Refurbished record of Yorkshire regiment re-opens

01/10/2011

The event was attended by the Mayor of Doncaster, Peter Davies; Brigadier Roger Preston, Chair of the KOYLI Trustees; and Gary Verity, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber Committee.

The recently completed re-design was possible thanks to a generous grant of £204,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), as well as donations from the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Trustees and the Friends of Doncaster Museums.

The museum, based within Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery on Chequer Road, looks at the history of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, the famous Yorkshire regiment whose success at the decisive Battle of Minden in 1759 is honoured on Yorkshire Day (1 August) each year.

Visitors can follow the origin of the regiment to its amalgamation with the Rifles; find out why people joined the regiment; what life was like for the families of the soldiers and just what the WWI 'Tommy' had to endure in the reconstructed trench section.

New features of the museum include interactive displays and audio listening posts, where visitors can listen to diary extracts from the Officers and soldiers of the KOYLI, as well as new displays including items from the World Cultures collection, such as silks and other objects from India, to give visitors more insight into the experiences of the regiment.

Mayor of Doncaster, Peter Davies, said: "I am proud that Doncaster is home to a museum which honours such a significant chapter in Yorkshire's military history. I am fiercely supportive of the modern day servicemen and women from the borough who make such a remarkable contribution to this country, and feel that it is important that we also reflect upon those who served our region so bravely in the past."

Gary Verity, Chair of the HLF Yorkshire and Humber Committee, said: "I am delighted to help the KOYLI mark the opening of a new and improved visitor experience at their museum. This fascinating collection of wartime memorabilia is now on show to its best effect, bringing alive for people of all ages the story of one of the most famous regiments in Yorkshire."

The KOYLI Museum has free admission and is open Monday to Saturday 10am until 5pm. To mark the official re-opening of the museum this month a series of special events are scheduled at Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery with a military theme:

Saturday 8 October, 11am -3pm
'A Yorkshire Tommy'
WWI re-enactors will give you the opportunity to find out what it meant to be a soldier. Free admission.

Saturday 15 October, 2-3pm
'Surely we are winning'
A talk and presentation, given by author and military historian, Malcolm Johnson 'Surely We Are Winning' explores the implications for a Yorkshire family when the father has to leave his wife and three small children and serve with the 5th Territorial Battalion of The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry during the First World War. Free admission. Limited

places – please book in advance.

Saturday 22 October, 2-3pm
‘Raising the 5th’
A talk and presentation by author and military historian Malcolm Johnson. In August 1914 Britain’s Regular and Territorial Armies mobilized for war. Raising the Fifth is the story of the 5th Territorial Battalion of The King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry from 1908, when it was raised in Doncaster, until 1919 when it was disbanded after serving throughout the First World War. Free admission. Limited places, please book.

Saturday 29 October, 11am - 3pm
‘You’re in the Army now!’
Using vintage costume and period objects, re-enactors from, ‘Civilians at War’ will give you the opportunity to find out what it meant to be a soldier in the King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and how Yorkshire families lived through WW2. Free admission.

The KOYLI Museum will be open to the public from 12 noon on Saturday 1 October. Free guided tours of the KOYLI museum will take place at 10.30am and 2pm each subsequent Saturday in October.