

NEWS

Echoes from the past - Paranormal activities

'A paranormal event or power, for example the appearance of a ghost, cannot be explained by scientific laws and is thought to involve strange, unknown forces.'
Collins Dictionary



The history of the Fort spans from 1867 and many different people have added to its story over the years. The Paranormal groups are finding some of these previous occupants. There have been some intriguing results and experiences. Several different Paranormal Groups hire Slough Fort to hold paranormal events. They vary a lot in their style but all offer an interesting evening.

To find out about the events, please visit our website www.sloughfort.org.uk and <https://www.facebook.com/Slough-Fort-Preservation-Trust-869178483172446/>

Our last Guided Tours for this year

Coming up on 3rd October 2021 at 11 am and 2 pm
Please turn up 15 min before the start of each tour.

For tickets visit:
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/kent/slough-fort/>



The Fort is looking for New Trustees

With our expanding plans and workloads the Trust is looking to recruit additional Trustees to our management board.

We are looking for people who may have particular skills and experiences that they can bring to the project or will enhance those we already have.

The role of the Trustees is to ensure that the Trust operates within its permitted legal powers and parameters and carries out the objectives as set out in its founding document. The Trustees main purpose is to manage the project strategically, make management decisions and ensure that they are carried through. Due to being a small organisation, our Trustees are also very hands on, running workdays and public events on the Fort.

However, there is a great deal that also goes on behind the scenes that can on occasions be time-consuming such as applying for grants, meeting outside bodies and attending meetings. We hold monthly Trustee meetings usually at the Fort. All Trustees and volunteers are unpaid for their duties to the Trust.

If you feel that this is something you may be interested in or know somebody else who might, please get in touch via secretary@sloughfort.org.uk

Further details of what is expected of a Trustee can be found on the Charity Commission website via the link below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

The Water Tank and its builder

It's not often that there is a photograph of a builder but, here we are! This is of George Rattray who was the contractor for the building of the water tank that has been removed from the top of the slope in front of Slough Fort. The booster pump house is still there on the roof of the fort, at least some of it.



The background is that the tank was approved by Strood Rural District Council in March 1960, and subsequently built by the contractor George Rattray from Gravesend.

The tank was a Horsely-Piggott, which is similar to a Braithwaite. The tank and booster building were built to serve the caravan site.

The specified capacity of the tank was 29,920 gallons. This was dismantled in January 2017 by our volunteers and transported to Wales to be erected at a heritage railway.



This is a picture of George Rattray, who was the contractor for the removed tank. Photo from the late George Rattray Collection

The Amazing Victor Smith, historian specialising in the research, recording, restoration, presentation and publication of military and civil defence

Victor Smith has a wealth of experience. He started his journey as a student at King's College and was a manager in the Civil service. In 1975 he formed the Kent Defence Research Group and helped found the international Fortress Study Group. He subsequently led projects for the restoration and public access to Coalhouse Fort, New Tavern Fort, the Gravesend Blockhouse and Gravesend's Cold War bunker. His excavations at Milton-next-Gravesend discovered what appears to have been the earliest Italianate angular bastion built in Britain. From documentary research he also found the location of the previously unknown 17th century Trinity Fort on Thameside. Victor has also advised the National Trust at Brean Down Fort, Reigate Fort and Bodiam Castle, English Heritage at Tilbury Fort and other organisations with military sites as well as exploring and reporting on the later fortifications of the Firth of Forth in Scotland. He acted as the Assistant Director of the excavation of the Romano-British religious town of Vagniacis and served in various capacities in the excavation of other sites from the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The list carries on including advising many international sites in the Caribbean.

We are lucky to have had his help and advice at Slough Fort.

When and how did you start your collaboration with Slough Fort?

In 2009 I was asked by Historic England and Bourne Leisure to research and report on Slough Fort, and to make recommendations. The fort was then regarded as 'At Risk'.

I worked in various archives and studied the fort and I also carried out measured surveys and obtained structural and wildlife assessments.

Can you tell us about a time when the restoration work has been challenging?

I remember a period of exceptional cold during the contractor's excavation of the right wing battery. Extra clothing and gloves were ineffective and my fingers were too frozen to write notes so I crept into an ammunition recess where it was marginally less cold.

I am pleased that my survey work assisted the restoration of the rear earthwork of the right wing battery.

What is your goal for Slough Fort for the future?

I would like to go back to the fort and take my surveys to a next level, including the exposed front of the main fort. The supposed placement of the gun casemates had fooled a statutory body and successive historians for years.

I want to see the fort continue as it has started, and to become an exemplar of a restored defence site presented to the public. I'd like to see more guns in place, even replicas.

I then, oversaw contractors' work on the main fort and their digging out of the right wing battery. Later, I wrote a published paper and a booklet on the site. A programme of community volunteering ensued, with work on both wing batteries. I was able to persuade Keith Gulvin to take on a leadership role at the fort and I briefed an artist to produce the interpretation drawings of the fort.



What would you recommend for people who are wishing to visit Slough Fort?

From a historian's point of view, I'd like visitors to understand and appreciate the difference between the visibility of the original fort and the striving for invisibility that followed. This is important!