

Friends of Cheshire Military Museum

Spring 2011



Hello to all the Friends of the Cheshire Military Museum.

I hope that you enjoy the Spring 2011 edition.

The last six months have been busy ones at the museum. Here is just a flavour of what has been going on!

If you have any news or other items you would like to include in the next addition please let me know.

Thank you for your continued support which is invaluable to the work of the Museum and I hope to see you soon.

All the Best,

Caroline

Tel : 01244 327617

E-mail :

museum@chester.ac.uk

New Addition

A brand new addition to the museum has been installed in the Great War/ Remembrance gallery. -An amazing Triumph motorcycle with custom paintwork!

The bike was customized in tribute to Corporal Steven Boote of the Royal Military Police

Corporal Boote was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 3 November 2009 in an incident at a police checkpoint in Nad e-Ali. Corporal Nicholas Webster-Smith, also of the Royal Military Police, WO1 (RSM) Darren Chant, Sergeant Matthew Telford and Guardsman James Major from the Grenadier Guards were also killed in the incident.

One of Steven's main

passions in life was motorbikes, which he and his dad spent many hours restoring and building, as well as riding them together. Corporal Boote was a strong character with a good sense of humour



and enjoyed being round his friends and colleagues and was always up for a laugh.

The bike was officially unveiled on 11th March by Major General The Duke of Westminster. Corporal Boote's parents and members of the Royal Military



Police and Royal Welch Fusiliers were present at the event. Those responsible for customising the motorbike and members of the fundraising team were also in attendance.

The event was organised by the owner of the motorbike Mr Rod Simms. Rod has loaned the bike to us on a long-term basis so that it can serve as a lasting tribute to Corporal Boote.

We are very grateful for his generosity and his efforts in organising the unveiling.

Book Launch

Our Archivist Dr Lisa Peters has written a book entitled 'Politics, Publishing and Personalities: Wrexham Newspapers 1848–1914'. It was the first book published by the re-launched University of Chester Press. The official book launch took

place on Wednesday 20th April at The Gladstone Library, Hawarden.

The book is a very interesting read even for those like myself who have limited knowledge of this period of history. Concentrating on the bitter rivalries

between titles and their struggle to survive in a competitive market it is full of interesting tales. A number of little known facts (at least to me) were also highlighted including the existence of a paper tax. The local focus is skillfully placed into a regional

and national context which I found most useful.

I never thought local newspapers could be this interesting!

The book is available online from Amazon (and I am sure all other good bookshops)

Eric Langton (Editor in Chief, Trinity Mirror, Cheshire), Peter Francis (Gladstone's Library warden), Dr Lisa Peters, Emeritus Professor Graham White (University of Chester), Professor Tim Wheeler (Vice Chancellor, University of Chester) pictured at the Book launch.

Photo Kath Skinner



St Georges Day Celebrations

The Museum once again played host to His Majesty's 22nd Foot re-enactment group on St Georges Day.

They marched through the city in the

morning and undertook exercises and firing in the yard during the afternoon. A local cub pack was also invited to the event by the Museum. They enjoyed taking part in the drill,

talking to the re-enactors about the life of a soldier in the 18th Century and looked around the Museum. A good time was had by all with the group returning on the Sunday

to do some more drill! The event also coincided with general festivities in Chester and are own Easter Egg Hunt. So it was definitely a busy weekend for the staff and volunteers on duty.

R e d e v e l o p m e n t o f M u s e u m E n t r a n c e

Those who have not visited the museum for some time may be in for a small surprise! We have recently redeveloped the museum entrance and shop.

It is hoped that the changes will improve the visitor welcome experience and increase sales in the shop. The aim was to make the desk less imposing and its new position directly opposite the entrance door enables staff and volunteers to welcome visitors as soon as they enter the building

In addition the changes have allowed us to add a further two exhibition cases. These

display items of current operational kit which has been donated to the museum by the 1st Battalion Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) and individual donors.

It is hoped that the new displays will fulfill the crucial role of keeping the museum up to date and relevant to both current serving personnel and visitors young and old alike.

Included in the display at present are items of Multi Terrain Pattern camouflage which has replaced Desert and Temperate pattern combat uniforms. Look out also for the Personal Mine

Extraction kit—a vital piece of equipment for those serving in Afghanistan.

The revamp has also given us space for a dressing up box and activity station within the entrance. This will allow us to use more of the handling collection on a day to day basis where those using it can be kept an eye on (and advised!).

The changes may take some time to bed in—so please bear with us while we adjust to them!

S u c c e s s f u l T e m p o r a r y E x h i b i t i o n s

The museum has continued with its volunteer led temporary exhibition programme over the last year. To date we have had three successful displays on topics as varied as the life of a Victorian surgeon, Lt Brockbank's diary and our current offering The Regiment and Royals. Produced by Katie, one of our student volunteers, it is nicely timed to coincide with the Royal Wedding. The display highlights the close association between the Royal Family and

Regiments represented in the museum. In particular the visit of HRH The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall to the museum in 2007 and many ceremonial occasions throughout the years.

At the beginning of June a new temporary display will be installed. Created by two students from the University of Chester undertaking their work placement at the museum this as yet untitled offering will concentrate on the period directly following the end of the Second World

War. It will highlight some of the changes which occurred in Cheshire and throughout the world. I expect the exhibition will be of the usual, high standard and I am looking forward to its completion.

Do come down to see it if you are in Chester!

Looking ahead to 2012 we are still looking to gather information about sporting activities. Let me know if you have any!

News in Brief

Paranormal Activity

During Spring we were visited by Waterloo and Sefton Paranormal Clubs. Both groups spent an enjoyable evening in the museum. They undertook a range of investigations to see whether there was any paranormal activity in the building.

Volunteers and staff also enjoyed their visits too!

Defence Review

We are still waiting for news from the Strategic Defence Review. We will let everyone know when there is any news which affects the Museum.

New Acquisitions

The Museum and archive have continued to add to their collections. In the Museum a number of medal groups have been

donated. In addition two sets of Cheshire Yeomanry medals have arrived on loan. In the near future these will be mounted in the medal drawers by Dave Clark (medals volunteer).

Archives donations have also continued a pace with a nice selection of photographs dating from the Great War, World War Two and Malaya being deposited.

Notices

Lectures and Events

Dr McLay has kindly informed us that there will be another Military Miscellany lecture series in February 2012. Friends of the museum of course are welcome (and indeed encouraged) to attend these lectures. More information regarding dates and times will be circulated at a later date.

In a further development the University and Friends of the Cheshire Military Museum are sponsoring a

lecture linked to the University's Autumn Festival by General Julian Thompson. Again details will follow at a later date.

The Electronic Age!

Those Friends who would like to receive their Newsletter and other information by E-mail are encouraged to send their addresses to me at museum@chester.ac.uk

I will then create a list. This should save us postage and also paper etc. It will also look good on the Environmental Sustainability elements of Accreditation.

Thank You!