

Friends of The Black Watch

Castle and Museum

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ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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Chairwoman's Letter



Now that the building work has finally started at Balhousie I can begin to imagine hosting Friends events from the new extension to the Castle. We are extremely grateful to the Perth Museum and AK Bell Library for allowing us to use their excellent facilities for our lectures, but it will be much nicer to be able to hold such evenings at the Castle. The longing for the building work to be completed was particularly brought home to me as I watched the rain pour nonstop in the run up to, and during, the

annual Cocktail Party. I am most grateful to all those that braved the floods to come, thank you for helping to make it such an enjoyable and well attended evening but gosh, it will be nice to not have to rely on a marquee, or to have wet feet, next year.

In last year's newsletter I said that we would welcome volunteers to help run our events. I am delighted to be able to say that volunteers have stepped forward and we now have an Events Committee, dedicated to think of and organise events throughout the year. I am most grateful to those individuals for giving so generously of their time and bringing such enthusiasm and organisational skills to the Friends.

The other thing I asked for in last year's newsletter was suggestions from Friends for events you would like to see on

the calendar; suggestions have not yet been forthcoming but I am full of hope that they will be!

The doors of Balhousie will be closing for the remaining building work and internal redevelopment of the Museum on 31st August 2012. As so many Friends events have, so far, been held in other locations, the closure of the Castle is not affecting our calendar and so a more or less full programme of events will continue to run right through to the reopening next year. It seems a long time since the Appeal was first launched to raise the funds to purchase and redevelop Balhousie. I feel we are on the final lap now and look forward with great enthusiasm to the opening next year and all that we will be able to achieve with the fabulous new facilities.

W. Riddell-Webster

Friends Events Committee

The Friends Events Committee (F.E.C) was set up in January 2012. The purpose of the F.E.C is to develop and run the Friends events programme. The F.E.C aims to deliver an interesting, varied and diverse event calendar alongside the Museum. The goal being to provide social contact with existing Friends, encourage new Friends to join, attract more

people to visit the Museum and produce a revenue which the Friends can use to support the Museum. The F.E.C will enable the Friends Management Committee to focus on the development of the Friends as an organisation.

Veteran members of the Friends, Sarah Riddell-Webster, Leanon Blackhall and Philip Halford-MacLeod sit on the

F.E.C. New members include Major (Retd) Derek Mowatt, Lt Col (Retd) Willie Coupar and Rosemary Pitcaithly, all of whom are dedicated Museum volunteers with a wealth of skill, knowledge and energy to develop our event offerings.



Museum Focus: Freddie Tait



This collection of golf equipment, pith helmet and khaki jacket belonged to Lieutenant Freddie Guthrie Tait, Officer of The Black Watch and amateur golf champion. Tait was born in Edinburgh to renowned physician and keen golfer Peter Guthrie Tait and it was through golf that Freddie was destined to follow in his father's footsteps.

A strong hitter of the ball, his drive of 341 yards went on to win him the amateur

Championship twice (1896 and 1898). He also finished third in The Open Championship (1896 and 1897) and was the leading amateur in this competition six times. Tait's military career began at Sandhurst where he is believed to have introduced golf.

He then joined the 2nd Battalion Leinster Regiment before joining the 2nd Battalion, The Black Watch. It was with The Black Watch that Freddie fought in the Boer War where he received

a wound to his left thigh during the battle of Magersfontein in December 1899. Less than two months later he was back with his Battalion at Koodoosberg where he was tragically killed in action.

Freddie Tait is commemorated as a famous golfer and son of The Black Watch through Museums and Memorials from Scotland to South Africa.

Image to right: Artefacts from the Museum's Freddie Tait collection

Friends Sponsor a Display Case

"..the Friends donated £1,000 for the sponsorship of a display case.."

The purpose of the Friends is to support the work of the Museum and its staff to preserve the legacy of The Black Watch Regiment. One way for us to do this is by donating monies raised to the Museum. Our first year has been dedicated to establishing our Committees, setting up our administration system, developing our events calendar and growing our membership.

In this, our second year, we are delighted to be in the position to make our first

donation of monies raised by the Friends to The Black Watch Heritage Appeal. In March the Friends donated £1,000 for the sponsorship of a display case in the redeveloped

Museum. The Museum will become home to a variety of new and unique display cases varying in shape, size and content. Sponsorship helps to support the Museum in funding these cases. If you



would like to find out more about sponsoring a display case contact 01738 638152 or visit:

www.theblackwatch.co.uk and look for the link on the Home Page.

Friends Events So Far.....



The Events Committee of the Friends have delivered two events thus far in 2012. The first event was held in the AK Bell Library on the evening of 23 May 2012 when Lt Col Edward Fenton, C o m m a n d i n g

Officer, The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, delivered a most interesting lecture about the Battalion's recent experience in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He addressed a packed hall with all 125 places taken. The address was preceded by drinks and canapés; all present enjoyed both the social interchange and the informative talk.

The second event was the annual Cocktail Party on 21st June amidst a torrential downpour! Despite the weather we had a good turn out and those who attended were determined to enjoy themselves. The evening was adjudged to be a great success by all.

Join Us On Our First Friends Trip



The Friends have arranged their first 'Friends Trip'. This will be a visit to the Museum of The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders at Stirling Castle on Wednesday 21st November 2012 at 11.00am. Transport to and from Stirling will be arranged amongst the cars of those Friends that are attending. Numbers will be limited to a maximum of 20. The Museum has kindly agreed to give our Friends a guided tour and provide some light refreshments.

The Argylls have an illustrious history dating from 1794 to the present day. The Museum itself is based within The King's Old

Building of Stirling Castle. The galleries have a rich collection of artefacts and personal stories which provide an insight into the events, locations, people and themes of war. Visit the Museum website at www.argylls.co.uk.

If you would like to find out more about the trip or to book your place please contact Leonor Blackhall, Friends Secretary on 01738 638152 or at friends@theblackwatch.co.uk

Image to the left: Entrance to The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum. © ASH Museum



Friends Fundraising Project

One of the key aims of the Friends is to support the work of the Museum. To support this work the Friends launched our first fundraising project in March 2012. The Museum has visitors from all over the world but it is currently only able to offer a guide book in either English or French; the Friends wish to rectify this. All profits from our 2012-2013 events and any donations received will go towards providing booklets in more languages and, if possible, also audio guides. To date we have raised over £500. We hope to have our guide books in place for the reopening of the Museum in Spring 2013.

Victoria Schofield's Lecture

Victoria Schofield is a distinguished published author and journalist. She has written many books including the recently published *The Official Regimental History: The Highland Furies The Black Watch 1739-1899*. During this lecture Victoria will discuss with the audience how she came to write this history, the challenges involved, share her methodology, reveal what surprises she encountered and how fascinating it was. The lecture will take place on Thursday 20th September at AK Bell Library, Perth; reception from 6.30pm with the lecture commencing at 7.00pm

Tickets are £15 and £7 for Friends. Tickets include a glass of wine and canapés. Booking is essential.

Tell Us What You Think

The Friends are now 22 months old and, with the imminent closure of the Museum for redevelopment, we are now reflecting on how we have done so far. We have worked hard to set up efficient systems to manage and develop the Friends and we have been delighted at the number of Friends who have joined. Always mindful of giving value for money, we are developing a varied and enjoyable events calendar and considering ways in which the Friends can support the work of the Museum.

We would like to hear how you, as a Friend, think we are doing. Do you think we could do it better? Do you have any event, fundraising or membership recruitment ideas? If so, please let us know by contacting 01738 638152 or friends@theblackwatch.co.uk or by letter.

Friends Exclusive Tour

The Friends will be invited to an exclusive tour of the redeveloped Museum. Details have yet to be confirmed but we hope this will be prior to the reopening of the Museum to the general public. We plan to provide you with a guided tour of the redeveloped galleries, the extension building and new collections stores. A glass of wine, refreshments and canapés will also be served. Details will be made available in the coming months. In the meantime, if are interested in attending this tour please give your name and contact details to:

Leonor Blackhall, Friends Secretary on 01738 638152 or friends@theblackwatch.co.uk

Museum Redevelopment Update



We are pleased to report that there has been significant progress in the Castle and Museum redevelopment project since our 2011 newsletter. In February this year Perth and Kinross Council granted the necessary planning permission, and the following month The Heritage Lottery Fund confirmed an award of £778,000. This, together with the fantastic amount raised through The Black Watch Heritage Appeal and grants from charities such as The Gannochy Trust, Robertson Trust and the Rausing Trust, meant that our Trustees were delighted to give the go-ahead to commence this ambitious project. Alfie Iannetta, C.E.O. The Black Watch Museum Trust, says "All those involved in supporting us to raise the funds for this ambitious project can look back with pride on what we have achieved as well as look forward with excitement to the opening of our redeveloped Castle and Museum."

In May work was commenced on our new car park. We were pleased to have this completed for the visit of Her Majesty The Queen in celebration of The Diamond Jubilee on the 6th July. The new car park provides space for the increased parking needed for visitors to the redeveloped Museum and tea room.

The contractors have now begun work on the foundation of the extension to the original Castle building. This extension will provide an area for special exhibitions, a designated learning space, improved storage for our artefacts, a new Museum shop and reception area and a much requested tea room and lift.

The Museum has managed to remain open throughout this stage of the redevelopment with what we hope has been minimal disruption to our visitors. Although we are planning to keep the Museum Shop open until the project is complete, the Museum itself will be closing its doors to the public on 31st August 2012 to allow the contractors to complete works in the existing building. During the closure the Museum will be internally redeveloped with new interpretation, displays and interactive and audio-visual equipment to enhance, preserve and share the legacy of The Black Watch.

Meanwhile staff will be busy packing up and storing the collection, developing our reopening strategy and recruiting staff and additional volunteers for the increased opportunities the redevelopment will bring. If you are interested in any of our volunteering opportunities please contact Leonor Blackhall on 01738 638152 or volunteer@theblackwatch.co.uk

The Museum is scheduled for a grand reopening in Spring 2013. We will confirm the opening date on our Museum website in due course: www.theblackwatch.co.uk



Demolition begins on the cottage to make way for the Castle Extension, 5 June 2012



Development of Castle Extension, 21 June 2012



Development of Castle Extension, 20 July 2012



Development of Museum Car Park, 14 May 2012



Completed Museum Car Park, 10 July 2012