



The Thistle

Journal of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)

Volume 37

Summer Edition 2020

Foreword

Brigadier G E Lowder MBE

Chairman of Trustees and President of The Regimental Association

Writing the last foreword for the Winter Thistle I reflected on what the new decade would bring, certainly ups and downs, but I don't think many foresaw the full extent of the impact of the COVID 19 (C19) global pandemic. On 30 April 1665 Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary of "Great fears of sicknesse here in the City" and a few months later, he wrote of deserted streets and the pedestrians he did encounter "walking like people that had taken leave of the world." Much of what Pepys wrote about the bubonic plague resonates today, including frustration with people not following the lockdown rules, the bleak pre-occupation with mortality rates and concern for mental health. By September 1665 it was clear that attempts to control the plague were failing and social distancing was not being enforced. Thankfully, that is not quite where we find ourselves today, but of course, there's no room for complacency and C 19 continues to impact all things Regimental, but as you would expect, we have adapted and continued to operate effectively.

You will be pleased to know that through the Spring and early Summer Regimental business has continued virtually. We have recorded several Regimental firsts, including, but not exclusively; Executive and Trustees' meetings successfully conducted via MS Teams, the virtual commemoration of the untold story of Le Paradis on Zoom, the Regimental Office working from home and functioning perfectly well and a socially distanced wreath laying at Rosebank Cemetery. Whilst some business took a little longer at the height of lockdown, everything was still completed to our usual high standards. I must thank everyone involved for their patience, perseverance, willingness to adapt and flexibility. Of course, lockdown and operational tours have some similarities, periods of confinement with the same folks, looking forward to the excursions, significantly heightened awareness when out of confinement and looking forward to meals much more than usual, or was that just in our house?

Last year's annual accounts have been audited and signed off, all completed virtually. The value of our investments dropped considerably in the early months of C19 but are now steadily recovering. C19 will have a direct impact on our investment income this year and probably for a few years to come. This is balanced by the realities of C19 which mean that we have been unable to conduct all the activity we had planned and therefore we have not spent some allocated funding. I can re-assure you that we are monitoring this very carefully. C19 has released other Government funding for Veterans and we have reviewed, with Association Branches, how we might be able to make best use of this additional resource. The key premise is that funding can be used to ensure Veterans do not feel isolated at this time. If you have an idea, please discuss this with Jimmy Springthorpe or John Dent. We are also considering a post C19 gathering in The Club when we are

able and details of this will follow in due course. The event will be similar to those for Op GRANBY and Op BANNER, following their very successful format.

In the last edition I explained our long term (30 year) strategy and that we were going to conduct a Governance Review to inform how we structure ourselves going forward. We procured the services of Saffery Champness early this year, to conduct an independent review of our governance and structures. An initial Report was considered by Regimental Trustees in May. The final Report has been compiled, taking into consideration feedback and suggestions for further work. This Final Report has been circulated to the Trustees of The Regimental Trust, Museum Trust, War Memorial Fund and Association Office Bearers for their consideration. It is planned that the recommendation in the Report will be considered before our late Autumn meetings and if approved we will take things forward. The main recommendation in the Report is that; the Regimental Trust, Museum Trust and Association should form a single charitable organisation, using the vehicle of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). The pillars of Regimental Trust and Heritage, Museum and Association will be unaffected below the top level, single, SCIO. The SCIO is a modern legal vehicle, which removes unlimited liability from all Trustees, improves efficiency and achieves some savings. The principal reason for all this, is to adopt the best governance model we can, to enable our long-term strategy. If you would like to see the Report, just let Jimmy know and he will share a copy. I am keen that this review is conducted in as open and transparent a way as possible. Whilst there is no great rush, we must maintain the steady momentum that we have achieved to date.

One strand of our strategy is to ensure optimal alignment between The Regiment and The Club. On Monday 29 June I took over from Mark Strudwick as Chairman of the War Memorial Fund Trustees. Mark has chaired the War Memorial Fund Trustees for 6 years and we look forward to saying thank you properly, when we are able. The Club was closed during lockdown and re-opened with public safety and health measures paramount on 16 July. During lockdown The Club's ability to generate income was seriously impacted and of course, all possible measures were taken to reduce costs, including furloughing staff. The truly symbiotic relationship between The Regiment and The Club became very evident at this time. In recent good times The Club has been in a position to support The Regiment, the obvious examples are the provision of The Regimental Office and support for our meetings, gatherings, lunches and dinners. In a C19 context it was necessary to consider how The Regiment could support The Club. I can report that this work has been conducted, the options considered, and a preferred course of action selected. Thankfully, it looks like this will not be



needed by The Club, who are making various arrangements to continue to trade. We are, however, on hand to help, in extremis, if required. This is absolutely the time when ex Royals (Regular, Reserve, Attached) should join The Club and support it. This is a call to arms and further details of a membership offer for Ex Royals are in this edition. If, for some reason, you decide not to join The Club, perhaps an overseas posting, or deployment, or you are living abroad then please use and support The Club whenever you in Edinburgh and are able. Of course, non-members can also visit and use The Club and are welcome to do so.

I have on several occasions referred to the importance of associating as well as the importance of The Association. The latter has relatively few fully signed up members compared to our surviving constituency. The former, however, happens all over the UK and beyond, in numerous ways; small gatherings, annual gatherings, Regimental Band re-unions and occasional catch ups and golf matches. One recent example is Eck Wind's organisation of a memorial golf day for the late Stuart Snedden. A fine example of Ex Royals associating, albeit postponed until May 2021 due to C19. This associating is to be thoroughly encouraged, although I would of course be very glad to see more of you joining The Association as well as The Club. Sadly, after much

consideration The Officers' Dinner has had to be cancelled, I hope that the golf will still be able to take place and Regimental Trustees will meet that day.

Finally, in this edition I usually ask you to think about turning out at one of the many Remembrance Services in which we participate each year. 2020 will be very different, with caps on numbers at each event and social distancing almost certain to still be in force. That said, I expect that we will have appropriate representation at all of our usual events and details will be promulgated as soon as possible. Off to polish my brogues and medals for Saturday and a socially distanced wreath laying at Lauriston Castle to mark VJ Day. I will be thinking of the 2nd Battalion Members who survived Hong Kong, that I have had the privilege of meeting, those who were on The MV Lisbon Maru and all those who did not come home from The Far East. Look after yourselves, take care and I look forward to the next time our paths cross in person.

Yours Aye

George Lowder

The Royal Scots Club

As lockdown eases and we look to getting back to normal after the Covid-19 crisis I am writing this as Chairman of The Club, Regimental Trustees and as President of The Regimental Association to draw your attention to the efforts being made to return The Club to a positive trading position. The crisis has hit The Club hard with a significant loss of income. The Management Committee of The Club along with the General Manager Adrian Hayes and his Team are working hard to deliver a programme of recovery which began on 16 July, when The Club re-opened. As I said in the Foreword, the COVID 19 situation has reinforced the interdependence between The Club and The Regiment. We remember that the primary purpose of The Club is to exist as a living memorial to The Regimental War Dead of the First World War and other conflicts since, but it also provides a rallying point and a home for our Regimental Office.

The Club is unique as an All Ranks Club, with membership open to all members of The Regimental Family at a special rate. The Club holds many artifacts mainly from the end of the 19th Century and early 20th Century. Importantly there is a memorial Book in the foyer listing all war deaths in two books: WW1 in Book One and WW2 and other conflicts in Book Two.

The Club is run by a Management Committee reporting to Club Trustees. The day to day running however, is the responsibility of Adrian Hayes and his very efficient team, all of whom are extremely keen to see the Club back up and running as best we can in the changing circumstances. One way for this to happen is for members of

The Regimental Family to use The Club more thus generating revenue. Membership Fees for ex Royals is currently £135 per year, or £2.60 per week – less than the price of a pint of beer. I would like to take this opportunity to urge ex Royals, their families and those members of The Regimental Family, to consider Membership of The Club. The membership fees can be found on The Club website <https://www.royalsscotsclub.com/membership/membership-costs/>

The Club has been hit hard by the Covid-19 outbreak and it will take time to return to normal running. It is extremely important that we help support The Club. To do this I respectfully request all of The Regimental Family to get fully behind the Club, take up or renew membership, use The Club for social events, or just pop in when you can. Let's all work together and bring The Club back to the vibrant, living Club that it was at the start of the year. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Adrian Hayes or his team, who will be delighted to answer any questions you may have.

“UP THE ROYALS”!

George E Lowder MBE

Brigadier

Chairman The Royal Scots Club Trustees

Chairman Regimental Trustees.

President Regimental Association

CLUB MEMBERSHIP OFFER

For readers of The Thistle and other members of The Regimental Family, The Club have come up with a very generous offer to encourage new Membership.

Firstly The Club will not charge a Joining Fee which is a saving of £60 straight away. Then, The Club has agreed, that for the first year the Membership Fee may be split over 4 quarters. Instead

of having to front up a Fee of £135 there will be four payments of £33.75.

This is a wonderful gesture by The Club which we hope can help increase Membership.

80th Anniversary of Le Paradis – an untold story - Video

May 1940 saw 1RS as part of the BEF in France facing the German Blitzkrieg. The fighting was fierce and, for the 1st Battalion, came to an end at Le Paradis. Many of those that fought there went 'into the bag' and were PoWs for the remainder of the war.

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of this small but significant battle two events were held under Covid-19 restrictions. Colonel Andy McDowall attended Le Paradis ceremonies in the village of Lestrem, representing The Regiment and laying our Regimental Wreath and flowers at the various monuments.

Back in the UK an online service was arranged by Colonel Martin Gibson using video conferencing software which allowed nearly 50 members of The Regimental and Regimental Family to participate. The Service, held on 26 May 2020, was taken by Rev Ros Trafford Roberts, the Exhortation delivered by Brigadier George Lowder and Corporal Alan Thomson 1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums played Dumbarton's Drums. Yet another unique and new experience for The Regiment which went very well.

Footnote: 22 years earlier in April 1918, in World War1, the 8th Battalion fought at Le Paradis."

Le Paradis Commemorations Colonel Andy McDowall



Regimental Office

Finally, we are back working from the office albeit on a reduced hours basis initially. Working from home was a new experience for me and I have to say, if I am working then I much prefer the office to home. Not going to the office allows one (me) to fall into bad habits which included sitting at my computer in rag order, allowing myself to be distracted by all manner of domestic issues and sloping out into the garden when the weather was particularly nice.

I missed getting dressed in collar and tie each working day and interacting with those that I met on a daily basis pre Covid.

One benefit of the home working period was that it allowed us to fully test our business continuity plan. There is no question that it worked as we were able to function pretty much as normal. However, it might have put us under a bit of strain if all our events and functions were continuing at the same time. It was timely that online meeting sites had been developed and we made good use of them so that no planned meetings were cancelled. Lessons have been learned.

To allow us to comply with the current restrictions we cannot allow any more than two visitors into the offices at any given time and we would ask that if you wish to come into the office you call us to arrange a time.

Captain J Springthorpe

The Royal Scots Regimental Association

During the lockdown period all Association events have been cancelled including the AGM which had been scheduled for 20th March 2020. We were however able to lay a wreath at Rosebank Cemetery (see below) and we have held committee quarterly meetings online. As we start to get a return to "normal" we have managed to enjoy a lunch in the Royal Scots Club on Monday 17th August when The Association had a table for ten. This was to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ day and followed on from a short wreath laying service at The Royal Scots memorial at Lauriston Castle on Saturday 15th August.

Associating (with a small 'a')

Earlier this year by coincidence two groups of Old Royals met while having lunch in The Royal Scots Club. It turned out to be a lamp swinging lunch as the Beanie Gang and the Saga Louts strived to outdo each other with tales of old.

Captain Jimmy Springthorpe



The Beannie Gang meet the Saga Louts

Photograph taken following Covid Guidelines

HERITAGE AND MUSEUM

Sadly during this period, The Museum has been closed since March 2020 due to COVID-19. In addition to The Museum being closed, all volunteers have been unable to gain access to The Castle hence the files and records etc have been unavailable to the team resulting in all work at The Museum ceasing. The latest update (July) is that we will not gain access to The Castle until September at the earliest, and with the potential restrictions that are likely to be imposed the actual opening date for The Museum is still uncertain, but we will be reopening when safe and practical to do so; keep an eye on the website for news.

During this period, a number of commemoration events were cancelled, however, we did manage to get authority for one or 2 people able to attend to represent The Regiment and to lay a wreath (Rosebank Cemetery, Le Paradis – reported elsewhere in this edition) and in the case of Le Paradis a very successful virtual commemoration was held via ZOOM. <https://youtu.be/gz42hSZg7-M>

Although we were unable to have The Museum open that did not hold us back in keeping The Museum in the public eye with regular

publication of photographs of interesting artefacts held in The Museum, much of it from the Reserve Collection.

The LIBOR project saw The Museum documents and artefacts delivered to the contractor prior to lock down. They have now been scanned and the documents were returned to The Museum in late July. While there are still some discussions to be had over this the aim is to have significant and relevant Museum documents and records online for research purposes, including all copies of The Thistle.

The second of the films "Scottish Soldiers, Regimental Memories 1945 – 2006" was completed and launched online on the 30th April. <https://youtu.be/BZI-FnUgWMQ>

Although access to the Castle is still denied to us, much work is still going on behind the scenes planning for the next phase of projects for when COVID-19 is finally defeated.

Lieutenant Colonel GJ Rae

Team RS 373 (the virtualisation of 373 years of unbroken service) Report

Despite the very significant impact of COVID-19 challenges, Team RS 373 has achieved much in the first half of a unique year by both determination to complete major heritage projects and being innovative in tackling the work programmes. Thank goodness for Zoom! Shortly after The Club reopened in July the Team met to review further work to be undertaken ahead in what will be a year of uncertainty.

Luckily the recording of the interviews for the 55 minute film that captures Regimental Family memories from 1945 to 2006 was completed just before Lockdown; this was launched at the end of April <https://youtu.be/BZI-FnUgWMQ> and provided welcome viewing both for Royal Scots and the much wider overall target of people worldwide. Production and editing remotely required a sustained effort and participation, ably supported by Paul Diffley, the film maker. Interviews to support: clarification of The Royal Scots deployments to Cyprus; additions to the First Gulf War and coverage of Bosnia

are taking place in early autumn to complete post WW2 Regimental memories. Many have commented that the shared unique common bond of being a member of our fine Regimental Family and our "Once a Royal Always a Royal" saying are exemplified in the film.

On the eve of VE Day 75th adhering to socially distancing The Regiment congratulated George Simpson, a veteran of Le Paradis and a prisoner of war, on reaching his 100th birthday. This happy occasion received widespread media attention (<https://youtu.be/qsbIMSCIUaE>). Arrangements were made for him to receive a congratulatory card from HM The Queen.

Unfortunately, the planned 80th anniversary commemoration in France of the 1st Battalion's 'fight to the last man' pivotal role at Le Paradis in enabling the Dunkirk evacuation had to be cancelled. But driven by a strong belief that the sacrifices of those who went before us needed to be commemorated to complement Col Andy McDowall laying a wreath in the French village frenetic endeavours resulted in a moving 30 minute Zoom Le Paradis virtual commemorative event which was shared with the people of Le Paradis (<https://youtu.be/gz42hSZg7-M>).

The pandemic necessitated the closure of The Regimental Museum within the Castle. However, a combination of the excellent essays and virtual museum walk-rounds and the extensive RS 373 work e.g. virtualisation of WW1 and WW2 over the last two years readily available on www.theroyalscots.co.uk has enabled continuity of access to our history and heritage from anywhere in the world 24/7.

Historic enquiries have continued to be received, and in July we learnt of the kind people of a Dutch village who display their gratitude by maintaining the graves of Royal Scots killed while liberating their village in 1944.



Lauriston Gardens by M Ross



VJ Day by J Anderson

On 15th August, the 75th anniversary of VJ Day, a short wreath laying service was held at the memorial in the gardens of Lauriston Castle to mark the major involvement of The Regiment in the Far East from 1940- 1945. Amongst those killed and wounded in the Far East were Royal Scots who had fought at Le Paradis in May 1940. Fittingly, after a wreath laying by Brigadier Lowder our Memorial Club hosted a well-attended VJ Lunch on the 17th of August.

The support of all those volunteers who have contributed to the achievements of Team RS373 is greatly appreciated, thank you all.

Colonel M F Gibson

Lisbon Maru

On 27 September 1942 the merchant ship the Lisbon Maru was taking Japanese soldiers and Allied POWs from Hong Kong to Japan. The ship was torpedoed by a US submarine, USS Grouper. The POWs had been packed into one of the holds and they broke out of the hold as the ship sank, many did not make it out of the ship. Of those that did they found themselves being shot at by the Japanese while they were in the water. Of the 1,816 POWs on board 828 died during the sinking and a further 200 succumbed to their conditions within a few months. Of the 373 Royal Scots on board 144 died. The story of this tragic event can be found on The Royal Scots website: <http://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/lisbon-maru/>

A memorial is being erected at the National Memorial Arboretum to commemorate this event. Details of the event and a method to make a personal donation to the Memorial Fund can be found on the Royal Scots website.

An update from the Lisbon Maru project team was received recently:

Steady progress is being maintained in line with plan. The Stonemason has commenced his preparatory pre engraving work based on the attached front and reverse inscriptions. A completed higher definition photographic impression will be forwarded for final consideration when available together with a complete list of those POWs who died in the sinking and subsequently in Japan. The preferred stone chosen is granite, probably a mix of black and grey

A meeting with the NMA management is scheduled for late September to identify the exact location for the memorial prior to the submission of the formal application to the planning committee in October.

Fund raising has commenced. Private cash donations inclusive of gift aid now exceed £25,500 raised in UK, Australia, South Africa, Hong Kong and China. Further contributions are expected. There have been over 120 donors in one month with many moving tributes.

So far there has been a mixed response from Service Associations. The Royal Engineers and Royal Signals have declined direct financial support due to internal policies but have circulated their membership which has resulted in a number of private donations. The Royal

Navy and Royal Marines combined Charity is considering a grant application and the Royal Scots and Royal Artillery are reviewing the proposal. The Queens Regiment Benevolent Fund (pp Middlesex Regiment) has agreed to contribute up to £3,000 as a back stop if contributions fall short of target.

Finally, a very well known arboriculturist whose father in the Royal Signals died in the sinking has made a significant donation and is presenting the NMA with an oak sapling from the Windsor Estate which it is hoped will be planted near the memorial.



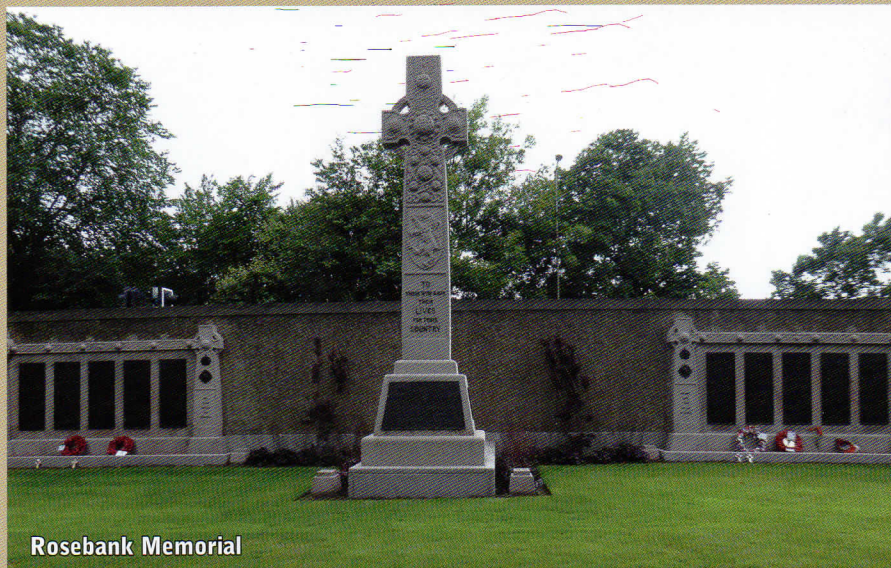
Sinking of the Lisbon Maru in the China Sea, 20 October 1942. A pencil sketch drawn by Lieutenant W C Johnston, US Navy while a prisoner of war at Kobe, Japan and later presented to the Regiment

Documentary Film

On a separate note, documentary film of the sinking is being made by Laurel Films. COVID-19 has caused significant delays to the completion of the film, although the Director informs us that they are continuing to make good progress. For the time being it is not possible to say when the film will be finished, nor when it might be possible to show it in cinemas. Further updates on this when more is known.

Quintinshill Commemorations 2020

Along with so many other events this year, the annual commemorations at Rosebank Cemetery were curtailed by the lockdown due to the Covid-19 outbreak. This did not stop matters completely and Capt Springthorpe sought agreement from the authorities to allow a wreath to be laid on Saturday 23 May at 11 am, the normal time for this event. We were permitted just two people and Mr Tam Douglas laid The Regimental Wreath and Rev Iain May BSC, MBA, BD, our Association Padre, gave the Blessing. This was an unusual event but shows the determination of The Regiment to maintain its commitments and remember their comrades of previous generations regardless of circumstances. Members of The Regimental family were encouraged to take a minute at 11 am on 23 May and recite The Regimental Collect thus bringing us together even though we are physically separated.



Rosebank Memorial

OP BANNER 50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

March 1970 saw the 1st Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) deploy to Northern Ireland and specifically to Belfast. On 29th February 2020 The Regiment held a reunion in the Royal Scots Club to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this event. 1RS were the first major unit deployed from a BAOR role to an emergency tour in N Ireland; this tour was the first of thirteen carried out by the Battalion over the next 32 years.

The size of the hall available somewhat restricted the numbers and we had to restrict attendance to those Royals with a GSM '62 with clasp N Ireland or attached personnel who supported us through these tours. On the night we had 98 all ranks from all parts of the UK and even some flying in for the event. The list of those who could make it is as follows:

Officers

Major General Bob Bruce; Brigadiers George Lowder, Charles Ritchie, James Stevenson, Colonels Mike Ashmore, Peter Fraser-Hopewell, Francis Gibb, Martin Gibson, Robert Watson; Lieutenant Colonels Jim Blythe, John Charteris, Dickie Donovan, David Goodacre, Gordon Rae, John Sands; Majors David Beveridge, Mike Cran, John Dent, David Dickson, Ian Johnstone, Guy Richardson, Stevie Simpson, George Waugh; Captains David Nisbet, Jimmy Springthorpe, Lt Colin Dougan.

Jocks

Messrs Stewart Aitken, Ricky Alves, Ian Apicella, Paddy Barnes, Johnny Beck, Paul Bennett, Andy Boyd, Stevie Brown, John Caballero, Ron Cairns, Jamie Colquhoun, Stuart Colquhoun, Robert Conquer, Thomas Cornwall, Robert Dickson, David Dickson, Tam Douglas, Kenny Dow, Les Elliot, Ian Fair, Thomas Fisher, Andy Fitzpatrick, John Forbes, Andrew Gilmour, Mark Gorrie, Charles Guthrie, Frank Hall, Graham Highet, Thomas Hodgson, William Hoy, George Hunter, Walter Hutchison, Alan Jeans, Andy Kay, Jimmy Laws, William Leith, Thomas Logan, Archie McDonald, Peter MacFadyen, David Macleod, Robert McCabe, Mick McCann, Michael, McCann, Allan McClelland, James, McConnell, Davey McKendrick, Hugh McLeod, David Milne, Gary

The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)					
1RS's 13 OPERATIONAL TOURS IN NORTHERN IRELAND MARCH 1970 - APRIL 2002					
As Recorded in Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Vols 2 and 3					
Tour No	Dates	Location	PPB pages	Thistle*	
1	Mar-Jul 1970	Belfast	387-398	14/1 Nov 70 8-32	
2	May-Jul 1971	Londonderry	400	14/7 Nov 73 84-81	
3	Oct-Dec 1971	Belfast	405	14/4 May 72 110-131	
4	Jan-Aug 1972	Belfast/Londonderry	406-411	15/1 Nov 72 5-18	
5	Dec 1973-Apr 1976	South Armagh	424-427	16/4 May 76 04-109	
6	Feb-May 1980	Belfast	428-432	17/4 May 80 117-128	
7	Mar 1981-Mar 1983	Ballykissel (resident)	437-438	17/6 May 81 191-193	
8	Dec 1987-Mar 1988	Belfast	464-465	18/2 May 83 52-76	
9	Sept 1992-Mar 1993	South Armagh	496	20/1 May 88 4-19	
10	Nov 1993-Apr 1996	South Armagh	501-502	23/2 May 96 79-105	
11	Jan-Dec 1997	Fermanagh (part Br)	508-509	23/5 Nov 97 253-275	
12	Mar-Aug 1999	South Armagh	513-514	24/2 May 99 66-85 and 24/3 Nov 99 114-143	
13	Aug 2000-Apr 2002	Ballykissel (resident)	Vol3 1-11	24/5 Nov 02 252-273 - 25/2 May 02 60-87	

* Volume/Number Date and Pages
Note: Additional information and photographs of a less formal nature can be found in copies of 'Pilate's Post', the Regimental Newsletter intended, primarily, for families and published on each Tour. Individual copies can be referenced in the Regimental Library in The Old Provost Marshall's House within Edinburgh Castle or provided, on request, through archive@theroyalscots.co.uk

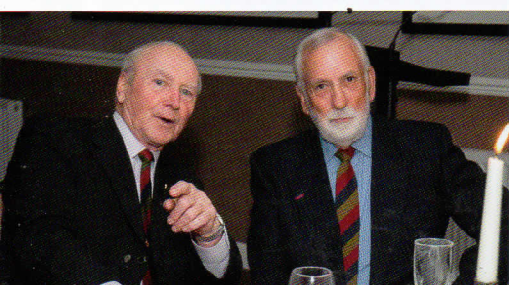
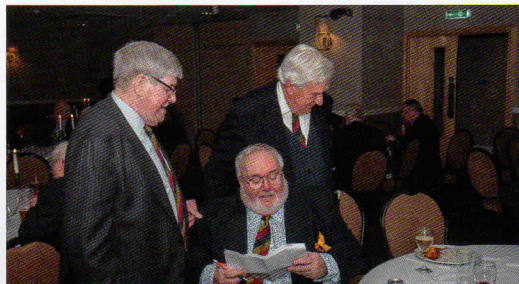
Mitchell, Alex Moore, David Morris, Mick Osinski, Dougie Porteous, Rab Ramage, Tony Reid, Terry Renicks, Malcolm Ross, Robert Sandison, Mark Sands, Francis Shields, Stuart Simpson, Ross Stalley (Cunliffe), Fraser Stewart, Gordon Strange, Gerry Stryker, George Thomson, Jay Watson, Eddie Welsh, Peter Whitson, Jack Wilson, Jennie Wren, Harry Wright.

This was a great turnout from all ranks and the early part of the evening rang with the familiar "I recognise your face but can't place your name"! That very quickly sorted itself out. There was no formal seating and people moved round the room re-kindling old names, memories and friendships; the main aim of the evening.

The evening opened up with a welcome from Brigadier George Lowder, Chairman of Trustees. There was no music or entertainment as this evening was about talking to each other, but we did have a set from two Pipers from The Regimental Association Pipe Band which was very enjoyable. This set followed the buffet supper which, surprisingly, was a curry! The Club as ever looked after us very well ensuring that all went smoothly. After the supper Colonel Martin Gibson took us, briefly, through the thirteen tours referring to the booklet put together by Colonel Robert Watson detailing the 13 Tours, and which was given to everyone attending. Copies are still available from The Regimental Office.

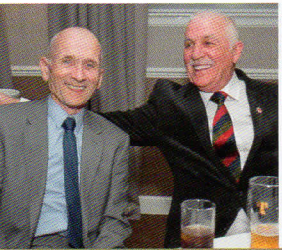
A highly successful evening which was enjoyed by all who attended. Thanks must go to Captain Jimmy Springthorpe and The Regimental Office for organising this. Mrs Ellie Weir for counting us all in and Brigadier Lowder and The Regimental Trustees for assisting in the funding of this very popular event.

Photography at the event. This year we have a former Royal who now takes photographs of RS events thus ensuring that we have full records of the events we hold. Malcom Ross (Rosco) ex C Coy & Sigs Pl, runs the photography company Malross so all copyright for the photographs belong to him. Rosco also took many of the photographs at Remembrance last year









The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Relocation of 1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums – From the Facebook page of 1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums

<https://www.facebook.com/1SCOTSPandD/>

On 16 March 2020 in a bid to rejuvenate, 1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums relocated to Balaklava Company in Redford Barracks, Edinburgh.

Over the past 3 years 1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums have been in an unprecedented position as a result of the Army 2020 refine and the formation of the Specialised Infantry Group. Due to the nature of the Pipes and Drums and the operational cycle requirements of the companies, it was deemed necessary to remain as one platoon within HQ Coy. Unfortunately, this did not work well with the structure of a specialised infantry battalion and as a result our numbers began to slowly decrease. After many discussions and exploration of ideas, a tough, but positive decision was made to relocate the Pipes and Drums alongside Balaklava Coy.

What does this mean?

The Royal Regiment of Scotland now has two pipe bands within the central belt of Scotland who are **actively recruiting**.

Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic our hopes of a traditional face to face recruitment campaign over the summer will be limited, if at all feasible but it is vitally important to continue our recruitment effort. Therefore, if you are **interested in a career** within the Royal Regiment of Scotland and, in particular, the Pipes and Drums, we want to hear from you.

Contact us direct via messenger and we will point you in the right direction.



Royal British Legion Scotland – 75th VE Day Anniversary Parade

Again, this was drastically changed to abide with government regulations regarding gatherings during lockdown. However, virtual events were held, and many joined in on-line.

Royal Scots Trustees Meetings – Major JV Dent

The Regimental Trust

We achieved another First for The First of Foot!

Both the Executive and The Regimental Trustees held their May meetings by video call for the first time.

Governance and Streamlining

The Regimental Trustees commissioned a review to establish the best way of moving forward in our continuing effort to make the best use of limited resources and the continuing reliance on a large number of volunteers. The volunteers, across all activities, help to ensure The Regimental machine ticks over and provides a proper level of service to our extended family.

The review carried out by an external Body, sought to establish the best way of moving forward on streamlining, covering future structure, financial, legal and tax implications.

The draft report was discussed by Trustees at their May meeting, at which The Museum Trust, RS Club Trustees and RS Association were all represented. The full report is now under consideration for final approval by the Trustees at their October meeting.

RS Club

Following the resignation of Maj Gen Mark Strudwick as Chairman of RS Club Trustees, on completion of tenure, Brig George Lowder was elected by the Trustees to assume the post of Chairman. This is a start in the process of streamlining and reduction of duplication of effort.

Brig Lowder remains the Chairman of The Regimental Trust.

Re-join and FTRS opportunities may also be available.

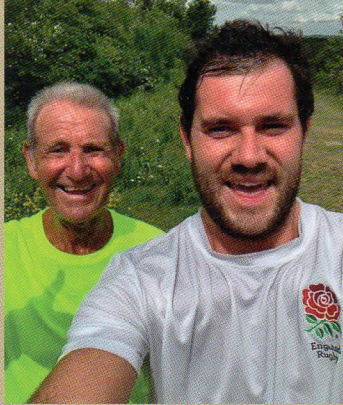
Part of our remit as an Association and as the P&Ds are the immediate descendants of The Royal Scots P&Ds it is up to us to spread the word that the Band are recruiting; so if you know or hear of any potential recruits make sure you point them in the right direction.

What did you do during the Covid-19 Lockdown

From Mr Tam Millar, Southern Branch

I hope all is well with everyone. A few photos of runs I have managed to do during lockdown. I did a run for Nurses Day, a half marathon for VE Day, with my Grandson William. This was his first half marathon and he did well, we even got a medal.

My wife is still shielding and has been told she has to until at least August as High Risk. I am hoping that Remembrance events will go ahead as it would be great to meet up with everyone for the march past the Cenotaph, and other Parades.



Andy Kay

While nowhere near as athletic as Tam Millar I have spent the period of Covid-19 lockdown growing a fine head of hair! I got my first haircut in five, nearly six, months on July 15th and what a weight off my head that was. I don't think I have ever had my hair as long as it became during lockdown. I have no doubt that many were in the same boat, with some even joining the bearded brigade. Hopefully this is a good sign that we are slowly coming out of this disruptive lockdown period.

Reminiscences during Lockdown – Major John V Dent

Lockdown prompted an increasing number of posts on social media (RS Facebook and other military sites) that brought back memories of yesteryear. One or two of the reminiscences below might be of passing interest to older folk and bring back a smile.:-

- Bed blocks and Bumpers
- Ice-cold ablutions
- Pick helms and greatcoats on guard duty.
- Button brush for brass buttons (I still use mine for medals and blazer buttons)
- Painting the grass, coal and stones appropriate colours

After the excitement of basic training and before Sandhurst, I joined the Demonstration Bn at Warminster. We trialed Combat Equipment Fighting Order (CEFO), later 58 pattern equipment and the FN rifle, later introduced as the SLR. I remember PUFO but that was something different!



Berlin - The March Past

Berlin followed Sandhurst and among lasting memories are the number of WW2 soldiers and officers still serving – and we never asked them to share their experiences. The same happens now- we forget to ask questions of relatives often until it is too late. Ruins and rubble from the war still much in evidence in East Berlin. Patrolling the perimeter wire of Montgomery Barracks, dressed in Service Dress and claymore. Russians impressed?

Bob Richardson's Adjutant's Parade for subalterns to teach them the intricacies of Highland Dancing

Queen's Birthday Parade - Visions of 1936 Olympics and Hitler parades on the same site

Spandau gaol, guarding the 3 German prisoners (Hess, Von Shirach and Speer) and ceremonial handover to other nations of the Four Powers involved in guarding. All taken very seriously at the time.



Berlin 1959 - Queens Colour Carried by Lt JV Dent

Libya

Expeditions – bartering with the local population for eggs and bread to supplement compo using pidgin Arabic, remnants of WW2 activity, LRDG vehicles and airstrips. Digging for water in the desert as instructed - and it worked! Bn exercises as Navigator, (a task for the IO then) mastering the sun compass in featureless desert was a challenge but, ably assisted by AdjT (Philip Davies) and RSM (Les Skinner) poring over maps, hoping to be where we thought we were!

Starry skies – no light pollution

Zam-Zam - fizzy soft drink (AKA gazoosa). Only much later did I discover it is the same name for Holy Water in the Koran - not sure that would be appropriate today?



'Farewell to Libya'. Corporal 'Paddy' Waugh, front left, leads a patrol in newly-issued combat suits across the desert in a publicity photograph. Corporal Waugh was to become RSM of the 1st Battalion 1980-82

Aden

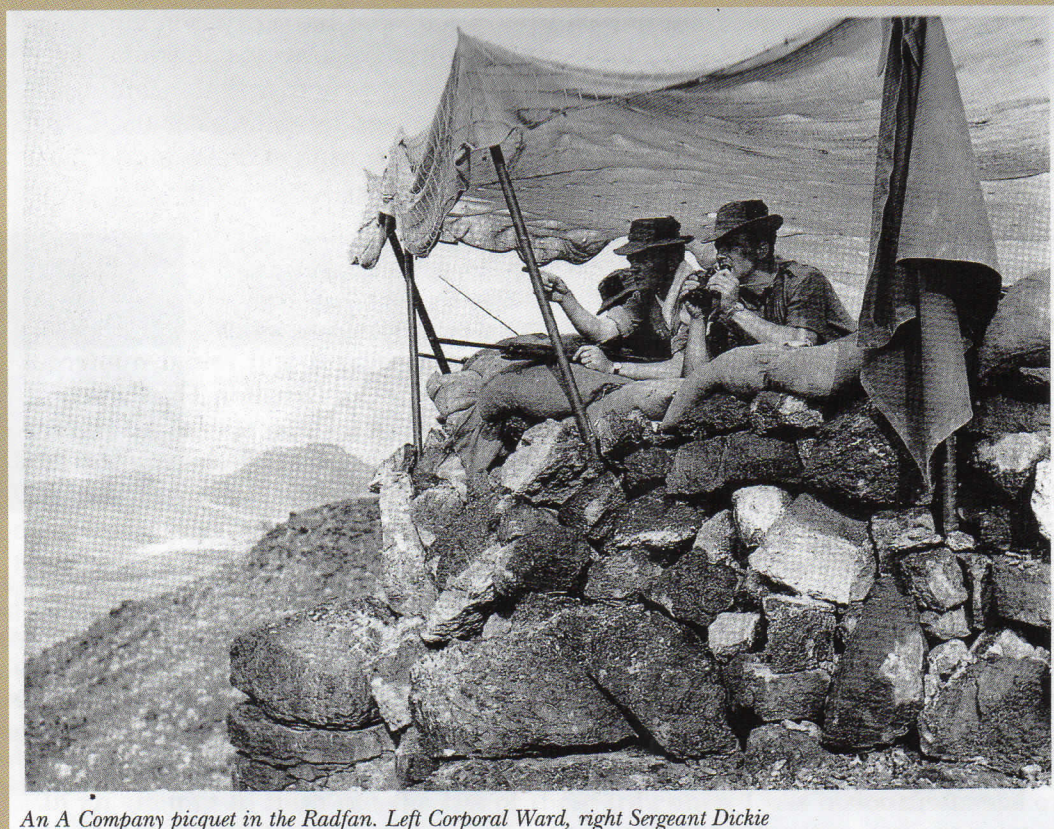
Archie's baboon!

First Royal to set foot in Thumier with Bob Lowson as Advance Party on first deployment to Radfan.

Brilliant colours of Chameleons and other lizards, scenery reminiscent of biblical times,- grain stores, terracing and widows' curses. Poisoned water and mines. Landrovers, Stalwarts, sandbags, and sangars

Being in charge of camels carrying rations and water to picquets. Beverleys lumbering out of Thumier and Belvederes. The latter was a forerunner of the Chinook and carried rations and water in flimsies; these were useful for making improvised showers. RN Hunter sorties, in and out over rugged terrain.

Tango time.



An A Company picquet in the Radfan. Left Corporal Ward, right Sergeant Dickie

Finally, I always mean to ask, are soldiers still issued with a very useful piece of kit, the hussif (Housewife)?

Enough from me but hopefully others may wish to reminisce....?

(Ed: please do and write to us about these memories)

JVD

Ellie Weir, Assistant Regimental Administrator

During the Covid lockdown the Regimental office was closed so Ellie worked from home with the main task ensuring that Benevolence continued where required. However, lockdown being what it was, Ellie found herself not only carrying on with her Regimental office work but became teacher to her children. Ellie is also Chairperson of the Liberton Primary School Parents Association. This task was not made any easier by the fire which destroyed several classrooms some months prior to lockdown so the Parents' Association has been working closely with the school to ensure a smooth return to classes after the lockdown eases. A very full time for Ellie as a Parent, Teacher, Chairperson all while ensuring that the work of the office did not get forgotten. Edinburgh Evening News interviewed Ellie and her daughter Amelie about the return to classes for the children who had been placed in other schools while the rebuilding was going on:

'We were taken in and made to feel so welcome'

To say that community spirit has got Liberton Primary through the challenges of this year seems a bit of an understatement – it has been a lifeline.

Without the understanding, pro-activity and adaptability of parents and pupils there is no question that staff would have found the challenges they faced even harder.

But help did not stop there, as countless people across the wider Liberton area – and further beyond the city – more than stepped up to help a school that really needed a hand.

After the fire we had so many offers of donations," explains Ellie Weir, chair of the Liberton Primary Association.

"There were things like books and cushions for the temporary classrooms we



GRATEFUL: Ellie Weir

were going to be in. We had other schools delivering them to us, a local pharmacy offering us space to use for storage, people giving us carpets, and a group at a local community centre crocheting blankets.

"People were so generous."

Like many parents, Ellie who has two children

at Liberton Primary – heard of February's fire by text message as news spread quickly across the community that afternoon.

"There was a lot of disbelief at first," she says. "I could not believe it and there was panic because of the time that it took place as we knew children were still in the building."

Ellie and her team of volunteers were quick to channel as much information as they could to parents from school management, using the association's Facebook page.

This continued during the "double whammy" of lockdown and over the summer holidays as plans for a return were discussed nationally and locally.

She praises staff for their "brilliant" work in making the decent to other schools across Edinburgh a success

following the fire. She also stresses that the welcome Liberton Primary pupils received was "fantastic".

"Pupils from the other schools sent us cards," she says.

"Staff also held open days for parents. We were really pleased that we were taken in and so welcomed."

Today marks a return for pupils and another day in the journey the school faces in designing and rebuilding the fire damaged wing.

"We've been really pleased that the council has listened to us and made an effort over what we would like from the new building," she says.

"This week is going to be emotional but there is a lot of positivity."

"The pupils have been so resilient, with no complaining. They've just embraced the challenges."

LIBERTON PRIMARY PUPILS DESPERATE TO GET BACK TO THEIR SCHOOL

IT has been a year like no other for the pupils at Liberton Primary, facing more disruption than most children will ever tackle at school.

Among the hundreds of youngsters who met the devastating news that their much-loved school had been partially destroyed by fire – and then went on to months of home-schooling during lockdown – is seven-year-old Amelie.

This eloquent, bright P3 pupil cannot wait to get back to her beloved school, and will be one of many to have missed all its excitement, routine and happiness.

"I have really missed my friends and teachers," she says.

"I've missed having fun in the playground and being in the classroom and learning.

"It's been quite a long time."

Staff have gone to great lengths during the fire decant and lockdown to meet the needs of pupils.

Such examples include taking pictures of the classrooms in the schools pupils were to be based post-fire, so they could visualise their new setting.

One teacher recorded herself singing individual birthday messages during lockdown to ensure every child had an opportunity to feel special.



EXCITED: Amelie, from P3

Old n Bold

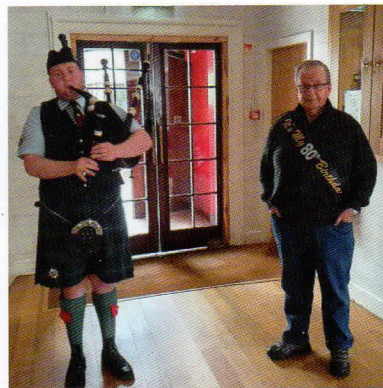
Another of our Regimental Old 'n Bold has lived up to the title by reaching his 100th Birthday.

George Simpson. 1st Battalion WW2

Former Royal Scot, George Simpson celebrated his 100th birthday on 7th May. A piper from the RS Association Pipe Band played outside his house and a small number of Association Members, suitably spaced due to Covid-19 regulations, saluted him. This was covered by BFBS and the BBC. George went with the 1st Battalion to France as part of the BEF but became a POW in May 1940 during the fighting at Le Paradis; remaining behind wire for the remainder of the war.



George contributed to a film produced by Colonel Martin Gibson's 373 Project Team and can be found here. <https://youtu.be/qsblM5CIUaE>



Colonel Mike Ashmore also celebrated his 80th birthday on the 23rd of May.

Other notable birthdays included Danny Dempsey, now a resident at SVR Whiteford House and a well-remembered member of The Regiment. Danny's 80th birthday was held in Whiteford House on 23rd May.

ROYAL SCOTS OFFICERS' REGIMENTAL DINNER AND GOLF MATCH

Friday 30 October 2020

It was hoped that the Officers' Dinner scheduled for Friday 30 October 2020 might be able to go ahead, if run on a socially distanced and legislatively compliant basis. It was acknowledged that it would be a very different dinner. After widespread consultation, scoping work and detailed discussions between The Club, The Dinner Committee and The Executive, various risks were identified which outweigh the benefits of running the event. This results in the difficult decision to cancel the Officers' Dinner this year.

It is hoped that the officers' golf match, which normally precedes the dinner, will still go ahead.

The Regimental Trustees meeting will still take place that day as planned.

Sport – as in so many other facets of our normal lives, sport has been curtailed almost completely. Tam Millar got himself out on some runs but apart from that the usual golf outings and other sporting events have been cancelled. Next year is going to be busy!

East Lothian Veterans Breakfast Club (ELVBC)

This very successful Club which brings together Veterans from all three Services once a month for a breakfast at the Ravelston Hotel Musselburgh, has been in abeyance due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The administrators are keen to get it up and running again just as soon as circumstances allow. Please look to the RS website for updates. There are Breakfast Clubs in just about every corner of the UK, open to Veterans of all ranks from all three Armed Services. Details of Clubs near you can be found on their website <https://www.afvbc.net/find-a-club/>.

Although not formed for charity raising purposes, the groups often do find causes they feel worth supporting. As an example, the ELVBC supported the East Lothian Food Bank and made a donation to them last Christmas as shown in the East Lothian Courier article below. The cost though of attending one of these ELVBC meetings is just the cost of Breakfast. Come along and join in.

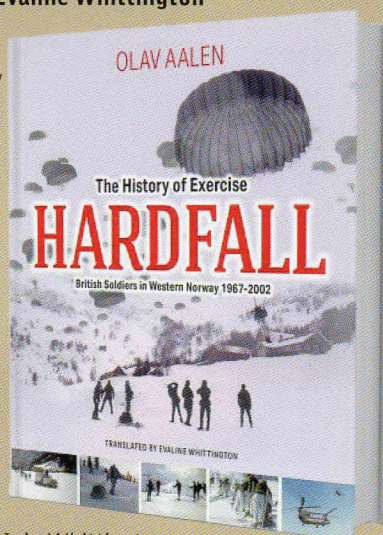


Mr Tom Logan, Mr Peter Dicker, Foodbank Manager, Mr Ian Fair

The History of EXERCISE HARDFALL- British Soldiers in Western Norway 1967-2002

By Olav Aalen translated by Evaline Whittington

Many will remember the winter exercises in Norway in the early 70s where 1RS, as AMF(L) Battalion, was introduced to NATO Planks (x-country ski's) and the injuries that went with them! This is a very good and possibly unique book about the series of exercises known as EX HARDFALL. Again, those who took part in these exercises will appreciate where the name originated! The book is written as a series of articles by Norwegian officers who were our instructors and some from British participants including former Royal Engineer, Colonel Iain Whittington, who supplied many of the photographs and illustrations. This is a very informative book covering a large part of the Cold War and our part in defending the Northern Frontier. Well worth a read.



The book can be bought from the publishers : <http://www.mereobooks.com/books/genre/war-military-history/history-exercise-hardfall-mereo-books>

Andy Kay

Deaths

The Editor relies on friends and relatives to provide timely and meaningful contributions to record the life and achievements of former members of The Regiment.

Mr James Welsh Jnr - 3rd February 2020 - 1RS
SSgt/REME

Mr Gordon Beech - 19th February 2020 - 1RS

Mr Frank Allen – 7th March 2020 - 1RS National
Service

Major Neil AD McCance - 28th March 2020 - 1RS

Mr John McGrath - 3rd April 2020 - 1RS

Mr Kenneth Leader - 7th May 2020 - 1RS

Mr Peter Pearson - 14th June 2020 - Sgt 1RS/
SCOTS

Mr Henry Duthie MBE - 15th June 2020 - RS

Mr Paul Poustie - 1st July 2020 - 1RS

Mr William Galloway - 10th July 2020 - Cpl 1RS

Mr Allan Gall - 21st July 2020 - CSgt 1RS

From The Editor

Once again, the Editorial team are grateful for the articles and photographs sent to us and we try to use most of these in The Thistle. Space constraints may mean that the article has to be edited which is at the Editor's discretion. Please refer to The Regimental website for confirmation of events venues and timings. We welcome any comments, ideas, constructive criticism so if you have any of these then either give the Team a phone call or drop us an email. All articles for The Thistle should be sent to thistle.editor@theroyalscots.co.uk. Timeline for the Winter edition is 15 January 2021.

Forecast of Events

Normally this Section would include a list of projected events for the next 12 months. With the current uncertainties surround Covid-19 we are not doing this for this edition. What we would ask is that you keep checking the Royal Scots website to get information of events as they become known. We hope to be able to produce a full list in the Winter edition when there is more certainty to life.

With the various Dinners cancelled the major events just ahead of us are the Remembrance events in late October through to 11th November. These will be held if government guidelines permit. Details of events, numbers permitted to attend, and any other details will be notified on the website closer to the events.

If you have any queries, call the Regimental Office who will be happy to assist where they can.

Branch Details

EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Branch are having to relocate to a new meeting place. Details will be made known when this has been arranged. In the meantime:

Contact: Mick McCann
mikemccann4130@hotmail.co.uk

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 RBL Prestonpans

Contact: Peter Blackie
peterblackie@yahoo.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

First Tuesday of each month at RBL Ards

Contact: Davy McKendrick, Secretary
Davidsmck1@sky.com

HIGHLAND

First Sunday of each month at 6 pm at Raigmore Recreation Rooms, Inverness

Contact: Tam McFadyen
tamrosie@btinternet.com

SOUTHERN

No Branch meetings but events arranged during the year.

Contact: Tam Millar
Weetam0571@sky.co.uk

PIPE BAND

Contact T Corkerton for information re Band practice days.

Contact: Torquil Corkerton
torquil@ednet.co.uk

For further information contact the:

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