



Museum of the Manchester Regiment

NEWSLETTER – November 2011

Introduction

It has been an incredibly busy time here in the Museum since the time of the last newsletter, in April 2010. We hope that this edition of the newsletter will give you some insight into what the team in the Museum have been doing over that time.

Exhibitions

The previous special exhibition *Cadets* (Jan - June 2011) demonstrated well the core reason for the ongoing special exhibition programme which is to collect material on, and promote a specific lesser-known aspect of the Regimental story as well as building new relationships with members of the community and the Regimental Family.

The current special exhibition *Stitch in Time* (June - Dec. 2011) is the Museum's first community exhibition. It celebrates the work done by members of the Museums NEW sewing circle *Stitch in Time* and how the embroideries and other textiles in the collection have inspired the work of the group over the past few months. The focus of the exhibition being a 'Colour for Tameside', inspired by the Regimental Colours within the collection.

Evening Lectures - FREE

The Evening Lecture Programme has been going from strength to strength, with over 100 people attending the talks in 2010 and 56 attendees during the shorter 2011 series, many being first time visitors to the Museum.



Loan Boxes

We have created 4 new school loan boxes on the themes of Remembrance, First World War, Soldiers' Souvenirs and National Service. These have been used many times by community groups for reminiscence sessions and by schools in the teaching of the national curriculum. Anyone interested in borrowing one of these boxes should contact the Curator for more information.



Discovery Day

The 2010 *Discovery Day* was held in the Museum of the Manchester Regiment and Setantii on 4th August 2010 (2266 visits to the town hall sites on the day) and the 2011 *Discovery Day* was held on 3rd August 2011 (1706 visits to the town hall sites on the day).

'Brasso, Blanco and Bull'

We have created a new facilitated educational session entitled '*Brasso, Blanco and Bull*'. The session (1-2 hours long) led by our costumed living history expert "Corporal Cook" brings this period of history back to life. This hands-on session gives participants a flavour of army national service during the 1950's, from being "Called-Up", through "The Medical" and "Basic Training" at Ladysmith Barracks. Participants get a chance to handle period objects and try on period uniform and equipment.

This dynamic and engaging session also enables participants to meet with a local Manchester Regiment National Service Veteran, Mr Tom Boardman. This opportunity for intergenerational discussion is stimulated by an activity making a 'Basha' or tent by participants, led by Tom – developing communication skills and team working abilities.

Meet Tommy Atkins

The 'Meet Tommy Atkins' drop-in sessions during school holidays 11am-3pm. (Wednesdays) have a growing following. Why not pop along and have a chat with Tommy yourself.



New Gifts to the Collection

The Museum continues to receive new and exciting objects into the collection. These have recently included a large collection of Regimental Silver, the medals of Lt. Col. Robert 'Rex' King-Clark MC and uniform work by Kingsman Ben Holland of the 1st Battalion during his tour of Afghanistan in 2010.



Grants

£1000 was received from the Army Museums Ogilby Trust (AMOT) which contributed to the creation and installation of a range of audio-visual improvements in the museum.

£1000 was awarded to us from the Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund to help towards a range of conservation/display work and oral history programme expenses.

£400 was awarded by the Daphne Bullard Trust to help cover the costs of conserving 2 hand-crafted Victorian Regimental embroideries, which inspired the *Stitch in Time* group.

£53,031.00 was gained from the Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund for an 18 month project entitled 'Man behind the medals' which will see the creation of the Museum's first medal catalogue and on-line searchable database of men for whom we hold medals. This will encompass a quarter of the collection (c.2200 objects) covering 750+ men.

Website

Between April 2010 and November 2011 there were 73,499 hits to the web pages. This includes 48,057 unique visitors to our webpages.

Stitch in Time

The newly created *Stitch in Time* group (sewing circle) meets twice monthly in the Museum and has received international recognition for its work. This includes articles in *Cross Stitcher* and *Cross Stitch Crazy*, including *Club of the Month* in the latter earning a prize of £100.



The Galleries

Work always continues to improve object labelling and case content and layout with 2 new display cases having been installed. One displays a selection of Regimental ceramics and the other a selection of Regimental textiles. The Regimental Silver display has been greatly enhanced by donations from the Regiment.

Audio-visual improvements

Work is now complete on 3 Audio-Visual projects:

- A listening post has been installed in the Forshaw Gallery and clips from the Museum's Oral History programme have been used including clips of Mr Jeremy Farnworth, Mr Tom Boardman, Mr Peter Ashworth and Mr Harry Lowe.
- The Trench has been brought back to life with a new 2 minute audio clip recreating the last few moments before men 'Went over the Top' on the First Day of the Battle of the Somme on the 1st July 1916.
- The 'Video Kiosk' now shows 8 film clips reflecting regimental life between 1934

and 1938. The footage was taken by Lt. Col. Rex King-Clark.

Volunteers

We currently have 6 regular volunteers who help on various projects across the Museum and I would like to thank them all for their hard work over the past several months.

- John Parker continues to input all names in the Post 1958 Regimental Journal into a database. Over 5000 names have been entered to date.
- Shelly Wright, Christopher Jones and Aino Boylan have now completed a 5 year project to make padded garment hangers for supporting the uniform collection in storage (about 300 hangers have now been made). All hung items in storage are now on their own individual hangers. This group of volunteers will soon be moving on to making bespoke padded supports for the headwear on display.
- Karen Woods continues the work on entering all known Regimental gallantry awards/honours winners onto a database. To date over 2200 names and associated information have been entered onto the database.
- Claire Gardner continues to interview veterans as part of the Museum's oral history programme. Her latest interview being with Mr Tom McAlister (siege of Malta veteran).

We continue to offer short term placements to students on formal education courses from



secondary school, through to and including post graduate students.

Between 16th April 2010 and 15th November 2011 the Museum benefitted from the equivalent of 49 weeks of full-time FREE work from 35 separate volunteers.

Penny Press Machine

A new machine was installed in the Ladysmith Gallery in late 2010. The machine essentially takes a 1pence piece and a 50pence piece. It then 'presses' the penny and returns it to the person as a souvenir of their visit to the Museum – the only location in the world where this can be done.

Book Signings

We hosted 4 book signings between February and June 2011. Over 60 people visited the museum for these signings, meeting with the

authors and learning more about the Regiment past and present. For the full list of Regimental Publications available to buy please visit the Museum's website at: www.tameside.gov.uk/museumsgalleries/mom/publications

Heroes Past and Present

On Saturday 26th March 2011 the Museum hosted an event entitled 'Heroes Past and Present'. This is an Oldham based, HLF funded, oral history project to connect the experiences of service veterans with youngsters in a variety of ways. They are working in partnership with the Royal British Legion, Volunteer Centre Tameside and Combat Stress. They brought their partners together for a promotional day in the Museum.

For more information call Garry Smith (0161 342 2254) or Email him at garry.smith1@tameside.gov.uk.