

Bagpipes and High Tea in aid of naval charities

The wail of bagpipes playing Calon Lan heralded the opening of this years British Warships Association (BWA) Annual Charity Garden Party, in aid of naval charities, at the magnificent Hensol Castle on Sunday 28th June.

This wonderful annual event, always offers spectacle and grandeur and this year was once again no exception.

After a champagne reception, over two hundred guests gathered on the castle lawn were surprised by the distant wail of the pipes and drums, only to then be stunned at the appearance of the City of Swansea Scottish Pipe Band marching around the castle to entertain them. The sun shone and the Pimms flowed as music filled the air.

The BWA Garden Party brought together the great and good of the locality with over fifty sailors, all ranks, from their local warships, including HMS Cambria, HMS Express, HMS Monmouth and, Cardiff's own HMS Dragon in appreciation of the work of the Royal Navy.

The Sea Cadets of TS Cardiff put on a stunning display in the Field Gun Competition where two team's challenged for the prestigious BWA Trophy and Medals.



The display represented the 150 miles transit of field gun artillery from Kimberley for the relief of Mafeking in 1900.

A sumptuous High Tea in the Castle Great Room followed, with party goers



being entertained by performances from the RAF St Athan Band, soloist Lucy Jones and a Barbershop Quintet.

BWA Chairman Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks RN said in his address, "Such events as this are really important to the Royal Navy and all our Armed Forces to see the support they have from the public".

Tales of its recent 8 month deployment at sea were regaled by HMS Dragons Commanding Officer, Captain Rex Cox RN, highlighting engagements on anti-piracy, thwarting drug trafficking and global diplomacy.

Christmas in South Georgia was made all the more memorable by a consignment of Christmas Crackers sent from well wishers in Cardiff, enabled by the BWA.

The chair of Trustee's for the BWA, Squadron Leader Charles Slatter RAF, outlined the Association's support to its nominated charities of the RNRMC.

He explained the donations made in the year to the Sea Cadet Units of TS Cardiff, TS Glamorgan (Penarth) and TS Resolute(Newport), before presenting a cheque of £3,500 to the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

With over 65% of injuries in Afghanistan sustained by Royal Marines, these much needed funds will help with the through life support of these young people.



Sq.Ldr Charles Slatter, Miss Suky Bains (BWA Finance Director), Mr Richard Hill (BWA Royal Marines Liaison Officer), WO1 David Charles (2IC Hasler Company Royal Marines – representing the RMCTF)

The party concluded in true naval tradition with Ceremonial Sunset and the lowering of the White Ensign over the castle. This ceremony is performed every day at sunset all over the globe on naval ships and establishments wherever they may be.

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