

Dear Friends,

This has been another busy year for the Friends and I am indebted to the volunteers on the Friends Management and Events committees that help make it all happen. I would also like to thank all our members for their ongoing support. Subscriptions make up about 65% of our income with the balance coming from lecture ticket sales. This year we have again provided financial support for a wide variety of requests from the Museum team.

## Education

In September last year we gave a donation of £1000 to set up a Travel Bursary fund. The Museums Learning Officer said

*"We have issued five travel bursaries to the following schools: Blairhall Primary School, Strathmiglo Primary School, Carnegie Primary School, Cleish Primary School and Milesmark Primary School. The financial assistance provided by the Travel Bursary has helped schools from as far away as Dunfermline to visit the Museum, thus enabling a greater number of pupils outside the immediate Perth area to access, enjoy and learn from The Black Watch's heritage. The introduction of the Travel Bursary has had a positive impact on the number of school pupils we have worked with so far this year. By the end of March we had worked with 366 primary and secondary school pupils (as opposed to 128 between January and March 2016), with 166 pupils coming from the schools mentioned above."*

We made a further donation to this fund in July to ensure the continued support. **Donation £1000**

The Museums Educational programme has also received grants to purchase replica uniforms



and equipment. There are three main areas in which the items are used. Firstly, certain pieces of uniform and equipment are used in the reconstructed First World War trench in the Museums grounds.

Members of the Trench Guide team dress in period costume to provide visitors with a more immersive experience, some of the artefacts also enable our guides to explore the lives of

soldiers on the front line through new angles, such as cooking and 'trench raids'. In addition, selected items are used as part of the First and Second World War workshops run for visiting Primary and Secondary Schools. The final areas are the 'dressing-up' stations in the Museum's galleries. These stations give children the 'hands on' opportunity to learn about the uniforms worn by the Regiment in the past and are frequently regarded as a highlight of a families' visit to the Castle and Museum. **Donation £1187**

A further grant was given to bring in a re-enactment group to Balhousie for the Festival of Museums weekend, which is always popular with adults and children. **Donation £320**

## Special Exhibitions

Through the silhouettes of 'There But Not There' the Museums paid an inspiring and poignant tribute to 12 Black Watch soldiers who lost their lives during the First World War. The silhouettes of soldiers placed through the museum reminded us of those that did not return. **Donation £2799**



As part of the Museum's act of remembrance last year, a workshop was run for visitors to make Willow Poppies that were then placed in the ground near the replica WW1 trench. **Donation £280**

## Castle and Museum

To ensure the preservation of the extensive collection of documents and artefacts within the Museum it is vital that the correct materials are used for handling and storing items. A grant was given for the purchase of specialist materials and equipment. **Donation £2617**

For far too many years Balhousie Castle had been invisible at night time, but no more. Late last year we gave a grant to pay for floodlights to be installed. Now, whether you are attending an event or just passing by, Balhousie can be seen from all directions. **Donation £1869**

In April of this year we made our biggest donation yet to the Museum.

Since the redevelopment of the Castle and Museum there have been many enquiries from companies and individuals wishing to hire the Café to hold private functions during the day. It was never possible to meet these requests because the Café is in use 7 days a week. However, the Museum Trustees felt that the time was right to build on an extension and so in April this year the Queen Mother room was opened by the Provost of Perth. The Friends paid for Audio Visual equipment to be built into the room as well as installing a speaker system and hearing loop into the Café, where we hold the evening lectures. The first event to be held in the newly opened room was the Friends Cocktail



Party in early May. With the huge doors that connect the Café and Queen Mother room wide open there was a wonderfully large space for the guests

to gather and circulate for what was a most enjoyable evening. **Donation £10,000**

You can hold your own event at the Museum by contacting [manager@theblackwatch.co.uk](mailto:manager@theblackwatch.co.uk) or telephoning 01738 638152.

### Conservation

*The Wreck of The Birkenhead* by Lance Calkin, a moving painting that depicts the sinking of the ship in 1852, was sadly accidentally damaged while on display in the Museum. A grant was given to pay for the restoration of the painting, which also included repair of other damage to the picture that went back many years. **Donation £2624**



### Lectures

The lecture programme for the last year has been full and varied. Our theme of following the centenary of First World War events has seen us cross from the Western Front to Russia and also look at matters from a Naval perspective. We started the year with Professor Norman Drummond making us think about how we will continue to remember the sacrifices made by so many once the centenary commemorations are over. In February, Professor Evan Mawdsley explained to us the intricacies of the Russian aspect of the later period of WW1 and the Revolution. An incredibly complicated subject

to cover in a brief hour but so important in the effect it had on the rest of the war. We were delighted to welcome back Professor Gary Sheffield in March for his fourth visit to Balhousie and, as ever, we had a sell out audience for him. The subject was The German advance in the Spring of 1918; their final major offensive on the Western Front. This lecture laid the ground perfectly for the following month when Dr Andrew Gordon told us of the daring Zeebrugge and Ostend Raids undertaken by the Navy in April 1918. It was extremely interesting to hear tell of the naval offensive and this daring plan to cripple the capability of the U boats. In May, Lt Col (Retd) Willie Coupar took on the very complicated subject of General Murray's two failed attempts to take Gaza and the subsequent success of Allenby in capturing Gaza, Jerusalem and most of present day Syria. In June, Professor Sir Hew Strachan returned to give us a master class in the global perspective of the economics of the war, the American entry into the war, the effect of war on world trade and how the Germans were probably always doomed to lose once they committed to fighting on two fronts simultaneously. It was a very different and completely fascinating perspective of the war at the truly strategic level. Dr Mike Taylor will give us an over view of 1918 in his November lecture and Professor Gill Plain will tell of some of the literature of WW1 in December. That will not be the end of our WW1 series as we follow through on some of the aftermath of the war in 2019.

Two lectures were very Black Watch focused. In July, Major Hugh Rose gave us a wonderful lecture on the Bagpipe Music of The Black Watch accompanied by Pipe Major Alastair Duthie. Hugh gave the history behind the tunes and how they fitted into the regimental day. In September we were treated to a very informative lecture given by Lt Col Rob Hedderwick, CO of The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn Royal Regiment of Scotland talking about the Bn recent tour of duty in Iraq,



'Op SHADER'. The lecture was hugely interesting and demonstrated how much things have changed since The Black Watch was last deployed there in 2004.

I hope you have enjoyed this brief resume of the Friends year and thank you for supporting us.

Sarah Riddell-Webster  
Chairwoman

