



Surrey Infantry Museum

Museum Newsletter - Oct 2015

Volume 1 Issue 9

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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Vel Exuviae Triumphant – Even in defeat there can be Triumph

You will all have heard of the terrible fire at Clandon Park on 29th April this year. The building having at last been secured; the salvage operation is about to start. We must assume that much has been destroyed. Elsewhere in this issue you will read more detail of the events on the day, what has so far been recovered and future salvage plans.

I know you will all join me in expressing our sympathy to all those, both staff and volunteers, who over many years helped to make our Museum so successful. Their hard work and dedication made a truly exceptional “Visitors Experience” attracting over 30,000 visitors a year. The very glowing comments in the visitors’ book, probably destroyed, were a testimony to their hard work and diligence.

Many of you will wonder about the future. In order to establish a replacement Museum we must: find a new location, determine if we have sufficient items to display (dependent on the outcome of the salvage operation) and lastly determine how much money will be available to display the items. The Museum Trustees are actively considering all these factors.

Even after a disaster there can be positives. The response and offers of help have been many and very positive. Guildford Council immediately made office space available, Surrey History Centre has offered long term office and storage space, The Lightbox in Woking helped with storage. The Queen’s Royal Surrey Trustees provided funds to host a lunch for all volunteers and FOSIM members, funds to purchase new WW1 uniforms for Ian Chatfield outreach activities and to set up a new office in the Surrey History Centre.

Not all of our history is lost. Our archives are held at the Surrey History Centre where they are extensively used by many for research. Our website of some 13,000 pages will continue to tell the story of the Infantry Regiment of Surrey.

National Armed Forces Day in Guildford was a great success. Both 1 and 3 PWRR provided Guards to march up the High Street followed by some of our veterans who found the sloop getting even steeper. After the march past The Duke of York, the Friends of PWRR hosted a Regimental Tent in Stoke Park. That the beer run out at one stage is proof of another successful regimental gathering. cont.....

Surrey Infantry Museum,
From 19th November

Surrey Infantry Museum,
Surrey History Centre,
130 Goldsworth Road,
Woking, Surrey
GU21 6ND
Tel: TBC

email:
fosim@btconnect.com

The 1st July 2016 is the 100th Anniversary of The Battle of the Somme. A hundred years ago the whole nation was inspired by the gallantry of B Company 8th Bn The East Surrey Regiment who charged the enemy lines kicking a football.

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.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, FOSIM is arranging a Battlefield Tour 10-13th May to view the actual Battlefields. If you have not already applied please do so soonest as places are fast being taken.

On 1st July 2016 an event to commemorate the action is being held at Guildford Sports Centre.

Some of you who have visited the Cathedral recently will have seen that the £7M work has now started. This has meant the closing of the Regimental Chapel for at least a year.

Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement during a difficult time.

May we wish you all a very happy New Year and successful 2016 during which we will see you on The Battlefield Tour.

Tony Ward

David Pollard - MUSEUM MANAGEMENT and TRUSTEES

Little did I imagine as I wrote my first report last March, that not many weeks later I would be at Clandon Park on the evening of 29th April to witness the destruction of the house and our museum. It was a truly dreadful sight. A number of our Volunteers were already there when I arrived, and were dealing with the four Colours which the Fire Brigade had rescued, at significant risk, from the building.

In the aftermath of the fire the Volunteers have rallied around, and at the recent Clandon Park "Open Saturdays" a good number of them have been present. They have engaged superbly with members of the public, many of whom showed a great deal of interest in the museum. It is reassuring that the Volunteers have stuck with the museum, and hopefully that loyalty might be rewarded in the future.

Two days after the fire I heard the NT Press Officer being interviewed on the "Today" programme, and make no mention of the museum. Arriving at Clandon a couple of hours later, I spotted him and told him in no uncertain terms what I thought of his lack of recognition of the loss the museum had suffered. He seemed somewhat contrite, but sadly the NT continues to make no mention of the museum in any of their press releases; it is almost as if it never existed as far as the upper echelons of the NT are concerned.

Happily, our relations with the local NT management have been cordial and constructive throughout. Steve Johnson and I have met them on numerous occasions to discuss salvage and the way forward. Hopefully, by the time you read this, salvage in the

museum area should have started and we might know more of what, if anything, can be retrieved, and the condition.

There are three organisations who have been very supportive and helpful in the aftermath, and to whom I should record our sincere gratitude. Firstly,

Regimental connections with the Leader of Guildford Council helped to provide temporary office space in the Council offices.

Secondly, Surrey History Centre in Woking has been very supportive throughout and, by the time you read this, we should hopefully have more suitable office space in that building.

Finally, the Lightbox gallery and museum in Woking provided secure storage space for the medals and some of the artefacts that were retrieved in the two days immediately after the fire, and continue to give help and advice.

We have also forged good and productive links with Surrey Fire Brigade, and a number of them involved in fighting the fire and the rescue of the Colours, as well as our local NT managers, were entertained to a splendid lunch at the Tower of London, organised by RHQ.

The Trustees have held two extraordinary meetings since the fire, in order to deal solely with its aftermath. The salvage operation has been subject to delay because of the need to stabilise the building and how to deal with all the different types of debris. It is now, however, underway, and at the next Trustees meeting on 21st October, we might be a little clearer about the way forward and start to ascertain what can be salvaged and used in the future.

Finally, David Dickins really is retiring at the end of this year. I am sure we are all grateful for his dedication and all the work, much of it behind the scenes, which he has put in during his time as a Trustee.

News flash --- New Home ---New Home--- New Home

From the 17th November we will be located in our new home at the Surrey History Centre In Woking, Surrey. We are all looking forward to this move and we will be able to coordinate more effectively and start to raise our Museum as Tony Ward says **Vel Exuviae Triumphant - Even in defeat there can be Triumph**

The Queens Royal Surrey Reunion at the Union Jack Club

2015 Reunion

The handling of this event will now pass to the Friends and will continue in force. Date for diary this year is **6th November 2015**.

Application forms and Tickets will come from Surrey Infantry Museum and all enquiries need to come to FOSIM. Tickets have now been issued and there are a few places available. All QRS matters are to be sent to Dee Hutchison at the email address below.

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 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 our 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 Clandon - 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 bounce backs per newsletter or email sent out

The Somme Battlefield Tour – 11th-13th May 2016

Attached to this Newsletter is the details of the Battlefield Tour planned for May 2016. There is short notice to get a deposit in for 11th November 2015 to Dee Hutchison, but the final payment is not due until March 2016. This is a bespoke Tour following our forebear regiments kindly put together with Anglia Tours.

The cost to those who served in the Regiments has now dropped to £349 per person as the Queens Royal Surrey Trustees have very kindly supported this venture and is allocating a grant to each ex or serving member of the PWRR and all forebear regiments. Please consider coming along and seeing where the Queens and East Surrey fought in WW1.

The Fire

On the afternoon and evening of Wednesday 29th April 2015, fire ripped through Clandon Park largely destroying the Museum and House.



The fire's source and cause remains subject to official investigation but the alarm was raised at about 4pm when flames were discovered in the basement. The building was immediately evacuated and the Fire Service arrived within fifteen minutes. However, by early evening in the attic rooms above the South Range: these rooms contained the reserve store of items not on display in the Museum itself. Throughout the evening the Fire Service struggled to contain the fire but by 8pm the upper floors of the South Range had collapsed with burning debris falling into the Museum rooms in the basement below.

A strong wind had fanned the flames across the building and there was serious concern that the whole structure would be destroyed. Due to the risk of collapse the firefighters needed to withdraw from within the building. As whistles were blown to signal the evacuation, a group of firemen led by an ex-Irish Hussar rushed into the basement corridor and rescued four framed Colours from the walls: the ceiling of the corridor fell in a few minutes later.

Over the following days the Fire Service remained on site damping down the debris and extinguishing residual fires. Whilst putting out a small flare-up in the Museum rooms the firemen scooped up a number of medals lying where they had fallen from their display and extracted the drawers from a cabinet containing a large number of medals. Altogether approximately 800 medals representing 300 recipients have been recovered: some have been damaged but the majority will be restored to their former glory.



Medal chest opened



State of Medals in Medal Chest.

Close inspection of the Museum rooms from outside reveals a tangled mess of beams, girders, cabling, brickwork and ash up to shoulder-height in places. It is most likely that anything combustible will have been destroyed.

A number of artefacts, of priceless historical value, are almost certainly lost including:

- The Nevill football from the First Day of the Somme.
- A unique powder horn snuff box from 1707.

MISSING IN ACTION : PRESUMED LOST



THE NEVILL FOOTBALL

One of four kicked across no-man's land by 8th Battalion East Surrey Regiment on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1916. Only one ball now survives.

*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.*
"Touchstone"

MISSING IN ACTION : PRESUMED LOST



POWDER HORN SNUFF BOX

This artefact was carved and carried by a soldier of the 2nd Queen's Dowager's Regiment; it bore an etched map of North America in 1707. The silver embellishments were added after it was purchased from the private soldier by an Ensign Holdsworth, who presented it to the officers' Mess in 1837.

- Scarves crocheted by Queen Victoria for troops serving in South Africa.
- Life-size wooden recruiting figures from 1715 and many other items.

Since the fire, work has been carried out to stabilise the remains of the building and secure the site to enable archaeological teams to start the salvage operation. During this period three more Colours were recovered from the walls in Tom Tit's Stable: unlike the rest of the house, this room has a stone-vaulted ceiling that did not collapse. Unfortunately these three Colours are badly affected by water and mould damage and will require long and expensive treatment.

Restoration of the house by the National Trust is likely to take over five years: this means that the Museum will almost certainly not be moving back into the property and we must make alternative plans. At present the Museum's administration is being run from a pair of desks in Millmead House, kindly provided by Guildford Borough Council, and the curator's study. However we are due to move into the Surrey History Centre during October where we will have an office with full facilities. This will be an excellent base, especially given the Centre's research facilities, for re-building the Museum.

The future of the Museum remains uncertain but a number of options are being considered. Until the salvage operation is completed (probably early in 2016) it is not clear as to how much material will be rescued and restored. In turn, this will help define the nature and timing of any re-establishment of the Museum. However, there is an appetite and determination amongst those involved that there will again be a Surrey Infantry Museum presence within the county.

Other Museum Business

The fire and its aftermath have understandably taken centre stage over the last six months but other Museum business has continued.

Accreditation of the Museum by Arts Council England was provisionally awarded during the spring: owing to the fire this is now suspended, but the hard work put in by Ian Chatfield to achieve this goal before he retired deserves our recognition and thanks.

A replacement 'pop-up' display stand has been purchased and seen much service over the summer including National Armed Forces Day, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Open Day and Guildford Heritage Sunday at Henley Fort. More recently the Museum has been exhibiting at the Clandon Park Open Saturdays attracting over 500 visitors on each day.

Stephen Johnson- Curator with
Doug Brown, Nick Lloyd, Dee
Hutchison, and Allan Mornment
At Clandon Open Days.



The Museum has received a number of donations since April, most notably: a full set of ESR Journals from Mr Norman Gilham: a large collection of items relating mainly to the 24th London Regiment, 1st Surrey Rifles and QRR from the Tamplin family: a significant collection of East Surrey badges from the estate of Colonel 'Mac' McConnell: WW2 QRR memorabilia connected with CQMS Frederick King: various items donated by Colonel Toby Sewell including a drum presented to the QRR in 1919 by the mother of Lt.Col. Bushell VC. We wish to express our thanks for the generosity of all who have made donations no matter how large or small.



I would also like to express my personal thanks to everyone for their support during this challenging time, especially the Volunteers who continue to work tirelessly on behalf of the Museum. I look forward to delivering a more positive report for the next newsletter: I hope by that time the fire will have become just another chapter in the Museum's continuing story.

Clandon House as at October 2015 –South End where Museum was in Basement



The Battle of Loos - 25th September 2015

Ian Chatfield

In the summer of 1915 the French Commander in Chief Joffre decide to repeat the assault of each flank of the German salient in the Western Front. Neither of the British Commander Field Marshall Sir John French and General Sir Douglas Haig were very much in favour of conducting an offensive in this area at this time.

The landscape around Loos was generally very flat and in the middle of a coal mining area. The Germans had taken great advantage of this, as they set up observation posts from the slag heaps and the mining towers. The villages had been strongly fortified and were linked by trenches which had heavily wired defences.

The date for the major offensive was set for 25th September despite all the reservations by the British Commanders. On the 24th September canisters of Chlorine gas were placed in the forward British trenches. This was the first time the British had used gas which was five months after the Germans had done this to try and overcome a shortage of their artillery.

Several areas were successfully taken by the British but the wind direction turned and chlorine gas went back across the British lines. Gains were about 8000 yards of enemy trenches captured and getting upto 2 miles into enemy territory. This gain was eventually lost with the German counter attacks. The only major gain was the village of Loos.

A major failing was the lack of artillery, ammunition and fresh troops and reinforcements to maintain the advantage. When the reserves did appear they suffered heavy losses. The Battle continued until November 4th but with significant casualties of 60,000 against the Germans 20,000. Of the 8,500 (approx) soldiers who died on 25th September only 2,000 have a known grave.

Among those lost in action was the only son (John) of Rudyard Kipling, the famous British writer and fervent supporter of Britain's participation in the Great War. Inconsolable, Kipling spent many years searching the Gohelle Plain for John's body, without success. It was finally discovered in 1991, and was laid to rest in Saint-Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery in Haisnes.

The failure at Loos led to the removal of General French from his position as commander-in-chief of the British Army to be replaced by General Haig on 19 December 1915.



Walking through the gas at the Battle of Loos

“meet old and new friends, come to lunch”

Luncheon Club

Despite the loss of Clandon as a venue we have managed to continue with the Lecture lunches. June we were able to go to the Manor House Hotel and the QRS Trustees very kindly paid for the buffet. This talk was well attended and being the first after the fire you all wanted to know what was happening.

In September we were kindly hosted by Andrew Treasure of the Surrey Fire Service at the New Guildford Fire Station. Many took up the offer a tour around the fire station after the talk. We will be there again in November so if you did not have time in September to go around, the offer is there again so please allow the time for this to happen. We are trying hard to keep the cost of lunch down so people do attend but as we have no facilities for full catering it will remain a buffet lunch.

Next year we have set dates but location is not yet confirmed as we are due to move into our new home in November in the Surrey History Centre in Woking.

Hope to see you all at the next talk in November being our very own Col Patrick Crowley. These talks cannot happen without your very vital support so thank you for continued interest.

Proforma for attendance to be returned to Dee Hutchison at the new address see Page 1

25 th Nov 2015	Col Patrick Crowley - Kut Guildford New Fire Station
13 th April 2016	Surrey History Centre Goldsworth Road, Woking
21 st Sept 2016	TBC
23 rd Nov 2016	John Lewis Stemple

Luncheon Club

25 th Nov 2015	Col Patrick Crowley - Kut Guildford New Fire Station	£7.50 ph	No...
13 th April 2016	Surrey History Centre Goldsworth Road, Woking	£7.50 ph	No...
21 st Sept 2016	TBC	£7.50 ph	
23 rd Nov 2016	John Lewis Stemple	£10.00ph	No...

Name -----

Email/Address/ Phone if not FOSIM Member

In case of short notice cancellation

Cheque amounts enclosed for £-----

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

Arrive for Lunch 12.00pm for seating at 12.30.

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 223419
email: fosim@btconnect.com