



COALHOUSE FORT NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

I should like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a Very Happy New Year as we go into 2013 so let us try to pull together and make it a good one.

In September last our chairman Simon Woodhead resigned and we would like to thank him for his diligence and service he gave to the office and the fort. At the same time our health and safety consultant left us. I until the AGM I took on the role of acting chairman to keep the jolly old ship afloat.

At the recent AGM it was agreed that I should take on the role of Chairman whilst continuing as Publicity Officer. Peter Appleton is now vice-chairman with Eileen Suckling continuing to act as Treasurer.

The remaining committee positions are:-

Mike Ostler	Research
Samantha Coats	Catering Manager
Maria Revell	Events
John Brice	Insurance
Roy Reynolds/Basil Silver	Village Reps.
Health & Safety/Security	TBA
Military Group	TBA

The Coalhouse Fort Military Vehicle group has now disbanded and it is hoped that a new member will come forward as representative for the military vehicle contingent. Ernie Heagren, our RAF man has done a lot to advertise the fort at shows throughout the past year entertaining the kids who try on bits of equipment and often have their photographs taken much to the delight of their mums and dads.

This past year our Halloween evenings were a great success due to Samantha stepping in at short notice with the assistance of John Pumfrett and Jason Knight. It is hoped that Sam will be able to do the same for 2013, and we should like to offer our sincere thanks for a job well done. It looks like this coming year will be another good one with the lessons that were learnt from this year's rather hurried event, so more power to their elbow.

We are approaching this coming year with a need to increase our finances in this time of dwindling finances so with great regret it has become necessary to raise the admission charges which we have remained static for a number of years. The revised charges for 2013 will be Adults: £4.00 Concessions: £3.00 but children 5 to 16 will remain at 50p. Incidentally, we still have the cheapest entrance fee for events in the area. The £10.00 annual membership fee is maintained giving free entry at all times.

We have had a hard think and due to the rising costs of services it has also become necessary to increase the annual vehicle rental space costs to £120.00, which is still good value at £10.00 per month. Entrance charge for the Halloween evenings will be Adults: £6.00 Children £3.00. All the above increases, although regrettable, are primarily due to the reduction in revenue and lack of grants being available. It is necessary to protect our reserves and enable us to continue to finish the work on the gatehouse block and other projects currently in the pipeline. Ken L

MEMBERSHIP

We need to recruit more members for both open days and working days. There has been a decline over the past year with the loss of dedicated volunteers so anybody who can or are able to assist PLEASE come forward and be recognised. We need to reopen the shop regularly and maintain our pay booth which requires two persons in each position. Generally we require at least twelve persons to maintain an efficient running of the fort on open days. Don't be shy every little helps.

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS

It was hoped that we would have had some details of the past years investigations but unfortunately they have not reached us in time for this issue, hopefully we will have more details for the next issue. It would be good to take the opportunity to offer our sincere thanks for all the work that the team have put in especially Simon, Thor and Claire in those dark dank tunnels. There seems to have been much interest and enthusiasm from all who have attended on what must have been some very cold nights.

THAMESIDE AVIATION MUSEUM

Another year has passed with a good public response and special interest being shown in the Battle of Britain and Blitz exhibits. The new year will see a number of planned changes taking place but nothing will be taken away. Items from the Blitz of 1940/41 have been represented with the land mine being relocated in the WW2 room and the USAAF exhibits being livened for 2013. This coming year sees the 70th anniversary of 'Operation Chastise' the bombing of the Mohne, Ader and Sorpe dams by 617 Squadron with the Barnes Wallis designed bomb/mine being dropped known as 'Upkeep'. A half scale replica is on display in the museum. The museum has now moved into another era, this of the jet with a small display especially relating to the English Electric Canberra, Britain's first jet bomber. Dave Thorndyke

FORT MILITARY MUSEUM

In the past two years the museum has tended to stagnate, but during the coming year it is intended to add some new display areas and improved displays to give it a more professional look. Due to concern with the constant dampness it has not been possible in the past to put many paper items on show, but with a new glass unit it may now become a possibility.

It has recently been possible after many attempts to obtain a WW2 WRNS officer's European tri-corn hat to add to the ratings soft hat on display. The reason for the officer's hat is a tribute to Christian Lamb who was a serving member of the fort's degaussing contingent at HMS St. Clement during the second world war, and whose memories can be found in her book 'I only Joined for the Hat'. Ken L.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

On Sunday 25th November and our last open day of the season the annual remembrance parade and service was held. It proved to be a great success and even luck was on our side with the weather behaving itself.

We were pleased to have present a number of very important visitors which included Lord Petre, Lord Lieutenant of Essex, The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Thurrock and the Mayor of Castle Point, Local MP's Stephen Metcalf and Jackie Doyle-Price, Local Councillors, Veterans and Members of the British Legion, A representative of the Royal Anglian Regiment and cadets of all three services, and many standards on display.

The parade into the fort was led by the Sutherland Pipes and Drums and on guard at the remembrance site with reversed arms was the 10th Essex WW1 re-enactment group. The service was conducted by Canon Paul Robinson.

This day has now been established as one of special significance which allows all to pay tribute not only to the fallen of all conflicts, but also to reflect on those who are still suffering from the horrors of war.

GRUMBLES AND GRUNTS

Once again only one person has deemed to send me anything for the newsletter, and although it may seem insular in my comments it would be welcoming if I could receive others opinions or articles so to reflect a more balanced viewpoint. It's your newsletter so why not be part of it. Ken L.

LATE NEWS

Most of you will not know that Georgette Polley, one of our trustees has resigned and we thank her for all the support she has given us. Her place is scheduled to be taken up by George Moseley a member of long standing to bring our strength up to three again which is a statutory requirement.

NEW YEAR GENERAL HISTORY QUIZ

HOW GOOD ARE YOU? * These questions were answered incorrectly by a high percentage of pupils in last year's school exams. Just for fun can you do better?

1. What year did the Roman occupation of Britain begin? *
2. What kingdom did Alfred the Great rule? *
3. In what year was the battle of Agincourt fought? *
4. Who was Britain's longest serving monarch? *
5. Which king did the gunpowder plotters intend to kill? *
6. Wat Tyler was one of the leaders of what rebellion? *
7. In which country was the battle of Waterloo fought? *
8. Who was Britain's prime minister at the beginning of WW2? *
9. Where was Thomas Becket killed? *
10. Who was the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world? *
11. In what year was the first tank used and where?
12. Who was Henry VIII first wife? *
13. In what year was King Charles I executed? *
14. In what year did Charles George Gordon die and where?
15. When did the 13 American colonies declare themselves independent? *
16. What were Gothas and how did they trouble Britain?
17. Where can you find in London eight 6" Mk.23 guns?
18. Who was the designer and constructor of the fort's RML guns?
19. Who designed and constructed the Stirling bomber?
20. What is the name of the first French ironclad ship?

OPEN DAYS 2013 MARCH TO NOVEMBER -

Those not titled are unspecified but may be reclassified later.

Sunday March 31 Motor Bike day, Monday April 1, Sunday April 28 Military History, Monday May 6, Sunday May 26, Monday May 27, Sunday June 30, Sunday July 28 Classic Car/Vehicle Day, Sunday August 25, Monday August 26, Sunday September 29, Friday/Saturday October 25/26 Halloween, Sunday November 24 Remembrance.

Answers: 1. 43AD, 2. Wessex, 3. 1415, 4. Queen Victoria, 5. King James First, 6. Peasant's Revolt, 7. Belgium, 8. Neville Chamberlain, 9. Canterbury Cathedral, 10. Sir Francis Drake, 11. 1916 on the Somme, 12. Catherine of Aragon, 13. 1649, 14. 1885 at Khartoum, 15. 1776, 16. WW1 German biplanes, 17. On HMS Belfast, 18. William George Armstrong, 19. Short Bros. and Harland, 20. La Gloire.