

Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum Trust

Newsletter No. 4 Issued May 18th 2002

Chairman: Professor Donald Ritchie FRSE Hon Secretary: Major David Evans TD Hon Curator: Dennis Reeves Esq.

From: Major (retd) IL Riley TD FSA (Scot) - Webmaster/Trustee

Dear Friend of the Liverpool Scottish Museum,

We have been very busy at the new museum premises. Entrance porches, electrics, picture hanging, display cases and all the usual enquiries and visitors occupy the scarce time of volunteers. We note the erection of an English Heritage blue plaque to Captain Noel Chavasse outside the old Bishop's Palace in the University precinct in Liverpool and tell you about the forthcoming visit of the Lord Mayor to the Museum for the rededication of the war memorials. The forthcoming visit to Ieper/Ypres (June 15th/16th/17th 2002) will be the subject of a further newsletter (No 4A) later in May. The official opening is scheduled for September/October 2002; the exact date is to be decided in the near future. The previous newsletter can be seen in the [Archive](#) file.

Contents (click to go):

- [Rededication of the War Memorial by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool - Sunday June 9th 2002](#)
- [Corrections/Omissions: Newsletter No. 3](#)
- [Museum Development - Fabric](#)
- [Museum Development - Display](#)
- [Research/Documentation](#)
 - [Digitisation and Scanning - Fred Craig and Frank McDonald Photos](#)
 - [Research - Ross Family](#)
 - [Research - Scotting Family](#)
 - [Research - Watkinson Family](#)
 - [A Highland Light Infantry Photograph](#)
- [Hooge visit](#)
- [Web Page Development](#)
- [Chavasse Blue Plaque](#)
- ['Bravest of Hearts' - The Liverpool Scottish in the First World War](#)

Rededication of the War Memorial by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool - Sunday June 9th 2002

- Although much remains to be done at the Museum, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool will be rededicating the bronze war memorials which were removed from Forbes House and recently re-installed (after very considerable effort) at Botanic Road. Detail of the memorials (in their previous location at Forbes House) are [here](#)
- **The Liverpool Scottish Regimental Association AGM takes place at 10.30 am. Those who are not members of the LSRA but attending for the dedication only should arrive at 11.30 am and to help with catering arrangements they should notify the Museum Secretary, Major David Evans TD, on 0151 924 7800 or by [e-mail](#) . **Visitors are asked to be in place before the Lord Mayor arrives at 11.50 am.** Proceedings start at 1200. A contribution to the cost of light buffet will be requested from those who are not members of the LSRA. The Museum is located on the corner of Botanic Road and Edge Lane in the old TA Centre. Edge Lane (A 5047) is the main dual carriageway leading from the Rocket Flyover at the end of the M62 towards the city centre. [A map can be seen by clicking here](#). Our green door is immediately next to the Liverpool Scottish Cadet premises.**
- The service will be conducted by the Padre of the Regimental Association, the Rev John Williams, and will feature the replacement





of the illuminated Book of Remembrance (for the First World War) within the memorial. The Chief Executive of Reserve Forces and Cadet Association for the North West of England (Colonel Gerry Wells-Cole), the CO of the King's and Cheshire Regiment (Lt Col Simon Bell), serving soldiers of the Liverpool Scottish element of KCR and of the Liverpool Scottish ACF will be present.

The War Memorials were taken down (and very professionally packed) from Forbes House with considerable help from the staff of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, stored in

Manchester with the help of Major David McNeil, returned from there to Liverpool with the support of Mr. David Cato, and finally re-erected through the good offices of those who had originally dismantled them. All of this has been supervised, organised and monitored by Major David Evans. The intention is that the Museum will be formally opened in September/October 2002

[Return to top of page](#) [Return to front page](#) [Contact the Museum](#)

[Corrections/Omissions to Newsletter 3](#)

- **Julia Carter Preston plaque:** The correct motto of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division was "They win or die who wear the Rose of Lancaster".
- **Sjt CW Ormesher.** We would like to thank Mr. Rob O'Brien for his help in establishing the facts of Sjt. Ormesher's case.

[Return to top of page](#) [Return to front page](#) [Contact the Museum](#)

Museum Development - Fabric

Work on the fabric of the Museum continues and the premises are beginning to look like a museum. Work has been done by a small core of trustees with some professional and volunteer assistance. In the course of this, Ian Riley has been elected as a founder member of the 'Friends of B&Q Warehouses'.



In more detail:

- **Roof:** This has been given serious attention and is now sound. Our chairman, Professor Donald Ritchie and his wife, Jeanne, cleared the roof area of broken glass left by RFCA contactors; I am only sorry that we did not get a photo of the dynamic duo in action with Donald lowering buckets of lethal glass shards by rope to Jeanne standing below in Botanic Road.
- **Ceiling:** An excellent suspended ceiling has been installed and has vastly improved the appearance of the main room and has changed the climate from 'polar' to 'temperate'.



• **Walls:** These have been professionally painted in cherry red. A decision was made to paint directly onto the brickwork and breezeblock and this has proved very successful as a backdrop to our showcases and pictures.

• **Electrics and Lighting:** Frank Dean completed the wiring and we are well provided with power points. Provision is in place for linking showcases to a lighting circuit and in most cases the connection has actually been made. Some showcase lighting needs to be considered for upgrading. We are looking to provide a tracked lighting system in line with the stringent museum conservation requirements that involve control of ultra-violet and visible light intensities. Ian Riley



has been researching this and professional advice has been taken from several sources.

A satisfactory system is liable to cost £3000 and although we can not immediately afford this, we are going to try to put in the infrastructure of suitable low-voltage tracking.

Showcases: The showcases provided an interesting engineering problem to the dedicated trustee team who have erected them. The aluminium showcases were erected but there were serious problems with some doors and their hinges. These were solved by John Archer, a teaching colleague of Ian Riley's, who has given his time very generously to convert the skills of Design Technology and Metalwork (and lots of other areas) into practical help in the Museum. His qualities of ingenuity, resourcefulness and patience together with his quiet determined refusal to be beaten by a problem have been truly invaluable. John Archer was also to the fore in strengthening and refurbishing the walnut showcases which display the best (and very elegant) technology of the early 1900's. These have been refurbished internally whilst the exteriors have responded wonderfully to beeswax polish and a spot of Windowlene. Showcases have been fitted with new baseboards lined with very high quality billiard cloth generously donated by Peter Clare of E.A. Clare and Son, a well-known Liverpool firm.



- **Pipework:** Much of the visible pipework which was surface mounted (making the main room look like the boiler-room of a battleship) has been diverted or concealed. This makes wall displays much easier to arrange. Diversion has been done by Mr. Phil Sutcliffe and his son, John. Concealment has been done by John Archer who has created storage and display space around some of the most obtrusive and immovable pipe work.



- **Vestibule:** We decided to construct a vestibule/entrance porch to provide a small reception area and an intermediate area between the street and the main room for the purposes of insulation, security and atmosphere. This major project has been carried out by John Archer who actually camped out in the museum from Monday to Friday for two weeks in



March. Resupply and logistic support was provided by Ian Riley (who never wants to see a McDonald's quarter-pounder with or without cheese again ever) on a nightly basis . The end result is splendid and provides an excellent home for the wooden Liverpool Scottish war memorial that returned from St. Andrew's Church in Rodney Street when it closed.

- **Building** The main part of the building, the Edge Lane TA Barracks and the gun shed which fronts onto Botanic Road has been taken over by a property developer and businessman who wishes to centralise the various functions of his operations under one (large) roof. He has taken an interest in our work.
- **Future Projects:** We are planning to construct a large built-in display case within an internal wall of the museum.

[Return to top of page](#) [Return to front page](#) [Contact the Museum](#)

Museum Development - Display



- **Displays:** Dennis Reeves has completed a further two cases featuring the Commando period of WW2 and the uniforms of Lt General Sir Colin Barber together with Cameron items. The Forbes Bell showcase and a Pipes and Drums showcase are nearly complete and a start has been made on First World War cases.

- **Pictures:** Important paintings have now been mounted on the walls . What initially seemed a fairly straightforward task was made difficult by the various features that punctuate the Museum walls; engineering skills triumphed again. It is proving difficult to make an appropriate choice of other pictures given the shortage of wall space. However, Messrs Ritchie and Riley are pushing the job along using the technique of screwing a picture to the wall before the Honorary Secretary has a chance to change his mind one has to be VERY quick.

- **War Memorial - Bronze:** This has now been erected with the help of professional experts. The structure was complicated and we needed to exercise extreme care as the WW1 memorial is the work of the well-known sculptor, Herbert Tyson Smith. The plaque below commemorates the dead of WW2. This memorial is to be re-dedicated by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool on 9th June 2002 at the Annual Hooge Day Service of the Liverpool Scottish Regimental Association when the Book of Remembrance will be replaced within the memorial. [See above](#)

- **War Memorial - Wooden:** As mentioned above, the wooden memorial from St. Andrew's Church has been placed in the new vestibule where it immediately sets the scene for visitors to the Museum. The carvings on this memorial seem to indicate that it is also from the studio of H Tyson Smith.



[Return to top of page](#) [Return to front page](#) [Contact the Museum](#)

Research and Documentation

These notes give just a flavour and a sample of the sort of queries that David Evans and Dennis Reeves deal with at the Museum. E-mail queries seem to arrive at the rate of two or three a week (plus telephone and postal queries) and can each take three hours or more to process. It is very rewarding when gratitude is expressed, knowledge is gained or a donation of material or funds is received. The Museum continues to provide a service with no obligation to make a donation when other museums might charge £20 to merely open a record book.

- **Digitisation - Photographs of Fred Craig and Frank McDonald** Ian Riley has been doing pilot work on the scanning of photographic resources (the WW2 photos which Fred Craig has kindly loaned from New Zealand and the photos and maps in the WW1 diary and album of Frank Macdonald). Photos are scanned in small and large format, the reference and a thumbnail embedded in a database and the photos stored on a CD. It is hoped that this will eventually make the Museum's photographic collection more readily accessible to visitors and reduce the wear on original resources.
- **Research - Ross Family** The Rev. Harry Ross, Vicar of St Luke the Evangelist (almost part the Everton Football Club at Goodison Park), has been doing extensive research into the service of his father and two uncles. His son, Philip Ross, has been contributing and, as a byproduct, has produced a large number of Internet reference to the Liverpool Scottish. They have contributed an excellent portfolio of their research to the Museum.
- **Research - Scotting Family** David Scotting, an expatriate from California whose grandfather served in WW1, has taken a great interest in supporting our work and visited the Museum with his father for an al fresco lunch during the early part of the year.
- **Research - Watkinson Family** Carol Williams contacted us from Canada as the grand-daughter of JB Watkinson, a 1914 Mairaner. From the captions in her family records she has provided us with identifications of photographs featuring the machine gun teams and Sjt Ormesher at Hill 60 in 1915. She has very generously sent us some of the original photographs. We have been able to put her in contact with a long lost cousin.
- **HLI Photograph** David Linthicum contacted us from Texas asking if we could identify and find a home for a fine photograph of what appears to be the Sergeants' Mess of a militia battalion of the Highland Light Infantry in 1904. Every man is identified. Negotiations are in progress to find a suitable home for this that will display the photograph in addition to the placing the photographic record in the Museum of the Royal Highland Fusiliers in Glasgow. This may require a visit to Glasgow in the summer.

[Return to top of page](#) [Return to front page](#) [Contact the Museum](#)

Ieper/Hooge Visit (Sjt Ormesher)- June 2002

Arrangements for the Hooge visit are moving forward and will be subject to a special e-mail in the next few weeks

[Return to top of page](#) [Return to front page](#) [Contact the Museum](#)

Web Page Development

- **Newsletter** The Museum's website has now received over 22500 unique visitors over two and a half years who have stayed for over a minute. The on-line illustrated edition of the last newsletter (issued in September) has been visited by about 750 people and circulated to over 300 people via e-mail.
- **The Trench** The Museum website now carries a ['virtual' exhibition](#) of about five or six pages to depict Liverpool Scottish trench life in 1914/15.
 - It uses documentary evidence from Liverpool Scottish sources. We would like to make it suitable for school research. The BBC broadcast a TV series called 'The Trench' during the spring in which a group of Yorkshiremen were taken from the streets of their native town and asked to live out the life of an infantry soldier during the First World War.
 - There was a call from the [24 Hour Museum](#) (a national resource covering 2500 museums large and small) for material to support the BBC programme. Whilst the Imperial War Museum heads the list on the ['Trench' trail](#), slightly lower down it finds itself in the august company of the Liverpool Scottish Museum. Mounting this proved a huge task (a classic example of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread) and is not yet complete, running only to late spring 1915. Notification of further work will appear on future newsletters

[Return to top of page](#)

[Return to front page](#)

[Contact the Museum](#)

Chavasse Blue Plaque



An English Heritage 'Blue Plaque' was placed on the building in Abercromby Square in Liverpool where Captain Noel Chavasse VC and Bar, MC had lived and which had been the Bishop's Palace. Captain Chavasse's father had been Bishop of Liverpool at the time of the First World War. The building now belongs to the University of Liverpool. The plaque was unveiled on November 13th 2001 by his nephew, Captain Edgar Chavasse, who is President of the Liverpool Scottish Officers' Association (*pictured left in camel coat*). Other memorials to Noel Chavasse (including the memorial in the churchyard at Brandhoek near Ypres/Ieper which was place there by the local people in 1998 and has not been previously recorded by the Museum website) can be seen [here](#). *The photograph on the left appears by courtesy of the University of Liverpool*

Explanatory Notes:

- [Captain Noel Chavasse](#) was the medical officer of the 1/10th (Scottish) Battalion of the King's (Liverpool Regiment), generally know as the Liverpool Scottish, and was the only man to win the Victoria Cross (the highest award for gallantry) twice during the First World War. Other memorials can be seen by clicking on the link.
- Blue Plaques: English Heritage commemorates people with Blue Plaques if they have been dead for 20 years or were born more than 100 years previously. They must have a strong reputation and have gained recognition through their life and work. Only one Blue Plaque is erected for any person. They are circular and are about two feet (60 cm) in diameter.

[Return to top of page](#)

[Return to front page](#)

[Contact the Museum](#)

The publication of this high quality, extensively researched '**Bravest of Hearts - the biography of a battalion**' took place just before Christmas 2000. This has been written by **Hal Giblin with David Evans and Dennis Reeves**. It includes a great deal of new material and is not simply a reworking of the fine history written by Colonel McGilchrist in 1930. Much work has been done on the citations for gallantry awards and on the archive of material from the 55th (West Lancashire) Division as well as including a huge amount of biographical material culled from a huge range of sources including local newspapers and families. It is a substantial volume, handsomely bound, well printed and extensively illustrated. It has been produced in a limited run and comments on it are very favourable (e.g. the review in 'Stand To', the journal of the Western Front Association). [The Museum](#) holds a stock a limited stock

From the Publishers Information

The Liverpool Scottish in the Great War. The story of the First and second Line fighting battalions of the 10th (Scottish) Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment (Territorial Force). in France and Flanders during the Great War, 1914-18.

80,000 word text. More than 450 named photographs. Rolls of Honour. Full lists of Gallantry Awards with many previously unpublished citations, including those for Military Medals, MIDs. Roll of men commissioned from the Ranks. Fully cross-indexed.

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PRICE £29.95 POST FREE (Ed note: presumably within the UK) Contact the [Secretary](#)

As a postscript, there is a fundraising note.

Yours aye,

Ian Riley

PS. The museum (a registered charity) is entirely self-funding and run by unpaid volunteers using their own resources with no financial support from any official source. We are relocating and refurbishing the museum. A display case might cost £3000 and an information board is £200 - £300. Many military museums will not handle an enquiry without a fee (£20 minimum in the case of at least one self-funding museum). We will always respond to a query as well as we can; please consider making a donation if you feel you have received something of value or simply wish to support our project. We are always glad to receive items/copies of photos but we need funds to preserve the archive for benefit of future generations. Donations (no matter how small) by UK taxpayers can be increased by 28% very simply by completing a Gift Aid form at no cost to the donor.



[Return to top of page](#)

[Return to front page](#)

[Contact the Museum](#)