1. Early life and education

Charles Morris Woodford was born in Milton next Gravesend in Kent on 30 October 1852, the eldest son of five children—three sons and two daughters—of Henry Pack Woodford and his wife Mary. The Woodfords lived at 91 Milton Road opposite a large park and the Gravesend Grammar School. Gravesend is a large and economically important town on the southern banks of the Thames Estuary with a long history as a trading and commercial centre dating back to Roman occupation. Both Gravesend and Milton are recorded in the Domesday Book, that great rural survey made under command of William the Conqueror and completed in 1068. Both appear as parishes within the Manor of Gravesham (Cruden 1843: 9–10). Gravesend absorbed Milton in 1914.

Henry Pack Woodford was a prosperous wine and spirit merchant with premises at 146 Milton Road (Kelly Directories Ltd 1903). The building still stands. Henry Pack Woodford had assumed ownership of the family firm after the co-partnership with his father, Edward William Woodford, was dissolved in 1841 (The London Gazette, issue 20021, 24 September 1841: 2381).

Figure 1. 146 Milton Rd Gravesend: premises of Henry Pack Woodford, wine and spirit merchant.

Source: Photo courtesy of Mike Howlett, 2013.
Edward Woodford, Charles Woodford’s grandfather who subsequently retired to Jersey, was formerly innkeeper of The Falcon in East Street Gravesend—now Royal Pier Road—at a time when an inn was not a tavern or public house but more like a hotel that also sold wine and spirits. He, in turn, was the son of William Woodford who established the family hotel business in 1785 in Gravesend, having moved from Northamptonshire (Woodford papers PMB 1381/005el). William was most certainly a joint owner of The Falcon in 1793. According to family traditions, he walked the distance to London with £4,000 in his boots. Henry Pack Woodford was a man of some importance to the commercial life of Gravesend. In addition to being an Alderman on the Town Council, he was a Governor of the Gravesend Hospital and director of the local gas company. He was an executor of the sale of settled estates and was appointed to a Committee of Inspection authorising him to act as an advisor and superintendent to the trustee of bankrupt estates (The London Gazette issue 23263, 14 June 1867: 3384 and issue 25616, 13 August 1886: 3992). When he died on 31 May 1889, his estate passed to his wife Mary and was probated in August (The London Gazette issue 25982, 11 October 1889: 5389; Woodford papers PMB 1381/034c). The estate, which included the Gravesend building, its stock and fittings, and a business in Wye, was valued at over £9,000 (£3,750,000 in current values). Mary Woodford died in June 1899 (The Gravesend Reporter 3 June 1899, Woodford papers PMB 1381/034c). The family was solid, well-established, and upper middle class at a time when London was the commercial centre of the British Empire.

Tonbridge School

The three sons of Henry Pack and Mary Woodford were Charles, Henry and Edward. They were all educated at Tonbridge School, also in Kent. Charles attended as a boarder from age 12 in 1864 and completed sixth form in 1871. Tonbridge, then a small but exclusive boys’ grammar school located not far from Gravesend, was founded in 1553 on an endowment from The Skinners’ Company, one of the oldest guild companies in England with power to control the lucrative fur trade. The school was established for the sons of local gentry and country families. In the early period, boys were expected to write in English and Latin for admission and as a grammar school, under its formal meaning, it was a requirement that Latin, Greek and Hebrew should be offered to students. Like a number of other public schools in England, Tonbridge began to grow when the demand for administrators and soldiers to serve the British Empire began in the early 19th century.

Other notable Tonbridgians who would become important to Woodford in the Solomon Islands were William Halse Rivers Rivers, the ethnologist and early psychologist, who was later to join with Alfred Cort Haddon and other
academics in the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits in 1898 (Haddon 19011935), the first multi-disciplinary ethnological expedition to Melanesia. Rivers would later visit the Solomon Islands as part of the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition in 1907 and 1908. Woodford would also contribute to a significant study Rivers made into the question of population decline in the Pacific following European contact (Rivers 1922). Another former student was Cecil Wilson who would become Bishop of Melanesia and a leader in the Melanesian Mission (Hughes-Hughes 1886). Wilson was a senior figure in the Anglican mission and would be a regular visitor to the administrative headquarters on Tulagi after the establishment of the British Solomon Island Protectorate. This formal link to the Anglican Church was to be an important one for the development of the Solomon Islands. The late-Victorian age was one bound by ties of family and friends, by links between schools and universities and by the constraints imposed by class. In the colonial outposts of the Empire these connections created bonds that provided the principal means of patronage and promotion before a centralised system of recruitment was created controlled by officers from the metropolitan capital, London (Hyam 2002: 308).

The attraction of Tonbridge was its growing academic credentials, its location and the construction of a large, comfortable new school building in 1864 and a chapel that had opened in 1859. The Head, Rev Dr James Ind Welldon, was a confirmed classicist. Latin prayers were heard three times a day. The curriculum was traditional. Science as a subject was not added to the curriculum until after his tenure in 1875. Apparently, he did recognise the talents of Charles Woodford who was excused from ‘fagging’ or ‘calling over’ so that he could indulge his hobby of butterfly collecting. Fagging at Tonbridge, contrary to popular ideas, was not the Dickensian idea of young boys performing menial servant duties for older boys. It meant taking turns fielding and fetching cricket balls and footballs for senior students. For small boys this could involve long periods on the playing fields in all weathers. It could be excused with a ‘leave off’ certificate signed by parents or teachers. Welldon abolished football fagging early in 1864 (Orchard 1991).

**Educating the administrators and soldiers of the Empire**

This particular period in the expansion of education for middle class boys was not matched by the expansion of employment considered suitable for the middle classes (Musgrove 1959). The middle class of the Victorian era in Britain has been variously defined. However, professional men, well-to-do clergy, the lesser gentry, as well as industrial managers constituted a group that earned a salary
of between £200 (£120,000 in current values) and £1,000 (£600,000 in current values) per year at that time. In the middle of the 19th century maintenance of a suitable house, domestic servants, the necessary standards of dress and a fee-paying education for the children could not be obtained on less than £200 a year (Feinstein 1990a and 1990b). However, the public school education so admired by Victorian parents was really only suitable for those who had personal fortunes, estates to inherit or who could gain access to purchased commissions in the army or navy. Positions in the Anglican Church could also be obtained by patronage. Elite, gentlemanly education in late-Victorian England posed public service as a moral status symbol that stressed leadership, loyalty, casual assurance and a light touch in command well suited to the amateur ideal. Specialisation in any form was seen as narrowing one’s talents. Effective leadership was seen to depend on qualities of mind, morals and manners, not expertise (Wilkinson 1963). The amateur idea of the well-rounded man stressed moderation and compromise, social harmony and the conservative notion that social inequality, and social class, was in accordance with the laws of nature. Elite education became a means by which members of the well-to-do middle class could be absorbed into the upper class of public officials, government and the established Church.

However, a higher class clerk in the War Office in 1887 began on only £100 a year and would not reach £200 until he was 30 years old. There was uncertainty and anxiety among the growing middle class, especially those who had risen to wealth by trade and commerce, that there was no access to the higher professions for their sons (Musgrove 1959: 108). Although London was the centre of political and economic life for the British Empire, prospects for a young man were even more depressing in the city. While the population was rising the number of career positions open to the well-educated was not expanding. There were few careers open to those with talent in the business houses. Conditions appeared to be worsening for ‘the upward path of the penniless adventurer in the City, how great soever his aptitude and ability has become very much more arduous’ (Musgrove 1959: 110, quoting from The Cornhill Magazine, 13 (1902): 764–775). Such a man could hope, at the best, for a salary in a clerical post of some £300 per annum at the end of his career. Later Woodford would attempt to establish a brief career in the city that would be unsuccessful. For young men like Charles Woodford, the prospects for useful and interesting employment in Britain during the 1870s were poor. The colonies of South Africa, Australia and the Pacific held more promise.
An obscure newspaper article

The only note documenting Woodford’s talents as natural history collector at school is in an obscure article written for the local newspaper, the *Gravesend Journal, Dartford Observer and County Intelligencer*, dated 1888, written by an ex-student who signed his name as ‘Ignotus Lybia Deserta, Drakensberg Mountains, South Africa’ (Heath 1974a: 9; Woodford papers PMB 1290 Item 9/7/1). There is little to identify the author although there are some hints in Woodford’s archives and school records. The signature title is part of a speech in the *Aeneid* (Book 1: 381–386) by Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro) telling of the time when, having fled Troy, Aeneas arrives at Carthage on the shores of Africa after wandering the Mediterranean for seven years (Clay 1988: 200). Here in Carthage he finds himself destitute and unknown but soon discovers that the land is inhabited by the traces of an ancient civilisation. Among the Carthaginians he finds evidence of humanity and sees the growing glory of the city (Clay 1988: 195, 198). The full quote follows:

‘Bis dēnīs Phrygium cōnscendī nāvibus aequor,
mātre dēa mōnstrante viam, data fāta secūtus;
vix septem convolsae undīs Eurōque supersunt.
Ipse ignōtus, egēns, Libyae dēserta peragrō,
Eurōpā atque Asiā pulsus.’

Nec plūra querentem passa Venus mediō sīc interfāta dolōre est:

‘I embarked on the Phrygian sea with twice ten ships,
my goddess mother showing the way, I followed what the fates had
given scarcely seven remain shattered by the waves and the Eastwind.
I myself am unknown, and needy, I travel through the desert of Libya,
having been driven from Europe and from Asia.’

Venus did not endure him complaining more and thus she interrupted
him in the middle of his sorrow:
(Fairclough and Brown 1920: 16; Clay 1988: 195; Conington 1903: 30–31)

The subtext is that the heroes of the *Aeneid* encountered exile, struggle, defeat and success before their eventual return home in triumph. It is little wonder that many old boys from the school would also have sought fame and some fortune in South Africa during the commercial expansion of the Cape Colony in the 1870s and 1880s, the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the subsequent Boer War of 1899–1902. The author of the article, then living in South Africa, had been sent a copy of the local newspaper dated 7 April 1888. This reported on a lecture given by Woodford in the Gravesend Town Hall on the evening of Wednesday 4 April 1888 (*The Gravesend Journal, Dartford Observer and County Intelligencer* 7 April 1888: 8). The well-attended lecture by Woodford that presented the
results of his successful two trips to the Solomon Islands between 1886 and 1888
was illustrated by lantern slides, maps, displays of natural history specimens
and artefacts.

The author of the article highlighted Woodford’s skills as a natural history
collector and noted that Woodford informed his audience he had made over
17,000 specimens and brought back a number of cultural artefacts for the British
Museum. The author had been a colleague at school. He had been excused
from fagging at Tonbridge because of poor health and so spent much time with
Woodford collecting in the fields and forests of Kent. The author wrote that
he and Woodford had spent time before the departure for the Solomon Islands
preparing ‘the necessary goods and trinkets, so essential as a substitute for
cash, among the raw savage natives of isles almost lost to human knowledge’.
Expressions like ‘raw savage natives’ and ‘lost to human knowledge’ were
common expressions in British magazines and newspapers of that day. The
possession of a large, alien Empire meant that the British saw themselves as
distinct and special, superior in their laws and political system, their standard
of living, in their treatment of women and ‘above all, their collective power
against societies that they only imperfectly understood but usually perceived as
far less developed’ (Colley 1992: 324).

Woodford’s skill as an amateur natural history collector while at school was not
unusual for that time. Local natural history societies were a significant part of
civil society in 19th century Britain. They provided a mediating layer of civil
social activity between the state and the nation for the sedentary naturalist in
the major museums and the many local fieldworkers in their natural history
societies were closely linked. It has been estimated that there could have been
close to 1,000 local scientific societies in Britain by the late-Victorian era,
each conducting fieldtrips, engaging in discussions and lectures and many
publishing their findings in reports and papers (Withers and Finnegan 2003).
Fieldwork for the Victorian middle classes had a moral as well as a recreational
value. The romantic vision of a peaceful rural England, a countryside of many
villages linked in social harmony under the paternalistic rule of the local squire
had faded in the post-Industrial period. Many towns and villages had been
subsumed in the advancing path of industrial growth and the rural labourers
had been transformed into the industrial poor. Time spent in the rural landscape
was considered to be morally justified.

This intense interest in collecting and classifying spanned class and gender
divisions and grew out of the influence of Darwinism in the 1870s and 1880s.
The pursuit of science even entered into late-Victorian novels. In Middlemarch,
written in 1872 but set in 1832, George Eliot placed two forms of scientific
knowledge in opposition to each other: the amateur naturalist, the Reverend
Farebrother with his study full of drawers of moths and blue-bottles, and
the forward looking medical practitioner, Dr Tertius Lydgate, with his new professional views of disease and cleanliness obtained from training in Europe (Eliot 1872: 182–183). The Linnaeian system for the classification of plants and animals democratised scientific endeavours and provided both amateurs and professionals with an internationally acceptable language. But the key to connecting locally-based amateurs with a potentially global community of professionals lay in mastering Latin and the binomial nomenclature (Coriale 2008). This explosion of scientific interest took a long time to filter down into the public school education system that continued to favour classical education, traditional social and religious values and conservative politics.

The unnamed author of the article noted that at Tonbridge the Headmaster Welldon had encouraged students with ‘glowing accounts of Australia and New Zealand, then at the zenith of their prosperity and lusty youth’, and boys read the tales of ‘Captain’ Thomas Mayne Reid and his adventure books for boys set in South Africa, the American west, Mexico, the Himalayas, and Jamaica. Welldon, at his own initiative and expense, had given an annual prize for entomology and Charles Woodford had won this prize on numerous occasions for his collections of butterflies and the skill in which he had displayed them. It was of little wonder to the author that Woodford should have ventured to the Pacific on collecting expeditions and that these travels had been so successful.

**Exploration, adventure and the Empire**

The later part of the 19th century saw a change in the way people interpreted colonial expansion, commercial growth and the role of the British Empire with its messages of commerce, civilisation and Christianity. During a century of imperialism—from 1815, the end of the Napoleonic Wars, to 1914, the start of the First World War—Britain extended its economic and cultural power to all parts of the world. Domestic growth was rising but with it came an increase in the population and a need to boost exports to cater for industrial investment and employment. But free trade and Imperialism were consequences of Britain’s failure to maintain her position among her main European competitors (Cain and Hopkins 1980: 476). Social unrest was acute in the period 1815–1850. Much interest was shown in opening the supposedly empty lands of Canada, Australia and South Africa—empty of settlers that is. The presence of local Aboriginal and Indian peoples was not considered part of this development strategy. Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, stated in 1874 that the ‘waste lands of the earth were being filled up and there were few outlying properties left’ (Cooper 1983: 32). The urge to travel and explore was a strong part of the Victorian character that naturally led to a fashion of sending an increasing
number of young men abroad for personal, political, scientific and military reasons. For young men of wealth, leisure and talent, England was simply too small (Middleton 1972: 211).

Map 1. Western Pacific Islands.

Source: (Woodford 1916: 29).

To a meeting of the Manchester Geographical Society in 1885, Henry Morton Stanley described ‘the world as a huge market-place, its ports just “so many stalls”, its people “so many vendors and buyers”’. In this world, the prime function of geographical knowledge was to clear the path for British enterprise and endeavour (Driver 1991: 138). But the acquisition of colonial territories after 1880 was an object of direct interest for all European powers. Interest focussed on the wealth of southern and eastern Africa that could command the attention of London merchants and notables but, apart from the white dominions of
Australia and New Zealand, the small islands of the Pacific held little promise. In Melanesia, the powers most attracted to the islands of the Western Pacific would be France and Germany. Britain was only reluctantly drawn into colonial annexation of lands with seemingly little wealth and few resources that were inhabited by bellicose peoples.

## Tonbridge and the African connections

The anonymous author of the letter to the *Gravesend Journal* of 1888 was familiar with the West African expeditions of Sir Andrew Judd, a founder of Tonbridge School, and he noted that Major-General Charles Gordon, Gordon of Khartoum, had lived in Fort House in Gravesend during the construction of the Thames forts at New Tavern, Shornemead and Coalhouse, built between 1865 and 1871 when Woodford and the author were schoolboys. All this, the author of the letter stated, was evidence that ‘England has been built up by adventurers’. There are a number of clues in the letter that identify the anonymous author as Arthur Joseph Todd Pattisson, one of 16 children of the lawyer Jacob Pattisson. Arthur Pattisson entered Tonbridge in 1862. Following his time at school he studied art at the Royal College of Art in Kensington Gore then travelled to Rome and Florence between 1872 and 1879. Pattisson never practised as an artist for he went to South Africa in 1879 where he joined the Colonial Commissariat, the official store for the Cape Colony (*Kaapkolonie*) that provided officials and armed forces with food, goods, general equipment and clothing (Hughes-Hughes 1893: 136). The Cape Colony had been founded by the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) in the 17th Century, but when Holland was occupied by the French revolutionary army in 1795, Britain occupied the colony. It was an important supply base and harbour for ships travelling to India and the Far East and Britain needed to keep the sea-lanes open. During the Napoleonic Wars, Holland was again occupied by the French and so Britain retained control of the Cape Colony. The Dutch eventually ceded the colony to Britain in 1814 and in 1872 it would become a Crown Colony with responsible government, a Parliament and an appointed Governor. By this time the original Dutch settlers had become an Afrikaans-speaking people. Following dissatisfaction with English control they began to move away from Cape Town into the savannah lands of the north. These migrant pastoralists, the Trekboeren, were better known to the English as the Boers. Their values and attitudes put them in opposition to the British settlers and Cape governments (Oliver and Atmore 2001: 226–7; see also Voigt 1900 for a Boer interpretation).

When diamonds were found in the Kimberley and De Beers mines in the 1870s it led to an expansion of the British commercial interest sponsored by entrepreneurs like Cecil Rhodes. South Africa entered a more prosperous phase
based on mining and this economic expansion moved north into the pastoral 
lands now occupied by the Boers. The northern push by both the Boer farmers 
and the British settlers led to conflicts with the numerous local tribes living 
on the plateau and specifically with the Zulu peoples. Zulu tribes east of the 
Drakensberg amalgamated under Shaka (Chaka) into a highly disciplined 
fighting force in response to a breakdown of social, economic and political 
stability driven largely by internal agency within the various African peoples 
north of the Cape settlements. This was a period of severe and prolonged 
drought that led to great unrest among the tribal peoples of the whole region 
from the Drakensberg Mountains to the Kalahari Desert. The period is known as 
the Mfecane (in Zulu: the crushing) or the Difaqane (in SeSotho: the scattering) 
(Ballard 1986; Lye 1967: 130; Etherington 2004). Guns and ammunition were 
traded across the Drakensberg Mountains from Natal and from the southern 
Cape to the Orange and Vaal River regions (Atmore and Sanders 1971: 538). 
Much unrest was exacerbated by this trade, and by the illegal slavery that 
resulted from the capture of the remnants of smaller tribes on the Highveld 
(Eldridge 1992: 15–25). Large areas of land were then occupied by the northern 
Ndebele (Matabele) and later the Boers when they arrived in the Transvaal. 
Many tribal peoples also sought refuge in the Cape Colony where they were 
recruited into indentured labour as migrant workers, miners and domestics. 
The Basotho, the SeSotho speakers, under their chief Moshweshwe, then took 
refuge in the Highveld of Basutoland (the land of the Basotho, now Lesotho) 
between present day Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. Moshweshwe and his 
wars fought a series of wars with both the British and the Boers until he 
signed a treaty in 1868 that made Basutoland a British protectorate (Eldridge 
1992). In this conflicts the Basotho lost a considerable amount of land on the 
western lowlands occupied by Boer farmers. After Moshweshwe’s death in 1871, 
the Cape Colony government annexed Basutoland and in the south another chief, 
Moirosi, rose in revolt. He stationed his forces in the Highveld at Moorosi’s 
(Moirosi) Mountain where utilising guerrilla tactics and because of the rugged 
topography the warriors were able to hold the British in stalemate. During a 
night raid on 20 November 1879, Moirosi was killed and the rebellion crushed 
(Atmore and Sanders 1971: 542). While this was presented in the newspapers as 
a victory for the Cape Colony forces, the 800 troopers and 1,500 African soldiers 
had actually been kept at bay for eight months by only 300 local Phuthi-
speaking tribesmen. In the end only 40 Phuthi were killed (Atmore and Sanders 
1971: 542–543). Arthur Pattisson, then employed in the Colonial Commissariat, 
was present at the conflict on the mountain and he used his artistic skills to 
sketch Moorosi’s Mountain and the night attack. These were subsequently 
published as engravings in the October, November and December 1879 issues 
of the Graphic an influential illustrated weekly newspaper that covered local 
and international news from the British Empire. A 30-page letter from Pattisson
dated 21 November 1879 and containing his sketches was auctioned in 1995 by Christie’s London for £368. This is a more complete version of his report to the Graphic.

When the British attempted to disarm all the Basotho this again led to further insurrections. The Basuto Gun War of 1880–1881 occurred in response to proposals by the Cape Colony government to disarm all Basotho warriors and to make land in Basutoland available for settlement by white farmers. Basotho warriors again held the British at bay. In the meantime, Pattisson had settled in Basutoland near the Natal border and worked as a trader. He would have found his experiences in South Africa and serving with the Colonial Commissariat useful in this new career. It was from here that he wrote in the letter to the Gravesend Journal c.1888, with his Drakensberg Mountains address, that he had experience trading with ‘natives’ who were familiar only with trinkets and other goods used ‘as a substitute for cash, among the raw savage natives of isles almost lost to human knowledge’. Following his experiences in South Africa, Pattisson joined the Pioneer Column in 1890 (Hole 1936). This was a force of white colonialists and armed police under the direction of Cecil Rhodes that occupied Matabeland (land of the Ndebele) and Mashonaland (land of the Shona) in the north (currently Zimbabwe). Rhodes formed the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and using the pretext that he held a royal grant he signed a treaty in 1888 with local Zulu/Ndabele chief, Lobengula, who ruled over both Matabeland and Mashonaland. But the Royal Grant that permitted the British South Africa Company to administer the northern protectorate from the Limpopo River to Lake Tanganyika was not formally approved by Queen Victoria until 1889. Rhodes had plans to expand his economic interest from diamonds at Kimberley and gold at Witwatersrand to include possible gold mining in Matabeleland. Eventually Mashonaland and Matabeleland became Southern Rhodesia (Phimister 1974). The British South Africa Company was a chartered company created under a Royal Grant. This was seen by many investors and developers as an ideal model for resource exploitation in the colonies and protectorates.

The planned Pioneer Column of 1890 consisted of an advance column of 180 civilian colonialists, 62 wagons of supplies, and 200 volunteers who later made up the corps of the British South Africa Police Force. This was followed by a rear column of 110 men, 16 supply wagons, 250 cattle, and 130 horses. In South Africa, Rhodes advertised for men but selected those from wealthy families for he calculated that if the columns were imperilled by local tribesmen the British government in London would be forced by pressure from wealthy, connected families to send in reinforcements. Each man was promised 3,000 acres (1,200 hectares) in the northern protectorate along with 15 mining claims (approximately 20 acres or 8 hectares each). Arthur Pattisson was an original
member of the Pioneer Column and his skills in the commissariat would have been particularly useful in organising supplies for the troops. The Pioneer Column crossed into Bechuanaland (the land of the Tswana, now Botswana) in June 1890 and by 12 September they had occupied the hill, Harare Kopje (Neharwa Kopje). They raised the British flag over Metebeland and Mashonaland on 13 September 1890; this day was known as Pioneer Day in Southern Rhodesia. The fort constructed at Harare Kopje was renamed Fort Salisbury. This became Salisbury, the capital of Southern Rhodesia, and is now Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. Each man in the column was allocated his land and mining claims and Pattisson settled in the Mazoe Valley in northern Rhodesia where he called his land Tonbridge Farm. Like other members of the Pioneers, he was awarded the British South Africa Company Medal of 1890 (Hughes-Hughes 1893: 136).

Photography was also used to effect in the wars of Southern Africa. The Pioneer Column also had an official photographer, William Fry, whose images were used to portray the idea that the white hunter and adventurer represented the ideal type of energetic, pioneering young man upon whom the British Empire depended (Ryan 1997: 107). These ideals of innate Anglo-Saxon racial characteristics were used to justify the occupation of Matabeleland and other colonial outposts. But in the early years the settlers faced many hardships, especially in a land-locked region remote from supplies and services in the Cape Colony, and malaria was a major health risk (Hole 1936: 45). Pattisson died young, aged 39, in 1891.

The draw of adventure and some fame in the colonies was strong in Victorian England. Another school colleague also went to Africa. Charles Woodford’s younger brother Edward attended Tonbridge from 1867 to 1874. He would later study at Oxford and become an officer in the York and Lancashire Regiment, and he served in Egypt in 1882. One of his school colleagues was Arthur Jermy Mounteney Jephson (Hughes-Hughes 1893: 145, 157, 166). In 1886 Jephson paid £1,000 (about £450,000) given by his cousin, the Comtesse de Noailles, to join Henry Morton Stanley on the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition to Equatoria (the South Sudanese states of Central, Western and Eastern Equatoria). Stanley at first considered Jephson unsuitable and ‘too high class’, but took him largely because of the financial subscription (Jephson 1969: 3; Smith 1972: 87). The Relief Expedition was a highly promoted and expensively funded expedition that cost more than £33,000 in 1887 (about £13 million) (Jephson 1969: 427–428). It was planned to rescue the Emin Pasha (Mehmed Emin Pasha) from a Mahdist revolt in the upper Nile. The Emin Pasha was baptised Eduard Carl Oscar Theodor Schnitzer in Silesia, then part of Prussia but now part of Poland. He changed his name during service as a medical officer in the Ottoman Empire and became Governor of Equatoria on the death of General Charles Gordon in 1878 (Jephson 1969).
In 1885, the Emin Pasha and his government were isolated at Wadelai near Lake Albert by an uprising that aroused considerable indignation and resentment in Europe and Britain. Because Stanley was officially an employee of King Léopold of Belgium, and had assisted the Belgians to establish the so-called ‘Free State’ of the Congo, the expedition accessed East Africa by travelling up the Congo River (Stanley 1885; Driver 1991: 138). This was a major tactical error. At the start of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, Stanley arranged for a former contact in Zanzibar, Tippu Tib (Hamed bin Mohammed bin Juma bin Rajab el Murjebi) to travel with him to the Congo to find porters and assist with the movement of the large caravan of men and equipment up the Congo. Tippu Tib’s past reputation as a slaver marred the status of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, especially at a time when the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society were stressing the sanctity of the universal principles of freedom, humanity and justice (Driver 1991: 155, 162). Between 1839 and 1909 these societies functioned as centres of national concern about colonialism, imperialism and economic expansionism in Africa and the Pacific. The Relief Expedition travelled up the Congo to Leopoldville and towards the Stanley Falls. It then separated into an advance column and a rear column. The advance group met with the Emin in Equatoria but he was not interested in leaving the territory, contrary to Stanley’s goals of ‘rescuing’ him. In fact, the Emin was only interested in acquiring ammunition and other supplies to strengthen his position. The rear column meanwhile had disintegrated into chaos with great loss of life. When Stanley arrived near Lake Albert he received news that the Emin Pasha and Jephson were being held under house arrest by the Emin’s officers at the Pasha Bey’s fort at Dufile. This lasted from August to November 1888 (Jephson 1890). Finally, the relief expedition, with the Emin Pasha, arrived at Bagamoyo in German East Africa (Tanzania) in 1889 (Jephson 1890 and 1969). The expedition was a shambles but those British members who survived were feted in Britain and received medals from the Royal Geographic Society and honorary degrees.

Woodford followed the expedition to Central Africa and its political and scientific outcomes with some interest. There is a copy of the expedition map, showing the route taken from the mouth of the Aruwimi River to Bagamoyo, and an invitation to attend the Royal Geographical Society Stanley Reception Meeting, held in the Royal Albert Hall on 5 May 1890, in the Woodford archive (Woodford papers PMB 1290 Item 11/10). At this meeting, attended by over 6,000 people, all surviving English members of the expedition were awarded medals by the Prince of Wales. Stanley received a gold medal, and Jephson and others received bronze medals (Stanley 1890; Butlin 2009: 261–262; Jephson 1890 and 1969). As Charles Woodford was in England at that time, while his book on the Solomon Islands was being published, we may conclude that he was present at the reception meeting. At the annual meeting of the Royal
The Geographical Society held in London in June 1890 Woodford was awarded the Gill Memorial medal for his explorations in the Solomon Islands and at that same meeting the Emin Pasha, in absentia, was awarded the Patron’s Medal in ‘recognition of the great services rendered by him to geography and the allied sciences by his explorations and researches in the countries east, west and south of the Upper Nile during his 12 years’ administration of the Equatorial Province of Egypt’ (The Daily News 19 June 1890; The Telegraph 17 June 1890 and The Yorkshire Post n.d., 1890; Woodford papers PMB 1290 Item 9/29).

The Zoological Society of London also received a large zoological collection made during the relief expedition that was noted and described in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society in 1888 by Oldfield Thomas, Arthur Butler, Dr A. Günther, the Keeper of Zoology, and others interested in the natural history of Equatorial Africa (Zoological Society of London 1888: 3–88). Thomas and Butler were also to describe the substantial collections presented to the British Museum by Woodford in that same issue of the Proceedings and Woodford would later correspond with Günther for many years. The Gravesend Journal of 7 June 1890 also carried a long article describing a public lecture given by Jephson at Tonbridge School that was well attended by local dignitaries (Woodford papers PMB 1290 Item 9/29). During the lecture Jephson described the difficulties faced by the expedition and hinted at the clash of personalities between himself, the Emin Pasha and Stanley. At that meeting Woodford was cited by the Headmaster as a fine example of an old boy of the school who had risked his death in the Solomon Islands ‘in his enthusiasm for discovery’. In phraseology common to that time the Head went on to describe exploration as a means by which ‘light was cast into all the dark corners of the earth’, and it was of considerable ‘pride that it was Englishmen who did these deeds’, for ‘[w]e were set to govern the world’. These values were firmly held by Europeans well into the 20th century. Exploration, scientific discoveries and ethnographic collecting were combined in the one expedition. It was part of the process of bringing the unknown home, of opening up the world.

Work in the family wine business

The stories of Arthur Joseph Todd Pattisson and Arthur Jermy Mounteney Jephson are important to this examination of the explorations of Charles Morris Woodford. All three were products of an education and cultural system that was increasingly expansive and where the role of young men was to serve the needs of Empire. In such an environment of travel and exploration, and with British colonial expansion at its peak, the seeds were sown for Charles Woodford’s wanderlust. But he was caught in a difficult social and economic position. He had prosperous, but not wealthy parents, and was without the
excellent social connections needed at a time when patronage was a key to high office. On leaving school in 1871 Woodford had few options but to join his father’s wine and spirit firm in Gravesend. After two years working with his father he joined the firm of Richard Harper and Sons in London. Then in 1874 he worked with C. Meynoie and Coy in Bordeaux. This was the normal way for a young man, soon perhaps to be head of the firm, to extend his personal contacts and learn the wine and spirits business firsthand (Heath 1974a: 10). From France he settled back in Gravesend in 1875. In 1880 the London Gazette listed his name, address and occupation as ‘Charles Morris Woodford, Gravesend, wine merchant’ and noted him as a customer of the London and Provincial Bank Ltd (Supplement to The London Gazette, issue 24685, 26 February 1879: 1573 and issue 24816, 25 February 1880: 1457). In 1874 he took out a commission in the 1st Kent Volunteer Artillery and he remained attached to the Volunteers until 1888 (Heath 1974a: 10–11; Woodford papers PMB 1381/008a-c). His second brother, Henry Gorham Woodford, had also joined the wine trade after only one year—1865—at Tonbridge (Hughes-Hughes 1893). After Henry Pack Woodford died in 1889 another son, Henry Gorham, was to expand the family business with offices in St Margaret’s Street, Canterbury, as well as the main offices at 146 Milton Road, Gravesend. By 1917 Woodford and Co had been taken over by Russell’s Gravesend Brewery and Henry and his wife had emigrated to Canada. Henry at least had been in a position to take over family responsibilities in England while Charles could nurture his dreams elsewhere.
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