



Scottish Charity

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Friends'
Chairman
John Allan



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BYDAND

FRIENDS OF THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

On Target

While there is good reason for congratulation, Bryan does not intend the team should rest on its laurels.

"We need to future-proof the museum," he said. "It must become completely sustainable and able to meet any slump wherever it may come from. We intend to be prepared to safeguard the future and make ourselves more resilient to ensure all our resources are in place."

A new Forward Plan is currently under consideration. The existing plan was launched in 2015 to cover the museum's development over the succeeding five years. All was proceeding well until the oil bust and a major re-think was needed to cope.

"We are now in a better place", Bryan said. "We are in consultation with all our stakeholders and we are setting up a new communications structure in order to be fully prepared to meet eventualities. A new website will be launched towards the end of April as part of the general upgrade."

Determination to learn from the consequences of the oil down-turn is very apparent at Viewfield, down to the last detail. A new coffee machine has been established in the Duchess Jean Tearoom to ensure the museum produces the best taste in town!

The ambitious target of raising £300,00 in three years to ensure the survival of the museum in the wake of the disastrous downturn in the North East's oil industry, has been achieved - in only 18 months.

This remarkable success story pays tribute to the hard work and considerable imagination required of the team, led by chief executive Bryan Snelling, in exploring every possible avenue to raise the necessary capital.

The target was reached on November 10 last year, the day before another significant date!, almost exactly a year and a half after the launch in May, 2017.

MOMENTOUS BRIDGE

The bridge where The Gordon Highlanders ceremoniously lost their individuality and amalgamated with the Queen's Own Highlanders in 1994, is under threat. The 200-year-old structure over the Spey at Craigellachie is in dire need of restoration. Its steel is rusting and engineers fear for loosening stonework which would threaten its future well-being.

Chartered civil engineer John Stewart has called for a crowd-funding exercise to raise £2 million to fund the refurbishment, saying the structure would become a pile of scrap metal without attention.

The Gordons and the Queens Own met in the middle of the historic bridge almost 25 years ago to signal the end of their long histories as famous and individual regiments, an action much regretted by both.

A category 'A' listed structure, Craigellachie Bridge was designed by the outstanding engineer Thomas Telford and completed in 1814. Now only used as a footbridge, it is a much photographed single arch, the oldest of its kind in Scotland.

The cost, in the early 19th century, was £8000, all raised by public subscription - the crowd-funding of its time!



Museum Loss

The sudden and unexpected death of museum Front of House Manager Monika Zajkowska while on maternity leave has shocked the staff and volunteers at the museum.

The lady with the big personality died in her native Poland after a short illness at the beginning of the year.

A memorial book and collection was opened in her honour at the museum, in which friends and admirers were able to express their regrets. The book is being handed over to Monika's partner Piotr and daughter Ania. Chief executive Bryan Snelling hoped the book would bring comfort for the family in the years to come.

The post of front of house manager was taken over by museum caterer Antonella Gatto but she too has departed on maternity leave and her place has been temporarily taken by Jiraporn Dawson, seen in our pic with tearoom volunteer Zoe Fisher.

Jiraporn has much experience in the catering trade having until recently owned and run the popular Pavilion Cafe on Aberdeen's Beach Esplanade. She is also a qualified chef.

Gordon Rugby



The stag emblem may be familiar although not quite what Gordon Highlanders are accustomed to. But it is certainly a popular representation Down Under. Yes, the stag has the same vital significance in Sydney, Australia, but for different reasons.



It is the recognisable face of Gordon Rugby - The Highlanders, a highly successful amateur club formed originally 84 years ago although the association with the Gordons did not begin until 1948, revealing very strong post WW2 Scottish influence among the club's membership.

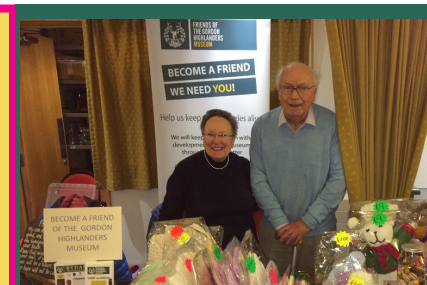
Today, Gordon Rugby with their shirts in the familiar green and yellow has several teams

playing in various leagues and has produced players who have achieved highest honours by their selection for the national side.

The club's song would be familiar to all Gordons - 'A Gordon for Me' in all its original words apart from mentioning inferior local Sydney sides. The club has also a strong Friends organisation - the Fogs!

QUIZ NIGHT

The Friends Quiz evening at Aberdeen's Ashvale Restaurant has become so popular that a limit of 100 tickets has been imposed for this year's event on Tuesday, September 24. The cost, **£12 per person**, includes a fish, scampi and chicken supper with a vegetarian option. The rule of a maximum of **six member in a team** will be strictly observed following complaints that some teams had as many as nine or ten, affording much extra brain power! A raffle with many diverse prizes will be held. **Tickets from Tom McKenzie Tel. 01224 316310** - first come, first served.



Members of the Friends council, chairman **John Allan** and secretary **Mrs Dorothy Fraser**, spent a profitable day selling craftwork at the museum's **Xmas Fayre** over the festive period. All went well and the Friends table raised **£146** for museum funds.

XMAS FAYRE

The first day on the parade ground was likened to an introduction to purgatory for many thousands of young men called up to fulfil their National Service obligations.

Dragged from the comfort of their homes, perhaps not many days out of their final year at school and certainly due to face the longest absence from mum's apron strings, the future in service life was almost impossible to bear.

"It was a chance to do something else, I suppose. I was lucky in as much, when I signed on I then went to Germany, then from Germany we came back here to Edinburgh, on a voyage to Mombasa to East Africa, to Zanzibar. I would never ever have thought that, that would have happened. So, I was probably lucky, but there were those who never left the UK, it was just your luck."

Mike Taylor
National Servicemen, The Gordon Highlanders

Mike Taylor

But in most cases, the pain was not prolonged. All were in the same boat and camaraderie kicked in and by the time demob loomed, regret at facing life in civvy street was common.

The end of WW2 brought an end to conflict, so many people thought. Not for many National Servicemen. From 1948 to 1961, all males



National Service Memories Board

aged 18 were liable to be called up and with the UK's international commitments the risks of being involved in an active way were still pertinent.

Many conscripts served in trouble spots, in Germany, the middle East and elsewhere where the deep mistrust of the Communists existed. The Regular Army did not have the resources to meet these commitments so National Servicemen were asked to fill the gaps.

By the time the last National Service man left for home in 1963, 2.5 million of his contemporaries had served their country. In the early years, conscripts served for 18

months but this was later extended to two years. Many spent their time in comparative ease and safety. For others who served in the trouble spots, the threat of death or injury was never far away Some did die.

Gordon Highlanders served in Malaya, Cyprus and Kenya among other postings. The museum's main exhibition tells their story. Among the volunteer guides at the museum are those who served their time as National Servicemen and will be on hand to add their personal experiences.

Preparing for riot drill, Cyprus 26 November 1955



Hopefully these Primary 6 pupils from Cults School will never face National Service! But all were most interested in what National Service was all about. Under instruction by Lewis Gibbon of the museum's Learning Department, the youngsters with teacher Mrs Alison Stewart discovered the principles of why The Gordon Highlanders were required to serve in so many different theatres of conflict.



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NATIONAL SERVICE ?

NEW UNIFORM



If the pupils attending courses at the museum appear remarkably well-dressed in uniform jackets and glengarrys it's thanks in no small measure to the Friends. The council agreed to finance the purchase of 90 trench jackets and caps as part of their policy of supporting the museum's educational efforts. There are now sufficient to dress a whole class of youngsters learning of the significance of the trench area in WW1. They now appear very smart and soldier like indeed!



TRENCH TALK



Spending time in a trench was never popular with The Gordon Highlanders who fought in the First World War. But for visitors to the regimental museum, a tour of the new trench feature has been a winner!

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The idea of creating the trench came after chief executive Bryan Snelling and curator Ruth Duncan visited other military museums around the country and were intrigued by the replica WW1 trench at the Staffordshire Regimental Museum in Lichfield. They decided that such a feature would create an additional attraction and remarkable remembrance at Viewfield.

The Moffat trench which has been a key factor has been named after a Gordon Highlander, Colonel Frank Moffat whose actions during the Battle of Ypres with the 8th/10th Battalion in August, 1917, earned him the DSO. He survived the war and his daughter, Dr Margaret Moffat served for many years as a volunteer at the museum.

With Graeme Dey, MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, Dr Moffat performed the official launch of both the Moffat Trench and the new exhibition on National Service.

ENTENTE CORDIALE

As the First World War drew to a close, a fierce and deadly battle in northern France still demanded much of the Allied forces.



Famars Communal Cemetery Extension

Towards the end of October 1918, the 51st Highland Division, included men of the 4th and 6th Gordon Highlanders, was heavily involved in clearing the town of Famars of the occupying forces on the way to recapturing the town of Valenciennes. It proved a see-saw battle with the Gordons playing a vital role in the eventual success.

One of the heroes of the conflict was Lt Philip of the 4th Gordons who had already won a Military Medal and because of his actions at Famars was awarded a bar to his MC.

Almost 100 years on, Lt Philip's grandson Mr Peter Rockwell, Aberdeen, who had inherited his medals, was curious to find out what his ancestor had done to earn them. He approached The Gordon Highlanders Museum research department and discovered the Famars connection. In 2014, he visited the area with a friend and saw the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery where Gordons who died in the Famars battle were buried. Mr Rockwell left a copy of the appropriate pages of the Gordon Highlanders War Diaries with a contact number.

About a year later, he received a communication from Mr Szevo of the Circle Historique de Famars who subsequently visited the museum twice, lately in October last year - the centenary of the liberation of Famars.

As a result of the visits, Mr Rockwell and his wife and sister, Mrs Anne Alan, were invited to visit Famars to mark the end of hostilities in Europe. It proved an unforgettable experience.

Mr Rockwell was honoured by being asked to take part in the celebrations by helping the Mayor Famars to unveil a new memorial to the 51st Highland Division and the party from Aberdeen was fete on several different occasions.

Said Mr Rockwell, The three of us had a wonderful time in Famars and remain truly grateful to the Mayor and the citizens for sharing their centenary celebrations with us."

He was very much aware of the enduring gratitude of the people of Famars for what the Scots had done for them in WW1 and of the entente cordiale between the two nations there was no doubt at all.

William Philip, known as "Paddy, joined the 4th Battalion as a private and was seconded to sniper duties because he was a crack shot. He was promoted to Lieutenant and returned to France in 1939 as Colonel of the 4th Battalion.

Friends Evening

Sweet music will be in the air at the museum on **May 14th** when the traditional Friends' evening entertainment gets under way. The stars of the evening will be the **Bel Canto Singers** whose reputation for the finest music precedes them. A raffle will include an attractive range of prizes. **Tickets, price £10**, are available from Friends secretary **Mrs Dorothy Fraser, Tel 01224 317338 or e.mail ghmfriends07@gmail.com**.

RECORDS IN SKETCH



These sketches were drawn by Frederick Arthur Farrell, who was born in Glasgow in 1882, the youngest son of John Farrell, a Trades House Officer, and Margaret Farrell, of 85 Glassford Street, Glasgow.

His siblings were Mary, Richard, Thomas and Jessie.

He was a self-taught etcher and water colourist of portraits and topographical subjects which were exhibited widely, including the Royal Academy and Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts. As an etcher he was greatly influenced both stylistically and with advice by Muirhead Bone. Prior to this he studied civil engineering in London. Many are 'Blindstamped' with the Fine Art Trade Guild blind stamp and signed in pencil. Farrell was the Official Artist with the 51st Highlanders from 1914 to 1918.

GIFT AID

Many of our tax paying Friends have taken advantage of the Gift Aid system offered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs when paying their annual fees to the Friends of The Gordon Highlanders Museum, a registered charity. This enables the council to reclaim 25% of the payment at no extra charge to the members.

Although not all of our members may not be taxpayers the majority will be and there are many who do not take advantage of the Gift Aid system. It would be to the Friends considerable advantage and thus to the ultimate benefit of the museum if every tax-paying member did register.

The council would also ask members who pay their fees by standing order to ensure they change the orders in line with the increased prices announced in the Bydand of autumn last year and which came into force on January 1 this year.

PERSONAL DATA

The majority of Friends have dutifully registered their acknowledgement of the requirements of the new Data Protection Act and returned their views to the council. A number have yet to do so. It is essential, however, that permission is granted to use personal details held by the council to enable communications to be sent out to members, including the distribution of the Bydand newsletter. We would ask those yet to reply to do so at their earliest convenience.

