

NEWSLETTER

Friends of The Black Watch Castle and Museum



FRIENDS OF
THE
BLACK
WATCH
CASTLE & MUSEUM



Issue 6 - 2016

Foreword from Friends Chairwoman, Sarah Riddell-Webster

“ The Black Watch Castle and Museum has had a phenomenally busy year and so too have the Friends. I mentioned when I wrote for the newsletter last year, that the Friends were going to take over running the whole lecture series for the Museum. We are now well into our stride with this and have developed a loyal following which has been very heartening. What has been even more encouraging is that many of those loyal followers have also become Friends, so our numbers have continued to grow throughout the year. Of course the lecture series only works in the way that it does because of the very dedicated and hardworking team of volunteers on the Friends Events Committee. There is not an insignificant amount of work involved in running the programme, from finding good lecturers and persuading them to come, to turning what is by day a thriving café into an evening lecture theatre. Their contribution is what makes the programme work as well as it does and I remain extremely grateful to our lecturers and volunteers for their tireless support.

The continuing recruitment of members to the Friends and the added income from the lectures has ensured that we are able to maintain the financial support that we have given the Museum over the last six years. This year we have made a significant contribution towards the cost of bringing ‘The last of the Tide’ D Day Portraits to the Museum. We have also kept up our financial support of the Special Exhibitions. Two of this year’s Special

Exhibitions gave the visitors a chance to make their own contribution by leaving a message for a soldier in ‘Seasons Greetings’ or writing a card of remembrance and reflection in the ‘Poppies: Weeping Window’ exhibition. Just as having a thriving Friends organisation helps to keep the Museum linked to the present day, so does the opportunity for visitors to reflect and comment on what they have seen.

It was always the intention when the Friends were set up that the members would be able to become involved and volunteer at the Museum if they would like to. Over the years lots of members of the Friends have become volunteers and helped in many different departments at the Castle and Museum. However, the arrival of Poppies: Weeping Window added a whole new dimension to that opportunity. Many of the Friends signed up to be Poppy Partners and in their red team shirts made sure that every one of the 120,000 people that came to visit in 12 weeks enjoyed their visit. Their support to the Castle and Museum and its visitors has been invaluable.

As 2016 draws to a close, I find myself wondering where on earth it went. It feels as if we have not stopped all year, 17 Lectures, 2 Friends’ trips, 95 new members and £6877 paid over to The Black Watch Castle and Museum. Thank you every one for making it all possible.”



One year on by Anne Kinnes, Chief Executive

“ When I was introduced to you all in last year’s newsletter I didn’t yet have a full year in post, however here we are now some twelve months later fast approaching my first two years at The Castle and Museum and what a year it has been.

We have had our most exciting year to date. We finished 2015/16 with a 17% uplift on footfall from the previous year and the best overall financial results since the refurbishment. Along with growth of course in our Friends membership, we were also building a loyal following of locals from Mum and Baby groups to Tai Chi groups who regularly come into the café and buy gifts from the shop.

We have expanded our menu with new dishes and new names reflecting where we are and what the museum is about. We often have a Sunday Roast which goes down really well with the locals. In fact, if you want to be guaranteed a table, you really need to book. In terms of footfall and income we have had the best year ever in the café.

In the Museum we have welcomed many visitors, old and young. In September 2015 we had our first ever Family Fun day, which was a huge success with over 500 visitors in one day, and the Museum was filled with the voices of children. We were so lucky with the weather and we had many locals come in for the first time and learn about the history of The Black Watch. We get such good comments about the Museum and I am delighted to say that, at the time of writing, we hold the number one place on Trip advisor of Best Visitor Attraction in Perth.

In the shop we have some new ranges of products that are all going down really well and we have re-designed the web shop to feature almost exclusively Black Watch memorabilia.

In November came our most exciting news; the announcement of the **Poppies: Weeping Window** by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper and specially presented by 14-18 NOW to mark the centenary of the First World War was to come to the Museum from 30th June until 25th September 2016. The *Weeping Window* is a cascade comprising several thousand handmade ceramic poppies seen pouring from a high window to the ground below. The Black Watch Museum is a focal point for remembrance and learning about the Great War and other conflicts and would make a poignant and fitting host venue for this artistic commemoration. The breath-taking installation was to flow from the Castle’s second floor turret window onto the ground below. We were all so pleased and almost daily it filled us with both excitement and terror in equal measures.

Once we had our exciting news we were waiting with anticipation for the Poppies: Weeping Window to begin in earnest. We had many weeks of hard work ahead getting the grounds ready, laying paths, erecting a marquee that would give us an additional 60 covers, organising car parking and recruiting Poppy Partners and that was all before they Poppies even arrived.

We recruited our army of 120 Poppy Partners, who came from the length and breadth of Scotland, aged from 16 to 81 and from all walks of life. They were all given two hours training, kitted out with bright Red Polo shirts and matching jackets all emblazoned with the words “Poppy Partner – How Can I Help You?”, a radio and a “most frequently asked questions booklet”. With that, they were off, meeting and greeting our never-ending stream of visitors. Ten weeks into the installation, we had welcomed over 93,000 visitors and, to put this in perspective, our annual footfall last year was 72,000 with an average in the summer of 80 to 100 visitors a day. Throughout the Poppies period, we welcomed around 1400 visitors per day. Quite an achievement. Our aim was to reach 100,000 by our final day on 25th September and, in the end, we achieved over 120,000!

All areas of the Castle and Museum have benefited from our extra visitors. We added Highlight Tours to our Museum offering, extended our gift range in the shop and added twice as many covers in the café. The first week was a shock to the system for all the team and especially the first Saturday, which was our busiest day to date with 2,200 people through the door. It felt like it would never end – our new busy very quickly became the norm and we all enjoyed it and would be sad to see it go.

Currently, we also have “The Last of the Tide” portraits from the Royal Collection on display until 4th November. “The Last of the Tide” showcases 12 portraits of veterans of D-Day, commissioned by HRH The Duke of Rothesay following his attendance at the 70th anniversary of D-Day in France in 2014. 12 leading painters were selected for the commission, amongst them Jonathan Yeo, James Lloyd and Stuart Pearson Wright. The portraits pay tribute to some of the extraordinary men that played a role in the Allied invasion of Normandy and guarantee an artistic record endures of those who fought in WW2 campaign.

And now, ‘What next?’ I keep getting asked. We are having a life size replica First World War trench built in the grounds at the end of October, which will be an integral part of our schools programme and will be delivered by our new Learning and Audience Officer, Shonagh. We have had a lot of interest from schools with bookings coming in and, as far as we know, we are the only site in Scotland currently offering this experience.

Our Christmas gift range will be introduced gradually into the shop with Christmas shopping nights planned in December and a Winter Family Festival planned for Saturday 2nd December 2016. Of course our Award Winning café will be offering Festive lunches throughout the month of December.

I look forward to welcoming you in 2017.”



Lt Gen Sir Alistair Irwin Stands Down as Chairman of Trustees of The Black Watch Castle and Museum

By Mike Riddell-Webster



Our Regimental Home since the late 1960's has been successfully transformed from a Ministry of Defence outpost to a thriving private business, which will ensure that sufficient funds are available to enable the name of The Black Watch and the Regimental collection live on in perpetuity. That this is the case is down to the prescience and leadership of one man; Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin.

As the Adjutant General, he was well informed about Regimental changes in the pipeline and as the Royal Regiment of Scotland formed up, it was

General Alistair who saw before everyone else that there was a certain inevitability that public financial support for Regimental Museums would be cut back, if not completely withdrawn. From that insight sprang the idea to "go private" by buying Balhousie Castle from the Ministry of Defence, starting an appeal, building a café and shop and renovating the Museum.

Having an idea is simple; delivering the huge project that resulted is something else again. Firstly, the Regimental family had to be persuaded that the approach was right. That accomplished, much then had to be done; an appeal launched, an enormously complicated application made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the governance of the Regimental Trusts had to be rearranged, business plans written and the detail design of both museum and extension had to be prepared, costed and delivered.

The project started seriously with the launch of the appeal for the new museum. The appeal was launched in 2008, almost simultaneously with the advent of the global financial crash, which made raising the required funds peculiarly difficult. Happily, with a huge amount of local support, Heritage Lottery funds and a degree of Royal and other well-placed patronage, the appeal target was realised and building started.

Regimental Trusts having been re-arranged, General Alistair became the new Chairman of the Black Watch Museum Trust in mid 2011, having been the Chairman of the combined Black Watch Trusts for



Planting the Sorbus 'White Beam' trees with Pipe Major Duthie

some considerable period before that. For the last five years, he has tirelessly overseen progress as the build has been completed and the fledgling business has been developed until it has been able to stand on its' own.

The advent of the Black Watch Castle and Museum in its' current guise has not been General Alistair's only contribution. That we now have both a comprehensive Regimental history (or will have once the second edition of 'The Furies' is published!) and a fine book of pipe tunes are also as a direct result of his ideas and determination to ensure that the Regiment is remembered in the best possible way and our Regimental values, standards and traditions are continued in the life of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and more widely.

General Alistair's contribution has not always been from the comfort of an armchair. There have been many occasions when General Alistair has rolled his sleeves up and helped ensure that deadlines were met and projects delivered.

As his time as Chairman draws to a close, it does so with the enormous success of the Poppies: Weeping Window display this summer. The Black Watch Museum now stands in a class of its' own. Recognised by museum professionals as being the leading museum of its' type in Scotland – and probably the UK – the Museum will absolutely be part of the legacy bequeathed to the Regiment by Gen Alistair.

Clearly projects of this type rely on a large array of people to deliver and The Black Watch has been very lucky to have had a number of energetic and committed volunteers and staff who have helped in a huge variety of ways to deliver the project. But Alistair Irwin provided the inspiration and leadership and, as he steps down as Chairman of The Black Watch and Museum Trust, we all owe him an enormous vote of thanks.

We are very lucky that General Alistair has agreed to remain as the President of the Friends of The Black Watch Castle and Museum and we look forward to seeing him in that guise in the future.



Royal visit



Poppy partner



Echoes from Gallipoli

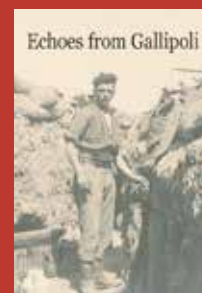
By Rosemary Pitcaithly

The Friends of The Black Watch Castle and Museum were delighted to welcome The Birnam Institute Players on the 2nd March, who performed a dramatic reading written to commemorate The Scottish Horse Yeomanry and their part in the Gallipoli Campaign during WW1 in 1915. As well as the four presenters, we were joined by Colonel David Arbuthnott and representatives from the Dunkeld Archive, and the writer of the piece, Bob Davidson, who were able to answer questions and offer more information about the history of The Scottish Horse Yeomanry.

With a backdrop of vivid and often very moving images, the Trooper, Narrator and two Homefront voices evoked the experiences of a local lad inspired to join The Great Adventure, his initial enthusiasm

contrasting inevitably with his sufferings in war. The trooper's lines were taken from a personal account written for his family by William Mowat from Stormontfield, who survived the war and lived into his nineties. The rousing exhortations addressed to the Mothers of Scotland were reproduced from the People's Journal published in Dundee during WW1, and offered a fascinating insight into the prevailing attitude.

This lively presentation was warmly received by a rapt audience, and we were delighted to welcome many new visitors in addition to regular guests. Our thanks are due to The Birnam Institute Players for their dynamic contribution to our programme of events.



St John's Kirk Tour

By Jan Macpherson

St John's Kirk, which has enjoyed a long and close association with The Black Watch, has always held an attraction for me. How lovely therefore to have the opportunity of a tour and to be there, as someone remarked to me, for something other than a funeral! Some years ago I visited the church with our grandchildren and the gentleman on duty went to considerable trouble to show them all the carved animals, which I now know from our knowledgeable guide, Derek Mowatt, are a somewhat more friendly-looking version of the mediaeval gargoyles.

Imagine, ladies, particularly if your wedding day is wet and windy, being able to come into a small room to check your hair and dress, and then enter the church via the Bride's door! Further along that aisle are a number of memorials to men of the Black Watch, including a splendid copper one which was apparently worked by a form of embossing from the back, so that the lettering – and there is a huge amount of it! – is seen in relief on the front. Every word would have had to be worked backwards! Just off this same aisle is Perth's memorial to the fallen of WWI. Look up just before reaching that point and see the splendid candelabrum, surmounted by an image of the Virgin and Child, in Belgian brass, overlooked by our guide until we were leaving the church, and also – fortunately – overlooked by the 16th century reformers.

In the centre of the church is the communion table with a beautiful hand-embroidered cloth, incorporating Tay pearls. Above your head at this point is a huge hole, now closed with a wooden plate on which is painted an image of the Agnus Dei. Four small holes surround the large one, and these once accommodated the bell ropes, the church bells having been transported to the belfry through the larger central hole. Looking up at the pillars, stone slabs can be seen protruding, and these once supported the King's gallery, accessed from a door part way up the staircase to the tower, where the King could worship away from the lesser mortals! Passing the organ, we saw the chairs that King Charles I and his Queen would have used in the King's gallery.

And now the highlight – maybe!! – of the trip and a chance to go up the tower. There are 129 steps apparently; I didn't count them; I was too busy worrying about how on earth I was going to get down again! It was well worth the climb to see all the bells with the various patterns and Guildry marks cast in them, as well as the organ-like instrument from where the bells are now operated. We were lucky to be up there at 12.15 and not 12 o'clock! Going further up – so far up it was snowing! – and onto the narrow walkway surrounding the tower, we were able to enjoy panoramic views over Perth. It reminded me of a quote I once read: 'from here the view is mighty fine, it sends a shiver up my spine'!

Going down wasn't as bad as I feared, although I couldn't decide if I was shaking from fright or the cold up there, and all in all it had been a fascinating visit. How better to end it than with a bowl of delicious and warming soup at the Black Watch Museum!



Friends admiring the view of Perth from the roof of St John's Kirk

Friends Trip to Sheriffmuir Battlefield

By Ruari Halford-MacLeod

16 Friends of The Black Watch braved the weather on Friday 13th November for a walk across the Battlefield of Sheriffmuir, fought 300 years before.

We gathered at Kippenrait, above Dunblane, where Richard Stirling-Aird kindly allowed the group to shelter in his garage and see some of the Kippendavie Estate maps and the picture of the Battle of Sheriffmuir. While we were in the garage it rained, snowed and then the sun shone!

The Friends started the walk at Dykedale, with fine views over Dunblane, and walked up the old drove road towards Sheriffmuir Inn. There was a stop on the crestline to see the ground where the Jacobite right wing routed the Duke of Argyll's left. Then a walk through woods to the Gathering Stone - blown up in 1849 and now in an iron cage - which was in the centre of the Battle. The ground on the higher ground was wet, as it was on the day of the Battle. There was a view of where Argyll's right wing had driven the Jacobite left wing down to Whitestone, across the old road, now the A9, to Allan Water. The Friends then walked back to the Macrae Memorial on the road. 58 Macraes were killed in the Battle and the Memorial was unveiled 100 years ago. A brisk walk along the road brought the sun out for a time!

The Friends enjoyed an excellent Sheriffmuir Anniversary Lunch at the Sheriffmuir Inn. There were some hundred Macraes and others at the Inn, including Mrs Marigold Macrae, mother of the present Macrae Chieftain. The Macraes went down to the Memorial in the afternoon - and got very wet!



Friends standing by the gathering Stone

Bonhams Valuation Day

On 1st March 2016 The Black Watch Castle and Museum once again invited Friends and guests to bring items of interest and value to be appraised by experts from Bonhams Auctioneers and Valuers. Appropriately for a military setting, the Bonhams Team included specialists in arms and medals, as well as jewellery, paintings and decorative items. The Education Room provided the perfect space for confidential auction valuations, and there were several happy stories of objects of unexpected worth which delighted owners and experts alike.

Visitors were given the opportunity to view a private collection of early Scottish Arms, predominantly pistols, which were to be included in a sale of Scottish items in April. Many of these were made locally in Doune, one of the foremost places of manufacture for such weapons, and the magnificent workmanship aroused great interest and admiration.

As an added bonus, the Copper Beech Café laid on a special Valuation Day lunch, and volunteers, Lorna, Moira and their teams ensured that everyone enjoyed this interesting event.



The Friends Lecture Series

The Friends have now been running the lecture series at The Black Watch Castle and Museum for just over a year. During that time our visiting lecturers have spoken on a wide variety of subjects. The one thing that all the lecturers have had in common is huge



The Scottish Women's Hospital

depth of knowledge for their particular subject. The type of subject matter and perspective of the lectures have varied hugely, from the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 to a modern day cycle ride of the Silk Route. We have had lectures delivered by eminent professors, talented local historians and a very gutsy local lady with a bicycle.

Major General James Cowan gave the third and final lecture in our series commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Major Colin Innes had opened the series with a lecture on the life of young Wellington. Brigadier Charles Grant had then lectured on the Battle of Waterloo itself. General James, who has taken a keen interest in Waterloo throughout his life, examined the relevance of the Waterloo campaign to modern war. The combination of being a history graduate and having recently commanded one of the two remaining divisions in the British Army allowed General James to educate and interest his audience with an incisive analysis of the battle and the extraction of

lessons of the time that can still be applied today.

In January we continued our First World War centennial commemoration lectures when Richard McKenzie, the archivist in The Black Watch Museum, delivered a lecture on The Battle of Kut, a much forgotten battle that was fought when



The Black Watch at El Alamein

the Ottoman Empire troops besieged a British-Indian garrison town between December 1915 and April 1916. In March Professor Gary Sheffield of Wolverhampton University spoke on the subject of The Somme: A Centennial Reassessment. The ground had already been laid for this lecture by Professor Peter Jackson, Chair of Global Security at the University of Glasgow, who had lectured the previous month on the Battle of Verdun, a battle that had lasted almost a year and had resulted in a million casualties, becoming possibly the most costly encounter of the war on the Western Front. The scene was now set for Professor Sheffield to take us through the Battle of the Somme, regarded today as the most traumatic of the battles in which the British Army took part in during the First World War. In July, Trevor Royle detailed the involvement of Scottish Regiments on the Somme July-November 1916 with his lecture "Friends Are Good on the Day of Battle".

The First World War was of course not only fought on land; possibly the most famous of the sea battles was the Battle of Jutland. In June we were delighted to welcome Dr Philips O'Brien of The University of Glasgow who took us through some of the details of this most complex of battles. Although extremely costly for the Royal Navy it was a battle that was to prove decisive in ensuring Britain's dominance of the North Sea for the rest of the war. The cost in lives lost and men injured as a result of all of these WWI battles was unimaginable. It was therefore with interest that we listened to Carol Parry and Dr Elaine Morrison tell us of The Scottish Women's Hospitals, whose Giron and Newnham Unit set off for France in the summer of 1915 for what was to be the start of groundbreaking and inspirational work in the medical field. In the autumn of 1915 they were sent to Serbia, the first women's unit to travel with an expeditionary force, retreating with the allied forces to Salonica where they remained for the remainder of the war.

We have not just concentrated on the WWI with our lectures. Last Autumn Professor Alex Danchev of the University of St Andrews spoke about Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke in a lecture entitled Alanbrooke – the Man and his Diaries. A lecture that gave an insight to a man who was at the heart of Whitehall during the Second World War. Brigadier Charles Grant then took us to the fighting on the ground with his lecture recounting The Road to St Valery. A subject that holds a great deal of personal interest to many people in Perth with family connections to the 51st Highland Division of the day. Professor Niall Barr then brought the subject matter of WWII very close to home by talking about The Black Watch at El Alamein. We were given a clear picture of the journey of the refurbished 51st Highland Division to N Africa, under Maj Gen Douglas Wimberley, their preparation for battle and experience in that critical encounter which turned the tide in WWII.

In January we broke out from our usual subject matter to listen to Tess Monteith speak about Cycling the Silk Route. The lecturer was not totally unrelated to Balhousie as Tess is married to Major John Monteith, late of The Black Watch. Tess and her daughter Francesca had spent 6 months bicycling the 5000 miles of the Silk Route from Shanghai to Venice and used the adventure as an opportunity to raise money for the Scottish

Charity Air Ambulance. The Friends of The Black Watch Castle and Museum donated half of the proceeds from the evening lecture to SCAA. It was encouraging to see that a change of subject matter brought many new faces to our lecture room.

We are developing a loyal following for the lectures and attracting visitors from far afield, many of whom have not visited the Museum before. We have also been extremely fortunate to be so well supported by our visiting lecturers. We have a full programme in place for the rest of this year and into next so please do come and join us. Details are available on the website at www.theblackwatch.co.uk and tickets are booked through the shop on 01738 638152 extension 1. The current lecture calendar is available to pick up when you visit Balhousie.



Tess Monteith with The Air Ambulance

Future Lecture Programme

1916: The turning point?

8th December 2016

6:30 drinks reception | 7:00 lecture commences

Tickets £9 non-members | £7 Friends

Mike Taylor of the Tayside Branch of the Western Front Assoc. will sum up the events of 1916 as the third year of the FWW centenary draws to a close.

The Rivals: Montrose and Argyll and the struggle for Scotland

19th January 2017

7:00 drinks reception | 7:30 lecture commences

Tickets £9 non-members | £7 Friends

Murdo Fraser MSP will talk about the different personalities of the key characters, Montrose the King's Cavalier and Archibald Campbell, aristocrat and upholder of Scottish Presbyterianism.

Blitzkrieg in the West: Manstein and the Fall of France, 1940 (inc the fate of 51st Highland Div)

16th February 2017

6:30 drinks reception | 7:00 lecture commences

Tickets £9 non-members | £7 Friends

Maj Gen Mungo Melvin will present a fascinating account of General Erich von Manstein's critical role in the German victory over France in May-June 1940.

Nivelle and the French Mutinies

2nd March 2017

6:30 drinks reception | 7:00 lecture commences

Tickets £9 non-members | £7 Friends

Professor Peter Jackson, The University of Glasgow will talk about Robert Nivelle, the French C in C, whose quick route to victory ended disastrously with the mutiny of the French army.

Battle of Arras

4th April 2017

6:30 drinks reception | 7:00 lecture commences

Tickets £9 non-members | £7 Friends

Lt Col Willie Coupar will talk about the battle focusing on the large Scottish contribution with emphasis on 9th Division.

The Victoria Cross

20th April 2017

1.30 Lecture commences

Tickets £7 non-members | £5 Friends

Steve Nicholl will talk about the VC and its history, meaning and relevance with particular reference to Charles Melvin of The Black Watch who was awarded his VC following action on 21st April 1917.



Poppies Come to Balhousie

By Sarah Riddell-Webster

When I saw the picture on television of the Poppies: Weeping Window and Wave by Paul Cummins artist and Tom Piper designer at The Tower of London in 2014 I was sorry that I was unable to go to London and see them. It is rare for an art installation to capture the public's imagination in the way that this one did. These two sculptures are now brought to audiences across the country as part of 14-18 Now's programme of extraordinary arts experiences connecting people with the First World War. The Black Watch Castle and Museum was chosen as the first place on mainland Scotland to display the Poppies: Weeping Window sculpture.

There was a great deal of preparation to be done. We had no idea how many people would come to visit yet we needed to be ready by 30th June, the anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme, for be it 100 or 1000 visitors on day one. Poppy HQ was built and installed at the front gate, brochures were printed, matting was laid, marquee erected and poppy scarves, mugs, brooches, cushions and much more delivered to the gift shop. Even the chef was in creative mood with the arrival of Poppy biscuits on the Castle coffee shop's menu. The garden also needed a little bit of 'tivating'. For this we received an enormous amount of help from the staff and volunteers of Beautiful Perth. They tidied the uncontrollable hedges at the perimeter of the grounds, planted up the borders and delivered 18 beautiful big pots full of Begonias, Busy Lizzies and Ferns to brighten up the Castle forecourt. Kind men from the Council put poppies on lampposts throughout the town to guide visitors to the museum. Stagecoach laid on BW1 the Poppy bus that brought visitors from the local park and ride to the museum, picking up at key locations along the way. Huge quantities of craft materials were set out in the education room with ranks of glue sticks and scissors ready for our visitors to create their own poppies. Maps were pinned up for our visitors to put a red spot on where in the county or country they had come from. The special exhibition room became an interactive space for people to write their own card of remembrance and pin it to the wall or sit and watch the short film about the Poppies Weeping Window and the story of its creation. Out went the call for volunteers and in marched 120 wonderful people to be our Poppy Partners and help in whatever way was needed. On the 20th June two enormous articulated lorries delivered scaffolding, mesh and 4,972 ceramic poppies to the museum. With the aid of fork lift and cherry picker it took a team of 10 people 6 days to turn this unusual collection of items into the wonderful display that we all admired. Now we were ready!

The opening ceremony on the 29th June was a very moving occasion. As the sound of the Pipes and Drums from 7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland faded away Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin, Chairman of The Black Watch Castle and Museum and Mr Nigel Hinds, Executive Producer, 14-18 NOW made the opening speeches. A number of letters from the museum's First World War archive were then read. The first from Lieutenant Cecil Slack to his sweetheart, the second from Gunner Wilfrid Cove to his daughter Marjorie and finally a letter from Sergeant Allday to his mother. The last few poppies were planted while Kinnoull Primary School Choir sang. The ceremony concluded with a reading of In Flanders Fields by John Macrae May and We Shall Keep the Faith by Moina Michael.

There then followed the most phenomenal summer the Castle and Museum has ever known. Come rain or shine the visitors arrived from far and wide. Many nationalities, ages and faiths all with their own reasons to remember and stories they wanted to tell, of family members who served, of ancestors they never knew. Over 12 weeks the Castle and Museum welcomed over 120,000 visitors, for each of whom there will be a lasting memory.



Designer Tom Piper and Artist Paul Cummins at the opening of Poppies: Weeping Window at The Black Watch Castle and Museum



Installing the Poppies: Weeping Window

By Peter Drummond-Hay

I arrived at Balhousie Castle that Friday at the end of June with a sense of some trepidation. My wife and I had volunteered to help with the disassembly at the Tower of London and it was important, to us, to offer our help when the installation arrived locally.

The trepidation I felt was as a result of not knowing what I had let myself in for and was I physically fit enough to do whatever was required? As it turned out I need not have worried as I was welcomed warmly by the four professional installers and the three other (much, much younger) volunteer assistants.

When faced with a huge pile of steel and pallets loaded with trays of individually packaged flowers, it has to be said, that it seemed an enormous task to hand mount nearly 5000 poppies and then use them to recreate the vision of artist Paul Cummings and designer Tom Piper.

Four days of pretty hard work followed with my thumbs aching after a first shift of pushing 2 neoprene washers either side of each poppy onto it's steel pin. The effect, though, was dramatic and the progress at the end of each day was a thrill to see. Of course the aches and pains were mitigated by the constant realisation of what each bloom represented. A sore back is nothing to the sacrifice remembered by each and every ceramic beauty.



Fascinating was the arrival, on the fifth day, of the artist and the designer whose eyes allowed them to make small but significant changes to the sculpture, which resulted in the simple, yet amazingly effective tribute that I hope you have seen and enjoyed.

So Thank You to my fellow volunteers and the Professionals from 14-18 Now, who welcomed me so warmly and made me feel such an integral part of the team. It was an honour to have been involved.

Apart from a small panel that oozes out of the tower window, each poppy was placed on the framework by hand, some from a cherry picker, and some put on the frame on the ground and raised into position on the scaffolding, again by hand. This is an extraordinarily labour intensive process, which the professionals go through with each new venue visited.

Remember with a Poppy

Throughout the summer visitors to The Black Watch Castle and Museum have been invited to join with us in remembering and commemorating those soldiers who fell during the First World War. Poppies: Weeping Window has proved a poignant and moving experience for all who have seen it.

In the Education Room visitors have been allowed the opportunity to reflect and express their feelings by creating a poppy and contributing to our own wall of remembrance. We have been truly overwhelmed by the response from the public, with children and adults alike sitting down and making their poppies. Within the first couple of weeks our wall was full. Before long the Education Room was covered in poppies.

The materials were very generously donated by our staff, volunteers, visitors and local businesses. McNaughtons were able to donate some beautiful red tartan fabric, which has proved one of the most popular choices.



Koby age 9 making a poppy



Just as with each ceramic poppy in the sculpture outside our poppies are also unique. Every visitor has added their own personal touches through their creator's embellishment and thoughtful messages.

The poppies have been dedicated to soldiers who served in the First World War through to more recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Visitors from around the world have contributed their own messages of remembrance and thanks to soldiers who fought in regiments both from Great Britain and from their home nations.

Our artists have ranged in age from under 2 to 98, and everyone involved has valued the experience. Even very young children are aware of the significance of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance, and their simple messages are sincere and moving. Particularly poignant are the poppies made in memory of family members who lost their lives during The Great War and subsequent conflicts, and it has been a privilege to share the stories of these brave soldiers.

The crafts have also provided an opportunity for inter-generational dialogue, as parents and grandparents tell their children about how their own family stories connect to the First World War, with almost every visitor being able to mention at least one relative who served between 1914 and 1918.

As Poppies: Weeping Window is coming to a close we hope to capture some of these responses, with a selection of the poppies being taken into the Black Watch Archive.



Being a Poppy Partner

By Graeme Giles

As Friends of the Black Watch Museum, and military history aficionados, it was, as they say in modern parlance, a “no brainer.”

When the call went out for volunteers to assist with the stewarding of the iconic Poppies: Weeping Window at Balhousie Castle, it was a case of ‘two paces forward’ for my wife and myself to become Poppy Partners. More than 100 others - from teenagers to octogenarians, from near and far - also stepped up to the mark.

And so in mid-June, we found ourselves attending one of several training sessions at which museum chief executive officer, Anne Kinnes, and Friends’ chair, Sarah Riddell-Webster, outlined how Balhousie Castle had succeeded in being the sole Scottish mainland venue chosen to host the Poppies and what would be expected of the volunteers during the Window’s three-months stay in Perth.

It was explained that a minimum of six volunteers would be required to man each of the morning and afternoon shifts and that our commitment would be a key element in the success of this poignant reminder of sacrifice a century ago.

I found my time divided between car park duty and being stationed around the installation itself - the latter providing a great opportunity to interact with members of the public whom, as we now know, came in their hundreds and thousands to see the ‘Weeping Window.’

Some came with very little knowledge of World War One, or The Black Watch’s involvement in The Great War. Others were well-versed in one, the other or both.

Without exception, there was unstinting admiration for the display by visitors, a number of whom - men as well as women - were visibly moved by its symbolism. Many were genuinely touched that each poppy was unique, crafted to represent an individual who had made the ultimate sacrifice during the 1914-1918 war to end all wars.

Many were shocked that the number of Poppies in the display was just over HALF the number of Black Watch officers and men who fell during World War One. To emphasise the scale of that sacrifice, I urged visitors to take a few minutes to visit the wall of wooden crosses - updated daily - commemorating each and every one of those who laid down their lives.

For me, a noticeable aspect was the age range of those who came to see the ‘Weeping Window.’ I expected those ‘of a certain age’ to be in the vanguard....and so they were. But young people - teenagers and those in their 20s and 30s also came in their hundreds. Schoolchildren, too, many of whom contributed some outstanding work in the museum’s craft room where, with the help of fellow volunteers, they created their own moving poppy tributes to the fallen.

For a significant number of folk, this turned out to be their first visit to The Black Watch Museum. While some took the opportunity to tour the galleries, many others pledged to return - post-Poppies - to spend more time viewing the collection.

So, my memories of my time with the ‘Weeping Window’? The camaraderie quickly established between the volunteers; the interest and involvement of members of the public from all walks of life; their eagerness to share stories of their own relatives’ World War One exploits - Black Watch or otherwise.

A word of thanks, too, to operations manager, Alastair MacFarlane and his team for welcoming us to our shift and never failing to express their thanks at the end of a morning or afternoon spell of duty.

Personally, I found my time as a Poppy Partner interesting, rewarding and humbling.

And my favourite memory.....perhaps not what you might imagine. I was on duty in the car park when a grandfather and grandmother approached hand in hand with a little girl - I would estimate to be between two and three.

“Are you here to see the Poppies?” I asked. “Yes!” the wee one replied resolutely. And off they set down the path towards the castle. Grandpa hesitated, then doubled back. “Trouble is,” he said, “she thinks she’s going to see PUPPIES!” He about-turned with the look of a man preparing for a mega toddler meltdown.

As they left at the end of their visit, I asked him, with a degree of trepidation, how it had gone. With considerable relief he replied: “She absolutely loved them!” As did we all!



The Poppy Partners

Why the poppy is a symbol of remembrance

Poppies were a common sight, especially on the Western Front. They flourished in the soil churned up by the fighting and shelling. The flower provided Canadian doctor John McCrae with inspiration for his poem ‘In Flanders Fields’, which he wrote whilst serving in Ypres in 1915. It was first published in Punch, having been rejected by The Spectator. In 1918, in response to McCrae’s poem, American humanitarian Moina Michael wrote ‘And now the Torch and Poppy Red, we wear in honor of our dead...’. She campaigned to make the poppy a symbol of remembrance of those who had died in the war.

Artificial poppies were first sold in Britain in 1921 to raise money for the Earl Haig Fund in support of ex-servicemen and the families of those who had died in the conflict. They were supplied by Anna Guérin, who had been manufacturing the flowers in France to raise money for war orphans. Selling poppies proved so popular that in 1922 the British Legion founded a factory - staffed by disabled ex-servicemen - to produce its own. It continues to do so today.



Poppy Visitors

"We were at a Menzies Clan reunion at Menzies Castle, Dull, near Aberfeldy, and Major Ronnie Proctor gave a talk about the Menzies connection with the Black Watch, which was fascinating. My (Ted's) connection with the regiment is that my grandfather served with the Black Watch, but that was during the Boer War. We found the Weeping Window so very poignant because of Canada's strong connection with both the Black Watch and the sacrifices of World War One."

Ted and Sandy Menzies, Claresholm, Alberta, Canada

"We have the Poppy Wave from the Tower of London on display at Lincoln Castle, so when we heard that the Weeping Window was to be in Perth, we just had to come and see it. It is truly wonderful." Stuart, originally from Glasgow, is secretary and treasurer of his local British Legion Branch and Angela has been a member of the local band of Poppy distributors prior to Armistice Day for many years.

Stuart and Angela McDonald, Lincoln

John's father served 25 years with The Black Watch and his grandfather lost his life during the 1916 Battle of the Somme, while serving with the Leicestershire Tigers. *"It is wonderful to get so close to the Poppy display here - not possible at the Tower of London - and we find it very moving. It's the fact that each bloom represents a fallen individual, so many of whom volunteered thinking they were off on a great adventure."*

John and Joyce were part of the huge team of volunteers who stepped forward to painstakingly dismantle the Tower of London display of poppies.

John and Joyce Winton, Perth

"I just had to come and see this. My father, who was just 17, was wounded in one of the first tanks during the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. He had been in the Royal Engineers, but decided to transfer to the Tank Corps. He spent a long time in a field hospital but, unlike so many others, he did survive to live until he was 80. Looking at the Weeping Window, I remember him and all the poor boys who were not so lucky as him. I think it is a wonderful tribute."

Margaret Henderson, Blairgowrie

This Weeping Window in Perth is quite magnificent, especially against the backdrop of Balhousie Castle, and a fitting tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the First World War.

Pete Wishart, MP for Perth and North Perthshire



Visitors came from around the World (This map may possibly have one or two random red dots placed by imaginative children!)

"Friends of ours came up to Perth a couple of weeks ago, visited the Weeping Window, and told us we just had to come and see them. I can see why...they are just beautiful. My grandfather served in the First World War. Like a lot of others, he lied about his age - he was either 14 or 15 - when he managed to join up. Like me, he was quite small, but so were lots of West of Scotland men in those days so he obviously managed to persuade the recruiting sergeant that he was eligible to sign on. He was captured on the Somme in 1916 and spent a couple of years in a German POW camp. But he survived and lived into his 70s. The Weeping Window is a wonderful tribute to those who fought and died during 1914-1918."

John's father served as a rear gunner in Liberator bombers in the Far East during World War Two.

John Evitt, Falkirk



Where from around the United Kingdom our visitors came

Heather is a Poppy lover, and for some time now, she has added one next to her signature whenever she writes a letter to a friend. She also has a poppy collection at home, including one from the London display. *"I loved the Weeping Window....it was really beautiful...and I was so pleased to be able to go into the craft room at the Castle to make my own. I left it on the display with my own little message."*

Heather Pollock (12), Rosyth



The Memorial Wall

Although The Black Watch Castle and Museum has been host to the Poppies: Weeping Window sculpture, one of the nation's most poignant memorials marking the centenary of WWI, this has in no way detracted from the Regiment's own commemoration of those of The Black Watch who fell. Over the last year we have remembered, on the centenary of their death, every Black Watch man who lost his life fighting in WWI by placing a cross with their name on it on our Memorial Wall in the grounds of the Museum. At these commemoration services we have been joined by family members, Black Watch Association veterans and members of the public who have come to remember those that gave so much. On some days hundreds of crosses have been placed, on others just one or two, every one representing a husband, father or son. During the closing ceremony for the Poppies: Weeping Window, we remembered the centenary of the death of Captain William Stewart of Ardvorlich and 50 fellow Black Watch men who died fighting at The Somme on 25th September 1916. In the WWI room in the Museum hangs a picture of Captain Stewart wearing his Black Watch kilt, which lies in a glass case below his picture still with the mud from the Somme splattered across it. Captain Stewart's nephew and niece joined us on the day to remember all of those men that laid down their lives 100 years before. The commemorations will continue to be held in the grounds of the museum until we have remembered the centenary of the death of all those of The Black Watch that died.



Captain Stewart's Kilt



Black Watch Association members placing crosses on The Memorial Wall



Capt Stewart's grandson reading at the Memorial service, at the closing of The Poppies: Weeping Window exhibition

The Black Watch Castle and Museum achieves Investing in Volunteers Award

The Castle and Museum have an amazing team of 55 volunteers, who give their time, knowledge and skills in a variety of roles across the departments. It is important to ensure the organisation has the necessary supporting framework, through policies and staff guidance to assist volunteers to get the most from their experience and for the Museum to fully benefit from the time they give.

In January the Castle's volunteer programme achieved national recognition for the management of their volunteer programme, the Investing in Volunteers Award. Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. The award is recognised as a benchmark of the quality of volunteer management and involvement, it enables organisations to prove and improve the effectiveness of their work with volunteers and enhance the organisation's reputation.

Anne Hislop, Manager from Investing in Volunteers Scotland visited the castle to present the team with their well-earned Award. Anne Hislop explains "All organisations achieving Investing in Volunteers must be able to demonstrate that they value their volunteers and have committed time and effort to ensure that volunteers are managed appropriately in line with best practice principles. The assessor was impressed by the care taken by staff to ensure that volunteers have a good experience, and heard direct evidence of this from volunteers. Volunteer Scotland would like to congratulate The Black Watch Castle and Museum for meeting the standard and achieving IiV."

Anne Kinnes, Castle and Museum C.E.O tells us, "We are delighted to have achieved this award; the volunteers are a valuable part of our organisation. Our volunteer manager Shonagh Lowerson-Head helps to ensure that we provide a strong supporting structure so that our volunteers, staff and visitors have a great experience. As part of the Black Watch team their contribution helps to support our organisation to deliver world class service to all our visitors'.



Anne Hislop, presenting the Investing in Volunteers Award to Anne Kinnes



Last of the Tide - Portraits of D-Day Veterans

The Museum team has been particularly delighted to have had the opportunity to exhibit "The Last of the Tide" portraits of veterans of D-Day, commissioned by HRH The Duke of Rothesay following his attendance at the 70th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy in 2014. This exhibition was of particular interest to the Museum as it included paintings of Tom Renouf and Brian Stewart, both of whom served with Black Watch-affiliated regiments. In commissioning the paintings, the Duke of Rothesay had wanted to capture the spirit, resolve, warmth and humanity of these remarkable men. "It seemed to me a tragedy that there were no portraits of D-Day veterans, hence this collection of remarkable old soldiers from the regiments of which my wife and I are Colonel or Colonel-in-Chief". Twelve leading painters were selected for the commission, amongst them were Jonathan Yeo, James Lloyd and Stuart Pearson Wright. The portraits pay tribute to some of the extraordinary men that played a role in the Allied invasion of Normandy and guarantee that an artistic record endures of those who fought in the Second World War campaign. The paintings were commissioned just in time; sadly Brian Stewart died in Aug 2015 and Tom Renouf in May 2016.

While the portraits of the 12 D-Day veterans were on display at the museum, The Friends welcomed Deborah Clarke, of the Royal Collection Trust, who gave an extremely interesting lecture on the background to the commissioning of the portraits. Deborah examined the role the veterans played in D-Day and discussed how the 12 different artists created these paintings and how they pay tribute to these extraordinary men. The paintings were on display in the Wavell Room where visitors had the chance to view them as part of the daily tours of the museum.



Captain Brian Stewart



Lt Tom Renouf

First World War Replica Trench

This autumn a very exciting project will be taking place in the grounds of The Black Watch Castle and Museum. A full-size replica of a section of First World War trench is to be installed, above ground and overlooking the North Inch. Construction is due to be completed by 1st December and the trench will remain at the castle for the remainder of the centenary and beyond.

The trench system is provided by Trenches for Teachers, a company specialising in providing reproduction trench systems and resources for schools. Designed to provide visitors with an atmospheric, thought-provoking understanding of the conditions experienced by soldiers on the battlefields, Trenches for Teachers aim to create a modern and accessible interpretation of trench life during the First World War.

The trench will form a central part of our learning offer for visiting school groups studying the First World War, as well as for other visiting groups with an interest in the First World War.

The trench will also be incorporated into our events programme, engaging a wide range of audiences with the experiences of soldiers in the First World War. If you would like to bring your children, grandchildren or their friends to visit the trench please book onto one of our family events. You will find the details on the website at www.theblackwatch.co.uk.



Replica First World War trench



A very unusual artifact

By Richard MacKenzie

Every now and again at the Black Watch Castle and Museum an object is donated which takes the collective breath of the collection's team away. This recently happened when the museum was contacted by a lady wishing to know if we would be interested in a wooden cross she had in her garage. On further investigation the item she was talking about turned out to be the original grave marker of S/43045 Private J Nairn of the 14th Battalion Black Watch, killed in action on the 10th September 1918, just 54 days before the ceasefire, which started the official end of the First World War.

James Nairn, the son of Andrew and Margaret Nairn, who lived in Sawmills Cottage, Blair Atholl, initially enrolled in the 6th Battalion Black Watch, and was given the army number 3399. He was posted to France on the 29th August 1915 and continued to serve with the 6th until, most likely, his wounding on the 20th March 1916. After recovering he was posted to the 8th Battalion, most likely because the 6th were up to full strength, and was again wounded on the 29th January 1917, after which he appears to have been posted to the 14th Battalion.

Already a veteran of three years on the Western Front Private Nairn was to see his last action on the 9th September 1918, when his battalion attacked the German trenches on the Ronssoy Basee Boulogne Ridge. This high ground totally dominated the local area and allowed the Germans to target the British lines very effectively. This, combined with the poor nature of our trenches, as well as a concentration of enemy snipers, meant that this was a very dangerous sector for the British.

The attack was set for early in the morning of the 9th but confusion over orders meant that it was delayed. Furthermore the artillery barrage which would assist the attack had to be postponed, but news of this never reached the Battalion. As a consequence the men of the 14th, some 400 in total, along with other battalions attacked the ridge line with no preliminary bombardment to soften up the defences. The result was disaster. C Company, along with soldiers from the Somerset Light Infantry, managed to creep up to the German lines, and began to cut the wire. At this point though they were seen and the Germans opened up a murderous rifle fire, C Company, and its supporting B Company, found themselves virtually surrounded and facing annihilation. Ordered to retire they fought desperately to disentangle themselves from the German defenders. Eventually managing this they got back to their own lines, but were shocked to find that of the original attackers, fewer than a quarter had returned.

The tragedy for Private Nairn was that he survived this attack but was killed the next day, when his battalion were being reformed in the village of Longavesnes behind the lines. This was a fate suffered by many during the First World War, and the reasons for the death can range from artillery shelling to grenade accidents, indeed this writer knows of one soldier who was kicked to death by a mule whilst in a rest area.

Having died in an area behind the lines, Private Nairn was given a burial with full military honours, and the cross, still displaying damage on top from where it was hammered into the ground, which the museum is now the proud owner of, was placed on the grave. Following the war's end the Commonwealth War Graves Commission moved his body to the St Emile Valley Cemetery, Villers-Faucon, where he was reinterred. Following his move, the original cross, with its simple metal plaque recording his name, battalion and army number, was offered to his family, from whom, a hundred years later it was donated to this museum. Because of the passage of time these original crosses became more and more rare and this donation is the first of its kind in the history of the museum. As a consequence it is hoped to be able to put the cross, along with the story of Private Nairn on display in the museum's temporary exhibition gallery.



Wooden WWI Cross

My favorite museum artifact

By Hugh Rose

Perhaps unsurprisingly, my favourite artefact in The Black Watch Museum is that associated with my own Regimental service. It comprises a photograph of myself and 3 members of my platoon digging beside a road and the small pieces of chopped-up metal rods and bolts which we recovered. These metal shards are pieces of home-made shrapnel which were fired from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at a Black Watch Mortar Platoon patrol on the Moy Road just outside Armagh City during our 1971 Northern Ireland tour.

At dusk, two un-armoured Land Rovers were returning to Gough Barracks (our Armagh base) after carrying out a low-level surveillance patrol and routine vehicle checks. At that point the Moy Road is higher than the surrounding countryside: the nearest cover was a line of trees two hundred metres away across a rough grass field and there were factory buildings on the other side of the road also set well back from the verge.

The vehicles were moving fairly fast about 50 metres apart when suddenly there was a bright flash and loud bang but what I mainly remember was the wave of heat which engulfed us. Pte Murray, my driver, asked if we had had a blowout! My response that it was a bomb was quite unprintable and delivered from the footwell of the vehicle as I cocked my pistol! As we had practiced, the vehicles skidded to a stop 50m beyond the ambush killing area and everyone 'debussed' cocking our weapons and ready to return enemy fire but none came.

A quick check revealed no casualties - the only damage was one vehicle had suffered a broken side window. I sent a contact report to the Ops Room requesting the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) before I carefully approached a small, smoking crater on the side of the road. Light was fading fast but we could see a surface-laid command wire leading back into the trees. I considered an immediate follow-up along the wire but decided against because it would have been hard to detect any trip wire or booby trap in the failing light. Instead I asked that the QRF flood the area of the town behind the trees (known as the Shambles) to stop and question any likely suspects. They found nothing and there was nothing more that we could do on-site, so we all returned to camp. It was a bit of an anticlimax really but as I climbed into bed that night, I remember the realisation that:

"Tonight someone actually seriously tried to kill us!"

Early the next day we returned to the bomb site with a Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) Scene of Crime Officer (SOCO) but forensic investigations during the Northern Ireland conflict were rudimentary at best. The police took away the command wire in a large and untidy bundle but it was left up to us to try to work out how the bomb was designed and placed. It appeared to have been a 'claymore' type of mine. A layer of home-made shrapnel was placed in front of a sheet of high explosive (gelignite from the smell) probably backed to reflect the charge by a solid metal sheet which we never found. The roadside fence had been splintered but other fragments of wood suggested the bomb may have been contained in a wooden box. The bombers had probably climbed up the embankment to place the bomb on the side of the road without being seen, leaning it against a fence post beside the pavement. This was lucky because the concrete paving had trapped all the lower projectiles and the upper ones had flown right over our vehicles damaging the factory roof 200 metres away on the other side of the road. The photograph shows Cpl A Crawford, Sgt Davey Mclure and myself digging up the shrapnel with Pte Davey Wotherspoon (whose rifle always seemed to be bigger than himself) who was acting as my bodyguard.



Major Rose and members of the company looking for shrapnel

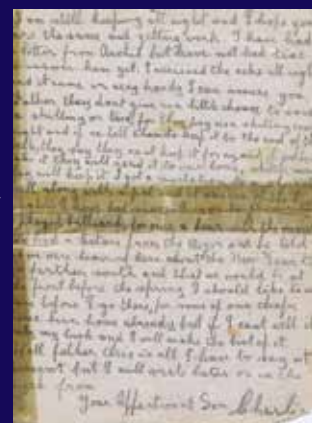


Transcription

The transcription of letters and diaries in the museum is an ongoing project which has kept some of the volunteers busy for years, and will do for many more to come. Below is one of the many letters that has been transcribed this year along with an image of the original letter.

I am still keeping alright and I hope you are the same and getting work. I have had a letter from Archie but have not had time to answer him yet. I received the cake alright and it came in very handy I can assure you. Father they dont give us a little chance to save a shilling or two, for they pay us a shilling every night and if we tell them to keep it to the end of the week, they say they cant keep it for us, and if we dont take it they will sent it to our home, which means they will keep it. I got an invitation to a church hall along with a pal and it was one of the best nights I have had since [.....] I played billiards for over a hour with the minister. We had a lecture from the mayor and he told us we were leaving here about the New Year to [...] father south and that we would be at the front before the spring I should like to see home before I go there, for some of our chaps have been home already but if I cant well its only my luck and I will make the best of it. Well father this is all I have to say at present but I will write later on in the week from

Your affectionate son Charlie



Special Exhibitions

The special exhibitions have taken the theme of Remembrance and Reflection this year. Each in their own way making us think of those that served and those that did not come back.

'Season's Greetings' opened at the end of last year and as we all prepared for Christmas with our families it was apt that we should give thought, during the Centenary of the First World War, to those that had been far from home on the Western Front at that special time. The exhibition not only displayed some of the very precious artifacts from the museum's WW1 archive but also gave visitors a chance to 'leave a message for a soldier'. Many were written by those that just wanted to remember an ancestor who had served, but one or two were written by children who had a parent currently deployed on operations.

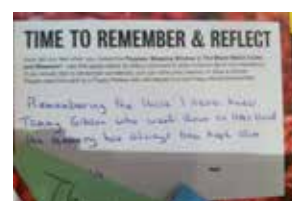
Continuing the theme of Remembrance, 'The Unknown' by Alison Kinnard MBE opened in the Spring. This thought provoking exhibition comprised of 52 glass figures beautifully designed and hand crafted by Alison as her response to war; the conflict in today's world and the memories of past conflicts. The soldiers were arranged in ranks and appeared in uniform, but each was uniquely engraved, each was an individual. Within the installation there were a number of civilian figures who could be seen as the 'collateral damage' of warfare and highlighted the impact of war on us all. The figures were lit with LEDs, which trapped and transmitted the light into each figure. It was a very beautiful and thoughtful art work which I hope you managed to see.



Season Greetings

Come the Summer and Remembrance and Reflection was very much to the fore front of our minds as Poppies: Weeping Window by Paul Cummins artist and Tom Piper designer went on display cascading from a second floor turret window into the grounds of the Museum. The many many visitors created the most significant part of our special exhibition by writing their own messages and pinning them to the wall. Some of those messages were very specifically to a particular family member and others were to all those who fought for us and did not come back.

The Friends are delighted to be able to continue supporting these exhibitions as they are an opportunity to display many wonderful artifacts from the archive that are not normally seen. The exhibitions also ensure that there is an element of change to the Museum on a regular basis.



"unknown"

Next of Kin

On the 11th November 2016 we welcome our newest temporary exhibition Next of Kin. This exhibition is a touring project from the National Museums of Scotland and it plays a significant part of the commemoration events of the First World War. Next of Kin began at the National War Museum before travelling on to several other venues and finally coming to both The Black Watch Castle and Museum and Perth Museum and Art Gallery in November.

Each venue will explore its own collection of keepsakes, kept by the families of those who served during the First World War. The impact of the First World War was felt by every community across Scotland. For families experiencing the hardship of loss, many coped by collecting and cherishing the souvenirs of their loved ones, such as medals, letters and photographs.

The Black Watch Castle and Museum's exhibition will feature a number of keepsakes including items held by the Reid brothers, who both queued together to enlist in Perth to play their part in the war effort. This will also include a framed selection of items kept by the family of James Armstrong who was killed during action at Beaumont Hamel, as well as a letter regarding the last sighting of Matthew Stark during the battle of Loos.

Next of Kin will run in conjunction with Perth Museum and Art Gallery from 11th November 2016 to 6th February 2017.



The Armstrong collection is his set of medals and memorial plaque which was framed by his family and will go out on display for the Next of Kin exhibition



Fighter Writers

The 'Fighter Writers' were a group of highly literate individuals who all worked in the newspaper trade in Dundee before the First World War. With such characters as Joseph Lee, William Linton Andrews and Joseph Gray the Fighter Writers became a prominent voice, not just in Dundee, but nationwide as well. Joining the 4th (City of Dundee) Battalion, Black Watch at the start of the First World War it was not long before vivid, dramatic and often very amusing tales from the frontlines appeared in local papers.

The Fighter Writers found themselves in the thick of the action very quickly, in particular the Battle of Loos 25th September to the 13th October 1915. On the first day of this fight the 4th Battalion went over the top with 443 men, at the end of the day there were 194 left. This day did not see the last of the fighting for the group for many of them went on to see the war's end.

Joseph Lee, described nowadays as Scotland's forgotten war poet, and once acclaimed alongside Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon as amongst the greatest poets the war produced, was 40 years old when war broke out. Despite his age, and the fact that he suffered from asthma, Lee readily joined up and eventually rose to the rank of Sergeant. Taking a commission in the Kings Royal Rifle Corps he continued to serve until he was captured by the Germans and sent to a PoW camp in Karlsruhe. Lee had two books of poetry published, *Ballads of Battle* and *Work-a-day Warriors*, both of which were highly thought of in Britain and America.

At the end of the war he got married to Miss Dorothy Barrie, a famous viola player and became the sub editor of the News Chronicle. He retired back home to Dundee in 1944 and died there five years later.

This special exhibition, featuring Joseph Lee, will run from February – May 2017



'Piou Piou' by Joseph Lee is one of his sketches which we have in our collection and will go out on display for that exhibition.

Festival of Museums

By Shonagh Lowerson-Head

On a sunny Saturday in May the newest recruits to The Black Watch Castle and Museum began to arrive. Greeted by the recruitment officers they gave their details and received their red hackles. As the day went on they prepared themselves for service in the First World War. Soon the cries of the drill sergeant putting our young soldiers through their paces could be heard ringing out.

Festival of Museums is an annual event for museums across Scotland to do something a bit different and help bring their collections alive for their visitors. This year the Black Watch Castle and Museum hosted a First World War recruiting event and the day was filled with a whole host of activities.

The Scottish Military Vehicle Group brought along a Ford Model T, which was of great interest to visitors both young and old. Some lucky recruits were even given the opportunity to sit behind the wheel.

The Great War Boys, a group of enthusiastic reenactors were on hand to put our young soldiers through their paces, drilling them in all the essential skills for the front.

To enhance their skills we also had grenade training (beanbag throwing to the uninitiated). Despite their best efforts poor aim was bound to lead to the odd casualty of war.

Luckily our First World War nurse was on hand to patch them up and share her own tales of horrors from the front.

However, leaving for war was not just about the military training. Visitors explored the museum with our special trail, collecting all the uniform and equipment they would need before setting out to France.

Those left at home were not to be forgotten as keepsakes could be made. All smart in their uniforms our young soldiers and nurses could have a black and white photograph taken and make a decorative silver frame to take away with them.

A great deal of fun was had by all. And we are very much looking forward to Festival of Museums 2017 already!



Experience The Home of The Black Watch

The Wavell Room

Named in memory of Field Marshall Sir Archibald Wavell, our redeveloped Wavell Room offers superior meeting facilities within the inspired surroundings of Balhousie Castle. Our antique boardroom table can seat up to 12 people. We have combined traditional with contemporary using the fabric of The Black Watch Officers' tweed for our soft furnishing to complement the modern Wi-Fi and audio visual equipment. Our ideal location, close to the city centre, hosts free parking. The Wavell Room is the perfect venue for team building, board meetings and training days.

We have a range of dining options available including a buffet lunch or dining in our award winning café.

All groups will be offered a complimentary tour of The Black Museum to be taken at a time of your choice; the perfect way to end your day.



Exclusive Use of Balhousie Castle

Host a truly unique evening with exclusive use of the historic Balhousie Castle and the iconic Black Watch Museum. Behind the closed Castle doors you can enjoy a drinks and canape reception, followed by dinner with a bespoke menu specially created for your party. Dinners can be enjoyed in the Wavell Room or in the stunning Empire Gallery. Prices start from £65 per head.

Choose to entertain with a difference.

To book or request more details please contact Alastair McFarlane 01738 638152 Ex 204 | manager@theblackwatch.co.uk



Gift Shop

The Castle Gift Shop enjoyed playing its part in welcoming all 120,343 visitors to the Castle and Museum this summer. The selection of poppy products available proved popular, a particular favourite being the poppy scarves. The scarves and other poppy items will continue to be available in the newly created poppy corner.

The gift shop has recently developed its range to include quality retro toys, a larger selection of children's pocket money toys, children's gifts, homeware and gifts to give. There is a great selection of food and beverages sourced from renowned Scottish suppliers such as Edinburgh Gin and Demijohn.

Remember to join the gift shop team at the exclusive Friends Christmas shopping evening on 29th November, 6pm. Enjoy mince pies with freshly brewed tea or coffee and the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win a selected gift.

www.theblackwatch.co.uk/shop



EXPERIENCE THE HOME OF THE BLACK WATCH

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Castle | Shop | Museum | Cafe

TO BOOK OR REQUEST MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT

Alastair McFarlane 01738 638152 Ex 204 | manager@theblackwatch.co.uk

www.theblackwatch.co.uk



The Black Watch Castle & Museum, Balhousie Castle, Hay Street, Perth, Scotland PH1 5HR

T: 01738 638152 | www.theblackwatch.co.uk

