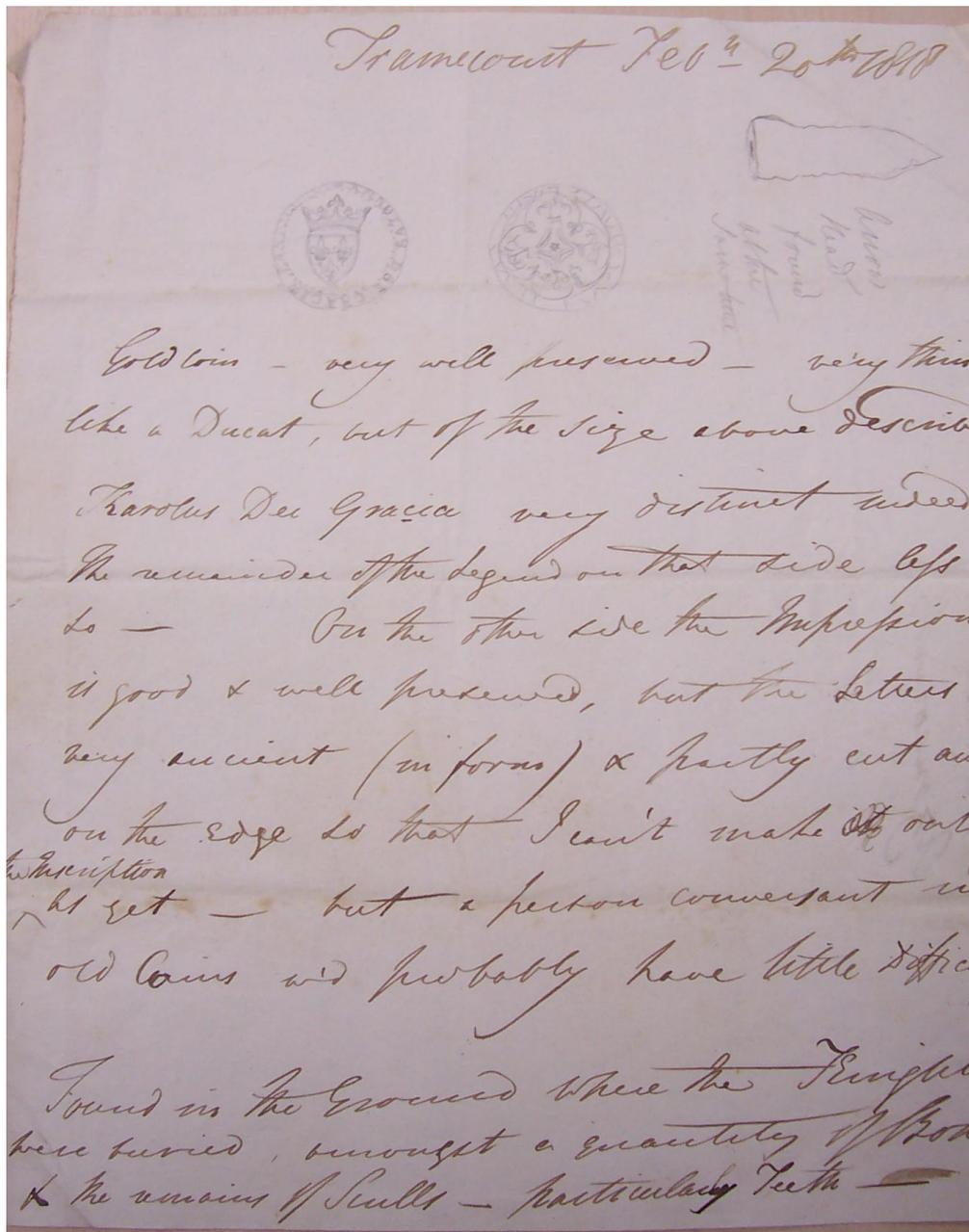


CR0764/240 –Letters from a dig at Agincourt.



Tramecourt February 20th 1818

Gold Coin – very well preserved – very thin like a Ducat, but of the size above described. Karolus Dei Gracia [sic] very distinct indeed, the remainder of the legend on that side less so – On the other side the inscription is good and well preserved, but the letters are very ancient (in form) and partly cut away on the edge so that I can't make out the inscription as yet – but a person conversant in old coins would probably have little difficulty. Found in the ground where the Knights were buried, amongst a quantity of Bones and the remains of skulls – particularly teeth –

The Woodford Brothers

This month's Document of the Month is a letter from Sir John George Woodford to Sir Alexander George Woodford, his brother, with an account of his excavation on the site of the battle of Agincourt in 1818

Sir John George Woodford, (1785–1879) was the younger of the two brothers born at Chartham deanery near Canterbury. He was educated at Harrow and became an army officer in May 1800. In 1815 he served in the Duke of Wellington's army as assistant quartermaster-general and was aide-de-camp during the Battle of Waterloo (15th June). When the army broke up in Paris he returned to London, however in 1818 he returned to the command of the army of occupation until France was evacuated in October. Whilst in this position he seized the opportunity to survey around the site of the battle of Agincourt. He discovered many artefacts of the battle including bones, an arrowhead and coins, small drawings of some of his finds can be found on the letter of the 20th February.

In 1834 he inherited an estate and Waterend House on Derwent Water, where he decided to retire in 1841 and spent much of his time engaged in antiquarian research. He died on 22 March 1879.

His elder brother Sir Alexander George Woodford, (1782–1870) was born in London, on 15 June 1782. He studied at Winchester College in 1794, and in 1799 to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich in 1799. Alexander received the gold medal for the battles of Salamanca, Vitoria, and the Nive, a silver medal for Ciudad Rodrigo and Nivelles, and the Waterloo medal. Alexander lived at Chelsea Hospital becoming lieutenant-governor in 1856 and governor from 1868; he died there on 26 August 1870.

References

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29917?docPos=3>

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29915?docPos=1>

Agincourt

The Battle of Agincourt was fought between the armies of Henry V King of England who led his troops into battle and Charles VI of France who wasn't present; the French armies were led by Constable Charles d' Albret Comte de Dreux.

The fighting took place on Friday the 25th October 1415 (Saint Crispin's Day) in Northern France near the modern town of Azincourt. It was just one battle in the war fought over the French throne known as the Hundred Years War between the English and French kingdoms and their allies; the war actually ran from 1337 to 1453 and therefore was longer than 100 years.

The battle was won by the English despite the superior numbers of the French armies, the English army was particularly known for its use of Longbow archers.

Sir John Woodford's descriptions of his impressions on digging up the battle site are quite telling, the antiquarian is obviously challenged by the sight of so many dead despite the obvious excitement he feels about the 'relics' he finds.

A documentary featuring these letters and the drawings of items discovered will be aired on 'Yesterday' in autumn 2013 <http://uktv.co.uk/yesterday/tv>