

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT**  
**MUSEUM TRUST COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF CULTURAL SERVICES MANAGER**

**Report prepared by Samantha Harris, Collections Manager**

**Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust**

**Annual Report 2013-14**

1. **Learning.**

Over the last year with the support of Council staff a number of events have been held in Maidstone Museum for the public and in particular school groups.

Events have included the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regimental Living history Group working with the museums' Learning Team in a Football and Peace WW1 schools event over Easter 2014 (involving 90 children from 3 schools and they are also involved in upcoming Arts Award projects in November with school students 2 sessions involving 136 children from 4 Maidstone schools).

The Learning team has also developed a WW1 workshop, linking with the First World War Centenary commemorations, and enabling students to handle unaccessioned WW1 material from the QORWK Regiment, some of which has been specifically donated by the public for that purpose. This workshop has been in high demand from schools.

The Collections Manager has developed a yearly talk on the QORWK for the November Collections in Focus talk (corresponding with the national Remembrance Day), which can also be given to groups both in-house and as offsite talks if requested. For example, a University of the Third Age History group booked in January 2014 for a talk to be given on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014, catering for and engaging an older audience.

2. **Publicity.**

Media interest in the Regimental Museum continues to remain high, particularly in light of the ongoing WW1 Centenary Commemorations. Articles and stories relating to the regimental museum regularly appear in the local and national press and on TV, most recently a visit from Cheryl Butler, relative of QORWK WW1 VC awardee Sgt Thomas

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Harris and presenter Stuart Maisner for a news story on BBC South East in late March/early April 2014.

The book publisher Dorling Kindersley, also spent some time at the museums, photographing items for the book 'A History of the world in 1000 objects', publishing in October 2014. This includes a double page spread on the Sutlej Gun from the QORWK Museum (pg. 298-9, ISBN 978-1-4093-5466-6). This book has a worldwide circulation and is due to be stocked in the museum shop.

### 3. **Acquisitions.**

During the period 1 April 2013- 31 March 2014, many donations have been made to the regimental museum, and added to the central CMS (Collections Management System), Adlib, to make the information and artefacts searchable and accessible. These number 69 items in total from 18 donors; please see a small selection of examples below:

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1674.1-11</b>
Object Name	Medal Set and Badges
Description	Defence and 1939-45 medals awarded to Mrs E Nicholls (nee Waring, Col. Blick's sister), and 9 badges for Red Cross, Mobile VAD, ATS, QMAAC, French Medical Corps and ATS Comrades Association

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1675</b>
Title:	Red Cross & St John Prisoner of War Map
Object Name	Map
Description	Facsimile of Red Cross & St John Prisoner of War map showing POW camps across Europe. Dated 20 June 1944.

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-167.1-2</b>
Object Name	Photograph, Embroidery and Archive
Description	Mounted photograph of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Bn RWK football Team 1891/2. Framed Regimental Embroidery incorporating the 50 <sup>th</sup> & 97 <sup>th</sup> Regiments. Paper archive relating to R Spencer.

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1676.1-11</b>
Object Name	Medal Group, Badges and Flag
Description	WW1 Medal group of Pte J Apps. Also Union Jack flag hung outside the Denyer family home at the end of WW1 and used for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1682.1-2</b>
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Object Name	Kukri and Dagger
Description	Used by Pte John Charles Boorman, 4 <sup>th</sup> Btn RWK in North Africa, Burma and Kohima

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1685.1-3</b>
Object Name	Medal Group
Description	1914-18 War Medal, Victory Medal and cap badge, awarded to 6304 Private Leonard Neville Hutchings, Royal West Kent Regiment. Slightly tarnished, on unmounted ribbon.

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1687.2</b>
Object Name	Remembrance Book and Certificate
Description	Certificate of appointment as Officer of Sidney Herbert Smith 29.09.1918, Second Lieutenant, Territorial Force. Book of Remembrance for 10 <sup>th</sup> London Regiment Battalion, completed 1930 inc. South Africa, Festubert, Loos, Somme, Ypres, Hindenburgh Line, Cambrai, Doiran, Gaza, Jerusalem, Palestine.

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2013-1688.1-7</b>
Object Name	Medal group, badges and identity tags
Description	WW1 medals awarded to Pte W F Davis and Pte J E G Cornet, 20 <sup>th</sup> London Regiment

Object Number:	<b>MNERM 2014-1693</b>
Object Category	Church Furnishings
Object Name	Processional Cross
Description	A solid brass processional cross inscribed in Memoriam John Pellew Carvosso Captain of the 5th Battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment who fell in action in Kurdistan 27-12-1921. Recovered from scene of a burglary in Norfolk together with other Church artefacts. The cross was not traced to an owner and therefore donated by Norfolk Constabulary to RWK museum.

The Trust have also been approached and agreed to fund the purchase of the India (1895) Medal to (then) Major CWH EVANS, DSO, completing an existing set on display in the QORWK Museum, at a cost of £750. (Purchased in following financial year, 2014/15 from seller Ian Laidler, and highlighted for significance to the collection by regimental researcher Chris Jupp – Accession Number - MNERM2014.1965). The medal will be added to the current set on display in the gallery in due course.

### 4. **Gallery.**

Relamping has been undertaken in the regimental museum, and throughout the St Faith's Street museum building, replacing fluorescent lights with energy efficient lights. These are beneficial to the display of the collections as they produce less UV and less heat, improving display conditions.

The audio-visual presentation recording the memories of eight veterans of the Battle of Kohima (1944) is fully prepared but has not yet been installed in the Museum. This is something that is being progressed in the current year.

The 6 framed and glazed Regimental colours removed during the redisplay of the gallery have now been moved back onsite and require rehung in the gallery. This will potentially require hiring in of scaffold towers, and assistance from the Council's Operations department, so will have some cost implications.

### 5. **Enquiries.**

Enquiry numbers have increased significantly due to the WW1 Centenary capturing the imagination of the nation and encouraging them to undertake family history research. Enquiries for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 are estimated to number around 500 by telephone, face to face, post, but mostly via email. In response to the high number of enquiries we are setting expectations informing of a 1 month turn around, and have also updated the advice on the QORWK website for people wishing to research WW1 regimental records.

The regimental museum continues to be very well served by volunteer staff and particular mention should be made of Mr. Steve Finnis (ex RWK) who is doing sterling work with museum collections artefacts undertaking an audit after the East Wing project and stores/office moves and also in dealing with the many research inquiries that are received.

### 6. **Activities.**

Work continues on developing a programme of activities for the WW1 centenary commemorations. We anticipate a very busy and productive coming four years. An Angel of Mons talk is planned for next year, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2015, to be given by Amy Adams. Also a myth busting Great War lecture by UKC's Professor Mark Connelly is planned for September 2014. Plans are developing for a WW1 themed exhibition developed in house for 2016 around Maidstone Museum's painting by Frank Hyde – Arrival of a convoy of Wounded Soldiers at Maidstone East Station, which will have some links to the QORWK Museum and collections also.

### 7. **Documentation.**

Maidstone Museums are planning to audit their collections following the successful return to site of all collections removed temporarily as

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part of the East Wing project. For the QORWK collection, an audit has started, particularly with Steve Finnis, updating location information of artefacts, adding detail to records and taking photographs. This will ultimately be added to or updated on the Maidstone Museums' CMS (Collections Management System), Adlib, for more efficient documentation and access to collections. Planning is in place, and resources may be requested to assist with the audit of the RWK collection longer term.

### 8. **Conservation/Collections Care.**

Conservation was arranged by Giles Guthrie for the Trones Wood painting by Frank Hyde (Accession number MNERM 818), in preparation for its potential use in any future WW1 related events, projects. Work was undertaken by Tom Organ ACR of Arte Conservation, Faversham in May 2013 at a cost of £2082.00 (inc. VAT). The work remains unframed, so additional cost will be required for framing to make it usable for events, display etc.



### 9. **Staffing.**

Some changes in staffing have taken place in the past year.

Simon Lace has now left Maidstone Borough Council. Laura Case has been appointed as Cultural Services Manager and has responsibility for the Maidstone Museums.

Giles Guthrie has now left Maidstone Borough Council and Samantha Harris has been appointed as Collections Manager. Samantha was previously in the role of Collections Officer for Maidstone Museums (since 2011).

The post of Interpretation and Exhibitions Manager is now occupied by Evelyn Palmer, previous museums and schools project manager.

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In addition the post of Registrar is now held by Pernille Richards who has many years volunteering experience at Maidstone Museums.