



# Surrey Infantry Museum

Museum Newsletter - Mar 2016

Volume 1 Issue 10

## AIM

To maintain knowledge within the County of Surrey's Infantry  
Regiments from 1661 to the present Day

## FOSIM – Tony Ward

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### Surrey Infantry Museum

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The purpose of Friends of Surrey Infantry Museum is to support our Museum and our Regimental heritage – so what is the future following the Fire at Clandon you may well ask? If we are to establish a new museum there are 4 factors. First, we must be confident that we have enough to display. Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will read of what has been salvaged. But the response of people finding items to donate has been really encouraging. Thank you and keep passing any items to our Curator Stephen Johnson. Next, we will need money – lots. The display cabinets in Clandon cost over £200,000 when made 15 years ago. But it is not just capital and fitting out costs, we need core funding to pay for the upkeep. So much will depend on the insurance claim. We then need a location with a good footfall. Again as you will read below we have had a very positive approach and offer. But it is still early days. I really hope we can give some exciting news in our next Newsletter. But lastly, we need good reliable loyal volunteers. I would like to pay tribute to all those who have continued to give up their free time to support in so many ways. We are very fortunate. Thank you.

I would also like to thank the Surrey History Centre for offering space for our Museum Office. It is an ideal location and the staff could not have made us more welcome. Stephen and Ian are doing great work putting together and determining the future of items salvaged.

I am delighted our Lunch and talks continue to attract so many and make such good re-unions. Dee Hutchison has also been busy arranging our Battlefield Tour “The Surreys on the Somme”. We will be visiting the exact spot where Captain Billy Neville Commanding B Company 8<sup>th</sup> East Surreys made National headlines on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 by issuing footballs to each of his platoons to encourage a speedy advance. It achieved its aim.

*On through the hail of slaughter,  
Where gallant comrades fall,  
Where blood is poured like water,  
They drive the trickling ball.  
The fear of death before them,  
Is but an empty name;  
True to the land that bore them,  
The SURREYS played the game*

I hope many of you will be able to come to **Surrey Sports Park, Guildford on 1<sup>st</sup> July** where The Regiment is organising a Football Tournament and re-enactment of the East Surreys action on the First Day of the Somme. It should be a fun day and a great re-union. Do tell your friends.

Many of you will have heard of the deaths of Major General Mike Reynolds and Regimental Sergeant Major Jack Chaffer. Mike was Jack's Company Commander (notice the way I put that!). It was a great Company with Mike giving vision and new ideas and Jack an outstanding example of a British Warrant Officer. Those of us who were in C Company, 1 Queen's Surreys learnt many life making lessons from those two great soldiers. They were two of the best. We are hoping to have a short memorial Service for Mike on 5<sup>th</sup> June at Holy Trinity Guildford.

Lastly, thank you all for your support and encouragement following the fire at Clandon.

## David Pollard - MUSEUM MANAGEMENT and TRUSTEES

As you might suspect, a lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to establish SIM at Surrey History Centre and to deal with the aftermath of the fire. The Trustees were grateful for the office space we were allowed to use at Guildford Borough Council immediately after the fire, which provided a base for Stephen Johnson and our loyal and supportive volunteers.

Relationships with the local NT management at Clandon continue to be cordial and helpful, and I have met them on a number of occasions with Stephen Johnson. The toxic residues in the debris have meant progress at salvaging our artefacts has been slower than we initially thought might be possible, and an (un!)educated guess is that all the museum areas might not be completed until perhaps May. All of the salvage work has been done by NT experts, wearing Personal Protective Equipment including respirators. The cooperation and painstaking approach provided by the NT in salvaging our artefacts has been most gratifying.

Tony Ward and I have twice met representatives from a Surrey town that is looking at how it might better present all aspects of its history in a local museum. We believe SIM will hopefully continue to be a part of that process as planning evolves.

The PWRR Museum Trustees met last October, again in February, and are due to meet again in April. The fire and its aftermath has taken up a large part of those meetings. At the October meeting our Insurer (Ecclesiastical) was present along with their loss adjuster and our broker, but this was before the fire investigation report was published. At the February meeting Ecclesiastical and their loss adjuster again attended, along with a representative from Ecclesiastical's lawyers. As Stephen Johnson mentions below, one issue that emerged in the fire report was the lack of any fire baffle in the top of the cupboard in which the electrical distribution board was contained. The fire report also noted the fire alarm was activated by a sensor in the attic of the building, and so it could be argued that the lack of that fire protection baffle in the cupboard was critical to the outcome and rapid spread of the fire. This is an aspect Ecclesiastical are looking at to determine what, if any, action they might take.

Fortunately, due to excellent work by Jim Reynolds from RHQ PWRR and our own Ian Chatfield, the display items in the museum, including all medals, were listed and valued for our insurers. That means we will either be recompensed for items that were destroyed in the fire, or for those items which have been salvaged the insured value should cover the cost of restoration. Unfortunately, however, the Museum's fixtures and fittings were not insured; Clandon had never flooded and the prospect of a catastrophic fire which would destroy a 350 year old Grade 1 listed building was considered too remote to consider realistic. Those uninsured losses are substantial and probably in excess of £400,000. The Trustees will be considering if there are possibilities to recoup any of those uninsured losses.

The story currently is thus one very much of work in progress, but hopefully this report, as well as those by Tony Ward and Stephen Johnson, give an insight into what has happened so far.

## The Queens Royal Surrey Reunion at the Union Jack Club

### 2016 Reunion

Date for diary this year is 18.30 on **11<sup>th</sup> November 2016** at The Union Jack Club.

Application forms will come from Surrey Infantry Museum in late May and Tickets from late Sept/Oct and all enquiries need to come to FOSIM. All QRS matters are to be sent to Dee Hutchison at the email address below.

[fosim@btconnect.com](mailto:fosim@btconnect.com)

## FOSIM Membership - Dee Hutchison

Many of you have asked questions on the future of the Friends. There is no Museum currently so do we still bill you for your ten pounds next Jun - the answer so far has been a unanimous YES. We still are producing a bi annual newsletter, holding four lecture lunches over the next year and have also put together a Battlefield Tour for 2016.

We are keen to maintain the Friends and current membership and hope you do agree. If however you feel differently then please advise and we will stop the Standing Order, if not your renewal will be on 1st Jun 2016. Please can you ensure those who pay by cheque remember to send this in as I do not like chasing if I can help it. The Funds are necessary to maintain our standards for you. If you would like to change to standing order then please let me know and I will send on the relevant forms.

#### Email:

We are using these for quick updates on the Museum and other events here at the SHC - so if you have an email address and have not provided it please do so. We do not pass your details on without prior permission. Also please advise when email changes I am getting a few bounce backs per newsletter or email sent out.

## The Somme Battlefield Tour – 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Attached to this Newsletter are the details of the Battlefield Tour planned for May 2016. Final payment was due on 6th March 2016 if you have not already done it. This is a bespoke Tour following our forebear regiments kindly put together by Anglia Tours with Ian Chatfield as our Tour Guide and ably supported by Philip Pearce ex Queens/PWRR CO.

The cost to those who served in the Regiments has dropped to £349 per person as the Queens Royal Surrey Trustees has very kindly supported this venture and is allocating a grant to each ex or serving member of the PWRR and all forebear regiments. If you would still like to come there are a few places available but you will have to now pay the full amount. Please consider coming along and seeing where the Queens and East Surrey's fought in WW1.

## Museum Report - Stephen Johnson

### **Life Continues After the Fire**

At the time of writing it is now nearly a year since the terrible events of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015. My previous report must have been very upsetting for everyone involved: so I would like to think that (despite having to continue to deal with the aftermath of the fire) the content of this report is, on the whole, more positive.



We now know the cause of the fire. In November 2015 the official report from the South East Fire Investigation Group was published. The conclusion was that the fire was accidental, caused by an electrical fault in a distribution board located in the basement. The fire could not be contained due to the nature of the building's construction and the lack of internal fire compartmentalisation. In December the

findings of the Surrey Fire Service's internal enquiry were made public under the Freedom of Information Act: enquiries such as this are held by the Fire Service after every major incident so that lessons can be learnt. The enquiry acknowledged that the operation was not without its problems and made recommendations relating to equipment, methods and responses for potential future incidents. However, the conclusion remained that once the fire had started the building was doomed.

The National Trust staged a press conference at Clandon Park in January 2016 where its Chief Executive announced restoration plans for the property: to the best of our knowledge the Museum has not been included in these plans.

### **Starting to Rebuild**



Archaeological salvage teams started work in the Museum rooms at Clandon in late October 2015. Initially concentrating on clearing a pathway to allow access to the basement corridor, the archaeologists have recovered a substantial number of medals from the main display wall and artefacts from the cases nearest to the Museum entrance.

As the structural safety of the building was still compromised and the rooms remained open to the elements, progress was slow. The rescued items had to be catalogued, labelled and bagged individually before being consolidated into larger batches. Handling is carried out by specialist operatives in full personal protection equipment (PPE) because of the risk of contamination with toxic residues from the fire. By the end of the year, a good proportion of the Early Years, Maritime and Medals Room had been cleared. Soon after the start of the New Year, the scaffolding and temporary roof were completed, rendering the property weather-proof and by the end of February the teams had started work in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Room.



As at the end of February 2016, the Museum had taken possession of all the items recovered before the end of 2015: approximately 300 individual objects are in sealed bags waiting to be decontaminated before they can be safely handled, identified and informed decisions made regarding restoration: it is a sad fact that some items will be beyond economical repair – these will either be discarded or retained, in their damaged state, as an enduring memento of the fire.



*Jezail rifle in its protective wrapping*

The Museum is now based at the Surrey History Centre in Woking. We have the space and equipment for myself and two volunteers to work plus a small meeting area. This is currently an informal arrangement which we hope will continue for the foreseeable future. Our office is the same building as the Museum archive which, with admirable foresight, was passed to the SHC about ten years ago – this is very useful given the significant number of contacts received each week ranging from requests for assistance with family history to academic research enquiries.

### **Donations and New Material**

Many thanks to those who have made donations by cheque or via the SIM *JustGiving* site including Mr Perrett-Young, Lt. General J P Riley and especially our good friends of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Queens Royals*) of Foot 1809 who thoughtfully handed over their leftover lunch-kitty money from their trip to the Battle of Waterloo re-enactment last June. Especial thanks to Mrs J Denny for her very generous donation following our discussion about her father's MC medal group which we hope is in one of the bags, awaiting restoration.

We continue to receive medals and memorabilia from members of the public with connections to the Regiment. Amongst the items are the personal effects of CQMS King



together with a framed map, annotated with cartoons, of 131<sup>st</sup> Brigade's movements in Northern France during 1940.



Particularly interesting is the trunk containing material belonging to Lt. Colonel St Barbe Russell Sladen killed in March 1918 whilst in command of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Queens. The contents included a beautifully preserved belt, a gungarry with a rare variant of the regimental cap badge and an 1897 Jubilee Medal - also included was a clip of Turkish rifle bullets and twelve live rounds for a Webley pistol, all now safely deactivated!

I am looking forward to a busy spring and summer during which, I hope, the cleaning and restoration of recovered items will move into full swing and options for the future of the Museum should become clearer. As before, for those FOSIM members who have access to the internet, I shall be using the Museum Facebook page to keep supporters up to date with the latest news. (<https://www.facebook.com/Surrey-Infantry-Museum-227378470733863/>)

Please also note we do have a just giving page after loads of requests and this can be found at <https://www.justgiving.com/Clandon-House/> . Please give generously as we need all the help we can get over the next few months.

## **ARMY v Navy Rugby Match -30th April 2016**

The London branch of the Queens Association will be providing Two Gazebos and "field" bar before the Army v Navy Match on 30 April 2016. They hope to be set up in one of the Car parks by 11.00am so do look out for them.

## **Donation Request - Queens Memorial – National Arboreteum**

On Sunday 15 May the Queen's are dedicating a new Memorial to stand proudly at the National Memorial Arboretum celebrating 50 years since they were formed. Fund-raising to cover the cost has been continuing throughout the last 12 months, ably supported by some of the Association Branches and some brave individuals

This is a plea to ask you to put your hand into your pocket and donate so that the Memorial is funded from subscription Donating is easy. Either go to the association website [www.queensregimentalassociation.org](http://www.queensregimentalassociation.org) and click on the "Donate" button half way down the page, not forgetting to click the Gift Aid box to ensure that the Chancellor plays his part or by filling in the attached donation form and sending it back to Alistair Goulden at the [queensregimentalassociation@gmail.com](mailto:queensregimentalassociation@gmail.com).

If you wish to see the event and would like tickets - £5.00 pp - please also contact Alistair direct for these.

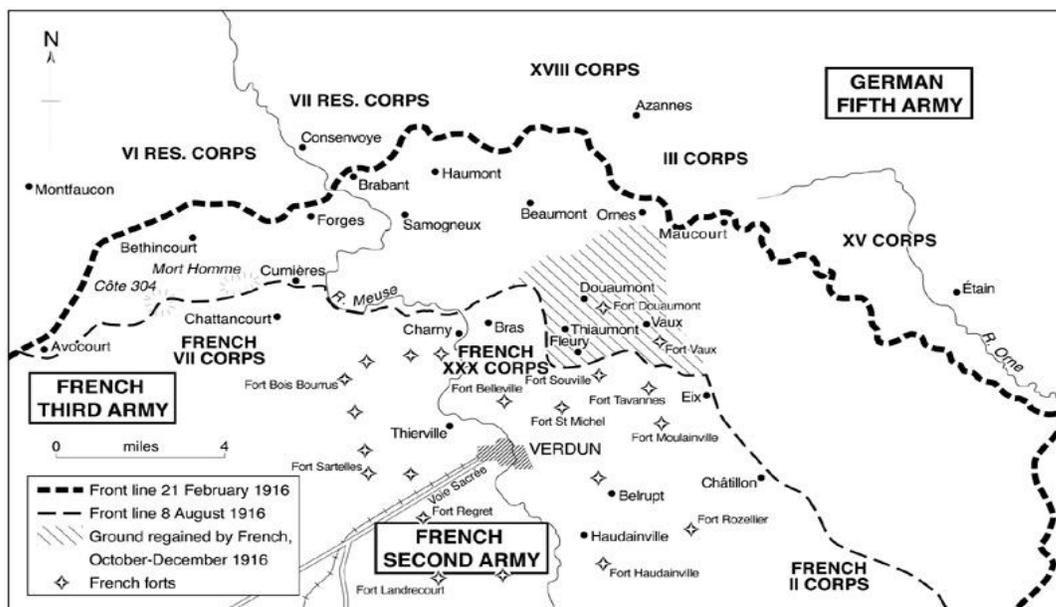
## The Battle of Verdun - 1916

This battle often gets overlooked as it is in the same year of the Battle for the Somme and was mainly between France and Germany. During 1915 all sides of the War had come almost to a halt and several attempts by both sides to break through had failed. Germany decided that Verdun would be the area to try and breakthrough again. The Battle started on February 21st 1916 and ended on December 16th

The German Commander in Chief General Erich von Falkenhayn believed that England would surrender if France collapsed. He decided that he would attack France in a very vulnerable area so that the French would throw their entire Army at it. Verdun was seen as this weakness by the Germans. It was a stronghold on the Eastern French border as well as the gate to the Champagne area and therefore a direct route to Paris. However the French had seriously neglected this area as they did not consider it an important target despite the evidence otherwise.

The German decided to attack in on 11/12<sup>th</sup> February 16 but the first attack was delayed due to the bad weather conditions. This allowed the French to put in two more divisions to support this area. The attack finally started on 21<sup>st</sup> February with the heaviest attack of bombardment of the war so far. The bombardment lasted for over nine hours but the French did not collapse until 25<sup>th</sup> February when the German managed to occupy Fort Douaumont.

General Phillipe Petain was appointed by the French as the Commander in Chief of Verdun and he ordered a formation on both banks of the River Meuse. More artillery was also set up and the German were managed to be stopped near the village of Douaumont, only for the French to lose this area by the 2 March. Petain however did get time to fortify the French defences and the Germans now found they have to destroy the French artillery if they were to proceed any further.



The Germans decided to attack the banks of the Meuse on the 6<sup>th</sup> March and they did well in the battle. The French artillery was concentrated in Bois Borrus. Before the Germans could get here they had to attack a hill called Le Mort Homme. This was fiercely defended by the French and from another Hill Cote 34, the French were annoying the Germans with its constant fire on them. The Germans had over 500 guns concentrated on this very small area and they managed to gain this with horrendous loss on both sides.

The strongest fort of the war was considered at Vaux as it was heavily fortified. The German attack was stopped by the heavy gunfire that the French put down and the German conceded on 19<sup>th</sup> March as nothing was being achieved here.

The French however were having a leadership crisis and Petain was removed and replaced by General Nivelle on 1 May 1916. On the 8<sup>th</sup> May there was a serious explosion at Fort Douaumont which killed over 700 Germans, however a further attack by the French was not so successful and the French suffered more terrible losses. Fort Vaux was successfully taken by the German in the July and despite attempts by the French and yet more heavy losses did not recover this area.

The Germans then went onto attack Fleury and Fort Souville in order to get to Verdun and they would use phosgene gas to disperse the French. This attack failed and so did a few more on Fleury with the French fighting hard to hold the Germans at Bay. In the meantime the British decide to start the Battle of the Somme in the hope that it would draw the Germans away from the area which eventually it did.

However the German put in an attack between Fleury and the Thiamont fortification. The area soon became awash with bodies. There were major shortages on both sides and the condition the troops lived in was dire. This attack lasted from 1 Aug to 6 Sep with no major gains on either side.

This time it was the Germans who lost confidence in their commanders and Von Falkenhayn was replaced by General Ludendorff who first order was to cease fire at Verdun. However the French had other plans. In the October the French recovered Fort Douaumont and then Fort Vaux all be it now in ruins as the German had blown it up. The final attack by the French started on 11<sup>th</sup> December as they wanted the Germans back to where they started on in the February. The German accepted a defeat at Verdun on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1916.

There are varying amounts given for the casualties on both sides - French around 350,000 with approx. 160,000 dead - the Germans 340,000 with approx. 100,000 dead. Prisoners of war were taken on both sides and this affects the figures and no accurate records were kept.



## Lunch Club at Clandon

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*“meet old and new friends, come to lunch”*

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## Luncheon Club

Lecture Lunches are continuing and we have a four events confirmed for this year. We must thank the speakers who give their time freely and for those who turn up to support the events. Especially new to the circuit this year is Colonel Patterson who is presenting the History of Army Flying. David has been a good supporter of the lecture lunches and now takes on the mantle of being a speaker for us. I would like to see that FOSIM members support this honorable step forward.

The lecture lunches are mainly at the Surrey History Centre but the September talk is in the Community Room at Guildford fire station. Please note the new timings and do not arrive much before these. Prices have changed as the SHC will do the catering for those held here.

Proforma for attendance to be returned to Dee Hutchison at the new address see Page 1 either by email or post.

<b>13<sup>th</sup> April 2016</b>	<b>Ian Chatfield - The Battle of the Somme Surrey History Centre Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND</b>
<b>21st Jun 2106</b>	<b>Col David Patterson - The History of Army Flying Surrey History Centre</b>
<b>20th Sept 2016</b>	<b>Col Patrick Crowley - General Sir Charles Monro - WW1 Commander &amp; Colonel of the Regiment Guildford Fire Station</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2016</b>	<b>John Lewis Stemple - Where Poppies Blow Surrey History Centre</b>

Luncheon Club - Proforma

13 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	Ian Chatfield - The Battle of the Somme Surrey History Centre Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND	No -----	£12.50
21st Jun 2106	Col David Patterson - The History of Army Flying Surrey History Centre	No -----	£12.50
20th Sept 2016	Col Patrick Crowley - General Sir Charles Monro Guildford Fire Station	No -----	£7.50
23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov 2016	John Lewis Stemple - Where Poppies blow Surrey History Centre	No -----	£12.50

Name -----

Email/Address/ Phone if not FOSIM Member

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In case of short notice cancellation

Cheque amounts enclosed for No ----- Tickets £-----

Please note you can send separate cheques for each buffet lunch. They will not be cashed until the lunch date is due so can pre date.

Arrive for Lunch 12.30pm for seating at 13.00PM

Guests are welcome to attend and do not have to members of FOSIM.

**Please return to:-**

Dee Hutchison - Secretary  
Surrey Infantry Museum, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking,  
Surrey, GU21 6ND

Phone and fax: 01483 770761  
email: fosim@btconnect.com