

The mane attraction

The opportunity of a lifetime came when the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment's Commanding Officer visited my studio in January 2011. He asked if I would like to do some paintings for the regiment and, soon afterwards, formed the idea of holding an exhibition in London with two other artists, Daniel Crane and Tom Hoar. After an initial visit to London, where I was shown around the barracks and treated to lunch, we three artists met up for the first time to gather material at the barracks on 29 April, the day of the royal wedding. It was incredible to be there on the day, absorbing the excited atmosphere and, for the first time, to witness the organisational precision of the regiment.

We were fortunate enough to be granted behind-the-scenes access, so I gathered material from the Colonel's Review, Beating Retreat, the formation of the regiment in the grounds of Windsor Castle before the Garter Ceremony, and the Queen's Life Guard Band Changing of the Guard. I also spent time sketching from life, watching the regiment at Hyde Park Barracks and at Horseguards. It was fascinating to see how the regiment's daily life works behind the scenes and I relished the challenge of introducing all this information into my paintings, capturing the important details in an understated way while conveying atmosphere and movement.

Putting on a show

The exhibition itself was at Hyde Park Barracks during the last week of April

Equine artist **Katie Scorgie DH'87** got a privileged behind-the-scenes view of military life when she spent a year as an artist-in-residence with the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment



2012. Three sponsors generously provided backing – Soldiering On, Child & Child Solicitors and Knightsbridge Business Group – with proceeds going towards the Household Cavalry Foundation, a new charity set up to care for the men, families, horses and heritage of the regiment. There were five private views, with openings to the public in the afternoons. We also had a press morning and did interviews, including one with Horse and Country TV, which can be seen online in their video section (www.horseandcountry.tv). One of my paintings made it into the Saturday edition of the *Telegraph*, although *Tatler* Bystander did not include me in their 'Who's who' online

review after their appearance on the first night! I was also lucky enough to be able to stay on site – this meant having to endure breakfast with young dashing uniformed officers every morning.

We all had very good sales and I sold 15 out of 20 pieces and nearly 40 prints. The Managing Director of Harrods invited us to put the remaining unsold work in the store for a month to coincide with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. As a result of the exhibition we all made new contacts and have commissions to do, so it was an amazing opportunity and, all in all, quite a surreal experience from start to finish. One of my next commissions is a painting for the regiment of the Diamond Jubilee.

I always wanted to pursue art as a career as it felt a natural thing for me to do. After A-levels I completed a foundation course in Bournemouth, but felt saturated with education and didn't really make the most of it, so when my father suggested I do a secretarial course and said I could always go back to art if I wanted to, it seemed a good idea. I then worked in London for eight years as a secretary/PA, the first two of these at The Jockey Club. I started riding in point-to-points, riding out at weekends in Dorset and going to a gym in London during the week to keep fit. I have ridden since I was very young, being a member of the Pony Club, and I have hunted and team-chased ever since, so it is natural for me to paint something I am passionate about.

During my time in London I felt I



Katie produced some beautiful paintings and sketches during her placement



should be painting, so when someone suggested I go back to art college, it was a bit of a 'light bulb' moment. I looked around some West Country colleges, finally deciding that the University of Plymouth felt right – it had a relaxed atmosphere and no 'in-house' style. Having been in a corporate environment, I found it a real treat to have the opportunity to spend three years developing my painting without having to worry about a salary. Although I am very glad to have my secretarial skills, I graduated in 2000 with a degree in fine art and I have been working as an equine artist ever since. ■



Above: Katie Scorgie at the barracks of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment

