



## INTRODUCTION

With the Royal Artillery Collection safely moved into its storage locations our focus has now shifted to the conservation of the artefacts in their new locations, the establishment of the library and archives in Larkhill, and the preparations for the visit of the Heritage Lottery Fund team in March. The team has also been busy handing over the old Firepower buildings in Woolwich and supporting the development and opening of the "Making Woolwich" exhibition on the site. With much conservation work to be done in many areas we have started to recruit volunteers to support the Collection, and the first of these have already started to assist us in Wroughton. Finally, we have been working hard to refine the way in which museum and equestrian events would be managed on Knighton Down East, and this work has delivered some excellent output which underlines the opportunities which exist on the site.

I hope that you will enjoy reading more about all of these important areas of activity in this newsletter, and if there are any areas about which you would like to hear more please do let our editor know.

**Major General Nick Eeles – Chairman RAML**



## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of the SPHC Newsletter. It has been a busy few months while we prepare for our HLF bid. We are also working hard on the website and other social media platforms, keeping our local communities informed and updated. We are also very pleased to have the Archive here at Larkhill and look forward to developing the 10% that we currently hold.

You can read more on this throughout the newsletter and also catch up on what the project has been up to and how we are progressing.

We are always looking for articles and interesting Gunner history so if you have anything that you might like to add then please do get in touch.

**Sarah Davies – Editor & Communications Mgr.**

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## TRANSITION UPDATE

### Phase 2 - Conservation – Volunteers – Access and Exhibitions

Firepower closed on the 15th December 16 and the collection was successfully moved into its new temporary locations in line with our Transition strategy. Alliances and support with Wiltshire Museum Conservation had already been formed and their support and advice in the early stages has ensured that we can manage our superb collection from the beginning of our move to our sites in Wroughton, Upavon and Larkhill. This next phase will see the focus of the RAM team recruiting volunteers, ensuring our conservation and collection management (including cleaning and maintenance) be progressive, maintaining the collection in good order prior to exhibiting it to public access via exhibitions and educational visits.

We have employed an Archivist at Larkhill. She is managing our valuable and extensive Archives. The first and most valuable part of the archive collection is now located at Larkhill and the opening to access of this material starts at the end of February 2017. Volunteers to assist with the viewing of the archive have been interviewed and after a short training period will be available to start before the opening.

Volunteers have already been recruited for the Wroughton site and they are from the local area in Swindon. Wroughton Parish council based at Ellendune Centre have also been of great assistance and, are keen for the museum in to be involved locally. They will help and assist us with volunteers from their local area. The RAM team have been invited to take part in the Victoria Cross Commemoration events in April, 3rd to 9th. This event will be centered on community engagement and schools interaction and awareness, given that a local man William Gosling was awarded the VC in 1917. A small display from our collection will be exhibited.

Conservation has been a high priority for our team in our locations of the Artillery collection at Upavon and Wroughton. We have been very fortunate to have had a very proactive Curator on the team along with the Senior Conservator from Wiltshire council advisory service (CMAS) has been invaluable they have given advice, support and guidance with our techniques in providing the best possible environment and cleaning methods for our valuable collection.

Communication with other museums in Wiltshire is ongoing and has been both informative and helpful and we continue to learn lessons from them at the various meetings we attend. Clear advice on our strategy has been given by Conservation Museums Advisory Service (CMAS), the National Conservation Service (NCS) and Arts Council England (ACE). We continue to strive for excellence in our approach to portraying our story of Artillery to the community and will develop with the ongoing support.

**Simon Wright, Operations Manager Royal Artillery Museum (RAM)**



Curator Emeritus Philip Magrath & Conservator Jana Jurgova in Upavon



Our first Volunteer Melinda Williams cleaning and preserving the surface of Bhurmese Dragon Gun in Upavon



Equipment Manager Adrian Haynes in a microclimate compartment.

## SALISBURY PLAIN HERTIAGE CENTRE – PROGRAMME UPDATE

We are pleased to report that we submitted our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) on schedule at the end of November 2016. This was the culmination of an enormous amount of work from the whole team, and we believe we have made significant improvements on our previous application. We are now preparing to welcome a delegation from the HLF for a visit to Larkhill in March, following which our application will be discussed by their South West Regional Committee and then their National Board of Trustees. We expect to receive their decision around the end of April.

Our HLF application included concept designs for the proposed SPHC building, landscaping and exhibitions. These show how the building would be organised and constructed, ensuring that it will be fit for purpose and enabling us to produce robust costings. These concept designs also provide us with the basis for briefing our stakeholders on the proposals, allowing any minor adjustments to be made during the next stage of detailed design. Design work is now paused while we await a decision from HLF; if positive, it will be "full steam ahead" as we move into detailed design work over the summer!

## ROYAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM ARCHIVE

The first part of the Royal Artillery Museum's Library and Archive is now safely settled in its new home at Larkhill. The initial batch of records (about 10% of the collection) includes the Annual Historical Returns and the Digests of Service, which between them record the peace time history of the RA's batteries and regiments from 1890 onwards. Also now at Larkhill are the Archives' large collection of gunnery handbooks and training pamphlets, issues of Gunner magazine (dating back to the first issue in April 1919), of the Royal Artillery Journal (also from its beginnings in the mid-Nineteenth Century) and early copies of the 'Blue Lists' of officers.

The move took place at the beginning of November, preceded by the transfer of some of the shelving from the Archive Strong Rooms at Firepower, which had to be installed and carefully secured. 10% of the collection is about 200 linear metres of records, so there were three very busy days of unloading, followed by several more weeks of sorting and re-arranging.

The new full-time archivist, Siân Mogridge, also started work at the beginning of November, and so was able to oversee the transfer.

In the meantime it is hoped to allow access to the records that are already here at Larkhill as soon as possible. The current plan is for a research service to be started up early in February, and for the Archive to open a couple of days a week from the beginning of March.

**Siân Mogridge - Archivist**



Jeff Smith briefing James Gower with Sian about the first phase of the archives in RHQ Larkhill

## NEW APPOINTMENTS FOR RAM

### Simon Wright

RAM is pleased to announce the appointment of Simon Wright as the Operations Manager.

As a Gunner for over forty years and an Officer for 19 years of that, Simon has had a wide range of Management jobs to prepare him for this new role and is under no illusion that the care, conservation and management of this unique collection is no small undertaking.

*'I am delighted to be part of the team that has been handed the responsibility of managing the Royal Artillery Equipment's, Archive documents and Artefacts on your behalf for preparation and inclusion in their new home on the Salisbury Plain, the home of the Gunners.'*



### Siân Mogridge

The new Archivist, Siân Mogridge, took up her post at the beginning of November.

After completing her undergraduate degree in history, Siân did a Masters in Archives and Records Management at Liverpool University. For the past thirteen years she has worked as an archivist at several different record offices and archives in London. She has moved to Wiltshire to take up her new job.

Siân has been involved in a wide variety of archive work ranging from cataloguing to running a Search Room, and from giving talks to managing archival storage and preservation. Most recently she worked for Hackney Archives where, a few years ago, she carried out a lot of the planning for a move of the entire collection to a new building. This should be a useful experience for her in organising the transfer of the remaining part of the Royal Artillery Library and Archive to Larkhill.

Siân's primary tasks will be to provide access to the Archive, set up suitable storage facilities at Larkhill for the rest of the Library and Archives collection, and learn as much as she can about the history of the Regiment as quickly as possible!





## EQUESTRIAN

Part of the Heritage Centre plan is to establish a partnership with the equestrian groups in order to secure the future of the RA Racecourse and equestrian events at Larkhill. The aim is to 'sustain the existing equestrian provision and to incorporate or improve the equestrian facilities and services' while 'ensuring that none of the equestrian users will be financially disadvantaged'.

My role on the RAM Board is to help ensure that the equestrian needs in the partnership are fully understood and provided for. I am working closely with Major General Andrew Ritchie, as the Senior Trustee of the RA Racecourse Larkhill, and with Colonel Dickie Winchester as Chairman of RA Equitation and the RA Hunt. I am particularly grateful for the active support of Lieutenant Colonel Angus Cameron (Master of the RA Hunt), Lieutenant Colonel Peter Wright (Racecourse Technical Director), Mrs Suzie Vickery (Clerk of the Course) and Lieutenant Colonel Andy Welsh (Director of the RA Cross-Country Course), who continue to refine the detail of the 'Equestrian Requirements'.

The current SPHC Programme plan can be divided into 3 phases from an equestrian point of view. Firstly 'Pre-Transition', until SPHC construction starts in June 2019; secondly 'Transition', during construction from June 2019 until October 2021; and thirdly 'Partnering', from October 2021 onwards when the Heritage Centre and equestrian events will operate in parallel.

The RA Museum needs the Larkhill Racecourse to transfer its Lease (with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation - DIO) on the area of the Queen's Building, before it starts development. This has been agreed in principle. The transfer does not include the racecourse, gallops or cross-country course, which will continue to be managed through a lease and licences with the DIO, as they are now.

The SPHC construction site is anticipated to cover the area behind (south of) the Queen's Building. Thus, before June 2019, the facilities that lie within the construction site need to be re-provided, including horsebox parks, access routes, toilets and continued water supply; through to moving the generator and the number board. These arrangements are being negotiated now. This should enable the Queen's Building to remain in operation during construction, so equestrian events can continue to run as they do now until 2021.

During this year, the detailed design of the SPHC is being refined through a series of workshops that the equestrian experts will support, to ensure that the written requirements are fully understood and implemented in the plans. This will include the plan for a county show sized, possibly all-weather, arena in front of the Heritage Centre, that the Paddock and Winners' Enclosure will be placed within during the racing season. The 'operating model' is also being developed to clarify the roles that the SPHC will support from October 2021, including: marketing, advertising and office support; food and beverage sales; and maintenance of the buildings and the area south of the racecourse rails.

The equestrian experts are working through the detail to ensure that the equestrian users will not be financially disadvantaged, but will have improved facilities that will be sustained in the long term.

Once the HLF decision has been made in April this year and there is certainty on the Heritage Centre going ahead, Nick Eeles and I will hold some comprehensive briefings for anyone who would like to know more.

**Brigadier Mark Milligan**  
**President RA Equitation**  
**President RA Hunt**



## Exhibition Opening 'Making Woolwich – The Royal Regiment of Artillery in Woolwich'

ROYAL  
GREENWICH  
HERITAGE  
TRUST

Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust (RGHT) is delighted to announce the opening of its new permanent exhibition 'Making Woolwich – The Royal Regiment of Artillery' on Thursday 1st December 2016. It will take place at Greenwich Heritage Centre, Royal Arsenal Woolwich, from 2:45-5:30pm. The exhibition will open to the public on Saturday 3rd December 2016, from 9:00am onwards. It will be free to visit as part of the permanent and temporary displays at Greenwich Heritage Centre.

The exhibition has been made possible thanks to a £68,100 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and will result in the creation of a new permanent exhibition, celebrating the 300-year history of the Royal Artillery (RA) and its close connections with Woolwich, in this, its tercentenary year.

This exhibition, in Greenwich Heritage Centre, located on the historic Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, combines objects and images from the collections of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG), with stories from local people about their own family members who served with the Gunners.

The VIP/press launch of the exhibition will feature an outdoor demonstration from a mounted gun section of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery and a musical performance by a string ensemble from the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra. These British Army units are both based in Woolwich, emphasising the strong connections between the Armed Forces and local area.

Chief Executive of RGHT Tracy Stringfellow said: "This exhibition will be the first step in a wider re-interpretation of Greenwich Heritage Centre, on the Historic Royal Arsenal. We are proud to work in partnership with these organisations and ever more closely with the local community that we serve. These are exciting times for the Trust, which recently celebrated its second anniversary, and looks forward to the museum's centenary year in 2019."

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Stuart Holey, the head of the HLF in London said: "This is an excellent project which, thanks to National Lottery players, will ensure that the rich heritage of the Royal Artillery in Woolwich is celebrated in this, their tercentenary year."



The ladies opening the exhibition are Mrs Patricia Holmes (daughter of John Murray Rymer-Jones MC) and Mrs Rita Haste (daughter of John Venables MM).



Photographs; Chris Mansfield [www.chrismansfieldphotos.com](http://www.chrismansfieldphotos.com)

This exhibition has been undertaken in partnership with RFK Architects and Moore & Moore Creative. These organisations have a long track record of success in delivering projects of this type. We have also brought together a large group of local volunteers to help us to deliver this exciting project and worked in collaboration with a number of local organisations, including the Royal Regiment of Artillery at Woolwich's historic Royal Artillery Barracks.

This project is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Royal Artillery Museums Ltd., Friends of the Royal Artillery Collections and Royal Artillery Historical Trust. RGHT would like to extend its sincere thanks to them all for their continuing support, both financial and otherwise.

**Mark Tindle**  
**Exhibition Project Officer**  
**Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust**

## THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY COLLECTIONS

### The Society of Friends of the Royal Artillery Collections

The Friends continue during the interregnum between Woolwich (Firepower) and Larkhill (Salisbury Plain Heritage Centre (SPHC)). At the 2015 Friends AGM, it was decided to keep the Friends going in order to be in a position to move forward in support of the new museum. At the last AGM it was agreed that we should change our name to the Society of Friends of the Royal Artillery Collections to reflect the new situation and a new Council was elected.

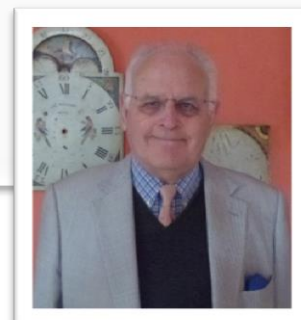
By the nature of things we are a reactive organisation, responding to the current situation and we are feeling our way towards where we can support the Collections most effectively. Amongst other things going on at the moment:

- We have made a significant financial contribution to the Gunner Gallery that has now opened in the Greenwich Heritage Centre, Woolwich. Much of the curatorial input for this project came from the Friends.
- We are currently sponsoring the photography of the Collections both as a record and possibly to form the basis of a virtual museum to allow some public access while most of the artifacts are in store.
- The Library & Archives are to be reconstituted at Larkhill under the control of Siân Mogridge, a qualified and experienced archivist. It is hoped that these will start to become available to the public from March onwards and it is expected that Friends will have free access.
- Currently access to the collections in storage is being controlled by the Royal Artillery Museum, but we hope to achieve some form of controlled access for the Friends as things settle down.

We are keenly supporting the current application for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to kick-start the new museum.

So far as the future of the Friends is concerned, I believe we have a significant role in developing the well-being of the Collections and ensuring that they are accorded the priority they deserve in the heritage of the nation, as well as continuing to support the Gallery in Woolwich. Our overriding interest is to ensure the unique nature of the Collections is not lost for future generations and is made available for learning and research. Please feel free to contact me for further information on [david.creswell@btinternet.com](mailto:david.creswell@btinternet.com)

**Brigadier D H C Creswell**  
**Friends of the RA Collection**



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### THE AMMUNITION COLLECTION

The Ammunition Technical Officers (ATO) 'Free from Explosives' (FFE) inspection of the museum's vast array of artillery ammunition is now complete, and the ammunition is safely housed at Wroughton. That much, it seems now, was the 'easy bit' as there is much more to do.

There are approximately 2 500 ammunition items in the collection, of which roughly 1 000 are formally catalogued. Some of those have, however, lost their painted catalogue numbers through age and storage conditions, and have been given 'local numbers' by the ATO team in order to tie them to their individual FFE certificates. The other 1 500 items have just the number allocated by ATO. The first task, currently underway, is to rationalise all the numbers and formally catalogue those items that have so far escaped the cataloguing process. The team at Wroughton aspire to completing this daunting task by early 2017, but it is a very small team and ammunition is not all that is in their care.

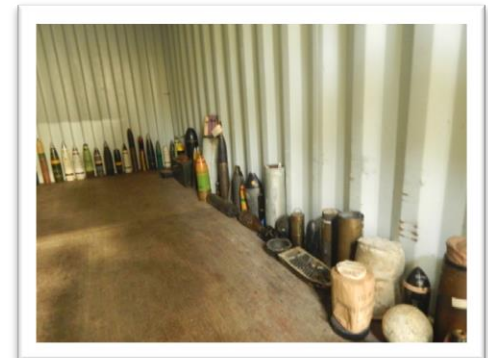
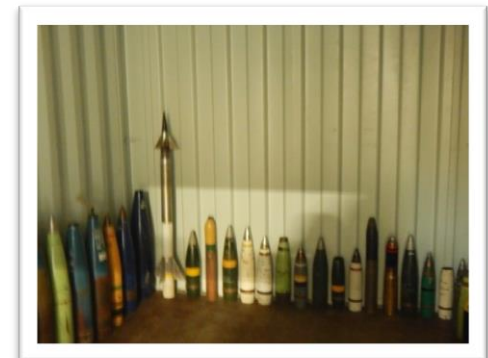
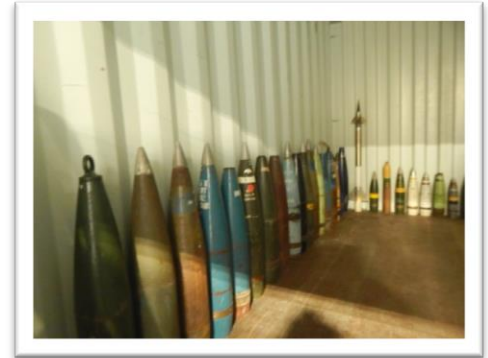
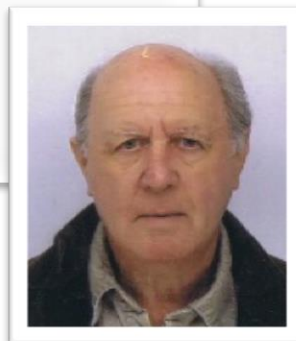
Next is the nature of the collection. One simple way of grouping the items might be to consider those items acquired in the twentieth century as one group; those acquired prior to the twentieth century as another. The early part of the collection seems, for the most part, reasonably documented. There is a large quantity of experimental ammunition, possibly gathered as a result of a close cooperation between the Regiment and the Arsenal at Woolwich. The 'Twentieth century' part seems to be more an acceptance of well-meaning gifts rather than an attempt to 'collect' significant items. There is a very large number of 'non-artillery' ammunition in this group, while many significant items do not exist. In all areas of the collection there are many duplicates which, if kept, will increase long-term storage costs.

The next task perhaps, once cataloguing is complete, is to remove non-artillery items and reduce the number of duplicates. This, I estimate, will bring the collection to a more manageable 1 000 to 1 500 items in total. (The ultimate disposal of unwanted items is a subject in its own right).

Many items are in poor condition, so a long period of conservation is called for. There is a plan to start the conservation, with those items likely to feature initially in the new Heritage Centre being given priority. Storage conditions at Wroughton are better, in the most part, compared to those at Woolwich; thus further deterioration of the worst affected items will at least be slowed.

Once thinned of unwanted items, and with a positive collecting policy to fill in the gaps, we should have a collection of Artillery Ammunition of which we can be justly proud.

**Major (Retd) J Reid MBE**

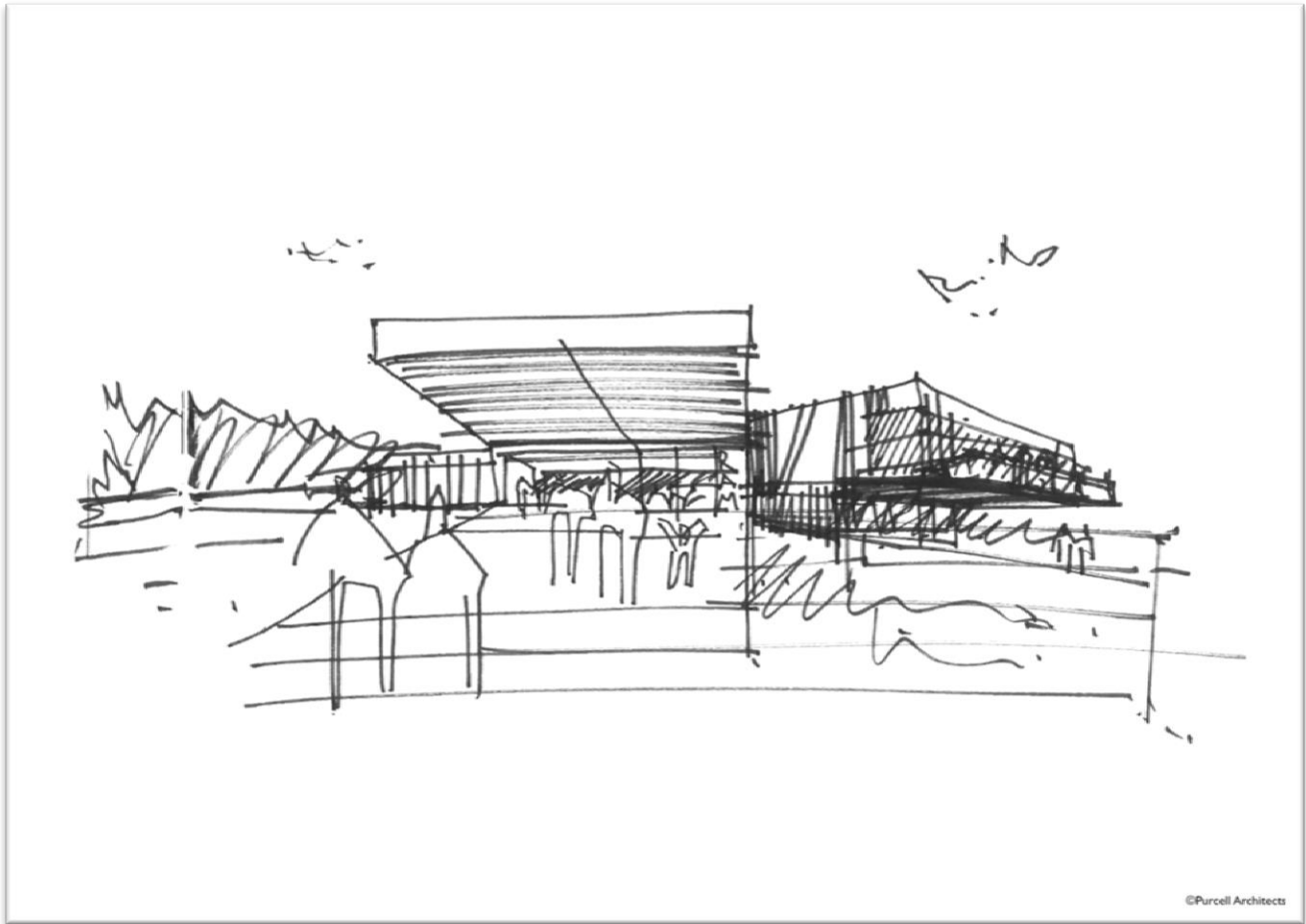


A selection of the ammunition stored in one of our conservation sites - Upavon, Wiltshire



# **SALISBURY PLAIN HERITAGE CENTRE**

HOME OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY COLLECTION



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