

NEWS

Celebrating Valentine's day

The first Valentine's Day was in the year 496!

Having a particular Valentine's Day is a very old tradition, thought to have originated from a Roman festival. The Romans had a festival called Lupercalia in the middle of February - officially the start of their springtime.

It's thought that as part of the celebrations, boys drew names of girls from a box. They'd be boyfriend and girlfriend during the festival and sometimes they'd get married.

Later on, the church wanted to turn this festival into a Christian celebration and decided to use it to remember St Valentine too. Gradually, St Valentine's name started to be used by people to express their feelings to those they loved.

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>

New website

Slough Fort has a new website!

Please take a moment and visit our webpage: www.sloughfort.org.uk

Thank you!

Sara Scales donation



Sarah Scales, an Allhallows resident, arranged our Village Halloween event in November and has fallen in love with the Fort. She wanted to help more and undertook a 20 mile run around the local area on 5th December to raise funds to help restore the Fort. Sarah managed to raise a massive £160.36. A huge thank you to Sarah!

NEWS

History piece from Victor Smith

A plan of Slough Fort as marked on an Ordnance Survey map and inked-in by the Royal Engineers in 1874. This shows the fort with an outer parade ground to the rear, as it is so identified in another plan.



Anti-tank cylinders

During the height of the German invasion scare in 1940/41 there was a massive programme to prepare temporary fortifications and defensive positions throughout Kent. Part of these plans was to create hundreds of movable roadblocks made from concrete cylinders that could be put in place quickly to slow or prevent enemy tanks from passing. After the war most of these were removed and disposed of, however others were repurposed or just left abandoned near to their original position. In November 2021 we acquired 9 anti-tank cylinders from a farm in Stonehorse Lane Wainscott.



The anti-tank cylinders had been possibly removed from a roadblock helping to protect the nearby anti-aircraft gun site in Wainscott and taken from a farm nearby. These have been placed within the Fort near the Tett Turret pillbox. We would like to say a huge thank you to Ross Crayford, Chris Saunders and everyone involved for helping Slough Fort to be the new home of such a magnificent piece of military history and for supporting us to keep our heritage safe and alive.

Source: Medway Military Research Group (Discovering and Recording Kent's 20th Century Military and Civil Defences. Medway District - The Findings.)



NEWS

Keith Gulvin Outgoing Chairperson

**“Thanks to your
tireless
volunteering
efforts, you have
helped to
protect and
restore a unique
piece of
Chatham’s
maritime
heritage
for future
generations
to enjoy.”**

**Theresa May,
Prime Minister
of the
United Kingdom
(2016 -2019)**

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

I first visited Slough Fort back in 1976 as a Member of the Medway Military Research Group to do recording and take photographs. After moving to Allhallows in 2001 I visited from time to time, I was responsible for the successful application to get the Fort Scheduled as an Ancient Monument. However, my main involvement in the restoration started in 2013 when I was asked by Victor Smith to help organise community involvement in some possible restoration (I had been involved with the restoration of Fort Amherst at Chatham since 1981). This led to ever deepening involvement and helping to establishing the Slough Fort Preservation Trust and getting the full restoration underway. This has involved research at the National Archives, making funding applications, applying for Scheduled Monument Consents to allow work to go ahead and many hours of hands-on work.

Can you tell us about a time when you had to work in extreme conditions?

Yes, on the occasion when I found myself trapped in a room in conversation with Colin, Neil and Catharina (they can talk for England). However, apart from that, two occasions come to mind, first when we were clearing out the Magazines by hand, digging out liquid horse manure and other unpleasant stuff, and secondly when we were removing the old water tank from the glacis, this was done during a very cold February, with sleet and a harsh East wind. However, the results in both cases were worth the extreme discomfort endured.



What is your goal for Slough Fort till the end of the year?

To see restoration work, continue, with more parts of the work brought back into use and restored to a high. With this in mind I would like to see the Guardroom fully restored complete with period fittings and equipment during 2022, which would be the first part of the Fort actually fully restored and interpreted for public viewing. As now ex-Chairman, I would want to wish Colin every success with the post over the next year and for him to take us to new levels of achievement.

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

Come along take advantage of the opportunity to wander the grounds Monday to Friday when we restart the limited unaccompanied opening of the site in April, this will give people a taster of what is on offer and hopefully encourage visitors to come back for one of our full Open Days in the summer or attend a Sunday /Wednesday tour (see the next news letter for more details). There has been much work carried out over the past year so I would urge people to come and see it for themselves.

