

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum, Stirling Castle - revitalising textile relics & regimental regalia!

Written by Fiona Watt, 2020

We got to work on some fantastic objects during the refurbishment of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum at Stirling Castle, including Colours that were carried at the Battle of Balaklava, fought on 25th October 1854, during the Crimean War!



The Balaklava Colours were a large undertaking, due to their size!

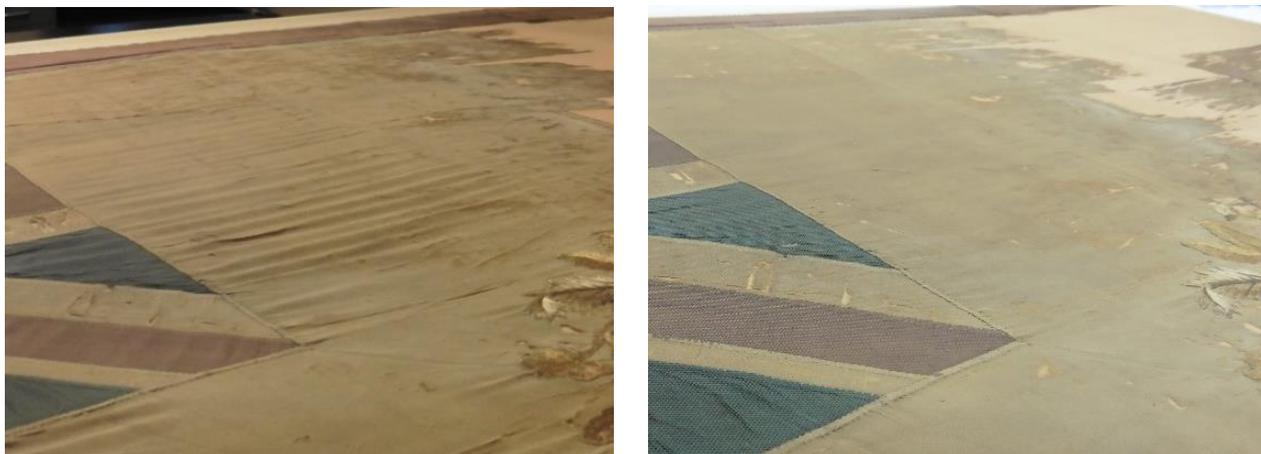
They had been previously conserved and mounted, possibly in the 1980s, and both Colours were sandwiched between a silk support and net layers.

Since their previous conservation, there had been more loss of the silk and small areas of damage to the protective net, which had lost tension in places. To top it all off, the stretchers had become very acidic, and this could be smelt when looking at the Colours!



The Queens Colour (right) and Regimental Colour (left) before conservation

Both Colours were removed from their stretchers while still sandwiched between the silk support and net layers from the previous conservation treatment. We added support stitching around areas of damage and loss, and to re-tension the net.



Before (left) and after (right) support stitching

For their display, new conservation grade boards were made, and the Colours were stitched to their boards.

As the modern silk support was longer than the new boards, the edge of this fabric was turned under and stitched to the back of the board, ensuring that the Colours themselves were completely safe and supported on the front of the boards.



Stitching support turn-back to back of board

Because of their size, our fantastic framer brought new bespoke frames to our workshop, where the mounting of the Colours was completed. It was great to get to see the Colours going into their frames - something that doesn't usually happen in our workshop!



Queen's Colour after conservation



Regimental Colour after conservation

The Balaklava Colours are now ready for the re-opening of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum at Stirling Castle. We can't wait to see them, along with the other objects we have conserved, in their new home!

Project Context

Work started in 2018 and is on-going. YCL has now conserved eight fantastically interesting objects, more will follow next year.

Thank you to those involved at the Museum: Project Director Colonel AK Miller CBE & Rod Mackenzie.

Conservators involved: Fiona Watt, Sophie Younger and Harriet Perkins.

Framing services: Joe Nicolson (<http://foursticksframing.co.uk>)