

THE HIGHLAND MILITARY TATTOO 2017

Report by Douglas Findlay-Shirras, a Member of the Highland Society of London

The Highland Military Tattoo held at Fort George was obviously going to be much less grand than the Edinburgh version. On the night we went, September 8th we were blessed that the weather was kind to us although it was pretty cold. Prior to the start we were treated to a WW1 biplane flying over the stadium and putting on a great display of aerobatics. And at the start we had a flypast – if one Typhoon can be considered a fly past! But everyone was thrilled that, as it left the stadium, it did a sharp bank to the right with its afterburners going at full blast in the darkening skies; it really was a pretty awesome sight!

Being the first night of four, the RAF Regiment took the lead as it was their 70th birthday, if my memory serves me well. They put on a very good show for us. The massed bands were pretty good but, with only one major pipe band namely the 3rd Scots (Black Watch) with the help of 3 other local bands, the noise was not overwhelming. We were also treated to some Highland dancing and two very good singers, one of whom was a dead ringer for Harry Lauder.

Throughout the evening, with re-enactments of various battles with Fort George in mind, we saw the development of the RAF Regiment. They even rolled in a Spitfire, alas without an engine! They also put on their version of the field gun race, which alas was not as brilliant as the one they roll out at the Royal Tournament down south. The curtain came down after about an hour and a half with a spectacular fireworks display – all in all it was great fun night and I will certainly return next year.

If one arrives early you will find that there is quite a lot to see and do. There is free entry in to the Highlanders Museum, which is well worth a visit. There are food stalls and other stalls of interest selling all sorts of things. I do recommend making use of the Officers' Mess and the hospitality they offer if you can organise it. I had to pay £50 for access for my wife and I, but I certainly didn't begrudge it. This year the Highland Tattoo team sold 1,500 more tickets than in 2016, which was felt to be pretty good result. I suspect they will sell even more next year as the word gets around as to how good the show is. I took two friends from New Zealand, both of whom had looked after my eldest child 40 odd years ago and they loved it.

Although, as I said above, you can't really compare it to the Edinburgh Tattoo, the Highland Military Tattoo is well worth a visit.

<https://highlandmilitarytattoo.com/>

