

Welcome to the 9th Edition of Slough Fort News! We hope that all of the friends and families of Slough Fort are staying safe and well during the current crisis. You will be pleased to know that although the fort is currently shut to visitors, a great deal of essential work and maintenance has still been going behind the scenes. We will hopefully be able to reopen soon and welcome back all of our valued volunteers and guests! We miss you all dearly!

Leader Grant

Applying for grants can be a time-consuming process which can take up a large amount of the trustees' time.

Back on 14th June 2018, trustees Keith, Colin and Daune started the process of applying to Leader for a grant to replace a number of windows and doors in the Main Fort. Slough Fort has successfully been awarded the grant after a lengthy 2 year process and we are very appreciative of these funds. The grant funding is enough to cover 4 doors and 5 windows, effectively weatherproofing the Guard Room, Officers Kitchen, Pantry, Officers' w/c and ladies' w/c. The windows and doors will be period correct and constructed by a local joinery company who made our windows and doors for the Magazine last year. The Leader grant covers 80%



The European
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Rural Development:
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Rural Areas

of the total cost so in order to obtain the windows and doors, we need to make up the difference as we are unable to currently fundraise due to the current crisis. Slough Fort has therefore set up a crowd funding page for the remaining 20%, details of which can be found below.

"Restoration of the Magazine Building at Slough Fort has been part funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development"

Crowdfunding Page

As we have not been able to raise funds in our normal manner (due to being unable to open the Fort for Open Days, Sunday Tours & Paranormal Investigations), we have initiated a crowd fundraising page with the hope that the shortfall of monies for the windows and doors, and new handrails in the Main Fort can be met in this way. Any donations would be greatly appreciated, no matter how small!

Our Crowdfunding Story

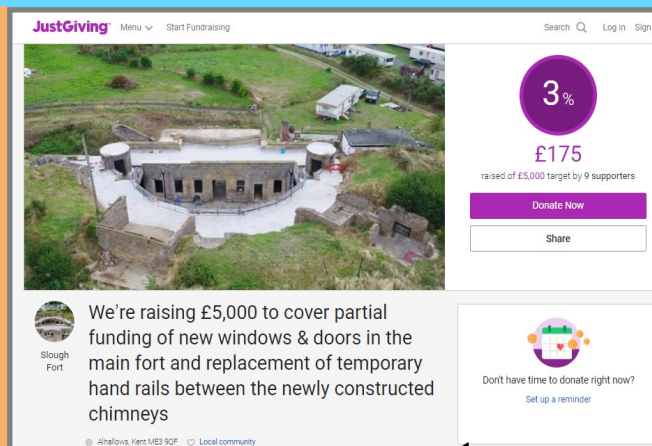
Slough Fort is a small Victorian fort in Allhallows, Kent. Built in 1867, it is one of the Lord Palmerston smallest forts and was constructed to protect the Thames Estuary and Chatham Dockyard from a French invasion. It was manned through the First and Second World Wars. After the war, the fort was sold and fell into disrepair, eventually being added to the Endangered Monuments List.

In 2013, a group of dedicated volunteers came together to preserve the fort. These volunteers eventually formed a Charitable Trust to save Slough Fort. Since then, the fort has undergone a restoration process which has seen many changes and improvements that are preserving the fort and its history for future generations to enjoy.

One of the biggest successes is the way the fort has brought the community together with a common goal of preservation. This has had a positive effect on the local community and has indirectly become a social prescribing activity, helping social isolation in one of the Medway Towns most isolated areas. Slough Fort has become bigger than its sum parts and is helping mental wellbeing within our volunteers, local community and further afield.

The project is to raise funds to replace a number of windows and doors in the Main Fort area. The Trust has been allocated a grant to cover two-thirds of the cost of these windows and doors but have a shortfall to fill. This would normally be raised via our regular tours and open days. As with all small charities, we have been hit hard from the Coronavirus pandemic and have not been able to open since lockdown. Additional to the windows and doors, we need to replace handrails that were temporarily installed for safety reasons. These are now obsolete since the chimneys were reconstructed and have become a safety concern for our guests. All items reinstated will be period correct and constructed with traditional techniques by local companies and installed by our volunteers. This project will help the fort partially realise its goal of becoming a community hub.

"Connecting communities to the past, present and future" – Slough Fort



News Flash

Since the page was setup, a long-term local supporter of Slough Fort has donated £2,500 towards our £5,000.

We now only need to raise £2,500.
Thank you so much!



Mission and Vision Statement

As the Trust has evolved, we have determined that we needed to review our current business plan and strategy. Using the wonders of modern technology, the Trust held a virtual Skype meeting and it was decided by the Trust that the main focus of work for the future will be on the Main Fort. Apart from existing projects, we felt that by focusing renovation exclusively on this area, more opportunities would be created for the fort to benefit from usable space. We have also decided on a new Vision Statement and Mission Statement for Slough Fort.

Mission Statement: *'Connecting communities to the past, present and future.'*

Vision Statement: *'With Slough forts unique history and location we aim to renovate, educate, celebrate and demonstrate history by becoming a premier tourist destination utilising the fort's maximum potential as a venue for all to explore.'*



VE Day



The scheduled VE day street party in Allhallows unfortunately did not take place due to the current pandemic restrictions. However, Slough Fort commemorated the occasion by raising the Union Jack for all to see.

Fort Signs



Another task that has been completed is the addition of noticeboards with lighting and open & closed signage to the signs at the fort entrances by Trustee Stuart. Typically the fort is closed during the evening but we wanted the fort to be easier to locate for our nocturnal paranormal investigators! The noticeboards also help to keep our visitors aware of any future events and if the site is open.



Fort Opening

We are reviewing the government's guidance regularly as to when we will be able to reopen Slough Fort for volunteering, paranormal nights, tours and open days. In addition, we are preparing for when we can reopen and currently looking at how we can safeguard our guests and volunteers when lockdown is eased. Please check our social media for updates. Thank you for your support and patience.



#TBT and #FBF

If you have been following us on social media recently, you will have noticed that we have been running a successful Throwback Thursday and Flashback Friday campaign during the current lockdown in order to reach out to our supporters to keep spirits high. It's not until you look back on the old pictures, that you can see how much progress has been made! We have now reached over 1,500 likes on our Facebook page which is a wonderful achievement and allows us to be connected to the wider community.

Please do tell your family and friends about us and share our posts. The more likes we can get, the more awareness and fund raising opportunities are opened up to Slough Fort. #SloughFort

Events Calendar

As you are aware, all events at Slough Fort have been suspended until further notice in line with the UK Government lockdown.

All volunteer workdays, Open Days, Sunday Tours and all other events and hires are postponed.

As soon as we are able to reopen, we will update you accordingly via our website and social media accounts.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers and visitors for their continued support and our thoughts are with everyone in these worrying uncertain times.

Fort Seating

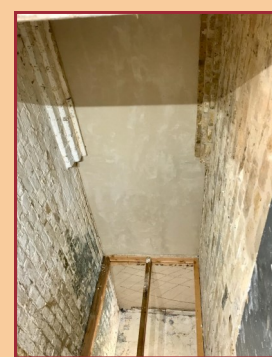
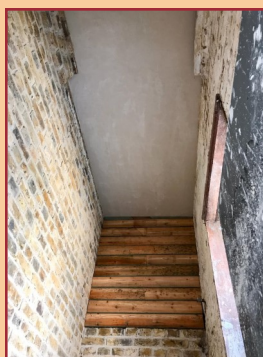


During the lockdown period, a number of benches have been made for Slough Fort by Trustee Stuart and personalised by Trustee Justine. These have been dotted around so guests can sit down during a tour. One such bench is to honour Fred O'Neill, one of our volunteers, who sadly passed away in January.



Main Fort Ceilings

Our multi-talented Trustee Colin, with the help of Trustee Kian, has been extremely busy during lockdown completing the lathes and applying the lime plaster to the ceilings in a number of rooms in the Main Fort. The ceilings in the Officers' Kitchen, Pantry and the Officers' and Ladies' toilets have all now been plastered on top of the lathes. Each ceiling had a total of 4 coats of plaster added. The first coat consisted of coarse lime plaster with horsehair, followed by one coat of hairless coarse lime plaster, followed by two final coats of fine lime plaster. The Officers' Kitchen has had a total of 670kg applied to the ceiling! Timber has also been applied on the framework in the Officers toilet that separates the other rooms. Applying the lime plaster is a labour intensive and time-consuming process. The plaster is composed of lime, aggregate, water and animal hair, which is mixed together shortly before applying to the lath. Drying is very dependent on environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity. It can even dry too quickly if it is too windy at the fort and if it dries too quick, it is liable to cracking. The lime plaster can burn the skin and so our trustees had to wear the appropriate protective equipment for their face and body. Excellent job Colin and Kian! Now, we need our new doors and windows to weather-proof such great work. Please help us with our crowd-funding to achieve this!



'We're Holding Down the Fort'

It's been roughly two months since Slough Fort was forced to shut abruptly to our supporters and pause our normal fund-raising activities. Even though the fort is currently closed, vital maintenance and essential work has still been going on behind the scenes to avoid project disruptions. The Slough Fort trustees have been continuing to hold meetings via skype and are still on-site observing good social distancing measures.

- **Keith**, our Chairman, has been busy as usual continuing to apply for numerous complicated grants and painting our gun with help from Feo the dog
- **Daune**, our Secretary, has been finalising grants and attending to daily financial matters
- **Colin**, our Deputy Chair, has been extremely physically busy with plastering the ceilings and all types of maintenance
- **Michael** has been busy tinkering with our beloved mower, fixing items and updating our COSHH facilities
- **Stuart** has been making Slough Fort benches from scratch, completing the handrails, installing noticeboards/signage and raising the crowdfunding page
- **Justine** has been working on the Facebook #TBT and #FBF posts, keeping in touch with volunteers and completing the newsletter
- **Neil** has been mowing the grounds, raising the flag on VE day and keeping an eye on the fort
- **Kian** has been busy reviewing and introducing new policies and updating the webpage

In addition, we would like to pay homage to our trusty local volunteers **Sue, Maurice and Mark** who have been checking up on the fort every day, watering our apple trees, weeding and mowing the grounds for which we are extremely grateful. We look forward to announcing when we'll be able to welcome all our volunteers back! We can't wait to see all our volunteers and have a well deserved catch-up over a socially-distanced bacon sandwich!



Fort Website

Have you missed a newsletter? Do you have an enquiry about volunteering?

Please take a look at our website which is regularly updated with items regarding the Fort.

<http://www.sloughfort.org.uk>

We hope that you found this Newsletter informative. Please do contact us if you are able to provide any support to us in the form of tools/materials or time so that we may continue with our vital work to get Slough Fort back to its former glory. Please find us on our Facebook Page—Slough Fort Volunteers Group and on our website www.sloughfort.org.uk

