



The Thistle

Journal of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)

Volume 44

Winter 2023



The Lord Provost joined us for a short service at the Royal Scots Monument following the Opening of the Garden of Remembrance 23 October 2023

Foreword

Brigadier G E Lowder MBE

Chairman of the Regimental Trustees, President of the Regimental Association and Chairman of the War Memorial Fund Trustees

I hope that this edition of The Thistle finds you well and looking forward to a brighter and drier Spring after what seems to have been a long, wet, winter.

Governance. I am delighted to report that we are now fully up and running as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), The Royal Scots Regimental Trust SCIO incorporating the Benevolence & Welfare, the Association and Museum & Heritage. The Museum Trust has been dissolved and the Museum Trustees have now stood down. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them most sincerely for their dedication and hard work over the years and for their support in getting us to this point. We have agreed the “rules of the road” governing how the Museum Committee will interact and report to the Regimental Trust, including a refresh of the Museum Committee’s Terms of Reference. The Committee will be reviewing its membership in the coming months and there will be opportunities to contribute, or volunteer, if you have the inclination and time. Outreach will continue to be a key activity of the Museum and the Museum Committee. We continue to give thought to the pros and cons of combining The Royal Scots Club and the Regimental Trust. Perhaps most importantly, after 5 successful years of streamlining our governance, Trustees have reviewed our Regimental Strategy that was developed in 2019. We undertook to do this by December 2023 and Trustees did this last October. Our planning assumptions remain valid, but we will be refreshing our Strategy to reflect the following timelines and key tasks:

Short Term. 1 Jan 2024 – 31 Dec 2029. We will:

Identify and confirm the future of the Museum beyond 2030. One of the options for the Museum after 2030 was a partnership with The Royal Regiment of Scotland (SCOTS). We will participate in a joint working group with SCOTS to explore the possibilities of such a partnership. Notwithstanding this, all options for the future of the Museum will be kept under review.

Update the RS Monument in Princes Street Gardens West.

Plan for the impending change in funding arrangements for the Museum Curator in 2030.

Support the Club and War Memorial Fund in exploring charitable status.

Plan for RS 400.

Medium Term. 1 Jan 2030 – 31 Dec 2039. We will:

Consolidate the Museum in the future model.

Deliver RS400.

Determine the viability and structure of the Association going forward.

Long Term. 1 Jan 2040 onwards. We will:

Set the enduring legacy. This will be based on the Club, the Museum, our Collection and other heritage (Monument and memorials).

I would also like to highlight the considerable work undertaken by a small team, led by Alex Dockar, including Nick Edwardson and Stuart Montgomery, with advice from Keith Oliver to review the performance of our Investment Managers and tender the provision of this service going forward. This has been a timely, thorough, and very professional piece of governance work, which highlights the considerable skills and competencies that we are able to call upon. The Team will report to Trustees with their recommendations shortly for a decision. I am very grateful to everyone involved in this important review.

The Association and Associating. In the last edition of The Thistle I posed the question “What would you like to attend?” in relation to Association events, mindful that several formal Association events have been cancelled due to lack of participation. That, however, is more than compensated for by the considerable informal associating that is conducted, sometimes with over one hundred Royals gathering for events. It is of course about balance. My sense is that the Association forecast of events was a little too busy for the current times and membership, and we are now finding a balance between formal Association events complemented by informal gatherings and associating. It was good to touch on this at the Association AGM in February. It is becoming clear which events are currently most supported and this will inform future decision making as to the type of events to be organised and the venues.

The Museum. It is great to see that Sophie, our Museum Curator has on boarded 8 new Volunteers to assist with archiving and enquiries, which of course means that we can do more of both. Thank you, Sophie, for achieving this. In late February the Regimental Trustees appointed Dickie Donovan to take over as Chair of the Museum Committee from Gordon Rae. The handover/takeover will be completed by early April. Gordon has kindly agreed to remain on the Museum Committee for the immediate future to provide continuity and support to Dickie. I am grateful to Gordon for this and of course for his 8 years of dedicated service as Chair of the Committee. Dickie has recently begun a new role as the Regional Director for the Army Benevolent Fund based in the Castle. So, with his military and commercial experience and this new role, he is a great fit. Thank you for taking this on Dickie. Museum and Heritage Outreach was conducted in November last year at Dalkeith Place and is covered separately in this edition.

The Club. The War Memorial Fund (WMF) Trustees have appointed another new Trustee, and I am delighted to welcome Kelly Rhodes as a Trustee. Kelly is a former Army Officer, who served for 8 years, including on operations in Afghanistan. Kelly subsequently spent 8 years working in human resources for multinational financial institutions and last year established her own consultancy business. Welcome Kelly. Norman Soutar’s Board of Directors continue to provide commercial support and guidance to Adrian and the Club Staff. They are considering succession planning and are keen to find future Directors with experience of the hotel, hospitality, tourism, HR and finance sectors. The Club continues to perform well, and we look forward to another busy year. Guy Richardson’s Members’ Committee is now well established. We have recently reviewed the Constitution of the Club to ensure it accurately reflects the current organisation and structures and is fully fit for purpose. This will be put to Members ahead of this year’s AGM in April.

I hope to see as many of you that can attend at the Gretna Memorial Service on Saturday 25 May at Rosebank Cemetery, and at Armed Forces Day on Saturday 22 June and at memorial service at Lauriston Castle on Saturday 29 June to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Kohima. We had a great turnout for Armed Forces Day last year and I would urge you to come again this year and bring a buddy. It’s a great way to help maintain our profile in the City. I understand that the route for the march will revert to Charlotte Square to Saint Andrew’s Square, where we will gather for some warm Vitamin T. What’s not to like?

Yours aye

George

Founding Day

The Royal Scots Club

The following message was published on 11 Mar 2024 to mark the Founding Day of The Royal Scots Club:

It was on this day in 1919 that a meeting was convened to discuss a proposal by Colonel The Lord Henry Scott, fourth son of the 6th Duke of Buccleuch and 8th Duke of Queensberry, and formerly Honorary Colonel of the 3rd Battalion The Royal Scots, to establish an all ranks club to act as a living memorial to those Royal Scots who gave their lives during the Great War, rather than simply erect a stone monument. The Regiment had 35 battalions, 18 of which served on frontline active service and over 100,000 men served in the Regiment, of whom in excess of 11,000 did not return. The Club has adapted over the years to economic pressures and changes in society, and the Club is in good shape and continues to uphold the founding object as a living war memorial. To mark this day, a message has been sent to the Patron of the Club, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, and she has graciously responded. Both of these messages are included below. As the custodians of this memorial, it is both a privilege and a solemn responsibility to ensure that it is maintained in perpetuity. We invite you to join us today in reflecting on the foresight of our predecessors in establishing the Club and the sacrifice of our forebears that has contributed to the freedom we enjoy today.

Message to HRH The Princess Royal

Founding Day – 11th March

The Chair and all Members of The Royal Scots Club send their greetings to Our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of the founding of The Royal Scots Club. We remain true to the founding object of the Club being a living memorial to those who fell in the Great War, and those who have given their lives on active service since.

Message from HRH The Princess Royal

As Patron of The Royal Scots Club, I send my warm thanks and best wishes to the Chair and members on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of the founding of The Royal Scots Club.

Anne.
Patron
The Royal Scots Club



The memorial plaques situated inside the main entrance of the Royal Scots Club.

Regimental Day

On 28 March the Regimental Flag flew at Edinburgh Castle to mark the day in 1633 when King Charles I granted a Royal Warrant to Sir John Hepburn to raise a regiment for service initially overseas but ultimately for Crown and Country.

The Regiment, initially known as Hepburn's Regiment, subsequently The Royal Regiment of Foot and The First Regiment of Foot and latterly The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), served continuously and unamalgamated for 373 years until 28 March 2006, declaring allegiance to 17 Monarchs during that period, from King Charles I to Queen Elizabeth II. To mark this day, a message has been sent to the Patron of the Regimental Association, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, and she has graciously responded. Both of these messages are included below.

We are proud that our history and heritage is maintained and promoted by The Royal Scots Regimental Association, The Royal Scots Museum in the Castle and The Royal Scots Club.

Nemo me impune lacessit.

Message to HRH The Princess Royal

Regimental Day – 28th March

The President and all Members of the Royal Scots Regimental Association send their loyal greetings and best wishes to our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, on the occasion of the 391st anniversary of the formation of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). Today the Regimental Flag is flying at Edinburgh Castle.

Message from HRH The Princess Royal

As Patron of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) Regimental Association, I send my warm thanks and very best wishes to The President and all Members of The Royal Scots Regimental Association on the occasion of the 391st Anniversary of the formation of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) at Edinburgh Castle on 28th March. I hope you have a most enjoyable day.

Anne.
Patron
The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)
Regimental Association



Our Regimental Flag flies at Edinburgh Castle.

Regimental News

Association Burn's Night

The East of Scotland Branch hosted this years Regimental Association Burns Night, which was held on Saturday 27 Jan 2024 at Prestonpans Royal British Legion. We welcomed members of the East Lothian Armed

Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club and members of the Prestonpans Royal British Legion as a total of 80 gathered to honour the legacy of Robert Burns and embarked on a night of revelry, laughter and heartfelt tributes which added warmth and joy to the evening. We extended our sincerest gratitude to all who attended and made the evening memorable. A big thanks to the caterers, Prestonpans British Legion staff and all who participated on the night.



Tam Douglas addresses the Haggis



l to r; Adam Aitchison (Piper), Tom Logan (Chairman East of Scotland Branch), Stu Marshall (Association Chairman), Stu Colquhoun (Director of Ceremonies), Tam Douglas (Address to the Haggis), Laird Alan Maitland (Immortal Memory) and Eric Yule (Chairman Prestonpans Legion).

Officers Golf and Dinner

Once again, golfers attending the Regimental Officers dinner Night gathered at Gullane No 3 to compete for the Officers' Golf trophy. The event was again sponsored by The Royal Scots Club for which we are particularly grateful. With a wide range of expertise and luck, the honours this year went to Derek Bathgate with Colin Dougan a close Runner-Up. Other prizes included the Longest Drive which went to Arthur Frame, Nearest the Pin to Sandy Mack and Nearest the Pin in Two to Brian de la Haye. The Endeavour Prize was won by George Lowder and the winner's Trophy was awarded to Derek Bathgate at the Officers' Dinner that evening.

The annual Officers' Regimental Dinner was held in The Royal Scots Club on 3 Nov 2023 and attended by 56 officers. We were entertained by an ensemble of the Lowland Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland and Cpl Jardine, Pipe Sgt SCOTS DG and formerly RS, yet again did a sterling job piping for us. Maj Christopher Delacombe was awarded the Regimental Prize for his many years outstanding service as Chair of the Southern Branch of the Regimental Association.

Lieutenant Colonel BG de la Haye OBE and Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



Officers after the Regimental Dinner.



Brig Lowder presents Maj Christopher Delacombe with the Regimental Prize.

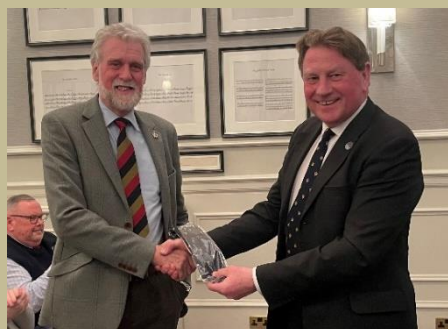


Brig Lowder presents the Golf Trophy to Maj Derek Bathgate.

Association AGM

Brig George Lowder, President of the Association, presented a Crown and One tie to Malcolm Ross and David Milne at the Association AGM on 23 Feb 2024. For many years Malcolm has been taking photographs at Association and other Regimental events and we have been privileged to enjoy viewing these in previous editions of The Thistle over the years and hope that we will be able to do so for many more years. David is a keen golfer and has been the instrumental in organising many Association golf events, particularly the Gladdy Murray and Fallen Comrades matches each year.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



Brig Lowder presents Malcolm Ross with a Crown and One tie.



Brig Lowder presents David Milne with a Crown and One tie.



James Finlay, Maj Tom Kapel and Lt Col Brian de la Haye.

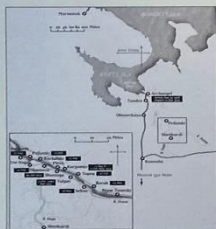
RUSSIA - ARCHANGEL, 1918 - 1919

In October 1917, during the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia overthrew the imperial rule of the Tsar, sparking a civil war. The new regime quickly made peace with Germany, shifting the balance of power against Russia's former allies Britain and France. They now saw Russia's new 'Red' government as pro-German and decided to intervene in the civil war in support of the pro-imperial 'White' Russians.

In August 1918, the 2/10th Battalion The Royal Scots were sent to Archangel in northern Russia as part of a multi-national Allied force.

The 2/10th Battalion had been raised in Linlithgow in 1914 and had spent most of the War on defence duties. By 1918, it was largely manned by soldiers graded as fit only for garrison duties.

On 26 August, soon after its arrival in Russia, most of the Battalion moved south by the River Dvina. They saw their first action on the 11 September, 130 miles south of Archangel, when a Bolshevik attack was repulsed. The White Russian advance continued for the next two months through difficult terrain and with frequent contact with the enemy.



The 2/10th Battalion in Northern Russia, August 1918 - June 1919

In November 1918, the First World War ended. However, the civil war in Russia continued and on 11 November, the very day of the Armistice in Europe, the Bolsheviks launched a major attack. The Royal Scots faced their fiercest fighting of the campaign.

The onset of winter then slowed operations. The river Dvina froze, and snow fell to a depth of up to ten feet. The Battalion was reorganised into platoons equipped with either snowshoes or skis.

Though fighting resumed in January 1919, by spring it was clear that the Allied intervention in Russia had little prospect of success. In June, the Battalion was relieved and embarked for home.



Not all returned from Russia. Over its ten months service, the Battalion lost 132 men. A number of others were also left behind. These were around 32 men who had been captured by the Bolsheviks, and who were held, effectively as hostages, long after the war was over.

The 2/10th Battalion had the distinction of gaining for the Regiment the Battle Honour 'Archangel 1918-1919', the only Battle Honour won during the war by a second-line battalion of the Regiment and an honour shared with just two other regiments of the British Army.

Museum Notes

As we approach spring, I cannot help but think that the museum is like a garden, work in progress and never really finished. Some areas need upgrading, some need filling as gaps emerge and others need refurbishing.

Over the winter period the Museum Committee has furnished the new display cases in the Douglas Room in The Royal Scots Club with additional 1st Battalion silver returned from 1 SCOTS / 1 RANGER. This project was completed in time for the Christmas festivities.



Display cases in the Douglas Room, The Royal Scots Club

The two new boards filling the gaps on the exploits of the 10th Battalion in Archangel and the story of the 7th Battalion and the Gretna train crash have now been installed. In addition, a number of pictures which had broken frames and/or glass have now been refurbished and safely put away in the bespoke picture shelves in the store room.

The digitised record system on ADLIB, is now being uploaded onto the new bespoke museum catalogue system called MODES.

All this work has only been achieved with the help of volunteers to do the ground work. I am happy to report that the number of volunteers is increasing but there is always more that needs doing. We are always looking for new volunteers. We can find something for everyone to do to fit in with the time that they have available. If you wish to join the team; contact our Curator (Ms Sophie Lenihan) on 0131 226 2688 or drop into the Club and give your name to the Regimental Secretary.

Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Rae

THE GRETNNA RAIL DISASTER, 22 MAY 1915

Early on the morning of Saturday 22 May 1915 two troop trains left Larbert Station, south of Falkirk, carrying the 7th (Leith) Battalion, The Royal Scots (7RS). They were on route to Liverpool where the Battalion was to embark for the Mediterranean and the Gallipoli campaign. 7RS was a Territorial Force battalion recruited mainly from Leith and Musselburgh.

At 06.49 the first train, carrying 498 all ranks, almost half the Battalion, collided with a local passenger train at Quintinshill near Gretna, just north of the English border. The troop train overturned, mostly onto the neighbouring north-bound mainline. A minute later, a Glasgow-bound express train ploughed into the wreckage. The old wooden, gas-lit carriages quickly burst into flames.

Between the crash and the fire, a total of 216 Royal Scots, plus 12 others, died. A further 220 were injured, many seriously. Only 62, including the Commanding Officer, survived unscathed. The rest of the Battalion, which had travelled on the other train, together with most of those officers who had survived, then embarked for Gallipoli.

On Sunday 23rd May 1915, those bodies which could be recovered from the wreckage were brought back to Edinburgh and placed overnight in the Battalion's Drill Hall in Dalmeny Street. The following afternoon, 101 coffins were taken in procession to the nearby Rosebank Cemetery, where they were buried in a mass grave.

Every year, on the Saturday nearest 22 May, The Royal Scots Association holds a Service of Commemoration at Rosebank to remember all those who died in what was, and remains, Britain's worst railway disaster.



The Memorial at Rosebank Cemetery

Silver Flute - Answers on a postcard please

From time to time I have been asked the question, "What's happening to RS silver at Palace Barracks?" I invariably reply verbally and, from time to time, post on the guestbook and in The Thistle. The short form of the answer is that much of the silver has been returned to the RS Museum in the Castle where there is limited display and storage space, some items have been handed back to those who presented them, or to their families, and the most significant returned items are now in magnificent display cases in the Douglas Room of the RS Club. Go and see for yourselves - and make use of the facilities the Club provides in terms of the its Objects, devised by the founding fathers at the end of the Great War, i.e.

Remembrance. Rallying place. Base for working schemes for the benefit of the Regiment.

If you are unfamiliar with the Club, other than for organised Regimental events, I live nearby and would be pleased to meet you there. Contact me at wjblythe@hotmail.com

Now to "answers on a postcard please". An item of silver recently returned from Palace Barracks is the flute in the photograph. It has been cleaned up to its former glory, the plinth has been restored and it was on display at a Regimental Band reunion lunch in the Club's Douglas Room last September. The plinth once bore an inscribed silver plate stating its origins. Sadly, this plate did not survive Palace Barracks and it would be good to replace it. No, I'm not asking for a whip-round to pay for this, although such are always welcome, but for Regimental memory of the flute's origins. I did ask those Band members present during the reunion lunch but none could be sure. We presume that it was presented when all regimental bands were gathered into brigade bands, the 1 RS Band joining the Lowland Brigade Band. I would be very pleased if any readers of The Thistle could confirm this or otherwise.



Answers on a postcard please to wjblythe@hotmail.com

Jim Blythe

A Tale of Two Pipes

In museums, it is not only the materiality of an object which makes it interesting, but the context it finds itself in. The 'object history', the story behind the object, continues throughout time to build, and it is this aspect which museums endeavor to discover and retell. In November of 2023, Karl Barclay (formerly of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) came to me with a set of bagpipes which achieved just that.

In September of 1914, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh raised the 15th Battalion Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment). Also known as the 1st Edinburgh Regiment or, owing to half of the battalion actually being raised in Manchester, The Manchester Scottish.

Not two years later, a pipe sergeant would find himself on the front lines of the Battle of the Somme. Initially ordered to stay behind the lines with the pipers, he instead gained permission from his commanding officer to play his fellow soldiers 'over the top'. Following the whistle blast, above the sound of the gunfire, the 15th Battalion would have rallied to the sound of the Regimental March, Dumbarton's Drums.

As alluded to at the beginning, this article is not about the battalion, nor is it the story of Pipe Major Anderson, the famous 15th Battalion Piper of the Somme. More specifically, it is about his historic pipes, as well as the stories of the other extraordinary men who played them.

Further to this, our story does not begin in 1914, nor with the Royal Scots, nor in Scotland at all. It starts in 1904 when the crew of the *Scotia* found themselves trapped in the Antarctic ice during the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Led by William Speirs Bruce of The University of Edinburgh, it has since been described as "by far the most cost-effective and carefully planned scientific expedition of the Heroic Age". As such a well-planned voyage, naturally, amongst their crew they had a formally appointed Piper – Piper Kerr.



Piper Kerr with the now famous indifferent Penguin
(photograph courtesy of
The Royal Scottish Geographical Society)

During a four-day period where the expedition was stuck in the thick ice, Piper Kerr took it upon himself to don full Highland dress, head into the Antarctic Environment and begin to play. During this, a now-famous photograph was taken of Piper Kerr alongside an emperor penguin, which recently remade headlines as 'the greatest Wikipedia edit of all time' - the penguin was noted for its indifference to the Piper. In reality, the penguin had been tethered in place using a cooking pot filled with arctic snow – but never let the truth get in the way of a good story! The image was famous in 1904 as well – the photograph was made into a postcard, and as such was one of the first items ever to be posted from Antarctica.

The Antarctic pipes later came into possession of William Bruce, Piper Kerr's Assistant, who in turn presented them to the 1st Edinburgh Battalion of the Royal Scots in 1914. This is where Pipe Major David Anderson enters the picture.

In October 1914, Constable Anderson of the Edinburgh City Police enlisted with the 15th Battalion, The Royal Scots, as Piper Anderson of the Pipes and Drums. As a piper of the regiment, he was issued with a set of bagpipes from the battalion, which happened to be the set played by Piper Kerr. By the time of the Somme, he had been promoted to Pipe Sergeant and found himself in the unenviable position of heading over the top with his fellow soldiers behind.

Pipe Major Anderson was hit by enemy fire shortly after entering no-man's land. He continued playing. He was again hit after crossing a third line of trenches and fell to the ground. From here, he continued playing. It was not until a shell landed nearby and shattered the pipes that they finally fell quiet. Pipe Sergeant Anderson then got up, engaged in a fist fight with a German soldier, then continued fighting with his rifle until his wounds overcame him.



Pipe Major David Anderson with his wife.

Following the battle, the announcement was made that the French Government was to award a Croix de Guerre to the "officer, non-commissioned officer, or man who was, in the opinion of the whole Division, the most conspicuously gallant figure in the day's fighting". Members of the Division voted Pipe Sergeant David Anderson the rightful recipient of the award, which he received on 9 December 1916.

In October 1916, the Scotsman reported on a movement to replace the now Pipe Major's bagpipes. This was successful and, in a ceremony attended by Lord Anderson, Sir George Anderson, Sir Rowand Anderson, Col Sir Robert Cranston and Major Arthur Rose (under whom Pipe Major Anderson served in France), he was presented with a set by the Clan Anderson. Decorated with Anderson tartan, the pipes were inscribed with a small plaque commemorating the event in which he lost his pipes.

After his military service, Pipe Major Anderson rejoined the Edinburgh City Police, as well as the Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band. He continued to play until his retirement in 1945, and died, aged 77 in 1967.

The pipes did not finish their story there, however. In 1963 the pipes were purchased by Piper Arthur Farrell, 1st Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, who played them for over 50 years first with the Argyll's Pipes and Drums, and then later in the Gatwick Caledonian Pipe band. It was not the last time they would see action either. On the 4th July, after a night invasion of the Crater District in Aden. As sun rose, the Pipes and Drums played on the rooftop of the Educational Institute, before marching down the main street of Crater. For this, he was mentioned in despatches.



Pipe Major David Anderson (top) with the Edinburgh City Police. He can be seen wearing his British War Medal, Victory Medal and French Croix de Guerre.

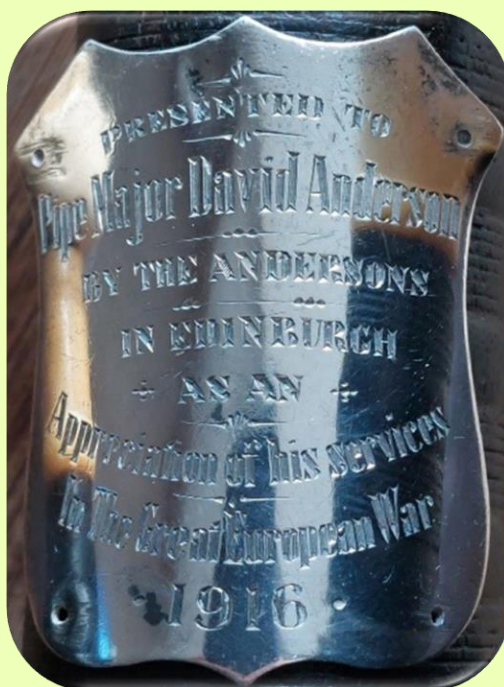
Ownership of the pipes has now been returned to Pipe Major Anderson's Granddaughter, Katherine Wright, residing in Canada. Due to Canadian ivory import laws, they cannot be reunited with the family. Instead, the pipes will be reunited with their regimental family in The Royal Scots Museum, and be displayed for all to come and see.

The beginning of this article started with the idea that an object's history is as important as the object itself. This set of pipes has presented us with an excellent opportunity to re-tell Pipe Major Anderson's story, highlight the 15th Battalion in the Somme and, by extension, the symbolic importance of pipes in the Scottish regiment.

With thanks to Katherine Wright, Joanna Green and her family. Also to Karl Barclay of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlander Regiment for the conservation, comprehensive history and photographs of the pipes.

The pipes will be going on display in the World War 1 section of the Royal Scots Museum, Summer 2024.

Ms Sophie Lenihan
Museum Curator



Pipe Major Anderson's Bagpipes before conservation. The original plaque can be seen on the drones.

A Volunteer Researcher's Perspective - The 4th Marquis of Headfort

I replied to the request for volunteers within the Royal Scots Museum for two reasons, firstly because I have a passion for history, which I am currently funnelling into my study for a degree in Arts and Humanities, with the hope it will enable me to work within archives and libraries. Secondly, my maternal grandfather served with the Regiment and his love for this, his second family, stayed with him throughout his life and produced a fondness within my own heart. One of the most interesting elements of volunteering with the Historical Family Research team is that you never know what you are going to come in to each week. It could be a heartbreaking investigation of a soldier's last days in a prisoner of war camp, a heartwarming tale of comradeship and bravery, or just having to politely explain the confusing fact that The Royal Scots Greys are not connected to the Royal Scots.

I was lucky enough to be given a case to investigate which actually linked with an acquisition in the museum's stores. Geoffrey Thomas Taylor, 4th Marquis of Headfort served with the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) between 14th April 1896 and some point in 1899 when he moved to the 1st Life Guards. It is interesting that he served with the Royal Scots as his seat was Headfort House, near Kells, County Meath in Ireland. Then again, he was known for doing the unexpected it seems, even going so far as to support the fight for (at least some) women to have the vote. We know from The Thistle of August 1896 that he was on duty for annual training at Glencorse that year and his joining of the 3rd Battalion was mentioned in the annual summing up included in The Thistle of November 1896, with his promotion to Lieutenant announced within the pages of the May 1897 edition.

Although the 4th Marquis was not with the regiment long, and we can infer from the dates saw no battle action, he did leave a tangible object of his presence, which is why he was of such interest to me during my first week of volunteering. Being able to touch the item brought things far more to life. The artefact in question, displayed in the photograph, is a Victorian silver salver by Garrards of London made in 1863, weighing 148oz, 58cm across, with a shaped moulded edge, feet, and engraved with the following message, **'Presented to the Officers of the 3rd Batt The Royal Scots by the Marquis of Headfort on his leaving the regiment 1899'**. A parting gift of this nature is of course not uncommon, but it will now hold a special place in my heart as the first item I was able to connect to a precise individual. In addition, the joy displayed by his relation (who is currently writing a book on her ancestor) when I relayed the information reinforced the importance of what we, as both a museum and a regiment, do when we connect people to the past.

Ms Amy Elliott
Volunteer Researcher



The Royal Scots Regimental Trust SCIO

The process of governance streamlining has taken a number of years, but is now complete. The Royal Scots Regimental Trust SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) is a new charity, registered as a charity in Scotland with the registration number SC052009, and incorporates three of our Regimental Pillars – Benevolence & Welfare, Museum & Heritage, and the Association. There is one set of Trustees for the Trust and Trustee has specific responsibilities. The Museum & Heritage functions are directed by the Museum & Heritage Committee, while the Association retains the Office Bearers, all of whom report to the Trustees.

Trustees

Brig George Lowder MBE	Chair
Maj Gen Bob Bruce CBE DSO	Vice Chair
Maj Norman Soutar MC	Club
Lt Col John Donovan	Benevolence
Lt Col Gordon Rae	Museum
Capt Alex Dockar	Finance
Capt Nick Edwardson	Communications
Maj Stu Marshall	Association
Mrs Jandy Stevenson	Governance
Mr Keith Oliver OBE WS	Legal
Mr Allan Carswell	Museum

Museum & Heritage Committee

Lt Col John Donovan	Chair
Brig George Lowder MBE	
Col Martin Gibson OBE DL	
Mr Allan Carswell	
Lt Col David Goodacre OBE	Treasurer
Mrs Cathy Tucker	
Lt Col Gordon Rae	
Ms Sophie Lenihan	Curator
Lt Col David Jack	Secretary

Regimental Association

Brig George Lowder MBE	President
Maj Stu Marshall	Chair
Mr Paul Robertson	Vice Chair
Mr David Milne	Secretary
Mr Jamie Colquhoun	Treasurer

Service Pets in War Time’s Lighter Hours



The “Dandies” Jackdaw.

I was doing a bit of research and came across the small article below from the War Illustrated dated 6th November 1915.

The jackdaw of the “Dandy Ninth”, 9th Royal Scots, which is the special mascot of the battalion’s cooks. This pet has acquired some slang terms, and greets visitors to the camp kitchen with, “What the devil are you looking at?”

The “Dandy Ninth” also had a goat as a mascot.



No other information such as pets/mascots or their guardian’s names was found.

Ray (Halfchat) Thomson

Standardising our Regimental Branding

We have updated the centre on The Royal Scots Poppy Wreath. This is now the standard item when a Royal Scots Poppy Wreath is ordered from the Lady Haig Poppy Factory. Great work by Ray Thomson on the image and many thanks to the team at the Lady Haig Poppy Factory for producing it. As you can see on the old one our Regiments Colours were not in the correct sequence (Oxford Blue, Gosling Green and Peony Red) and also of equal width.

A project is underway in the Regimental Office to standardise the branding of our Regiment. As know there are many variations of both cap badges, cypher and the Crown and One. Many of these images are often used on flyers, menu cards, invites, headed paper etc. We are in the process of having a standard OR’s and Staff cap badge, the Royal Cypher, the Crown and One and the Regimental Colours used on our tie etc. These will be made available to all and we ask that these will become the standard ones we all use.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



Old design



New design

After the disruption of Covid the Regimental Band resumed the gatherings originally organised by Danny McMeechan by meeting for lunch in The Royal Scots Club on Saturday 30 September 2023.



I to r; Brian and Eileen Higgins, Ian and Michelle Smith and Ian and Heather Falconer



Gill and Tony Hodgetts



Derek Hooper

Twenty five members, including some of our ladies, gathered in the Main Bar before sitting down to lunch in the Douglas Room, which is probably the most elegant dining room in Edinburgh. The Douglas Room has recently been enhanced by 1st Battalion silver returned from Palace Barracks, now displayed in bespoke cabinets installed as part of a Museum project with support from the War Memorial Fund. It is further intended that 1st Battalion pictures no longer in use at Palace Barracks should likewise be installed in the Douglas Room. The table was set in elegant fashion with crested crockery and Club silver previously belonging to the Territorial Battalions disbanded after the Second World War. The fare was excellent and the service most attentive.



It had already been decided to meet for lunch rather for dinner in order to facilitate travel and this met with general approval. A key question was answered in the affirmative. Should we meet again? Yes! A question in the "answers on a postcard please" category was at what intervals? Annually or every two years, bearing in mind Danny's original thoughts that two years might be about right? A decision has been settled on that we will try a new routine; meeting formally in the Douglas Room for lunch every two years – next in September 2025; but in between meeting less formally in the Dining Room, next on 14 September 2024. Note the date in your diaries; further information will follow.

So, until we meet again, don't forget to use our very own War Memorial Club and to visit our Museum in the Castle. For the Club, simply turn up although, if for lunch or dinner in the Dining Room, book in beforehand at reservations@royalscotscub.com. For Museum visits, contact museum@theroyalscotscub.co.uk giving as much notice as you can. Free access into the Castle for the purpose of visiting our Museum will be arranged for all Old Royals and their families. Finally, keep checking the Guestbook, the Forecast of Events and the Events pages at www.theroyalscotscub.co.uk.

**Lieutenant Colonel Jim Blythe MBE
Band President 1987 – 89**



David Knox



George Gilchrist and Tom Feenie



I to r; Ian Falconer, Alex Knox, Billy Bradford



I to r; Brian Higgins with Elaine and Peter Trainer



I to r; Billy Bradford and Ian Falconer



I to r; Ian Smith, Jack Knox and Gerry Stryker



I to r; Jim Blythe, David Nelson and Tony Hodgetts



I to r; Tom Feenie, Billy Bradford, Heather & Ian Falconer

Happy Hackers Golf October 2023

For a few years now a sextet of hapless but happy golf hackers have planned a few days away golfing. The outing is based on value hotels, B&B or golf club dormie houses and by playing late in the season ensures there is always a deal to be made allowing good courses to be in the right price range. The Happy Hacker group included John Sands, David Beveridge, Jimmy Springthorpe, Ian Johnstone, Paddy Waugh and Andy Stewart.

This year, John Sands planned the outing, courses and accommodation, based in a fabulous B&B located in Norham, a very nice sleepy village near Berwick-upon-Tweed. There was also a hotel in the same village for the bed overspill, where we had our evening meals. The golf was played over two courses - day one we played over Magdeleine Field Golf Club in Berwick-upon-Tweed and on day two Seahouses Golf Club in Seahouses village.

The golf competition this year was organised by Andy Stewart. It was decided to use the golf format called Bingo Bango Bongo, where you can score when the first golfer in your group gets their golf ball on the green called the bingo point; then, the player in the group whose ball is closest to the pin once all balls are on the green gets the bango point. Finally, the player in the group who is first to get their golf ball into the hole gets the bongo point. Thus there are 3 points on offer at each hole. Order of play matters because of these factors and because the first person putting will be the one farthest from the hole so strict etiquette must be observed. The player who is furthest away always plays first, so no Ready Golf here. This format suits all levels of golfers as scoring starts with the first ball on the green, so getting to the green can take as many shots as needed.



Back l to r: Ian Johnstone, John Sands, Andy Stewart.
Front l to r: Jimmy Springthorpe, David Beveridge, Paddy Waugh.

Lieutenant Colonel John Sands MBE



Jimmy Springthorpe on the tee.

Prior to the golf match, we held a putting competition where one hole on the practice putting green was selected and each player had 30 seconds and as many balls as required to putt a ball in the selected hole from 7 paces away, with the fastest time winning. On day one David Beveridge was the only one to putt out within time. So, on day two we changed the format to 5 balls only and 60 seconds to get a ball in the hole. This time there was more success with 5 points available to the winner to be added to the golf match score. David Beveridge still won. After dinner, we all retired back to the Bike Yard (The B&B) where we had the prize giving, some beer and wine in the fridge with the whisky at room temperature on the table, all allowing the memories to flow and the light to swing.

On day one the weather was great; the course was in fabulous condition and everyone had a great day with most people enjoying the Bingo Bango Bongo format. The only downside was the putting competition with only one person completing the task. Day two at Seahouses was a bit colder, damp and rain was the forecast. Fortunately, it didn't arrive until we had finished. The course was not as enjoyable or in as good condition as the Magdeleine Field course. There was a lot of standing water, very long par 3s and confusing fairways. In their favour, there were some delicious big scones that everyone bought to take home with them.

Combining the results from the two very enjoyable days resulted in David Beveridge being the overall winner, his putting results lifting him well into the lead; second place was Andy Stewart, third was Paddy Waugh, joint fourth was Ian Johnstone and John Sands, leaving Jimmy Springthorpe to bring up the rear.

All in all, a most enjoyable few days golfing and playing a different scoring format. The planning for next year will start soon and might exclude a putting competition.

Sighting Report - When, Where, Who and What are they doing?

Answers sent to admin@theroyalscots.co.uk with subject heading clearly marked as **SIGHTING REPORT – Answers**.

Should you wish to send in a photo or two for the "Sighting Report" then kindly send them to admin@theroyalscots.co.uk with subject heading clearly marked as **SIGHTING REPORT – Possible Article**. Please, high resolution photographs where possible.

Jim Blythe



Family honour Victoria Cross recipient at The Royal Scots Museum, Edinburgh Castle.



Private Robson VC

On Monday 18 September 2023, the Royal Scots Regimental Museum in Edinburgh Castle was delighted to welcome Mr Brian Gaskin and his family from Ontario, Canada. They came to view the Victoria Cross which Brian's grandfather, Private (Pte) Henry H. Robson, originally from South Shields, had won for an act of "most conspicuous bravery" in December 1914, when aged 20, whilst serving with the Regiment in Flanders.

For Mr Gaskin, his family's trip to Scotland has a deeper resonance. As a fourteen-year-old boy in 1965, Brian had been present at the ceremony when, after Pte Robson had passed away, his family had presented his Victoria Cross to the Royal Scots Museum. Mr Gaskin has now returned with his wife, Jane, his son Kevin and grandson Luke to "visit the museum and medals and keep the history alive".

Pte Robson was a regular soldier in the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots, which had deployed to Belgium in August 1914 as part of the British Expeditionary Force that was sent to prevent the German advance. The Battalion took part in a number of significant actions as the war ebbed and flowed that autumn before an attack near Kemmel on 14 December. Badly wounded during the action for which he received the award, Pte Robson survived the war and emigrated to Canada where he raised a family.

Pte Robson was presented with his Victoria Cross by King George V and Queen Mary at Buckingham Place on 12 July 1915. The official citation reads: "Private H. H. Robson. 2nd Battalion The Royal Scots. For most conspicuous bravery near Kemmel on the 14 December 1914, during an attack on the German position, when he left his trench under a very heavy fire and rescued a wounded non-commissioned officer, and subsequently for making an attempt to bring another wounded man into cover, whilst exposed to a severe fire. In this attempt he was at once wounded, but persevered in his efforts, until rendered helpless by being shot a second time."

For Pte Robson's great great grandson, Luke Gaskin, a first visit to Scotland was a wonderful opportunity not just to see the medal, tangible evidence of his family's history, but to see its place in wider Regimental history and how that story continues to be told today.

Lt Col Gordon Rae, Chairman of The Royal Scots' Museum and Heritage Committee, presented the Gaskin family with a copy of "Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard", the Regiment's three volume history, as a memento of their visit showing the bond between the Regiment and the family.

Captain Nick Edwardson



Mr Brian Gaskin



I to r: Jane Gaskin (Brian's wife), Brian Gaskin, Kevin Gaskin (Brian's son), Luke Gaskin (Brian's grandson).

Stoke Prior

In May 2023 we received an email from a trustee of the Stoke Prior War Memorial Trust informing us that a local soldier who had served in The Royal Scots was not formally recognised at the village War Memorial, where each those who had fallen were commemorated with a small stone. Private Hubert Kenneth Parker served with the 8th Battalion and was killed in action on 26 Mar 1945. He is buried in the Reichswald War Cemetery in Germany, but had not been commemorated in UK. The Regimental Trustees approved a contribution to the manufacture of a suitable memorial stone and this was arranged by the Stoke Prior War Memorial Trust, which was dedicated at the Remembrance Service on 11 Nov 2023. Jimmy Collins laid a Regimental wreath and was joined by David Trafford-Roberts and Eric Gough.



I to r: Lt Col David Trafford-Roberts, Capt Eric Gough, Mr Jimmy Collins

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

Rededication for Private Frederick Little 9 RS

Frederick Little was born in Carlisle in Cumbria in 1899, but grew up in Dumfriesshire. He was the eldest of seven children born to William Little and his wife Janet. He worked as a labourer for a fellmonger producing hides and skins before he enlisted in the Army on 18 Apr 1917.

Private Little embarked for the Western Front on 31 Mar 1918, initially serving with the 12th Battalion Highland Light Infantry. He was transferred to the 9th Battalion (Highlander) The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) on 25 Apr 1918. The Battalion conducted offensive operations on 1 Aug 1918 near Villemontoire, but immediately came under heavy enemy machine gun fire, only managing to advance 100 yards from the initial start line. It was during this action that Private Little was wounded. After having his wounds dressed the position was shelled and he was killed. He was just 19 years old.



l to r: Drummer Adam Grant, 4 SCOTS; Rev Timothy Clarke-Wood, Padre 4 SCOTS; Col Sean Cunliffe, British Military Attaché; Lt Col David Jack, Regimental Secretary; Lt Harry Eaton, 4 SCOTS; Piper Fearghas Russell, 4 SCOTS.



Private Frederick Little's grave

The location of Private Little's grave was lost and as he was missing he was commemorated on the Scissons Memorial to The Missing. Recent research, however, has identified his grave in the nearby Raperie British Cemetery where he had lain in a grave marked only as "A Soldier of The Great War". The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Raperie British Cemetery was established after the Armistice when the graves of over 600 casualties killed in and around Villemontoire were brought in from the battlefield and several smaller cemeteries. Among them was the one that has now been confirmed as being Private Frederick Little.

A short service of rededication took place on 6 Sep 2023 to honour Private Frederick Little. On a baking hot day a group gathered under blue skies, bright sunshine and barely a breath of wind. The contingent comprised a party from The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, including the padre, a piper and a bugler, the British Military Attaché from Paris, the local Commonwealth War Graves Commission representative, staff from the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell, Ministry of Defence, a teacher from the school near Dumfries that Frederick Little had attended as a boy, and the Regimental Secretary. Like all Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemeteries, Raperie is a place of tranquillity, immaculately maintained in beautiful countryside and it was the perfect setting for a moving service to honour the life and service of Private Frederick Little and rededicate his resting place, where he is now appropriately recognised for posterity.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

Museum Outreach Exhibition - Remembrance 2023, The Royal Scots at Dalkeith Palace

Photographs by Mr Malcolm Ross

The Regimental Museum reached out from Edinburgh Castle to engage with people in Midlothian, a significant part of the First of Foot's former recruiting area. This bold initiative was delivered under the banner of **"Connecting People, The Royal Scots, Dalkeith Palace, through Remembrance"** by providing interactive Royal Scots heritage displays covering from the Boer War to the present day (Royal Regiment of Scotland) focussing on selected campaigns, Rolls of Honour and local soldiers stories.

Working closely with the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust this innovative outreach was a great success. The vast majority of the 1020 exhibition visitors had a real interest in either their own family's Royal Scots connections, or the Regiment's close historical links with the Palace, Dalkeith and Midlothian. There was a rare opportunity to engage with three separate quality research organisations: the Museum (including medals), National Records of Scotland and the Lothians Family History Society. This evidenced by 497 enquiries, with several emotional engagements. The Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian, the Scottish Veterans Commission, the Midlothian Provost and local primary school children- who enjoyed a bespoke educational experience, ensuring intergenerational reach out- were amongst the visitors.



Maj Guy Richardson meets two National Service Royal Scots who trained at Glencorse Barracks where Guy's father was Adjutant.

The recruiting of Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard (PPBG) volunteers from the Regimental Family proved to be invaluable; their professionalism, obvious pride, knowledge, and ready visitor- engagement were praised universally. They stepped forward to give something back, and really valued being in contact again with fellow Royals they had served with in the 1st Battalion. Planning is now well underway for the major Museum Outreach 2024 event at Tynecastle Park as part of the Heart of Midlothian FC's 150th Celebrations from 5 – 10 Jul 2024.



Lt Col David Jack with some of the many visitors to the Research area.



Gerry Stryker, one of "Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard" hosts.



Some of our 1020 visitors viewing the displays.



Lt Cdr Susie Hamilton the Scottish Veterans Commissioner with Col Martin Gibson.

We have taken the quote made by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner's in the Newsletter, November 2023. *"I very much enjoyed a visit to the Royal Scots' Remembrance exhibition at Dalkeith Palace. It was beautifully curated and moving, thoughtfully highlighting the service and sacrifice of individual soldiers. It brought real meaning to the words we say every year: "We Will Remember Them"."*

Colonel Martin Gibson OBE DL



Stu Aitken discussing the Gretna Rail Disaster.



Sheila Purves plays the film that captures Royal Scots experiences from WW2 to 2006.



Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal
at the Breamar Highland Games on 02 Sep 2023.

The Royal Family and the Regiment

It was with great delight that we noticed on the BBC News Website that Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal was wearing the Colonel-In-Chief's Regimental Brooch and a Hunting Stewart tartan skirt whilst attending the Breamar Highland Games on 02 Sep 2023.

The brooch, made of diamonds and gold, was accepted by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal when she was appointed as our Colonel-In-Chief on 30 Jun 1983.

This brooch was originally the gift of The Royal Scots to Princess Anne's great aunt Her Royal Highness Princess Mary (later The Princess Royal) when she was appointed Colonel-in-Chief in 1918. Lord Harewood, the Princess Royal's son, returned it to the regiment after The Princess Royal's death in 1965. (This information was published in the Nov 1983 issue of the Thistle).

Sadly, with the demise of our Regiment and the formation of The Royal Regiment of Scotland, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal ceased to be our Colonel-in-Chief. However, she continues her link with our Regiment by being the Patron of The Royal Scots Regimental Association. She also maintains other links as Patron of The Royal Scots Club and Royal Colonel of 6 SCOTS.

This was followed by His Majesty The King wearing a Royal Scots tie on his visit to Tomintoul on 13 Sep 2023.

Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



His Majesty The King
on his visit to Tomintoul on 13 Sep 2023.

Following a chance meeting on an airplane delayed on the tarmac in London, the Royals Scots family would come together to help efforts to send much needed medical equipment to Ukraine.

“Muse Ukraine: Indomitable Spirit”, an initiative driven and presented by Finnish pianist Julia Wallin and Ukrainian violinist Myroslava Khomik, took place in the Canongate Kirk on Friday 22 Sep 2023. The primary goal of the event was to raise money for medical equipment and training in support of British Ukrainian Aid. The secondary, equally important long-term, objective of ‘Muse Ukraine’, was to raise awareness of Ukrainian music which has been suppressed and misappropriated for a century.

When thinking of war, one rarely ponders over culture. However, Russia has systematically used culture as a weapon and continues to do so. Russia understands the power of culture in shaping and strengthening a nation’s identity, courage and resilience. Systematic oppression of Ukrainian culture has been ongoing for centuries and only intensified since the start of the most recent war. From a country that has the largest amount of folk music in the world, how many composers or writers can almost anyone name?



Myroslava Khomik and Julia Wallin performing during the concert

The concert, hosted by The Royal Scots at the Canongate Kirk brought together hidden gems from Ukraine to Scottish audiences. Presenting the all Ukrainian music programme, the accomplished duo of Khomik and Wallin brought to life the musical and cultural heritage of Ukraine. The audience were treated to the music of Sergei Bortkiewicz, Viktor Kosenko and Myroslav Skoryk. Skoryk is the composer of ‘Melody’, which has become an Anthem of the Ukrainian war. The artistic collaboration and personal representation of allied nationalities symbolises the western unity of values against Russian tyranny.

The concert raised funds for British Ukrainian Aid, a charity organisation focusing on bringing medical equipment and ambulances to the Ukrainian frontline. British Ukrainian Aid has raised over £1 million in the last two years. The concert was the first collaboration between The Royal Scots and British Ukrainian Aid. The final total on the night including Gift Aid was over £3000. Crimean born Myroslava and Julia are now working on starting a non-profit organisation called ‘Beyond Muse’.

The event was attended by Depute Lord Provost, Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron; Estonian Honorary Council, Mr Peter Ferry and Finnish Honorary Council, Mr Harry Nimmo. Our thanks to the Minister Neil Gardner and the Canongate Kirk team, The Association of Ukrainians in Edinburgh, Lee Brophy at the Royal Scots Club for marketing support and the body of former 1RS officers who stewarded the event.



I to r: Julia Wallin, Lezley Marion Cameron, Myroslava Khomik

More detail on Myroslava and Julia:

Ukrainian born violinist Myroslava Khomik is a top prize winner of international competitions and awards, including the Remember Enescu Competition in Romania, and the New Names of Ukraine. She has appear as a soloist and chamber music collaborator in concerts and festivals throughout the US, Europe, South America and Asia.

Julia Wallin, an award winning, Edinburgh-based Finnish pianist, has performed as a soloist and chamber musician Europe, Asia, Scandinavia, the US and UK, and won prizes in several competitions such as the Royal Academy of Music’s prestigious Wilfred Parry competition and the Poleeni Lied Piano Competition.

Captain Iain Johnston



Myroslava Khomik and Julia Wallin

Notes on serving Royals

Brig	Graeme	Wearmouth	DA Baghdad
Brig	Nick	Wight-Boycott	COS SJFHQ
Col	Piers	Strudwick	DA Netherlands
Lt Col	Ross	Brookfield	APC
Lt Col	Toby	Bunney	Army HQ
Lt Col	Jeremy	Giles	Army HQ
Lt Col	Andy	Lumley	BLO Germany
Lt Col	Frank	Reeves	PJHQ
Lt Col	Sean	Semple RAPTC	HQ RAPTC Aldershot
Maj	Stevie	Gibson	3 SCOTS
Maj	Tam	Lindsay	MRTC
Maj	Zander	Russell	XO 5 RRF
Maj	Dean	Fraser	QM 1 RANGER
Capt	Stephen	Dawson	QM (T) 1 RANGER

W01	Steven	Paterson	RSM 2 SCOTS
W02	David	Williamson	Aberdeen UOTC
SSgt	Ray	Basalaia INT CORPS	Aberdeen UOTC
CSgt	Barry	McIntosh	PSI A Coy, 6 SCOTS
Sgt	Peter	Paterson	PSI A Coy, 6 SCOTS
Cpl	Euan	Jardine	Pipe Sgt, SCOTS DG
Cpl	Viliame	Kama	D Coy 1 RANGER
Cpl	Joeli	Raduva	Sp Coy 2 SCOTS
Cpl	Steven	Thomas	D Coy 1 RANGER
AS1	Thomas	Shute RAF	RAF Lossiemouth

We have endeavoured to ensure that we have recorded all those currently serving in the Regular Army, but we are keen to know if there is anyone who has been missed.

Deaths

Mr Gus Birrell	22 Sep 2023 1 RS	Mr Walter Hutchison	01 Dec 2023 1 RS	Mr Stan Fital	09 Feb 2024 1 RS
Maj Piers Drew-Wilkinson	25 Sep 2023 1 RS	Mr Bill Pettigrew	16 Dec 2023 1 RS	Mr Danny Sutherland	02 Mar 2024 1 RS
Mr Gerald Benham	28 Oct 2023 7/9 RS	Lt Col John Charteris MBE MC	23 Dec 2023 1 RS	Mr William Watson	Mar 2024 1 RS
Maj David Meehan	27 Nov 2023 1 RS	Mr Norman Waddell	09 Jan 2024 1 RS		

Obituaries

Colour Sergeant Angus Williamson Birrell

5 March 1946 to 22 September 2023

Gus Birrell, who has died aged 76, was an extraordinarily loyal Old Royal and May was a mainstay of the Wives Club, both giving sterling service. Among many memories of Gus, I have three in particular.

For much of Gus's career, he was Santa Claus at 1 RS children's parties to the extent that, once he left the Battalion, Christmas parties were never the same again.

But Gus was a soldier too. There was a moonless night on the South Armagh border when a huge fire fight broke out and all of A Company were deployed to it. At no notice, those of the Recce Platoon who were not elsewhere were sent down by helicopter to reinforce.

Plan A was that we were to be dropped into the A Company base for briefing before going on to a blocking position on the border. Mid-flight, Plan A was superseded by Plan B and we were dropped in a field; grid reference unknown, A Company dispositions unknown and where PIRA might or might not be likewise unknown. Having landed, we huddled silently along a hedgerow trying to get our bearings as tracer criss-crossed the night sky like the last night of the Tattoo. Radio conversation didn't really add to understanding of the situation, so I told the Platoon we would stay put for the time being rather than complicate the issue.

After a while, rustling in an adjacent hedge was followed by the time-honoured RS password, "Psssst!". I gave the daily changing response, which that night, happened to be, "Psssst!" A series of "Psssts!" responded to by other "Psssts!" brought us into close proximity of the original "Pssster!" who turned out to be none other than Gus who had been sent to find us. There followed a hurried combat appreciation that should really have been adopted in the syllabuses of Warminster and Brecon battle courses.

Me: "What the f----'s going on?"
 Gus: "Not a f----- scoobie!"
 Me: "What are my orders?"
 Gus: "There aren't any."

Immediate decision was required by me and thus Plan C evolved, "So, we'll stay put until daylight" which was only an hour away, which Gus agreed would be an appropriate course of action. The moral of the story? Never assume that Plan A won't be superseded by Plan B, nor that you'll be briefed on Plan B before deploying on it. Also, it was good to be in the company of Gus in the transition to any Plan C imaginable.

Gus remained in Hunting Stuart tartan after demob, not only in the TA and ACF but also in the RS Club. On the night of our son's 21st birthday party there, Gus was the duty manager. This was a considerable relief to Mhairi and myself because we knew that both organisation and delivery would be spot on, and that any inclinations toward high jinks would be discouraged without fuss. As the party ended and the guests started to depart for various night clubs around town, I had to respond to a plea from Gus to rescue him. He had been surrounded by a bevy of bonny lasses who had "adopted" him and told me, "We want to take Mr Birrell with us out on the town!"

Gus was a man of universal appeal and very many talents, and will be much missed.

Jim Blythe



Lieutenant Colonel John Anthony Charteris MBE MC

4 September 1940 to 23 December 2023

Lieutenant Colonel John Charteris, who has died aged 83, had an adventurous career as an infantryman, an Army pilot and an Intelligence Officer; he was awarded the Military Cross in 1973.

John completed four tours in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1972, the latter two in command of a company of 1st Battalion Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) (1 RS). On July 9 1972, he was ordered to secure the area around an outpost in Belfast manned by a Royal Artillery battery which was under attack by rioters. As he led his company forward in armoured personnel carriers, the rioters scattered. IRA gunmen concealed in high-rise apartments directed heavy fire at his force. With complete disregard for his safety, he cleared the apartments and secured the area, remarkably without sustaining a single casualty. A few days later, his company secured an outpost in Belfast after continuous stoning and sniping, culminating in a truck-borne bomb which exploded and caused considerable damage. Later that same month, he led the assault of two companies in the Creggan area. He directed his men on to their objectives, secured them quickly and dominated the area with firmness and tact. The citation for his MC paid tribute to his courage, determination and outstanding leadership.

John Anthony Charteris was born at Hampstead, London, on September 4 1940. His grandfather, Brigadier John Charteris CMG DSO, was Field Marshal Lord Haig's Chief of Staff. His uncle Euan took part in the raid on the German radar station at Bruneval in northern France in 1942 and was awarded a MC in North Africa. Young John was educated at Wellington and, by the age of 16, he had learned to fly so that he could tow his father in a glider. He went on to RMA Sandhurst and was commissioned into the Royal Scots July 1961. He joined his unit in Libya, famously driving 1,000 miles across the desert for a cocktail party with a cavalry regiment.



In 1973 with his wife and mother-in-law after being awarded the Military Cross.

John saw active service in Aden and Yemen before learning to fly Tiger Moths and then Sioux helicopters at the Middle Wallop Army airfield in Hampshire. Between 1964 and 1969 he flew the Sioux in Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong. In 1965, while serving with the Army Air Corps (AAC) at Seremban, Malaysia, he flew by helicopter to Brunei in Borneo, where the AAC had a detachment to support operations in the Confrontation with Indonesia. He adopted a baby gibbon who was found clinging to the back of his mother, who had been killed by a poisoned arrow fired from a blowpipe. He named him Shak, after Ringo Starr's hairy-headed son Zak, and fed him using a Parker pen as a milk bottle. As Shak grew larger, he started to fly uncaged and liked to jump out of the cabin of the Sioux and swing from the stabilising bar as the rotors slowed. On one occasion, John was called back from leave to fly a brigadier into dense jungle. He had been on leave, partying for two days, but was ordered to report for duty as he was the only pilot available. He was feeling very ill, and on his way to the helicopter he was sick. "I very much hope you aren't flying," said the brigadier. "Don't worry," Charteris replied, "the gibbon can handle the flying."



John getting in a canoe in Borneo after his helicopter suffered engine failure 1964.



John's pet gibbon Shak.

He formed the 10th Gurkha air platoon in Hong Kong to help deal with insurgencies on the border with China. At the time, he was called to fly the pregnant wife of a Gurkha to hospital. She sat between John and the midwife, but on the way she started to give birth and the midwife asked for help. The birth was successful – and the mother was so grateful that she named the baby John. In 1979, he commanded the Royal Guard at Balmoral before returning to active service in Northern Ireland. He was very disappointed to miss the Falklands campaign in 1982 but he arrived there soon after the conflict and did much to rebuild morale. He re-established the racecourse at Port Stanley and rode in the final race of the inaugural meeting. He also liaised with GCHQ and the American Defence Intelligence Agency on signals-intercept work. A tour as Commander Army Recruiting Scotland was followed by command of the Junior Infantry Battalion and, in 1990, he became Commandant of the Otterburn Training Area in Northumberland; the 80,000-acre area was a home to many rare species. He was appointed MBE in 1995 for his successful efforts to integrate large-scale exercises with substantial advances in conservation, without which military training in the area was likely to be banned entirely. He retired from the Army in 1995 in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 2001, he ran as the Conservative candidate for the constituency of Dumfries and Galloway, polling second. For many years, he worked for Marie Curie Cancer Care for which he was the chief fundraiser for South-West Scotland.



John leads his Company on their arrival as the Royal Guard at Balmoral in 1979.



John with his uncle Euan's medals. Euan took part in the raid on the German radar station at Bruneval in northern France in 1942 and was awarded a MC in North Africa.

John was a local councillor for the Lochar ward for 15 years. Settled in Locharbriggs, Dumfriesshire, he planted 10,000 trees and created several small wildlife lochs on his farmland. He enjoyed field sports, ran his own small shoot and was a keen skier. He was also a renowned bon viveur who made a party more interesting and sometimes rather surprising.

John married, in 1967, Antoinette Lowe. She survives him with two daughters, both of whom married career Army officers, and a son who served for nine years in the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons).

Published in *The Daily Telegraph* 5 January 2024

Cenotaph Painting

The painting of The Royal Scots Regimental Association leading the Veterans' Parade at the Cenotaph on 14 Nov 2010 has been on display in the Club since 2011. There are articles in previous editions of The Thistle, volume 28 numbers 9 (Summer 2011) and 10 (Winter 2011). There is, however, no explanation of the painting next to it to identify the individuals depicted in the painting or the context. A short piece has been created that will now hang beside the painting so that this information is not lost in the mists of time.



THE ROYAL SCOTS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION AT THE CENOTAPH 2010

This painting was commissioned to record the occasion when The Royal Scots Regimental Association led the Veterans' march past at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday 14th November 2010 in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and where the salute was taken on Horse Guards Parade by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal KG KT GCVO Patron of The Royal Scots Regimental Association and Patron of The Royal Scots Club.

The Royal Scots Regimental Association was accorded the honour of leading the march past in 2010 after being commended for their smartness on parade in 2009. 62 members of the Regimental Association were on parade in 2010.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Major General Philip Davies OBE | 8. Colour Sergeant Jock Marr |
| 2. Private Tam Douglas | 9. Brigadier Charles Ritchie CBE |
| 3. Major General Mark Strudwick CBE | 10. Lieutenant Iain Laird |
| 4. Colonel Edward Cowan OBE | 11. Private Peter Kilgallon |
| 5. Colonel Peter Fraser-Hopewell CMG MBE | 12. Colonel Finlay Maclean |
| 6. Lieutenant Colonel Jim Blythe MBE | 13. Lieutenant Colonel John Charteris MBE MC |
| 7. Colonel James Finlay OBE | 14. Lieutenant David Garforth-Bles |

Artist: JHL Beattie. Hugh Beattie is a renowned military artist. He has created art nationally and globally with painting tours including Bosnia, Rome, India, Helmand in Afghanistan, and Estonia. He was commissioned by The Royal Scots Association to depict the Association participation in the national Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph.

HM Armed Forces Veteran Card

The long awaited HM Armed Forces Veteran Card has started to be issued to service leavers. This card aims to help ex-service people access specialist support and services.



The card allows veterans to easily verify their service to the NHS, their local authority, and charities, helping them to access support and services where needed.

If you left HM Armed Forces on or after 17th December 2018, you will automatically be given one of the new cards. Anyone who left HM Armed Forces before 17th December 2018, will have to apply for the new card.

To apply for your FREE HM Armed Forces Veteran Card then go to <https://www.gov.uk/veteran-card> or scan the QR code. This will then give you the details and process for applying for one.

It mentions that it take about 8 weeks but I received mine with 2 weeks.

Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



"IT FELT LIKE HOME RIGHT AWAY."

WE ARE WELCOMING APPLICATIONS TO BECOME A CHELSEA PENSIONER.

To find out more, contact our admissions team:

020 7881 5204

admissions@chelsea-pensioners.org.uk

www.chelsea-pensioners.co.uk/become-chelsea-pensioner



Donations and Legacies

Until 2006 the Regiment received a relatively healthy income, mainly from the One Day's Pay Scheme, to which the majority of officers and soldiers contributed, and had limited expenses as the Regimental Headquarters was funded by the MoD. Since then the balance has shifted; there is additional expenditure in maintaining a Regimental Office and income is greatly diminished and will reduce further in 2030 when MoD ceases the provision of funding for the Museum Curator. While sufficient funds exist to support Benevolence and Association activity in the short to medium term, and this activity is expected to diminish over time, securing the display of the Regimental Collection as part of The Royal Scots enduring legacy will require funds that currently exceed those held by the Regiment. Donations to the Regimental Trust to support Benevolence, Heritage or Association activities are always greatly appreciated. Donations can be made monthly or annually by standing order or as single donations. Legacies from wills will also be greatly appreciated.

With the creation of a new charity as part of our governance streamlining process we now have new bank accounts. Further details can be obtained from the Regimental Office on 0131 557 0405 or admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Readers articles invitation – “Jock” anory

We would like to invite you, “The Royal Scots Family”, to submit articles to your journal, The Thistle. Write a story of some event, a good time had or something funny you were involved in. If possible, support it with a photograph/s with name/s.

Please send them to admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Kindly put **THISTLE ARTICLE** in the email subject heading.

Summer Edition of the Thistle

The Summer 2024 edition of the Thistle (Vol 45) will cover events during the period 1 Mar – 31 Aug 2024. We aim to publish this edition by 30 Sep 2024. All items for inclusion should be submitted to the Regimental Office via admin@theroyalscots.co.uk no later than 6 Sep 2024, although it would be appreciated if contributions are submitted as soon as possible after events have occurred rather than leaving it to the last minute. **All photographs should be accompanied by a caption, which includes names of all people in the photograph.**

Kindly put **THISTLE ARTICLE** in the email subject heading.

Volunteers Required

The activities of the Regiment rely heavily on volunteers, whether organising and running the Association, assisting with the administration of the Regimental Trust, or helping at the Museum either routinely or for specific projects. We are seeking more volunteers; tasks will be matched to skills and experience but we are particularly seeking assistance with communications managing social media platforms and the website, photography, compiling The Thistle, historical research in the Museum archives and assisting with Museum events and projects. Anyone interested is requested to get in touch with the Regimental Office on 0131 557 0405 or admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Association Details

President: Brig George Lowder MBE
Chairman: Maj Stu Marshall
Vice Chairman: Mr Paul Robertson
Secretary: Mr David Milne
Treasurer : Mr Jamie Colquhoun

Highland

First Sunday of the month at 6.00pm at Raigmore Recreation Rooms, Inverness
Contact: Derrick Cameron
derrick1974@hotmail.com

Edinburgh

The Royal Navy Club
1 Broughton Road, Edinburgh
Contact: Details to follow

Pipe Band

Contact: Torquil Corkerton
torquil@corkerton.com

East of Scotland

Last Saturday of the month at 7.30pm at
RBL Prestonpans
Contact: Jamie Colquhoun
Jamie_colquhoun@hotmail.co.uk

Northern Ireland

First Tuesday of the month at RBL Ards
Contact: David McKendrick
davidsmck1@sky.com

Southern

No regular branch meetings, but events organised throughout the year.
Contact: Monty Stuart-Monteith
monty@shawsequestrian.com

Central Scotland

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

Fijian

Quarterly Meetings
Contact: Peni Ravutia
bogiravutia0506@gmail.com

For more information contact:

The Royal Scots Regimental Office

The Royal Scots Club
29 - 31 Abercromby Place
Edinburgh EH3 6QE
Tel: 0131 557 0405
Email: admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Royal Scots Golf Club Details

President: Jimmy McConnell

Captain: Arthur Frame
Vice Captain: Zander Russel

Secretary: David Morris
Contact: bampops1@gmail.com

Forecast of Events – as at 01 Jun 2024

The Forecast of Events is published on the Regimental website and updated at the beginning of each month. Details of specific events can be found on the regimental website under Upcoming Events.

Armed Forces Day 2024. This is normally held on the last Saturday in June so we anticipate this taking place on Sat 22 Jun 2024. We are hoping for a strong contingent to join the parade.

80th anniversary of the Battle of Kohima. The Battle of Kohima was fought from 4 Apr to 22 Jun 1944 and 1 RS earned the battle honour “Kohima”, which is carried on the Queen’s Colour. We are planning a parade and remembrance service at Lauriston Castle, Edinburgh, Sat 29 Jun 2024.

Remembrance at the Cenotaph. The Regimental Association will participate in the Veterans parade after the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London on Sun 10 Nov 2024. Our participation will be coordinated by the Southern Branch of the Association. Those wishing to attend should submit their bid to the Southern Branch by mid Aug. Further details will be available on the website or from the Regimental Office.

Day/Date 2024	Event	Time	Remarks
Fri 14 Jun 24	RSGC Golf Match		Harburn Golf Club
Tue 18 Jun 24	Riding of the Marches Linlithgow		Linlithgow
Sat 22 Jun 24	Armed Forces Day	1000	Edinburgh
Sat 29 Jun 24	Memorial service to mark 80th anniversary of the Battle of Kohima (4 Apr – 22 Jun 1944)	1030	RS Memorial Garden, Lauriston Castle
Sat 29 Jun – Thu 4 Jul 24	McCrae's Battalion Trust visit to the Somme		Contalmaison, France
Thu 4 Jul 24	Kohima Educational Trust Memorial Service	1100	York Minister
Fri 5 Jul 24	RSGC Golf Match		Pumpherstons Golf Club
Fri 5 – Wed 10 Jul 24	Museum outreach exhibition		Hearts FC, Tynecastle
Tue 16 Jul 24	The Royal Scots War Memorial Fund (RS WMF) Trustees' Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Tue 23 Jul 24	Club Members' Committee Meeting	1700	Royal Scots Club
Thu 25 Jul 24	RSCM Ltd Board Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Sun 4 Aug 24	Association Quarterly General Committee Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Tue 13 Aug 24	Southern Branch visit to Blenheim Palace		Blenheim Palace
Fri 16 Aug 24	RSGC Golf Match		Haddington Golf Club
Sat 31 Aug 24	East of Scotland Branch Summer Party		Prestonpans
Fri 6 Sep 24	RSGC Golf Match		Kilspindie Golf Club
Tue 10 Sep 24	Museum Committee Meeting	1030	Old Provost Marshal's House
Sat 14 Sep 24	NI Veterans Association Memorial Service		NMA
Sat 14 Sep 24	Regimental Band (informal) Reunion Lunch	1230	Royal Scots Club
Tue 24 Sep 24	RSRT Executive Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Tue 24 Sep 24	Club Members' Committee Meeting	1700	Royal Scots Club
Sat 12 Oct 24	Fiji Day		
Tue 15 Oct 24	RSCM Ltd Board Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Mon 21 Oct 24	Opening of the Garden of Remembrance, Princes Street Gardens	1030	Princes Street Gardens
Mon 21 Oct 24	Remembrance Service at Royal Scots Monument	1200	RS Monument
Mon 21 Oct 24	Veteran's Curry Lunch (No cost cabs)	1300	Royal Scots Club
Tue 22 Oct 24	RS WMF Trustees' Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Fri 25 Oct 24	RSRT Trustees' Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Fri 1 Nov 24	Officers' Golf Match		TBC
Fri 1 Nov 24	Officers' Dinner	1900	Royal Scots Club
Sun 3 Nov 24	Association Quarterly General Committee Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Thu 7 Nov 24	Opening of the Field of Remembrance Westminster	1030	Southern Branch
Sat 9 Nov 24	Remembrance Service at Glencorse Gates	1045	Glencorse Barracks
Sat 9 Nov 24	Regimental planting of crosses at the Field of Remembrance, Westminster, followed by a Remembrance Service in the Abbey Cloisters	1800	Southern Branch
Sun 10 Nov 24	Remembrance Sunday		
	Cenotaph	1030	
	City Chambers	1045	
	Canongate Kirk	1045	
	The Royal Scots Club	1045	
	Haymarket	1200	
	Peebles	1045	
	Whitburn	1045	
	Prestonpans	1045	
	Linlithgow	1045	
Mon 11 (TBC) Nov 24	Remembrance Service at the Scottish National War Memorial	1045	The Castle
Tue 19 Nov 24	RSRT Executive Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Thu 21 Nov 24	Club Members' Committee Meeting	1700	Royal Scots Club
Sat 30 Nov 24	St Andrew's Day Service	TBC	St Cuthbert's Church
Tue 10 Dec 24	RSCM Ltd Board Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Tue 10 Dec 24	RS Club Trustees, Directors and Committee Christmas Lunch	1200	Royal Scots Club
Wed 11 Dec 24	RSRT Volunteers Christmas Lunch	1230	Royal Scots Club
Thu 12 Dec 24	RS WMF Trustees' Meeting	1400	Royal Scots Club
Fri 20 Dec 24	Regimental Office closes for the Festive period		
Fri 20 Dec 24	Regimental Museum closes for the Festive period		
Day/Date 2025	Event	Time	Remarks
Mon 6 Jan 25	Regimental Office reopens		
Mon 6 Jan 25	Regimental Museum reopens		
Sat 25 Jan 25	Association Burn's Supper Night	1900	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Sun 2 Nov 25	Association Quarterly General Committee Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Fri 21 Feb 25 (TBC)	Association AGM	1900	Royal Scots Club
Fri 28 Mar 25	The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) Regimental Day		392 nd anniversary
Fri 28 Mar 25	The Royal Regiment of Scotland Formation Day		
Sat 29 Mar 25	Regimental Day Dinner	1900	Royal Scots Club
Wed 2 Apr 25 (TBC)	Club AGM	1900	Royal Scots Club
Fri 4 to Sun 6 Apr 25	Association Weekend		Rothiemurchus
Sat 24 May 25	110 th Gretna Memorial Service	1030	Rosebank Cemetery
Fri (TBC) May 25	Stewart Snedden Memorial Golf Match	TBC	Kingsknowe GC
Sat (TBC) May 25	Le Paradis Commemoration		Le Paradis, France
Tue 27 May 25	Le Paradis 85 th anniversary Memorial Service		Norwich Cathedral
Thu 5 Jun 25 (TBC)	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day	1000	RH Chelsea
Tue 17 Jun 25 (TBC)	Riding of the Marches Linlithgow		Linlithgow
Sat 28 Jun 25 (TBC)	Armed Forces Day	1000	Edinburgh
Mon 20 Oct 25 (TBC)	Opening of the Garden of Remembrance, Princes Street Gardens	1030	Princes Street Gardens
Mon 20 Oct 25 (TBC)	Remembrance Service at Royal Scots Monument	1200	RS Monument
Fri 31 Oct 25 (TBC)	Officers' Golf Match		TBC
Fri 31 Oct 25 (TBC)	Officers' Dinner	1900	Royal Scots Club
Nov 25 (TBC)	Opening of the Field of Remembrance Westminster	1030	Southern Branch
Nov 25 (TBC)	Remembrance Service at Glencorse Gates	1045	Glencorse Barracks
Nov 25 (TBC)	Regimental planting of crosses at the Field of Remembrance, Westminster, followed by a Remembrance Service in the Abbey Cloisters	1800	Southern Branch