



The Thistle

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Chair of the Regimental Trustees Statement

The Regimental Trustees met at the RS Club on Friday 27th June for their six-monthly meeting. Your Trustees with lead responsibilities in brackets are: George Lowder (Benevolence), David Nisbet (Communications), Gordon Rae (Museum and Heritage), Jeremy Richardson (Investment and Finance), John Sands (Association), Robbie Scott Bowden and Norman Soutar (Business and Fundraising). It was agreed that Alex Dockar would take over from Jeremy Richardson at the end of his tenure in July. Jandy Stevenson was welcomed to the meeting in her capacity as Honorary Governance Advisor.

The strong desire to reach out and engage with our wider Regimental Family, including widows and sons and daughters of the Regiment, has seen successful initiatives being taken by all Regimental Association branches as well as broader encouragement to all former Royals to participate in both informal gatherings and events in the spirit of companionship.

Excellent work has been carried out in reviewing the Association's Constitution with the agreed purpose of returning to a truly national Association that is fit for purpose in the future. There has been significant consultation with valued input from both the membership and the branches; this activity will continue in the next few months with the aim being to adopt a revised Constitution in October.

There have been several notable Commemorative events during the last 6 months including: the 25th Anniversary of Granby in February; the 40th Anniversary of the murder of 3 soldiers in South Armagh in March 1976, with the service taking place in 1 SCOTS Regimental Church; the 101st Anniversary of the Quintinshill Rail Crash and the 76th Anniversary of Le Paradis in May. Most recently the Regiment was represented at the Centenary of the commencement of the Battle of the Somme Vigil at the Scottish National War Memorial on the night of 30th June to 1st July, as well as at Contalmaison.

The Royal Regiment of Scotland marked the 10th anniversary of its Formation Day, our Regimental Day, by exercising its Freedom of Edinburgh when 2 SCOTS marched down the Royal Mile in April to a service at our Regimental Kirk at the Canongate which was conducted by our Regimental Padre, Neil Gardner. An Anniversary boxing match was held at Meadowbank on the 1st of July and 2 SCOTS



hosted the annual rugby sevens at Glencorse on 2nd July. I would encourage all Royals to continue to support and promote The Royal Regiment of Scotland, today's Scottish Infantry, at every opportunity. It is excellent news that Major General Bob Bruce CBE DSO assumed the appointment of Colonel of The Regiment of SCOTS from the 2nd of July.

Now that Jimmy Springthorpe and our Regimental Office are well bedded-in at the Club we have the opportunity to further grow the strong bond with our Regiment's World War 1 War Memorial. It has been described as the Regiment's beating heart, and plans are being made to mark the Centenary of the opening of the Club in 1919.

Our Regimental Museum continues to attract around half a million Castle visitors every year; much work continues to ensure its reputation is both protected and enhanced. This work is very reliant on a band of invaluable volunteers who work away tirelessly behind the scenes.

Communication both within the Regimental Family and externally is vital. Our Regimental website has been undergoing redevelopment and will shortly be relaunched. Again, this has just not happened rather the work of volunteers has been essential to drive this project forward.

Being able to react to members of our Family who require support and assistance is very much at the

centre of Regimental activity; Benevolence is a key Regimental 'pillar', which depends on everyone's eyes and ears continuing to alert the Regimental Office, and is so well supported by the Soldiers Charity and Poppyscotland - and those Royals who carry out sponsored charitable fundraising activities.

This year the Regimental Prize is awarded to both Jim Anderson for his continuing huge IT and communications support and David Beveridge for his great commitment to Museums and Heritage projects, including reviewing and cataloguing holdings to old Regimental uniforms and coaching our Regimental Standards Party.

Finally, please do share any suggestions and ideas you may have as to how we continue the drive to engage with Royals who are definitely out there but perhaps would be content to renew friendships once a year. In the meantime, I was particularly pleased that ten "new faces" joined the Royals that mustered for this year's Edinburgh Armed Forces Day Parade.

Yours aye,

Colonel Martin Gibson OBE DL

New Colonel for the Royal Regiment of Scotland

As the Royal Regiment of Scotland celebrate their 10th anniversary, The Royal Scots are delighted to hear that HM has agreed the appointment of Major General Bob Bruce CBE DSO as the new Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Scotland in succession of Major General (Ret'd) James Cowan CBE DSO.

"I think this is a good point to finish my time as Colonel of the Regiment, a period that has coincided with the implementation of the Army 2020 reforms and the change from an era of intense campaigning in Iraq and Afghanistan to a new and much more varied life for our soldiers.

This marks the end of my active involvement with the Army and our Regiment. As a commissioned officer, I have had soldiers of our Regiment under command at platoon, company, battalion, brigade and divisional levels. Scottish soldiers have therefore been a central part of my life - their humour and talent for soldiering have made an indelible impression.

I have no doubt that those characteristics will continue to define our Regiment into the future - I look forward to hearing the exploits of its soldiers in the years to come."

General Bruce's first official duty as Colonel of The Regiment was to attend the Regimental Rugby Sevens tournament at Glencorse Barracks.

General Bruce said:

"I am greatly honoured to be appointed as Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. The Regiment is founded on uniquely glorious history, and the powerful reputation of the Scottish soldier is acknowledged world-wide. We aim to carry that history and reputation forward into the future with confidence and pride.

I would particularly like to pay tribute to Major General James Cowan CBE DSO, from whom I assume this appointment. James is a son of the Regiment, as a child first with The Royal Scots and then with the Black Watch.

Scottish soldiers have been a central part of his whole life and we are indebted to him for his outstanding service and leadership."

Major General Bob Bruce was commissioned into The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) in 1987. His early service was spent in Werl, Germany, from where he deployed with B Company to Northern Ireland and A Company to the Gulf. He was both Ops Officer and Adjutant in Fort George and subsequently commanded C Company in Colchester and Ballykelly.

He assumed command of 1st Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) in Iraq in February 2006 and led the merger of 1st Battalions of The Royal Scots and King's Own Scottish Borderers to form The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, on 1st August 2006. He returned to Iraq with 1 SCOTS in 2007.

He commanded 4th Mechanized Brigade from 2011 to 2013.

Operational deployments have been to Northern Ireland, the Gulf (Ops GRANBY and SHADER), Iraq (Op TELIC) and Afghanistan (Op HERRICK).

On the staff, he has served in Land Command, the MOD, HQ 6 (UK) Division, and Army HQ and the Pentagon, USA.

Major General Bruce has been married to Lorna for 20 years and they have two teenage children.



**Major Generals
Bruce and
Cowan**

Keep in Touch

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Piershill Cemetery

In January this year there was a ceremony at Piershill Cemetery for Sgt Willie Duguid, who led a very chequered life but was Pipe Major of the Gordon Highlanders and the 16th Battalion whom he piped off to France during WW1. He ended up in an unmarked grave in Piershill Cemetery due to his fall in circumstances until 2014 when McCrae's Battalion Trust, in the guise of Jack Alexander, tracked down his grave and erected a stone over it to commemorate his final resting place. This was unveiled on 7th January 2016 with representatives from 16th Battalion Trust, the RS Association led by Capt Jimmy Springthorpe, and descendants of that Battalion.

Willie Duguid's complete story from the McCrae Battalion Trust website:
<http://www.mccraesbattaliontrust.org.uk/mccraes-battalion-centenaries/>



Major Tait with Regimental Flag

Major Gary Tait MBE, currently serving as OC HQ Coy 2 SCOTS, stands next to the commemorative stone for Pipe Major Duguid (late GORDONS and 16th Bn RS). Maj Tait is holding a Regimental Flag which covered the stone prior to its unveiling.

50 Years ago – 1966

1st Battalion in Tidworth then Osnabruck

Major event of the year was preparation for moving to an Armoured role in Germany. Following Battalion training in Canada, it becomes a Mechanised Infantry Battalion in Osnabruck equipped with FV432s.

40 years on....

We remember them

The events held in NI over the weekend Friday 25th and Saturday 26th March to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the deaths of Ptes David Ferguson, Roderick Bannon and John Pearson was a marvellous occasion. They were killed by a terrorist mine on the night of 31st March 1976 in South Armagh, NI. The service conducted on the Saturday morning by Padre Alan Knox, followed by the laying of wreaths in The Memorial Garden, was very moving and it was fitting that some family members were there from the Ferguson and Bannon families to lay wreaths. The Chairman of Trustees, Martin Gibson, laid a wreath on behalf of The Regiment and Stuart Aitken and Tam Douglas represented the Pearson family. The hosting provided by 1 SCOTS was exemplary and the QM Maj McAuley and WO2 McBroom went the extra mile to ensure all that was required was provided. A lunch was held for family and Association members in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess of 1 SCOTS. Overall coordination for the weekend's events was provided by the NI branch of The Regimental Association and their Chairman Maxie McDonald, and Secretary Davey McKendrick, worked tirelessly over a number of months to pull it all together. NI Branch members did a great job of hosting people, answering questions and acting as "duty drivers". A mention must be made of the NI Branch's close links with the Royal British Legion Club of Newtonards, who made everyone very welcome on Friday and Saturday night, and to all of you who made the journey to remember three Royals who made "the ultimate sacrifice."



Colonel Martin Gibson paying his respects

Photo courtesy of Davy McKendrick

Unveiling of the Gulf memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum

by Liz Kyle

On Saturday, 26th February 2016, a small group departed from Edinburgh to Staffordshire for the unveiling of the memorial to the Fallen during the Gulf War conflict. The group consisted of Iain Johnstone, George Lowder, Guy Richardson, Jimmy Springthorpe, George Higgins, Jim Anderson, Andy & Liz Kyle and Torquil & Ann-Marie Corkerton.

The journey down was rather interesting as we had our own personal barman, who kindly kept us entertained. On arriving at our hotel, we gathered together with the members of the Royal Scots Association Southern Branch and had a few wee drinks after dinner. In the morning, we boarded the coach and headed to the National Arboretum for the unveiling ceremony. The memorial was organised by the Gulf War (90-91) Memorial Trust Appeal, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the campaign. The Royal Scots Association was well represented and the Regiment was noticeable in the crowd as the Glengarries were prominently displayed. Approximately 20 minutes into the ceremony, there was a flypast from the RAF, which sadly drowned out the words of the Padre. When this part of the ceremony was over, the families were invited to lay the wreaths in memory of their loved ones; Brigadier (Retd) Iain Johnstone OBE, the Op Granby commanding officer laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment.

After the ceremony came to a close, people started to make their way to view the names of the fallen and to pay silent honour to the memory of those who sadly lost their lives during the conflict.

Time was so precious with so much to see and take in. We all dispersed for a bit of a warming up as it was a rather chilly day, and a few pictures were taken of the trees commemorating Royals on Op Banner. The Arboretum is a place definitely worth a visit at some point for those who have not been before.

Our journey back home was less eventful, with Iain Johnstone and myself being the only two people who managed to stay awake on the coach! (There is photo evidence to prove it!!) We arrived back into Edinburgh at around 2200 rather tired and weary but feeling it was a very well worthwhile trip.



Brigadier Iain Johnstone laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment

Photo courtesy of Ann-Marie Corkerton



Left to Right - Jim Scoular, James Valentine, Torquil Corkerton, Paddy Millar, George Gilchrist, Pete Dewar, Iain Johnstone, John Caballero, Andy Kyle, George Higgins, Jimmy Springthorpe, John Lambert, Alex Alderson, George Lowder, Tam Millar and Guy Richardson

Photo courtesy of Ann-Marie Corkerton

Op Granby Reunion Dinner

by Jimmy Springthorpe

On 26th February to mark the 25th Anniversary of Operation Granby (First Gulf War) 55 veterans of The Royal Scots Battlegroup sat down to dinner in The Royal Scots Club which was presided over by the CO during the Gulf War, Brigadier (Retd) I A Johnstone OBE. The evening begun in the bar before dinner and the "war stories" were flying even before the first pint had been pulled. During what was an excellent dinner a photo loop of photographs from our time in the desert were portrayed on a large screen which prompted many comments along the lines of "was I really that slim and handsome" and "that's when I had hair". Brigadier Iain Johnstone in a well-received speech reminded all present of what great warriors we once were. The age of those present ranged from 43 to 71. After a marvellous meal which was beautifully presented and served by the Club staff under the watchful eye of the duty manager, Mr Patrick Jam, we retired to the bar where the war stories continued. It was a great evening, and catching up with old comrades who had not been seen for a while was the icing on the cake.



Brig Iain Johnstone, Maj Dave Beveridge, Lt Col Gordon Rae, Padre Stephen Blakey, Maj Guy Richardson, Capt Alex Dockar, Maj Norman Soutar and Brig George Lowder

Photo courtesy of Jim Anderson

101st Commemoration of Quintinshill Crash

On Saturday 21st May Royals, together with members of the cadet organisations came together to mark the death of so many of 7th RS at Quintinshill, near Gretna on 22nd May 1915. A much smaller, yet more intimate, affair than last year's 100th anniversary but with a good turnout of RS Association members, Association Standards Party, Association Pipes & Drums, Navy and Army cadets, Lodge members, people of Leith community and descendants who met at the gates of the cemetery on a sunny morning. The Association, Cadets and Lodge members, led by the Pipe Band and Standards Party, marched from the gates to the Memorial. The service was taken by Rev Iain May, Minister from South Leith Parish Church which had strong links with the 7th Battalion. Colonel Martin Gibson laid the Regimental wreath and several other wreaths were laid by local organisations. Over 60 members of the Royal Scots Association including Pipe Band were on parade and in the front rank, stepping out strongly were Colonel Gibson, Mr Andy Kyle and Major General Strudwick. Many thanks to all who turned up for this important Regimental event. Prior to the event on the Saturday, Pilmey Youth Club had laid 216 Poppy Crosses by the side of the Memorial, one for each Royal Scot killed in the accident.



101st Service of Remembrance of the Gretna Rail Disaster

Photo courtesy of Ann-Marie Corkerton

85 Years ago – 1931

1st Battalion at Aldershot
2nd Battalion at Quetta



New pattern Officers' Cap Badge and Collar Badges illustrated. It had been felt that the Cap and Collar Badges were too similar to the Scots Guards and the Regimental Council, having elicited comments from all officers, and received approval from Lord Lyon King of Arms, decided to move to the badge used on the Officer's Buckle – which is the Staff Badge we know today.

Le Paradis 2016

This year a party of Royal Scots once again met up with Royal Norfolks at Le Paradis in Northern France to remember all those who had laid down their lives during the battle for Le Paradis in May 1940.

Mike and Cheryl Cran, Andy and Valerie McDowall, Iain and Annabel Laird, David Dickson, Ian Johnstone and our trusty Piper Matt Hoggan made up our numbers. Elizabeth and Christopher Roads joined us for the first time. Elizabeth is the daughter of the late Major James Bruce MC who was the Adjutant of 1 RS and took over command of the battalion during the last stages of the battle on 27 May. On the Saturday short services were held, and poppy wreaths laid, at Le Creton Farm, the memorial outside the village church and in the British Military Cemetery. Andy McDowall gave an excellent address in French to about 200 people attending. The Lestrem Marching Band played Major Jimmy Howe's compositions as well as our Regimental Marches. The local school children sang "The National Anthem" followed by "The Marseillaise". Poppies were laid on all the Royal Scot graves and the locals were given poppies to wear. After a village reception all the guests were treated to civic lunch in a nearby restaurant where toasts were made and the Piper played much to the appreciation of our hosts. The Regimental pipe banner that had been presented to the Lestrem Community last year was carried throughout by our Piper.

With the formalities concluded the weekend continued with much bonhomie. On the Sunday Ian Johnstone led the tour of the battlefield and gave a particularly graphic and moving account of his father's role in taking command of A Company on the final day and how they narrowly avoided being massacred by the SS.

Next year's 77th anniversary event will be held on Saturday 27th May. All are welcome, and are invited to get in touch with David Dickson on davidpmdickson@gmail.com.



Piper Matt Hoggan

Photo courtesy of Lt Col Gordon Rae



Regimental Piper Matt Hoggan and Major Mike Cran at the Memorial

Photo courtesy of Major David Dickson

A note from the Regimental Office

We have now been embedded in the Royal Scots Club for eighteen months and thanks to the warm welcome from the manager, Adrian Hayes, and his staff we are well settled in. Liz Kyle and Andy Kay continue to beaver away without complaint, provided they are constantly topped up with tea and coffee, as well as maintaining possession of the air conditioning unit remote. Comfort is only one of the many advantages of being based in the Club. It is also easier for people to visit us, and where else can you order room service from your desk. Being the first point of call for all things Royal Scots, keeps us extremely busy. This year we have been involved in supporting dinners (Regimental Day and Granby Reunion) and commemoration services (The National Arboretum, Northern Ireland, and Gretna 101) as well as parades (Armed Forces Day and the Somme Vigil). We also update databases and websites, answer questions so varied they would test the highest level eggheads; we keep the accounts, sell stock, almonise for benevolence and lend a sympathetic ear to Royals and their families whenever and wherever it is required.

In closing, a final plea to everyone in the Regimental Family to contact admin@theroyalscots.co.uk and to confirm your contact information so we may pass on any relevant information. An email, letter or phone call is all it takes. And of course a visit to the Office during opening hours would find you a warm welcome.



Liz Kyle and Jimmy Springthorpe in command of the Regimental Office

Photo courtesy of Ann-Marie Corkerton

Regimental Day Dinner



Tam Douglas offers a dram to Piper Jim McCabe while Jim Blythe, Jimmy Springthorpe and Mark Strudwick look on

Photo courtesy of Jim Anderson

The Regimental Association

by Chairman Jimmy Springthorpe

The first six months of 2016 have been very busy for the Association. As well as the annual events (Regimental Day Dinner, the Gretna Commemoration Service, The Regimental Reunion, various branch events and Armed Forces Day) we have also been involved in The Op Granby Dinner, the unveiling of the Granby Memorial at the National Arboretum and the Vigil Service to commemorate the battle of The Somme which was held in the SNWM, Edinburgh Castle. All of those events are covered elsewhere in this edition of The Thistle.

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Rev Iain May as our Association Padre. Padre Iain as minister of South Leith Parish Church has for a number of years conducted the Gretna Memorial Service at Rosebank cemetery. His input and guidance last year during the 100th Anniversary of the Quintinshill rail disaster was invaluable; I am sure he will be a great asset to the Association and I would ask that we all make him welcome whenever we meet.

The Crown and One Tie Awards for 2015 have been made to Martin Burnett and William Malloy who have, while fund raising for Erskine, promoted the name of The Royal Scots wherever their bikes have taken them; well done!

To all members of the Association, thank you for your continued support and to those of you who are eligible but have yet to join the Association a simple e-mail to association@theroyalscots.co.uk will suffice.

Northern Ireland Branch

by Chairman C MacDonald

After a quiet start to the year and eventually managing to have the Northern Ireland Branch Christmas night out, it was full focus on the upcoming commemorative service for the 3 Royal Scots soldiers who were lost during the 1976 South Armagh Tour. The night prior to the service we held a meet and greet in the Ards British Legion. It was a fantastic evening as it was well attended by members from across the water as well as members of the 1 SCOTS rear party. According to the Chairman of the Legion club, they have never taken in so much money behind the bar in 3 hours. I think we have set a new record.

The main commemorative service was held in Palace Barracks, courtesy of 1 SCOTS, where tea, coffee and biscuits were served in the WO's and Sgts' mess. A fitting church service was presided over by our very own famous and never changing, Padre Knox, supported by the Garrison Padre. It was great to see Padre Knox and it was very nice of him to volunteer to lead the commemorative service.

Wreaths were laid in the Garden of Remembrance after the service. The gathered returned to the mess for a lovely lunch where Colonel Martin Gibson made a small presentation to the families. Although the 1 SCOTS Battalion was deployed to Cyprus on a UN tour for six months, our POC WO2 Alec McBroom coordinated the day for us and all his efforts make it an overwhelming success for all concerned including the families in attendance. Special thanks to WO2 McBroom and Colonel Nick Wight-Boycott, the Commanding Officer of 1 SCOTS, who have always been a great support to us. Every member of the Royal Scots Association Northern Ireland Branch would like welcome our newest members, Stuart Guthrie and Eddie Edwards.

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

By the summer of 1916 the British Army in France had grown from the five Divisions and some 100,000 men who had formed the British Expeditionary Force in August 1914, including the 2nd Battalion, to a force of fifty-eight Divisions totalling some 1.5 million men. Amongst these were nine Battalions of the Regiment; the 2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th and 17th, all of who were to take part in The Battle of the Somme.

The Battle commenced at 0730 on 1 July, after a massive six-day bombardment, with eleven Divisions, 220,000 men, assaulting simultaneously on a fourteen mile front. The 15th and 16th Battalions, forming part of the 34th Division, were in the initial assault in the southern sector astride the Albert to Bapaume road. By nightfall British losses were over 57,000, of who nearly 20,000 were dead. Some gains were made by the attacking force on the southern flank, including by the 15th and 16th Battalions who were the only units in their Division to reach their initial objectives, but elsewhere the attack had been stopped in its tracks. The first day of the Somme, in terms of casualties, remains the blackest day in the history of the British Army.

The Regiment commemorated the centenary of the start of the Battle by participating in three major events. These were:

- An overnight Vigil on 30 June through to 0730 on 1 July at the Scottish National War Memorial within Edinburgh Castle.
- A major Act of Remembrance at Contalmaison, in France, the objective of the 16th Battalion on 1 July, organised by the 16th Battalion Trust under the leadership of Major Gary Tait, formerly The Royal Scots now SCOTS.
- A Somme Remembrance Service at St Cuthbert's Church, in the West End of Edinburgh, organised by the 16th Battalion Trust and including a film link to Contalmaison.

The detail of the Regiment's involvement throughout the Battle, including maps, can be found at www.theroyalscots.co.uk, click to history and then The Somme

Vigil at the Scottish National War Memorial

30th June/1st July

The Vigil, organised by the Royal British Legion Scotland under the auspices of Scotland100, the National WW1 Commemorations Committee, commenced at 1800 with members of the Regular Armed Services standing Vigil on the Shrine. At 2100 a Service took place outside the SNWM led by the Rev Neil Gardner. At 2130 veterans groups, organised by the RBLS, took on the overnight task of standing Vigil. The Royal Scots were given the honour of standing the final Vigil, ending at 0730, the time the Battle commenced. Regiment Sentinels were Lt Col Gordon Rae, Mr George Higgins, Mr Rab

Conquer, Mr John McCulloch, Ms Susan Purvis, Mr Stewart Taylor, Mr Jim Anderson, Mr Andy Kay. Joining us were Lt Col Jim Blythe, our support element, and Major General Mark Strudwick, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the SNWM.



John McCulloch and Rab Conquer
Photo courtesy of George Higgins



Major General Mark Strudwick, Sheila Purvis, Rab Conquer, John McCulloch, Gordon Rae, Andy Kay, Jim Anderson, George Higgins and Lt Col Jim Blythe
Photo courtesy of Lt Col Jim Blythe



Lt Col Gordon Rae and Andy Kay
Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Life Magazine

Our Vigil period lasted from 0640 to 0730 with two members standing Vigil at any one time. Our allotted time ended at 0730, 100 years after the start of the Battle. At 0710 a Dawn Service was held, again led by Rev Neil Gardner, ending at 0728 with a round fired from the One O'Clock Gun signifying the start of a two minute silence. At 0730 a whistle blast by Lt Col Hamilton, using the whistle blown by his grandfather on that day, signified H-Hour and The Royal Scots contingent left the SNWM to symbolise the going over the top.



Evening Service 30th June

Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Life Magazine



Dawn Service 1st June 2016

Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Life Magazine



0730 on 1st June 2016 Leaving the Shrine

St Cuthbert's Church Memorial Service

by Colonel Robert Watson

Organised by the 16th Battalion Trust, a service was held in St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh. The service was led by Service Ministers and Ministers from St Cuthbert's Church. The Church was well filled with few seats left vacant. While not organised by the Regiment, there was a good turnout of Royals for this Commemoration.



St Cuthbert's Service

Photo courtesy of Irene Gill



Military Wives Choir

Photo courtesy of Irene Gill



Flanked by the Bugler and Piper from 2 SCOTS are Brig Charles Ritchie, Lt Col and Mrs John Sands, Col Robert Watson, Maj and Mrs David Beveridge and Col Martin Gibson

Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Life Magazine

McCrae's Battalion Trust - Centenary Pilgrimage, 1st July 2016

By Major Gary Tait

The 1st of July 1916 is often referred to as the blackest day in the history of the British Army; but you could easily go further. From this distance it seems like the blackest day in British history full stop. The 16th Royal Scots were in the worst of it. 'Edinburgh's Finest', they called them; Scotland's 'Sporting Battalion' and the first of the so-called 'Footballers' battalions'. But most folk knew them simply as 'McCrae's'. They were named after their charismatic founder, Colonel Sir George McCrae, who stood on the stage in the Usher Hall on a chill November evening in 1914 and invited the young men of the city to join him. "I cannot ask you to go", he told them, "If I'm not prepared to share the danger at your side." It was an unforgettable moment.

On 1st July 2016, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, the McCrae's Battalion Trust, in partnership with the Prefecture of the Somme and the municipality of Contalmaison, held a commemorative service at the McCrae's Battalion Memorial Cairn at Contalmaison from 0915 to 1015 hours.



Tam Douglas, Tam Logan, McCrae's Battalion Committee member Jim Paris, Paul Robertson and Stu Aitken at the Great War Memorial

Photo courtesy of C A Potter Photography

Preparation and Delivery

The 100th anniversary event was one of only six authorised events sanctioned by the French Government; Contalmaison and the 16th Battalion Cairn being designated as the "Cairn Ecosais." As in previous years the Royal Scots Association Standard Bearer Party paraded, with the "Blue Blanket" (a one-time Association banner now held in the City of Edinburgh Council offices) making an appearance. Additionally the Royal Scots Association Pipe Band played wonderfully while on parade at the Cairn. The Trust is hugely appreciative of the relationship with the Royal Scots Association and will work with them to further develop this important and critical link.



The Pipe Band at the Cairn site with No Man's Land behind them (the ground that the 15th and 16th RS crossed)

Photo courtesy of C A Potter Photography



Led by the 2 SCOTS piper the Standard Bearers march on at 0918hrs in Contalmaison

Photo courtesy of C A Potter Photography

French security was very tight indeed and an early start was required by all attendees. Checks and sweeps started at 0400hrs in the village in preparation for the arrival of the attendees from around 0700hrs. The Association Pipe Band played two stirring sets as we waited for the official start time; they were quite simply superb. Once settled in approximately 850 personnel were present for the march on of the Standards Party at 0918hrs (slightly delayed due to the arrival of the French Minister for veterans - Jean-Marc Todeschini). The Service commenced with a historical account of the 1st of July by Maj Gary Tait, Chairman of the Trust, which included a review of both the 15th and 16th battalion's advances that morning. Further tribute was made to all Royal Scots who took part in the Battle of the Somme and of course, the sacrifice of all soldiers that day. A wreath was laid on behalf of the Association along with a further 72 others (our largest other than the unveiling in 2004). Both the 15th and 16th Battalions were so honoured separately as was the Regiment as a whole. After the very poignant service and commemorative element a light lunch in the village was enjoyed by all. A couple of hours in Albert in the afternoon preceded a commemorative Dinner in "Le Tommy" Restaurant in Poziers. The Royal Scots from WW1 were remembered and commemorated in good order this centenary year – we will continue to do so in the years ahead, as they will not be forgotten.



Major Gary Tait



Harry Wright lays the wreath on behalf of the Association under the watchful eye of Tam Douglas
Photo courtesy of C A Potter Photography



Contalmaison Cairn 1st July 2016
Photo courtesy of C A Potter Photography



The Edinburgh Armed Forces Day

by Andy Kay

The Edinburgh Armed Forces Day parade was held on Saturday 25th June 2016. The parade with a good representation from the Royal Scots Association, the Standards Party plus the Association Pipe Band formed up on Johnstone Terrace and marched to Princes Street Gardens via the Royal Mile, George IV Bridge and the Grass Market. It was particularly encouraging to have a Korean veteran and around 10 younger Royals from our Regimental Family marching. The parade was presided over by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh The Rt Hon Donald Wilson, Lt Gen Sir Alistair Irwin KCB CBE and Air Vice Marshal Ross Paterson OBE who all said a few words of thanks to those on parade.



Royal Scots from left - Gordon Sinclair, John Wilson, Frank Hall, Jimmy Welsh, Jock Marr, John McCulloch, Neil McPherson and Rab Conquer

Photo courtesy of Jim Anderson

MUSEUM

by Colonel Gordon Rae

Technical problems with the digitisation of the Museum Accession Register have finally been overcome. The programme also allows for photographs to be stored, so that each item can be readily identified. When this is completed we will have a 100% up to date location for all artefacts with the ability to move and change displays and update the computer at the same time, thus always having a 100% accuracy of each item's location on the now digitised Accession Register.

The Library project to reduce the library from a broad-based military library to a smaller Royal Scots focused library is now complete. The surplus books to be sold off have been set aside and professional advice has been sought and received. The process of disposing of the surplus books will now commence; all monies raised will be put back into the Museum for future projects.

Following on from the very successful display of the 3rd Battalion Waterloo Colours in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle as part of WATERLOO 200 last year, where they were seen by over 500,000 visitors in only four months. The Museum Committee is undertaking a project to permanently display the Colours in the Museum. The wall where the cases will be displayed will have a full size photograph of the King's Colour printed on it to give a perspective of scale. In addition there will be 2 large explanatory boards detailing the design, Battle Honours and history of the Colours. This project will be completed in the autumn.

After much hard work all labels in the Museum have been checked and additional information added where needed. The aim is to replace all labels in the Museum in a larger and clearer font so that visitors, especially those with impaired vision, can easily read the information. The plan is to carry this out in October at the same time as the Waterloo Colours project is being installed.

The Reserve collection of uniforms have now been photographed and documented. The uniforms are now being cleaned in batches and returned to the Museum storeroom, where they are being stored in special Tyvek covers for long term preservation. Ladies from the National Association for Decorative and Fine Arts Society have been making the covers and once completed they will then start on a programme of restoration of the uniforms that require it and the reinstatement of badges and buttons to bring the uniforms back to their former splendour.

This year has been a busy year with many projects being completed but there are many more projects still to come. If you feel that you would like to volunteer with the projects, please call Tom Gordon on 0131 310 5015. Whatever skill you have we will be grateful for your help, and who knows you may have a skill that even you have not yet discovered?

150 Years ago – 1866

1st Battalion in Southern India

2nd Battalion Bombay

India was not a safe posting for European men and a monument at Nusseerabad has the following inscription:

"To the Memory of 3 Officers, 13 NCOs, 132, 24 women and 112 children of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots who died between November 1866 and January 1870"

THE VIEW FROM THE OLD PROVOST MARSHAL'S HOUSE

By Lt Col W J Blythe

The view from the Old Provost Marshal's House has been steadily improving with the advent of summer after a pretty miserable winter. The 'permanent staff' here continue to represent 1 SCOTS and A Company 6 SCOTS in the south east quadrant of Scotland while also bridging the gap between RS and SCOTS. At the turn of the year, we lost Chris Galloway, our excellent Office Manager, to 154 (Scottish) Regiment RLC in Dunfermline. Chris had done terrific work for us here as we progressed the transition from HHQ RS to RHQ SCOTS (East) in its present steady state. On Chris' departure we were re-joined by Helen Spence who had been with us on a part time basis, for a spell before moving to the Welfare Office in RHQ SCOTS (Main) in the Barrack Block. Helen is now back with us on a full time basis and settled back into the routine in no time at all. Tom Gordon completes the 'permanent staff' and continues to look after the Museum. In addition to this he continues his military career as an AGC sergeant with 4 PARA and spent June with his unit forming the Falkland Islands garrison, armed with a

pack of briefing notes on the 1 RS deployment there in 1984.

Although the focus of all things RS other than Museum and Heritage is now very firmly with the Regimental Office in the RS Club, Old Royals remain most welcome to visit us here in the Castle; indeed we encourage them to do so. All we ask is that they give us a few days warning so that we can arrange access. Other visitors in the past six months have included: Lieutenant Colonel Nick Wight-Boycott on assuming command of 1 SCOTS, Lieutenant Colonel Don Stedeford a former commanding officer of The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) and Colonel John Purves formerly of 10th (Princess Mary's Own) Gurkha Rifles.

And we look forward to seeing 1 and 6 SCOTS carrying forward the RS Golden Thread with 1 SCOTS Pipes & Drums at the Musselburgh Racecourse Bicentenary, C Company 1 SCOTS along with the RS Association and our Pipe Band exercising Freedom Privileges at the Riding of Musselburgh Marches in July: 1 SCOTS Pipes & Drums in the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

THE ROYAL SCOTS ASSOCIATION PIPE BAND

By Pipe President Major Torquil Corkerton

We're already half way through 2016 and the Association Pipe Band has been as busy as ever, both playing and otherwise. Because of the band's status, we get an interesting mixture of work for pipers and the band, from 'commercial' jobs to pay the bills through to Regimental jobs for the Association and beyond.

As the last edition of The Thistle went to press in December, we were playing at Dundas Castle for the wedding of an ex-soldier who was on the production team of the film Kajaki, about PARA Cpl Mark Wright and his ill-fated patrol in Afghanistan, and we ended 2015 once again as part of the massed pipes and drums for Edinburgh's Hogmanay Torchlight Procession. We began our season this year in February by playing at the Queensferry Hotel for a combined mess Burns Supper for the Army Training Unit (Scotland), all Army Reservists based at Redford Barracks who provide recruit and specialist training to the Army Reserve in Scotland most weekends of the year. Following this were: a late night retreat at Gosford House in East Lothian, the first of three Indian Christian Festival parades for this year and playing for the third time for the Scottish Decorators' Federation's annual dinner dance at Dalmahoy Country Club.

We do not, however, stray too far from our Regimental roots. We played again to open the Regimental Reunion at the BMC Club in Edinburgh, although unfortunately illness and a lack of numbers prevented us from performing again later in the evening. We provided pipers for The Royal Scots Club's Burns Supper, the 100th

birthday celebrations of 2RS veteran Alex Leslie, the unveiling of the Gulf War memorial at the National Arboretum, the Regimental Association dinner in April and for the annual pilgrimage to Le Paradis in May. At the band's AGM last year, it was unanimously decided that we should send a band, rather than just a piper, to Contalmaison this year and as I write this the band are there, playing for the 100th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme.

The band was raised at the end of 1999 to fly the flag for the Regiment and its Association. In a modern world where there are many local bands vying for talent, we are always on the look out for any pipers and drummers, particularly old Royals, who enjoy the camaraderie of the Pipes and Drums but for whom competing is not an interest or an option. If there is anybody near Edinburgh who is interested, we'd be delighted to hear from them. For information, please email torquil@ednet.co.uk.



The Association Pipe Band on parade at Rosebank Cemetery

Photo courtesy of Ann-Marie Corkerton

The Royal Scots Regimental Trust

Fundraising is always a necessary part of running a charity in order to ensure it has sufficient funds to carry out its role. In our case, to ensure that funds are always available to cover the benevolence needs of our Regimental Family.

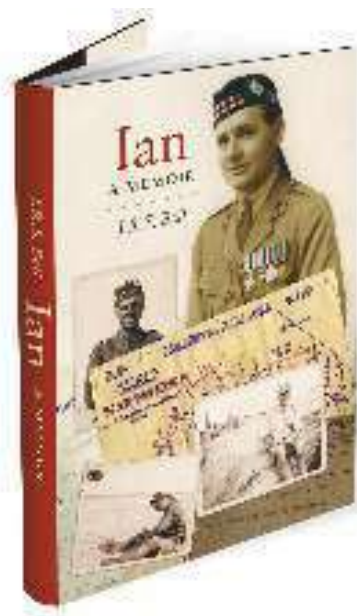
Donations are always welcome.

Have you considered leaving a gift – bequest – in your will?

There are three types of legacy: Residuary, Pecuniary and Specific.

A lawyer will help you with your choice and wording.

All bequests should be left to The Royal Scots Regimental Trust and must use our Registered Charity Number (SC008001) and our address: The Royal Scots Regimental Trust, The Royal Scots Regimental Office, 29-31 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6QE.



Ian: A Memoir

by J.R.S. Bell

Robin's book is not for sale as it is primarily for family and friends. He is, however, very generously offering 100 free copies to Royal Scots and those connected to the military family, if they consider making a donation of £15.00 to Combat Stress. Copies of the book along with the donation form can be picked up from the Royal Scots Club, or go to the Club website www.theroyalscotsclub.com and Regimental website www.royalscots.co.uk where you can print off a contact form to send to the Club and they will post a book out to you for the P&P cost.

Congratulations! Old Royal celebrates his 100th birthday

Mr Alexander Leslie, veteran of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) celebrated his 100th birthday on Friday 11 March. Alex joined the 2nd Battalion aged 17 in 1933 and survived three years and eight months in captivity during WWII as a consequence of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru in Hong Kong.



**Young Alexander who joined the Regiment in
1933 at the age of 17**

Photo courtesy of Gordon Leslie



Mr Alexander Leslie celebrates his centenary

Photo courtesy of Maria Leslie

200 Years ago – 1816

1st Battalion – Ireland, Garrison duties

2nd Battalion – India on operations during the

Mahratta Wars, which led to two actions at Nagpore in 1817 and the award of Nagpore as a unique Battle Honour to The Royal Scots.

HRH The Princess Royal visits 1 SCOTS in Cyprus, February 2016

The Princess Royal pays her respects at the grave of Private Ketchen during her visit to 1 SCOTS in Cyprus on Thursday 4th February 2016.



Paying respects at Pte Ketchen's grave



HRH visits a 1SCOTS patrol

300 Years ago – 1716

The Regiment was in Ireland, where duties were "of a policing nature in support of the civil authorities" - good experience for Op Banner!

Royal Scots Club

Contact Janet or Laura on 0131 556 4270
or membership@royalscotsclub.com

The Club Speakers Lunches

The Annual Burns Supper was as ever a resounding success. The Immortal Memory was given by Magnus Linklater CBE, and the Toast to the Lassies by Major Gen Mark Strudwick CBE. Best-selling Scottish crime writer Val McDermid gave a thoroughly entertaining Reply to the Laddies. And of course for those who prefer their haggis a bit earlier in the day, the Burns Lunch provided an excellent opportunity to see what musical talent there is throughout the Club. Dairmid Gunn gave an excellent 'Immortal Memory'.



The Club was privileged to have as one of their lunch speakers, the newly appointed Chief Constable of Police Scotland, Phil Gormley, who gave an insightful talk on new and past policing in Scotland. He is pictured here with Chairman John Lloyd. David Craig was also part of the series, and as CEO gave a fascinating insight into Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance service.



Phil Gormley QPM and John Lloyd

IN MEMORIAM

Capt Robin Fegan – 22nd February 2016

In 1956, Robin graduated from Sandhurst, and was commissioned into the 1st Battalion The Royal Scots and served in Egypt, Scotland, Libya, and Benghazi. Robin spent two years in the newly independent Nigeria during which time he wrote an article for the regimental magazine titled, 'From Lowland Bonnet to Bush Hat'.

Robin left the regiment in 1965 but he never forgot his military roots later joining the regimental association and, despite his emphysema, marched at the National Cenotaph parade in London. He could be seen playing his accordion in the grand entrance of the Old Building as a greeting to special lunches at Sandhurst. So, to the last he remained a brave soul despite the slings and arrows of life that came his way!

Major (Retd) Bob Maclean – 17th March 2016

Bob MacLean passed away peacefully, in his 96th year, on 17th March 2016 in Edinburgh. He is survived by his wife Sheila, daughter Anne (Gill), son Roderick and grandchildren, Catherine, James, Richard, Iain and Gemma.

Mr J (Jimmy) Scullion – 12th April 2016

W02 1RS 1962- 86. Jimmy spent most of his time at Regimental duty in the Signal Platoon but also had spells in the Recce Platoon and B coy. His last appointment at Regimental Duty was as Sergeant Major HQ Coy. He also served at the Depot and at the School of Infantry where he was a tremendous ambassador for the Regiment. In civilian life Jimmy continued to serve the MOD as a Range Warden and as an Accommodation Services Accountant. He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter Stella and son James.

Mr John Myles – 30th April 2016

John Myles was born on the 27th June 1924 and enlisted in The Royal Scots in 1942. John served in India with the 14th Army under Gen Bill Slim. John escaped death on a number of occasions the first being when the troop ship he was on was sunk by an aerial torpedo. He was later to be struck down with malaria and dysentery while serving in Kohima. In May 44 whilst attacking a strongly held Japanese position he was hit by a jagged bullet which narrowly missed his spinal cord. He was to be wounded again in 1945 when he was hit by a dum dum bullet. Age 23 John was demobbed in 1947. A great supporter of the Regimental association John was at his happiest while parading in the annual Cenotaph parade.

Mr John Neil – 11th May 2016.

John Neil was born in Paisley in 1947 and joined The Royal Scots in 1965. During his time with 1RS John deployed on six tours in Northern Ireland. During one of those tours John was Mentioned in Despatches (MiD). From 1979 – 87 John served as an instructor with the REME and completed his service as a Staff Sergeant. It was while serving with the REME at Arborfield that John met and married Helen and became Step Dad to Danny, Brian and Karen. As a civilian John worked for Reading Council and later moved to Slough and High Wycombe. When they finally retired John and Helen moved to Dorset.

Mr Chris (Para) Williams – 30th January 2016. 1RS

Major Richard Mothershill – 4th March 2016. 1RS

Mr Scotty Fair – 14th May 2016. 1RS

Mr Stephen Balfour – May 2016. 1RS/1 SCOTS

Mr Francis (Frank) Lawson – 17th May 2016. 1RS

Capt Jack Storie MC – 22nd June 2016. 7/9 RS

From the Editor

Ann-Marie Corkerton grew up a pale-skinned redhead in the Texas heat, but escaped as soon as she could. She worked all over America in the service of others, variously as a paramedic, volunteer fire fighter, 911 dispatcher and USO volunteer, but sadly nowhere felt like home until she came to Scotland for the holiday of a lifetime in 2012 and met dashing IT engineer, piper, Army Reserve Major and husband-to-be, Torquil.

In 2014, newly married and waiting for leave to remain in the UK, she helped the Association Pipe Band with its admin, during which time she came to the attention of the Regimental Trustees. Now the proud owner of a National Insurance number, she has her dream job, working for Veterans First Point Scotland, and was asked by Colonel Robert Watson to consider taking over as Editor of The Thistle from Bob Paterson.

Ann-Marie lives in Edinburgh with Torquil, doesn't get to see him as much as she would like and looks forward to dressing a Corgi fur-baby (or two) in Hunting Stewart.

FORECAST OF EVENTS

AUGUST — DECEMBER 2016

AUGUST

Mon 1st Minden Day
Thu 4th RS Club Tattoo Evening
Mon 15th HRH The Princess Royal's Birthday
Sun 28th Gladdy Murray Golf Outing — Silverknowes Golf Course

SEPTEMBER

Sat 24th RS Club — Pre-race Day Dinner with
Derek "Tommo" Thomson
Sat 24th RS Association Dinner, RS Club
Sun 25th Support your Services Race Day, Musselburgh Race Course

OCTOBER

Fri 21st RS Association AGM, RS Club
Fri 28th Regimental Trustees Meeting
Fri 28th Officers' Dinner, RS Club
Mon 31st Opening of Garden of Remembrance, Princes Street,
Edinburgh

NOVEMBER

Thu 10th Opening of Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
Fri 11th Armistice Day Service SNWM 10:40am Edinburgh Castle
Sat 12th Glencorse Memorial Gates Ceremony
Sun 13th Remembrance Sunday
Sun 13th RS Club Remembrance Day Lunch and laying of Wreath in
the Club
Sat 26th East of Scotland Branch, St Andrew's Night Dinner

DECEMBER

Tues 13th RS Club Members' Christmas Lunch
Tues 20th RS Club Christmas Carol Concert
16th Dec — 3rd Jan 17 RS Museum Closed for Festive Period
22nd Dec — 3rd Jan 17 RS Office, Closed for Festive Period

All RS Club events can be found here:

<https://www.royalscotsclub.com/membership/members-events/>

Looking forward:

I have rather enjoyed editing my first edition of The Thistle, and going forward I would like to include more stories about members of the Royal Scots family, wherever they are living or serving, including the various branches of the association. Whether you wore the cap badge or loved someone who did, please allow us to share all the news and events which celebrate the proud Royal Scots name and tradition. Please forward your submissions (or branch newsletters) and photos including the names of person within as well as the name of the photographer, to my email address — Ann-Marie@Corkerton.com by Sunday, 11th December 2016 for the Winter 2016/2017 edition.

Association Meetings

EDINBURGH

Last Friday of each month at
8.00 pm at Leith ex-
Servicemen's Club, 7 Smith's
Place, Edinburgh
Contact: Mags Allen
weeweegie1@virginmedia.com

CENTRAL SCOTLAND

First Sunday of each month at
2.00 pm at Hillcroft Hotel,
Whitburn, West Lothian
Contact: David Milne
David.milne3343@live.co.uk

EAST OF SCOTLAND

Last Saturday of each month at
7.30 pm at Prestonpans, East
Lothian. Contact: Ross Swinton
Ross.swinton.24@gmail.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

First Tuesday of each month at
RBL Ards
Contact: Davy McKendrick,
Secretary
davidsmck1@sky.com

HIGHLAND

On the first Thursday of the
month at 7.30 pm at Raigmore
Recreation Rooms, Inverness
Contact:
william.jeans@btinternet.com

SOUTHERN

Contact: Tam Millar
Weetam0571@sky.com

PIPE BAND

Contact: Torquil Corkerton
Torquil@ednet.co.uk

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