

APPENDIX

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

REPORT OF THE MUSEUMS & HERITAGE MANAGER

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Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust

Annual Report 2010

1. In 2010 we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum at Maidstone Museum with an ambitious series of activities and events. These included a series of nine lectures, all with a military theme. Over 350 people attended the lecture programme which included a speaker from the National Maritime Museum and the Colonel of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment's successor, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.
2. Also offered was a concert featuring military music by the Band of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment; children's activities; family history workshops; living history events and excursions to local venues with a military flavour.
3. During the year the Regimental Museum Trust received a donation of £20,000 from the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association. This donation formed part of a larger bequest made to the Association by Brian Bartlett, one of the Association's long-standing members. The donation was made with the intention of allowing the Museum's displays to be upgraded to modern standards (they were largely as installed by the Regiment's soldiers in 1961).
4. To deliver the improvements the Regimental Museum was closed for 10 weeks in the summer. The improvements included:

- The installation of fourteen new graphic panels providing the history of the regiment and its predecessors.
- The creation of a touchscreen display of the regimental photographic collection which allows users to browse through over 400 images ranging from photographs taken during the Crimean Wars in the 1860s to the amalgamation of the Regiment with the Buffs a century later.
- Special interest exhibits such as the story of regimental mascot Bob the Dog, the first canine winner of the Dickin Medal, the "animals' VC".
- The upgrading of every exhibit to include new graphics, sets, mounts, mannequins, lighting and labels.
- The creation of a comprehensive display of over 1,000 campaign and gallantry medals.

The new gallery was formally opened during a reception held at the Museum and hosted by the Queen's Own Buffs regimental Association on 29th September 2010.

5. Media interest in the Regimental Museum remains high. News items surrounding the anniversary have regularly featured in the local press and twice on regional television. Newspapers and stories featuring items donated to the Museum have appeared on the local TV news networks three times in 2008/09.
6. During the year over 30 individual donors donated over 800 separate items to the regimental collection.
7. The project to record the memories of eight veterans of the Battle of Kohima (1944) is reaching its conclusion. A short audio-visual presentation is being prepared and will be installed in the Museum for visitors to view in the New Year.