

War, landscape and memory in the twentieth century

Salisbury and South Wilts Museum
7 May 2014 | 10.00 – 17.00

A one-day public symposium organised by the Fovant Badges Society in collaboration with the Department of History of the University of Southampton.

Speakers

Dr Tim Grady (University of Chester)
Professor Neil Gregor (University of Southampton)
Michael Nixon (Birkbeck, London)
Dr Ross Wilson (University of Chichester)
Plus Closing Roundtable

Tickets

£15.00 or £5.00 for students/unwaged available from:
Richard Bullard
Tel: 01722 714782
Fovantbadges1@outlook.com

Venue

Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum
The King's House, 65 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EN



THE FOVANT BADGES SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 2014

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Our October committee meeting took place in the home of our outgoing President and as a priority I must record our appreciation and thanks to General Sir John Wilsey for his wisdom, support and guidance for the last 12 years. He has had many other demands upon his time and energy, not least as a Deputy Lieutenant for Wiltshire, but he has always made time for us, and he and Lady Wilsey have offered generous hospitality to our high profile supporters for which we are extremely grateful. We now look forward to welcoming General Sir Nick Parker as the Society begins a new chapter.

After a year in this appointment I hope that I have seen the full breadth of the Society's activities. I think I understand the contractual, engineering and financing realities of the badges, the commemorative activities of the drumhead service and

THE FOVANT BADGES SOCIETY

Fovant, Salisbury, SP3 5JL
Registered Charity No 1045087

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the work which your committee carries out on a daily basis, including the strategic issues presented by both our centenary project and local initiatives which bear upon the badges.

Our Royal Patron much enjoyed the memorable 2013 drumhead service, and the capacity congregation reflected genuine local and high level interest and resulted in very welcome financial support after a service taken so sensitively by the Reverend Jane Ball. The badges were looking stunning then on a warm July afternoon and continue to do so now, so well done the conservation team.

Progress on our centenary project with Southampton University is the result of Richard Bullard's industry and networking and we are particularly appreciative of his success in attracting Lottery fund support. Tony Phillips has continued to present the Badges to external audiences and the BBC, now travelling to distant venues when required given the absence of The Emblems as a venue and focus. Our finances are sound but can always be improved and I thank our Treasurer and the investment team for their counsel and hands-on management. We are also working steadily on the one medium which provides worldwide access and our current aspiration is to enable online donation.

In summary, 2013 has been a year of steady progress which heralds a busy commemorative programme over the next few years and I am grateful for the support which you continue to give – thank you.



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2014 EVENTS

Please note the following dates in your diary

The Society Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held in the Village Hall, Fovant at 7:00 pm on Wednesday 21 May 2014. Would members expecting to attend please notify the Secretary in writing or by email of matters they intend to raise not less than 14 days before the meeting.

Annual Drumhead Service

This will take place at East Farm, Fovant on Sunday 6 July 2014 at 3:00pm. (please be seated by 2:45pm). Our Guest of Honour will be announced shortly.

Please note that it is time for members to pay their annual subscription to renew their membership

ANNUAL DRUMHEAD SERVICE Sunday 7 July 2013



**HRH The Earl of Wessex
addresses the Drumhead Service**

This year's service was held at East Farm, Fovant, (by kind permission of the East Farm Partnership), on a beautiful summer day with a large attendance in excess of 400 people. More than 30 standard bearers from The Royal British Legion and County Regimental Associations, including a Guidon party from The Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, were on parade.

We again welcomed our Patron, His Royal Highness The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO, as our Guest of Honour and Speaker. He was met on arrival, and then escorted to the service, by The Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton. After the service he inspected the parade and then circulated amongst the many guests at tea in the garden of Firs House.

The service was conducted by The Reverend Jane Ball (former TA Chaplain to The Royal Wessex Yeomanry) The Lesson was read by Brigadier 'Bill' Sowry, head of The Australian Defence Force in London. General Sir Jack Deverell read the

Commemoration, the Fovant Poem was read by Cadet RSM Andrew Swaffield. The Shaftesbury Silver Band played for the service and afterwards at tea at Firs House. Cadets from Wiltshire ACF, Salisbury, again efficiently directed traffic and car parking and assisted with the collection.

His Royal Highness opened his address by saying that he noticed little change to when he last stood before us six years ago (2007). The service hadn't changed, the same lesson, the same hymns, the same lead Regiment, perhaps even the same mice might appear - (several mice ran across in front of the altar in 2007 whilst he was speaking !) He laid emphasis on the power of all the hymns in this service notably "O God our help in ages past - ", a hymn indelibly linked to remembrance in this country – he said there are few more emotive places to sing it than in front of The Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Each year he stands in support of Her Majesty The Queen wearing the uniform of The Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry to represent the Reserves.

HRH then talked about the current and proposed re-structuring of the Regular and Reserves in the British Army. The past six years had been very testing for the four regiments that form The Royal Wessex Yeomanry, of which he is the Royal Honorary Colonel. Yeomen from Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire had stepped up to serve their country in the best traditions of the Reserves.

Nobody likes change, that has to happen. Nostalgia, an uniquely British trait, tends to view the past through rose tinted spectacles. He recalled, whilst driving through areas of the country, of being struck by the amount of poppies growing in the fields this year, the poppy being such a very powerful emblem !

In 2014 we will be recalling the centenary of the start of The Great War, and the men billeted here in the shadow of Fovant Down who had left an indelible mark on the hillside and, those who had striven to retain their badges in the intervening years. 2014 also sees the end of operations in Afghanistan, although British servicemen will continue to have a presence there for some years to come.

At the end of his address His Royal Highness again referred to Isaac Watt's poignant adaptation of Psalm 90 "O God our help in ages past" ---"Our shelter from the stormy blast"... He said "Today we remember those who did make it through the storm as well as those who didn't", and we should remember those who have maintained the continuity of our traditions and in whom we have entrusted our future.

Finance

In the last financial year to 31 March 2013, the Society made a profit of £6,156. As ever, the annual maintenance of the eight badges on Fovant Down is our main expenditure. Our current contractors Dean & Dyball Limited continue their excellent work of maintaining the badges, as they have for over 10 years.

This has been a quiet year on the investment front. Bond investments produce a high level of income, and we regularly monitor these investments to maximise the value of our assets and income streams. The investment in bonds and UK Government gilts mean that the Society's ability to maintain the Badges for the foreseeable future looks much more secure.

We receive a refund of VAT on our maintenance costs through the UK Government's Memorials Grant Scheme, and Gift Aid repayments from HMRC. We would encourage all subscriptions and donations to be made via Gift Aid (where appropriate) as this enables the Society to claim tax on these payments, thus enhancing our income. The annual grant from the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs adds considerably to our income, and we acknowledge their valuable support for the maintenance of the ACMF badge. We also receive regular donations from a number of Regimental Associations (linked to the badges of the Royal Signals, the Wiltshire Regiment, the Post Office Rifles and the Devonshire Regiment), whose donations contribute to the upkeep of those Badges.

It is pleasing to note that the badges attract world-wide interest via our website, and as a result we often receive donations from overseas. Our collection box in the lay-by on the A30 and sales of publications are valuable additions to our income. Each year our Accounts are audited externally, and after approval at the AGM in May they are posted onto the Charity Commission website for all to see.

Membership

We heartily thank all members who loyally support us financially and with great regularity. Our membership figures stand at 300 or just over and new members join us as others fade away. You can help us by talking to friends about our cause especially in the light of the forthcoming 1916/2016 commemorations.

May we remind you that it is possible to make provision in your WILL for gifts to made for the benefit of the Society. You will need to contact your solicitor and quote : The Fovant Badges Society and our Registered Charity No.1045087

FOVANT BADGES WW1 CENTENARY EDUCATION PROJECT

Earlier in 2013, members of the Society successfully applied for a grant (£8,400) from the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to organise and undertake a series of activities marking the passing of one hundred years since the Great War. Not only does Fovant have its own unique story to tell regarding the existence of a series of military training camps during the war, and their resultant impact upon the village and surrounding areas, but the Badges themselves, by their very familiarity to the people of Wiltshire, offer the local populace a reference point from which to relate to a conflict which is, by now, beyond biological memory. And with the future of the Badges dependent, as ever, upon a sustained level of not only financial aid but also, broadly speaking, a sustained level of popular interest, the centenary presents an ideal opportunity for the Society to emphasise the relevance, especially to a younger generation, of the chalk emblems for both British and global historical and contemporary concerns.

With such thoughts in mind, it was decided that a major component of the Society's centenary activity should comprise of an interactive educational pack for use by schools in Wiltshire. Spearheaded by Richard Bullard (Society PR and Newsletter Officer), and joined by Professor. Neil Gregor (Southampton University) in an advisory role, I was invited to join the project as an historical researcher, and ideas quickly began to take shape. It was agreed, along the Society's own general specifications, that the educational pack should focus primarily upon aspects of the Fovant Camp, the impact of the war upon the village both during and after the conflict, and the Badges themselves. At the core of the resource was to be a strong and empirical body of primary source materials, from which students are able to draw upon and hone their skills of historical interpretation, structured by short, lucid narratives and housed within a fully interactive digital interface.



Michael Nixon pictured at Verdun

Thus far, the resources available for the project have been ascertained and recorded. First and foremost, both Richard and I have made good usage of the excellent documentation situated within the village of Fovant itself. In this regard, the wealth of material held by members of the Fovant Historical Interest Group has been examined extensively by the kind cooperation of its members, providing us with a strong documentary insight into both the military camp and wartime Fovant. At the same time, the Fovant Badges Society's own archival collection has been fully utilised. Minute books, photographs, and correspondence dating from 1916-2000 have provided an incredibly rich history of the Badges themselves (so much so that I decided to conduct my own academic research upon the emblems whilst a graduate student at Birkbeck College, University of London). Setting the sights further afield, such local sources have also been gathered in tandem with visits to various other archival and documentary holdings including the Wiltshire and Swindon Historical Centre (Chippenham), the Imperial War Museum, the British Library, the Postal Heritage Centre, the London Metropolitan Archives, and others.

We are grateful to Andy Nuttall of Fovant for the donation of some of his father's (Roy Nuttall, former Secretary of the Society) papers to the archive.

As we move into 2014, the project has taken the next step, and the process of writing up the bodies of text and organising the gathered materials is well underway. As with any modern education-based work, one is bound by the requirements of school curriculum's, and thus a degree of caution is to be practised here in establishing a relevant and consistent level of intellectual difficulty, but good progress is being made. Tied closely to this aspect of the work, and in many ways the real final stage of the project, is the digital aspect to the educational pack. Currently, appeals have been sent to several digital media experts regarding the potential partnering with a student and/ or industry professionals in bringing the whole resource to life via an interactive interface. This we hope to have concluded as quickly as possible.

I wish the Society and its members a very happy new year, and thank them for all of their support for this project so far.

Michael J Nixon MA

Annual Maintenance 2013

As in previous years, we planned to have the Badges looking smart for the Drumhead Service, especially for our Royal guest of honour. The pre-chalking strim took place in late May and the maintenance started on 28 May. Bad weather delayed the start by a day, but once the work was started it was carried out with the usual vigour and completed by 10 June.

We purchased 80 tonnes of chalk from the G B Foot Ltd quarry again this year as the quality and size of the chalk pieces last year was excellent. We re-chalked three badges - the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces and the Devonshire Regiment - as per the Society's Five Year Management Plan authorised by English Heritage.

The process employed for re-chalking involves moving the delivered chalk to smaller temporary dumps on the hillside, below the Chiselbury Ring, by dumper truck. The chalk is then loaded onto powered caterpillar-tracked barrows by digger. The powered barrows then travel from the temporary dump, down the long steep incline, to the badge - in this case the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry (RWY) - for distribution on the feathers of the badge. The RWY badge is on the steepest part of the hillside, with many 'eyebrows' that hamper the work - a chalk hillside phenomenon exacerbated by the grazing cows! Every time this badge is re-chalked there seem to be more 'eyebrows' than the previous re-chalking.



Chalk being loaded into powered barrows

Prior to the re-chalking, each badge is weeded and those being re-chalked are carefully re-edged with a flame-gun and, when necessary, re-dug with a spade. Following re-chalking each of the badges is treated with Pistol, a residual herbicide, to 'keep the weeds down' for as long as possible. The badges are all re-strimmed in late autumn to keep the grass surrounds looking good during the winter.

Days before the Drumhead Service the Badges were all strimmed again to ensure they looked at their best for the Earl of Wessex and all the other guests.

During the last few autumns, after the fresh chalk had been exposed to unusually warm and wet weather for three or four months, the chalk became a little greener than its original pristine white, which was visible from the A30. The greening is caused by algal growth and fortunately the chalk returns to white during the winter cold dry periods. This phenomenon is being closely monitored.

We are also keeping a vigilant eye on the state of the barbed wire fences which protect the Badges from the cattle that graze the hillside during most of the year. The trouble is that the grass within the wire enclosures is much more attractive - or greener - to the cows than that outside. The consequences of steep slopes, loose chalk and gravity do not need to be explained. Hopefully, any intrusion or wire failure is spotted and repaired quickly to minimise damage.

Steve Harris and Don McLaren



Chalk being deposited on the badges



The Australian Commonwealth Military Forces badge after re-chalking

FOVANT BADGES SOCIETY AND THE WW1 CENTENARY

As we enter the centenary of that fateful year, 1914 it is appropriate to let members know a little more about some of the plans that the Society has for contributing to national and county events that will commemorate World War One. We are more than two years away from the centenary of the Badges, which will occur in 2016, but we do need to start planning.

My colleague Michael Nixon's article explains in some detail the scope and objective of the education project that will remain central to our plans throughout the 2014 -18 period, since the first objective of the Society is "to further the education of the public..."

One of the early benefits of the Education Project is Michael Nixon's decision to base his MA dissertation on the history of the Fovant Badges. This will be available on our newly improved website.

WAR LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund last summer was successful. Apart from the work that Michael is progressing, on 7 May this year, at The Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum in the Cathedral Close, the Society and The University of Southampton are jointly presenting a one day Symposium entitled

War, Landscape and Memory in the Twentieth Century

Leading academics in this field of historical research will present a series of talks which will feature the Badges.

Tickets are £15. Including refreshments and buffet lunch.

If you would like tickets for the Symposium, please contact Richard Bullard (fovant-badges1@outlook.com), telephone 01722 714782.

TONY PHILLIPS'S TALKS

Tony decided he had to take the plunge and convert from slide to digital projection, making it easier to mix text and photos and add new material. 'Don't panic' is the by-word for setting up our new laptop and digital projector!

Receiving requests for a talk because of recommendations from one audience to another is still important, but increasingly groups have a web site or a contact point in a local 'event' diary and our web searching is producing some new venues. We are also going back to groups that we visited several years ago. Before you finalise your yearly speakers list please contact Tony (contact details on page 2).

MORE HISTORICAL IMAGES

We have also inherited a series of historical images of the Badges donated by Andy Nuttall and one of these is reproduced here. All will eventually be placed on our website.



A picture from Andy Nuttall's collection which, judging from the clarity of the Royal Signals Badge, might well date from 1970.

THE FOVANT BADGES WEBSITE AND PUBLICATIONS

www.fovantbadges.com

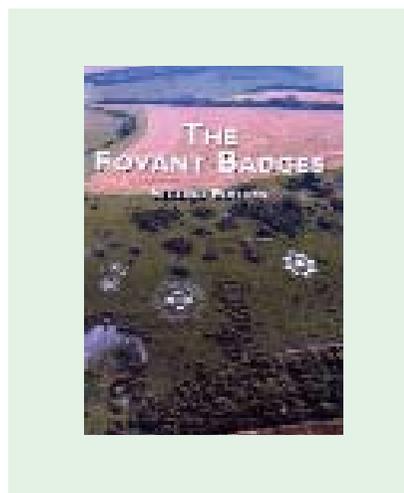
The Fovant Badges Website has been a valuable source of information for thousands of people over many years for those interested in the history behind the Badges. However it must be admitted that the current site is starting to show its age and so we have decided to initiate a complete update incorporating the latest technology. We also intend to add a facility for website users to make donations to the Society.

One surprise when we analysed the latest statistics on visitors to our site is that most of them were not using PCs. Instead the IPAD was the most popular followed by other tablets and quite a few using smart phones. So our website needs to make it easier for people using smaller screens and touch screen rather than mouse driven devices.

Usually we get about 25 visitors to our website a day peaking to 100. But on 6 November, the BBC's One Show had a feature on the Fovant Badges with a consequent rise of visitors to our website peaking at 1,745. It is gratifying to see that level of interest but in future our website will also have a donate button making it easy for visitors to make contributions.

So look out for big changes to the website over the next few months. And if you would like to tell us what you think about the changes, we would be most interested.

The Fovant Badges Booklet Second Edition is a quality document which we intend to sell to a wider public via the website.



THE FOVANT BADGES SOCIETY (Registered Charity No. 1045087)

Membership application/renewal and donation form

Minimum regular membership contribution £15.00 per annum

1.* I wish to become/remain a member of The Fovant Badges Society and make a regular contribution of £..... by Standing Order* (please complete the form below) or by Annual Cheque*

2.* I wish to make a single donation of £.....
Either is to be used exclusively for the restoration and maintenance of The Fovant Badges and the aims of the Society. (*Delete as applicable)

Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer, please enhance the value of your contribution/donation by 25p (currently) in the £ using the Gift Aid procedure by completing the following declaration:

Title..... Forenames.....
Surname.....
Address.....
..... Post code.....

I am a UK taxpayer and wish this and any other contributions/donations made to The Fovant Badges Society to be treated as Gift Aid. I will inform you if my circumstances change and I do not pay an amount in Income or Capital Gains tax that at least equals the tax deducted from my donation

Signature..... Date.....

Membership Application: Standing Order Instruction:

To the Manager: Bank plc. Sort code:
Address:
..... Account number:

Please pay the Salisbury Branch of the National Westminster Bank plc, (sort code 54-41-19) for the credit of The Fovant Badges Society, Account No: 03109828

the sum of £(figures)(words)
on the (date) of (month).....(year) and a like sum on the same date in each succeeding month*/quarter*/year* (*delete as applicable) until further notice and debit my Account No:.....

Signed Date
Name
Address
..... Post Code
Overseas country)

(Please return this completed form to: The Membership Officer, The Fovant Badges Society, Sarum St. Michael, 188 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EZ