



BUILDINGS

SCOTLAND'S DRILL HALLS



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

CITY OF DUNDEE



FIELD AMBULANCE
R.S.C.

ROYAL
ENGINEERS

YEOMANRY

ARMY SERVICE
CORPS

BLACK
WATCH

ROYAL FIELD
ARTILLERY

TERRITORIAL FORCE

SMART YOUNG MEN OF THE CITY OF DUNDEE

May join any of the following Branches of the County Territorial Force:

Mounted: 2nd Highland Brigade Royal Field Artillery.
" Five and Forfar Yeomanry.
" Army Service Corps (No. 4 Company, Highland Division).

Engineers: Royal Engineers (Fortress).
Infantry: 4th & 5th Battalions Royal Highlanders.
Medical Corps: Royal Army Medical Corps 3rd Highland Field Ambulance.

Age 17 to 35 years. Height 5 feet 2 inches and upwards. Chest Measurement 32 inches and upwards.

TERMS OF SERVICE 4 YEARS.

No Man of the Territorial Force can be compelled to serve Abroad.

Free Discharge granted to M.C.O.'s. and Men who find it necessary to leave the City to obtain work, provided all Clothing and Equipment is returned to Store.
Army Rates of Pay paid to all ranks in Camp. Free Rations and extra messing supplied free in Camp. Camp 8 to 15 days.
Service Dress and Walking-out Uniform provided free. No Subscriptions.

Infantry have **Machine Gun, Transport, Signallers & Stretcher Bearers,**
also Pipe and Bugle Bands.

Sergeants' Messes in the various Corps. Miniature Rifle Ranges. Shooting Prizes competed for annually.
Corps have Annual Sports in Camp.

For further particulars apply to Sergeant Instructor, at Bell Street Drill Hall, for Yeomanry, Army Service Corps, and Infantry. At Dundee Drill Hall, for Royal Field Artillery and Field Ambulance, and at 52 Taylors Lane, for Royal Engineers.

*** GOD SAVE THE KING. ***

DEFENDING A NATION

The story of Scotland's drill halls closely follows historic events that not only shaped Britain, but also changed the world.

Britain in the 19th century was fighting wars right across the globe. In the 1850s, one of the most famous of these took place: the Crimean War. In this, Britain became one part of an alliance with France, the Ottoman Empire and Sardinia against the Russians. There was a threat that Russia might try to advance towards Western Europe so the British Empire and the government started to take steps to ensure that Britain could be defended in the event of an attack.

Our own military resources were stretched and we needed to train men on the ground across the country so they

would be ready to take up arms against an invader. The solution was to create 'Volunteer Forces', a reserve of men who would volunteer for part-time military training similar to that of the regular army and who could help to defend Britain if the need arose.

In 1859 the Secretary of State for War, General Peel, authorised "the Lords Lieutenant of counties to submit proposals for the formation of volunteer rifle corps, and of artillery corps in maritime towns where there might be forts and batteries." This was the beginning of our volunteer forces.

Left: Recruiting poster for Dundee Territorial Force, 1910 © National Museums Scotland.

Cover: Geilston Hall, Cardross.

Volunteer forces

More regulation for the volunteer forces was set out in the Volunteer Act of 1863. It also gave volunteer units the right to acquire land to build drill sheds or halls. Volunteers came from all walks of life and ranged from men with military backgrounds to enthusiastic and patriotic civilians with no military experience.

While some units used existing buildings, such as church halls, these weren't always suitable as the requirements for training men were very specific and purpose-built drill halls were soon needed. These new

volunteer units needed accommodation and in the beginning a small number of new buildings were built and paid for by the volunteers themselves, through local fundraising, or with the help of a local landowner. Sometimes it was a combination of all three.

Below: Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
© East Renfrewshire Council.





Above: Drill hall in Dundee © Dundee City Council, Central Library, Photographic Collection.

Building a drill hall

The Regulation of the Forces Act 1871 gave further rights to acquire land and a formal drive to build new drill halls began after this date. The largest period of drill hall construction, aided by government grants, took place between 1880 and 1910.

Once government funding had been secured, a site needed to be found. This was sometimes gifted by a local landowner or bought using a government grant. It needed to be in the centre of the community so that it was easily reached by the volunteers. As a main function of drill halls was to 'drill' (to carry out military training exercises), a large space was required. Unlike other military buildings, a standard design

was not rolled out across the country and communities were free to design drill halls according to their needs and budget. Budgets were often very tight and the buildings were, as a result, mostly plain and functional. Communities with more generous budgets could build more visually impressive structures.

A typical drill hall had to provide offices and a caretaker or drill instructor's accommodation, usually at the front of the building. At the back would be an armoury to securely store weapons and the hall itself – a large covered space with no columns to give room to train and drill.

After the First World War

By the time of the First World War in 1914–18, purpose-built drill halls were no longer being built. We think that around 350 drill halls were built in Scotland between the 1860s and the First World War. The early volunteer forces had changed into the Territorial Force and by 1920 they had become the Territorial Army, known today as the Army Reserve.

Warfare was changing and by the middle of the 20th century many drill halls were no longer required. Some were retained by the Territorial Army and continue in their original use, some were given a new use and many were demolished. Surviving drill halls have also become associated with the act of remembrance and commemoration and some are now places where communities can gather locally to remember those who have given their lives for our country.

Drill halls today

In 2015–16, as part of our commemorations of the centenary of the First World War, we carried out a nationwide review of drill halls. We reviewed halls that were already listed buildings and we assessed a number of unlisted halls for listing.

Of the 350 or so built, around 180 drill halls are thought to survive in Scotland. To recognise their special architectural and historic interest 35 of them, known to be built specifically for military drilling, are now listed buildings. The vast majority of our historic drill halls are

no longer in military use, many are now community centres or homes, but they continue to tell us much about our military history and how we prepared to defend ourselves when the threat of invasion was very real.

A selection of the buildings we visited during our survey is shown on the following pages. All of them are listed buildings.

Golspie, Highland



Initiated by one of Scotland's richest men at the time, the 3rd Duke of Sutherland, Golspie Drill Hall is situated near the Duke's former family home at Dunrobin Castle.

Contracts to build the hall were advertised on 8 March 1892 and it was opened in September of that year. It was the second hall to be built on the site as the volunteer force had begun in June 1859, and the 3rd Duke became the Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Administrative Battalion of Sutherlandshire Rifle Volunteers in 1864.

Designed by the Duke's architect, Laurie Bisset, it is a unique building – the only listed drill hall built almost entirely in timber. Presumably donated by the Duke

from his extensive estate, the advantage of using this material was that it was readily available and it allowed the hall to be built very quickly. The design of the hall is unusual – its pyramid-shaped roof at the entrance looks more like a feature found on distillery or industrial architecture. There isn't another drill hall in Scotland that looks like it.

Inside, the use of timber continues with many of the walls lined with timber boarding and a trussed timber roof in the hall. The hall also has a viewing balcony, which is where the Duke would have stood to watch drill displays. This balcony was originally accessed from an outside staircase, as can be seen in this image.

Above: Golspie Drill Hall.

Blair Atholl, Perth and Kinross



There was no standard design for a drill hall and, as a result, they were built in a variety of architectural styles. The Scots Baronial style was popular in the 19th century and lent itself readily to drill halls because it uses architectural features from defensive structures such as medieval castles.

This drill hall in Blair Atholl was built for Squadron A of the Scottish Horse regiment. Here the entrance is under a wide crowstepped gable with a squat tower with a bellcast roof to the right. Over the door is a carved panel featuring the arms of the regiment. The building was opened on 14 September 1907 and a number of important people from volunteer battalions across the country

attended the opening ceremony, including Richard Haldane, Secretary of State for War, who gave an important speech describing his plans for the reorganisation of the forces. His reforms resulted in The Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907.

Above: Blair Atholl Drill Hall.

Below: Carved panel over the entrance door.



Cardross, Argyll and Bute



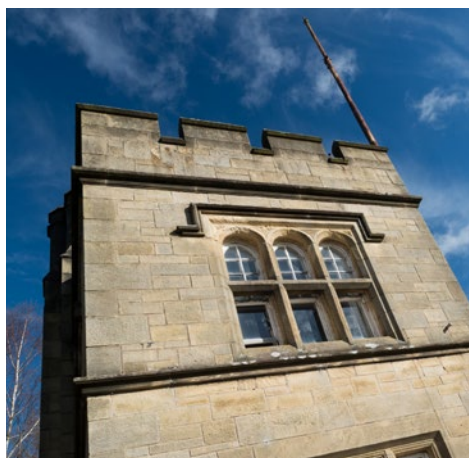
Geilston Hall was built as the base for the 7th Dunbartonshire (Cardross) Rifle Volunteers. It replaced a mid-19th-century hall on the same spot, which had been destroyed by fire in 1889. Soon after the fire, the family of Major Joseph Tucker Geils (who was the commanding officer of the volunteers between 1860 and 1871) employed Honeyman and Keppie, a newly formed architectural practice that later became renowned for their work. The hall was designed in 1889–90, which was the first year Charles Rennie Mackintosh worked for the practice and he may have been involved with the design.

The building is in a distinctive Neo-Tudor style and has a square-battlemented tower reminiscent of historic defensive buildings. It also had a further use as a popular venue for village activities,

such as local meetings and shows and it continues to be used by various local clubs today.

Above: Interior of Geilston Hall, Cardross.

Below: Tower at Geilston Hall, Cardross.



Jardine Street, Glasgow



The drill hall at Jardine Street in Glasgow is unusual because of its half-timbered Elizabethan style. Brick and half-timbering is associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, which was fashionable in the late 19th century. It was built in 1894 as the Lanarkshire Regimental Headquarters and was designed by Robert Alexander Bryden, who was also a Major in the Regiment. As it was designed as a headquarters, the interior is of a higher specification than was usual for drill halls and it has a meeting room with decorative panelled timberwork.

Above: Jardine Street Drill Hall © Crown Copyright HES.

Below: Meeting room in Jardine Street Drill Hall.



Forres, Moray



Towards the end of the 19th century, drill halls began to be more informal in appearance and took on a more domestic style. This was probably a deliberate attempt for these military buildings to appear less conspicuous, as well as a response to restricted finances and the urgency of construction.

An example of this more domestic style is the Joint Cadet Centre in Forres, which was built in 1909-10 for the 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. It was built with an armoury, recreation rooms and a large hall and it was hoped that the new facility would attract more men from Forres and

the surrounding areas to volunteer. After 1938 a larger rifle range was constructed to the rear of the hall. It is one of the few drill halls to remain in military use.

Above: Joint Cadet Centre, Forres © Crown Copyright HES.

Below: Carving in gablehead © Crown Copyright HES.



Arbroath, Angus



Arbroath Community Centre was built as the headquarters and drill hall for the Arbroath Rifle Volunteers. Fronting the hall is a late-18th-century townhouse which was converted to offices when the hall was built in 1883. The hall was designed by local architect William Scott, who was one of the original members of the Arbroath Volunteers Rifles Corps and reached the rank of Sergeant.

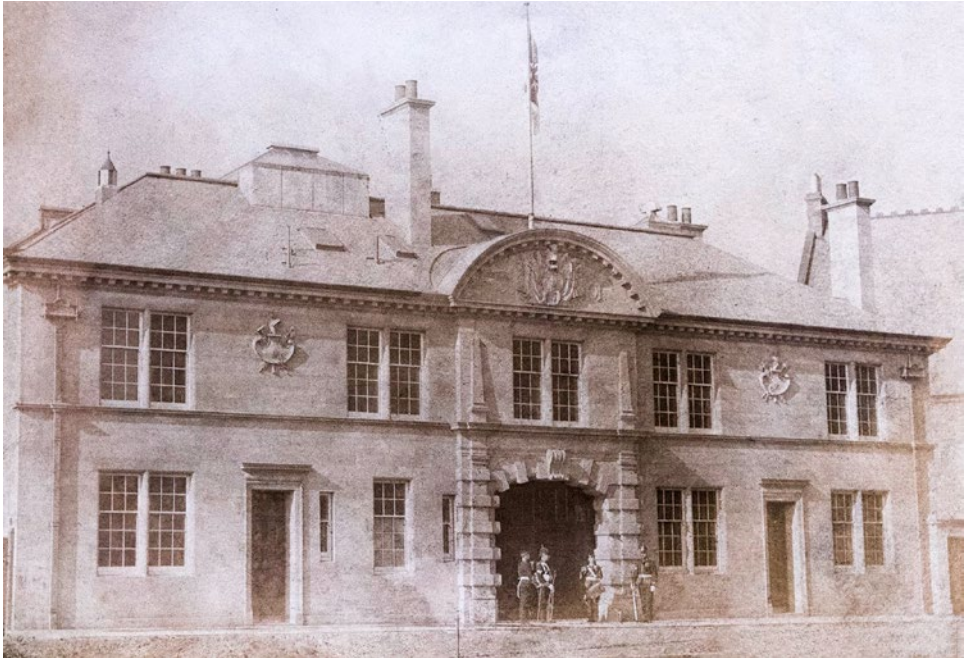
The hall is unusual because of the shape of its roof. It resembles an upturned boat and was an imaginative solution for creating a large, uninterrupted space perfect for drilling.

Above: Interior of Arbroath Drill Hall.

Below: Entrance door of the former townhouse.



Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh

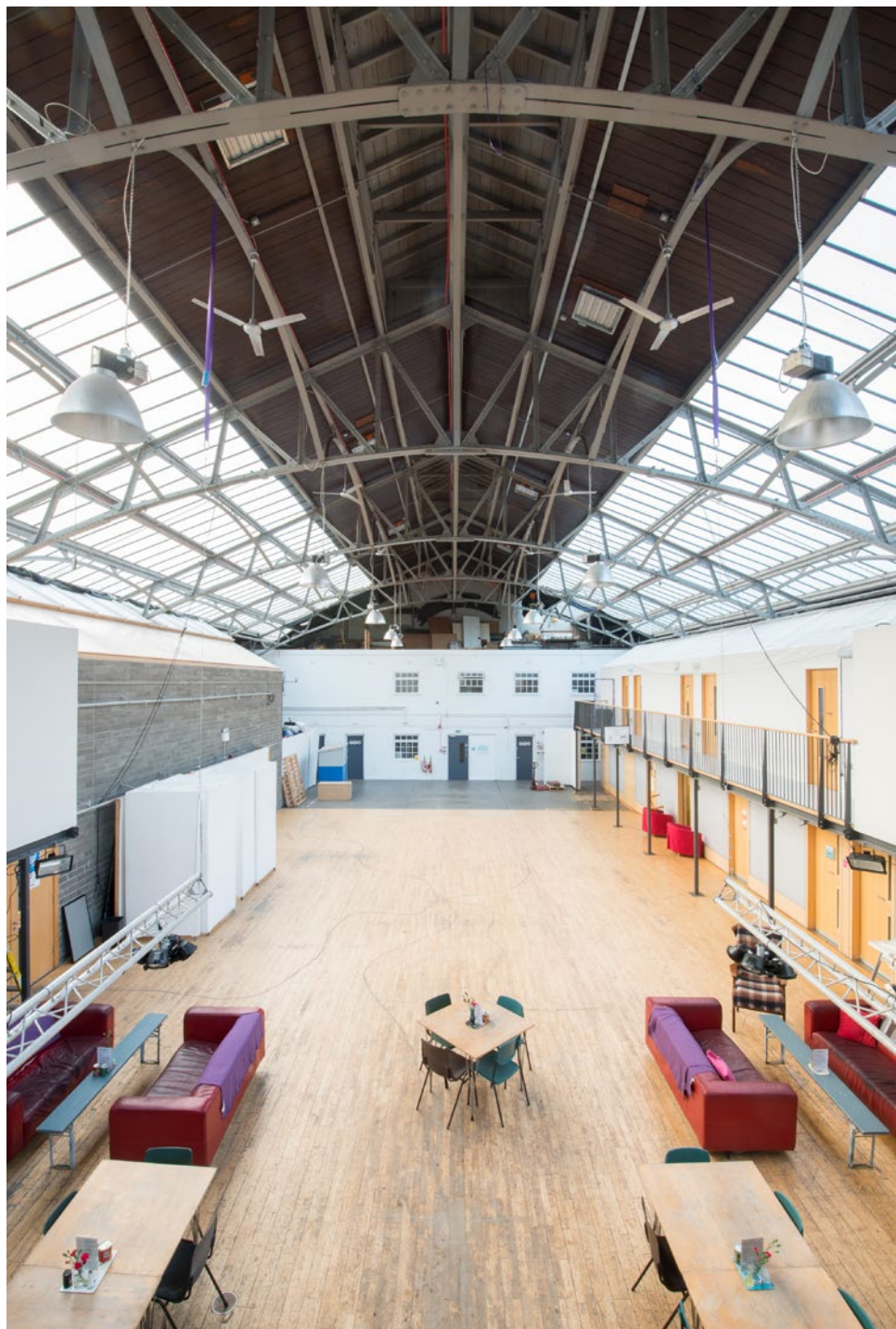


One of the largest and most elaborate drill halls is the former headquarters of the 7th Volunteer Battalion of the Royal Scots on Dalmeny Street in Edinburgh.

The building was designed by Anderson Simon & Crawford in 1899 and was officially opened on 7 December 1901. The overall cost was about £13,000, which was considerably more than most other drill halls in the city. The hall is built in red and cream brick while the office section, at the front of the building, is in polished sandstone ashlar and features elaborate carvings.

Above: Dalmeny Street Drill Hall in 1915. **Below:** Carving at Dalmeny Street Drill Hall © Crown Copyright HES.





The building is not only of interest for its architecture: it has an important historical association with the worst modern day disaster to hit the community of Leith.

On 22 May 1915 a southbound troop train crashed into a stationary local train outside the signal box at Quintinshill, near Gretna, and was then hit by a northbound express. 227 passengers were killed and 246 injured. 485 men of the 7th Battalion of the Royal Scots were on the train on their way to Gallipoli and 214 were killed.

The drill hall became the focal point for families looking for information after the disaster and it also served as a

temporary mortuary for the bodies of the soldiers when they were returned to Edinburgh.

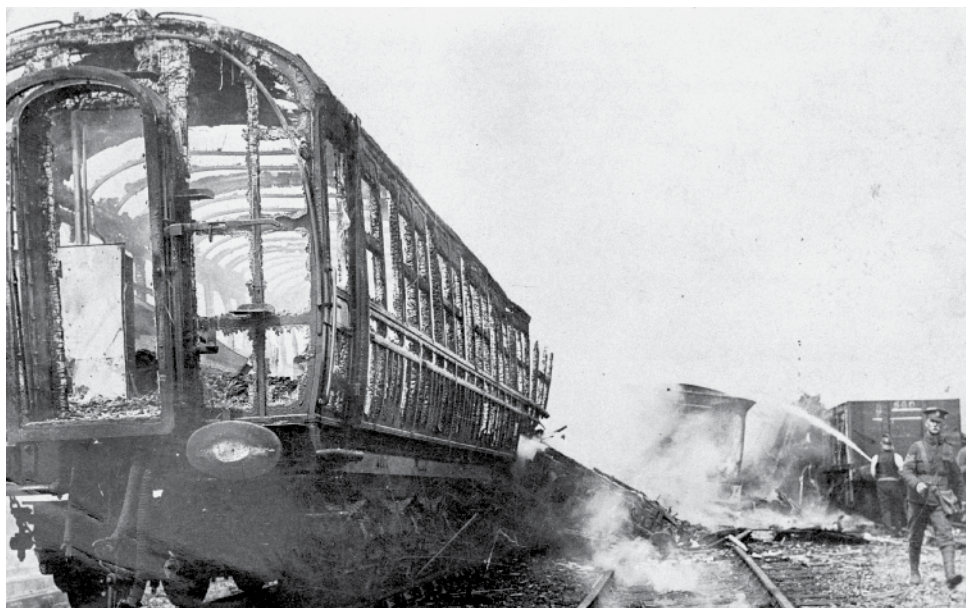
Today, the building, as with all our drill halls, continues to help us commemorate and remember the sacrifice our service men and women have made for our country.

In 2004 the building was converted into an arts and education centre called Out of the Blue Drill Hall. The large hall space is well suited for its use as a performance area and exhibition space.

Left: Interior of Dalmeny Street Drill Hall.

Below: The train crash at Quintinshill, near Gretna

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Above: Carving over the entrance at Dalmeny Street Drill Hall, Edinburgh © Crown Copyright HES.

BUILDINGS

This booklet is part of a series celebrating Scotland's buildings. Each gives a brief overview of the building type, looking at key buildings or structures and exploring what makes them special.

If exploring Scotland's drill halls, please respect owner's privacy or any private property.

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Further Sources of Information

Barclay, G. J. (2013) *The Built Heritage of the First World War*.

Historic Scotland (2015) *Scotland's Drill Halls Preliminary Report*.

Osborne, M. (2006) *Always Ready: The Drill Halls of Britain's Volunteer Force*.

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