

Battery Banter

Registered Charity No. 1082171

Autumn 10 Newsletter

Halfway Milestone Reached

As reported in the Herald Express on 21st October, the War Shelter Restoration Appeal has reached the halfway mark. Over the last five months the group has been hard at work fundraising as well as receiving the support of donors such as the Port of Brixham Trawler Race Association and the Southwest Branch of the National Service (Royal Air Force) Association.

On Saturday 30th October Torquay's Frognel Hall Hotel held a 1940's themed party. Members of the Heritage Centre Group were asked to attend and Andy and Marie Youngs, Dave Clarke, Steve Watkins turned out in full 'kit'. Andy also took along his WW2 field medical exhibits. As a result another £100 was added to the Appeal fund from the kind donations of the hotel owners and guests.

The Appeal is aiming to raise £6000 to fully restore the War Shelter building and recreate the rooms as they would have appeared in 1940 when 'Britain Stood Alone' against the threatened Nazi invasion. Reaching the halfway mark is an important milestone and a tremendous achievement. It is now hoped that the War Shelter and Tunnel will be restored and open to the public in time for Easter holidays next year.

While fundraising continues so does the restoration. 1st September saw eight members with three wheelbarrows fill three truck loads with concrete block from the floor of the War Shelter and tunnel entrance. Jeff had previously cut through the block work ready for removal. It took an hour and a half of very

Right: Jeff cutting through the War Shelter gunners room block work



hard work for Simon (and family), Ivan Parton, Tony Weller and Steve Watkins to transport the concrete from the War Shelter back to the Museum where it could be loaded on to the truck.

On Friday 24th September Brixham Steel's Robert Coopman, along with some willing Battery members, fitted ventilation boxes on to the new steel War Shelter shutters.

Both the restoration and keeping access to all Battery free of charge is only possible by the generous support of the general public. Please continue to support the Appeal by either making a donation or by joining our group. Membership costs just £5 for adults and £2 for under 16s per annum. For further information please telephone Phil Trayhorn on 01803 752239 or email hiightres@tiscali.co.uk.



Left: Brixham Steel's Robert Coopman

Right: The ventilation boxes in place on the War Shelter



What do you get for £17.1 Million?

The answer, which I am sure you would know anyway! is The Tank Museum's new extension (complete with a leaky roof). This is just one of the many interesting facts which we learned on the Steward's Day Out to the Tank Museum at Bovington in Dorset on Saturday 18th September. It may have been an early start but the sun was shining as we made our way to Dorset. Rod Hart organised the day which included a guided tour of The Tank Story which is housed in the new extension. The Tank Museum is home to the world's best collection of armoured vehicles from the very earliest tanks of World War I right up to the latest British Challenger 2 tank, as well as the world's only German Tiger tank in running order. The Tank Museum always lives up to expectations and didn't disappoint on this occasion. Thanks to Rod for organising a day which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Below: On the guided tour



Below: The Tank Story



Below: A German Jagdpanther



By Royal Appointment

Wednesday 20th October saw the Battery's very own Robbie Robinson accompanying Princess Anne on a Remembrance Cruise from Dartmouth aboard the wartime Fairmile 'B' motor launch. The princess laid a wreath in memory of the 749 US lives lost during

'Exercise Tiger' in April 1944 when German E-boats intercepted the tail end of the practice assault convoy in training for D-Day.

Make a Difference Day

On Sunday 24th October over 200 visitors attended the Battery for our CSV (Community Service Volunteers) Make a Difference Day. The day was a celebration of the 'power of volunteering in Brixham' in restoring and interpreting the 400 year history of the Coastal Artillery Battery at Battery Gardens. The day also raised £140 towards the War Shelter Restoration Appeal.



Thanks to all who supported the day including Winston Churchill (a.k.a. Dave Clarke), GI Steve Watkins, sniper Andrew White, Para Peter Bailey, NAAFI Wendy Parton, Sergeant Ivan Parton, Instructor Robbie Robinson, Regimental Policemen Fred and ARP Warden Brian



Heritage Open Weekend

The four days between 9th & 12th September were very busy at the Battery as we took part in English Heritage's 'Heritage Open Weekend' event. Over 400 visitors enjoyed the Battery museum and guided tours of the 14 acre site. An added bonus was the underground ammunition tunnel and War Shelter rooms being opened up to the public for the first time. On the Thursday the BBC sent the afternoon filming at the Battery for Spotlight. Over the weekend we were also privileged to welcome veteran Battery Gunner

Right: Veteran Battery Gunner A.H. Wood with Battery members

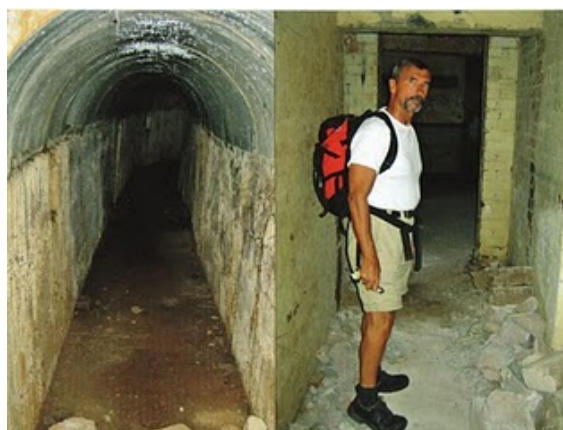


A.H. Wood of 'D' Company Royal Artillery attached to 378 coastal Artillery Battery HG 1943 -1945.



Left: Private Gillin clearing the tunnel of 'enemy' cave spiders.

Right: Group Chairman Phil Trayhorn leading a tour into the War Shelter rooms



Attention Tuesday

Dartmouth Castle hosted a WW2 living history event 'Attention Tuesday' on 31st August. Group members were in attendance representing 361 Coastal Artillery Battery Home Guard and over 700 visitors enjoyed this English Heritage event.



Calendar of Events

December

Saturday 11th – **Coffee Morning** 9.30am – 12 noon

Held at the Community Christian Hall, Fore Street, Brixham. Come and enjoy a tea and biscuit for just 60p while supporting the Battery at the same time. Also from 10.30 musical entertainment will be provided by Kingswear Village Choir.

Heritage Centre Opening Times

Winter Opening

Sunday, Monday and Friday 2.00 – 4.00pm

Other times by appointment including group bookings, to arrange please telephone Phil Trayhorn on 01803 752239 or email hiightres@tiscali.co.uk. **Admission is free.**

Membership Details

Would you like to help preserve one of the country's last remaining Coastal Defence Battery's? Then why not become a member of the Brixham Battery Heritage Centre Group.

To become a new member, or renew your current membership, costs just £5 for adults and £2 for juniors per annum. For further information please telephone Phil Trayhorn on 01803 852449 or email hiightres@tiscali.co.uk.

Find us at www.brixhambattery.org

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