



FRIENDS OF THE INTELLIGENCE CORPS MUSEUM

E Newsletter 01 - Spring 2012



Julian Barnard - Patron



Sir Stanley Odell - Trustee



John Quenby - Trustee & Chairman



Frances Maynard - Trustee

WELCOME!

It is with much pleasure that I am able to welcome you to this first edition e-newsletter of The Friends of the Intelligence Corps Museum (FICM). It has been quite an experience bringing the new Trust into being from scratch and would not have been possible without the Herculean efforts of Paul Croxson my fellow founder trustee and Treasurer/ Secretary.

In addition to creating a Trust Deed, we have had to set up a new bank account (with Holts Military/RBS); register with HMRC as a charity eligible to claim Gift Aid (worth 25p for every pound donated by Friends); contact as many members of the defunct Friends section of the Museum Trust as possible; print inserts for the latest Rose and Laurel and finally to arrange the reception and open evening held for Friends old and new at the museum at Chicksands on March 29th.

We felt that the reception was a reward in itself, as it attracted excellent support, notwithstanding the geographic spread of our Friends, the high cost of fuel and the other demands on our busy lives. Featured in this newsletter, you will find photographs taken of many of the Friends who attended, so I am sure you will recognise some familiar faces! During the evening we were delighted to be able to hand a cheque for £500 to Museum Curator, Sally Ann Reed for

use on specific and urgently needed conservation materials, needed to ensure the long term preservation of the items on display. To this sum we were able to add a further £200 donated by one of the guests specifically for light diffusion equipment.

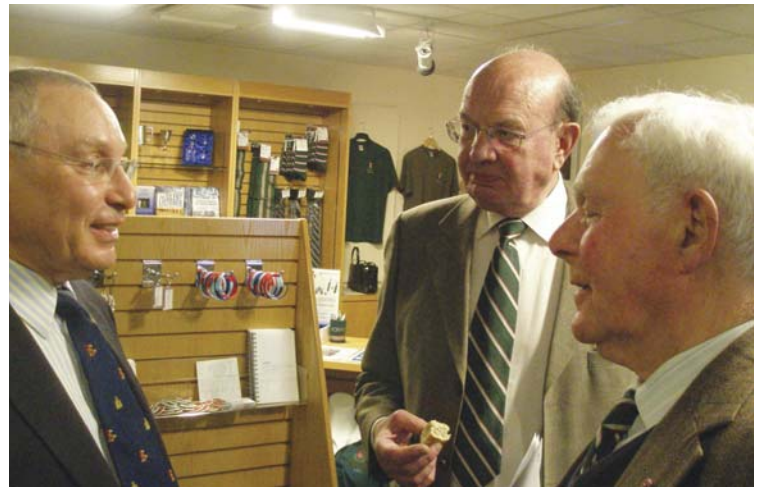
This is indeed a promising start to the fundraising element of the FICM Trust's objectives. That said, however, we do wish to emphasise the social dimension of our planned activities. We have already received a number of letters stressing the importance of "keeping in touch" and we hope that as we develop we will be able to provide a social dimension through events and other activities to help to keep people in touch and to share in the living development of the Corps Museum. So please have a look at the events planned for later in the year and look out for the website (see separate article in this newsletter). Finally please do let us have your thoughts, suggestions and indeed contributions for future publication either by e-mail to me direct at jquenby@btinternet.com or via snail mail to the Chicksands address.

Best wishes to all our Friends, old and new!

John Quenby



Guests listening to Julian Barnard's opening remarks



David Elvy (SLAM) with Historian - Alan Edwards and Paul Croxson



Paul Croxson - presents a cheque for £500 to museum curator Sally Ann Reed



Corps Secretary - Nick Humphrey and other guests

HISTORICAL NOTE

George Scovell 1774-1861

CODE BREAKER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

George Scovell came to prominence during the British campaign against the French for control of Spain and Portugal (The Peninsular War) as the leading code breaker for the Duke of Wellington. Between 1809 and 1814 he developed a system of military communications and intelligence gathering for the British that intercepted French dispatches to and from the battlefield, and cracked their codes.

Under Wellington's command, code breaking and intelligence gathering played an important role in British victories such as Oporto (1809), Salamanca (1812) and Vittoria (1813), and Scovell was a key part of these activities. George Scovell served as an officer in the Intelligence Branch of the Quartermaster-General's department. A gifted linguist, he was placed in charge of a motley group of Spanish, Portuguese and other rag-tag soldiers recruited for their local knowledge and language skills. Known as the Army Guides they began to develop a system for intercepting and deciphering encoded French communications

Initially the French used simple ciphers known as "petits chiffres" to encrypt communications. These were designed to be written and deciphered in haste on the battlefield and were generally based on 50 numbers each representing a key word or phrase. In the spring of 1811 this was replaced

by a more robust code based on a combination of 150 numbers, known as the Army of Portugal Code. At the end of 1811 however the French adopted "The Great Paris Cipher", a table of some 1400 numbers and derived from a mid-18th century diplomatic code. These tables included dummy numbers often used towards the end of a message to confuse any attempts to decipher the coded message.

For the next year Scovell pored over intercepted documents. He made gradual progress using letters that contained some words and phrases written "en clair", so that the meaning of coded sections could be inferred from the context. The information on troop movements gathered by Scovell's Army Guides was also crucial when making informed guesses about the identity of a person or place mentioned in coded letters. When a letter from the king of Spain (Napoleon's brother Joseph) to Napoleon Bonaparte was intercepted in December 1812, Scovell had cracked enough of the code to decipher most of Joseph's explicit account of French operations and plans. This information allowed Wellington to prepare for the final battle for control in Spain (Vittoria) on 21 June 1813. That night British troops seized Joseph Bonaparte's coaches and discovered his copy of the Great Paris Cipher table. The process was complete.

In 1829 in recognition of his achievements Major General Sir George Scovell was appointed Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst

THE SILENT LISTENER

by David J Thorp, pub. Spellmount, The History Press. 2012 pp192

I feel that I should start by declaring an interest. I served during the Cold War period and was stationed earlier at some of the same bases as Maj. Thorp during his Sigint days in BAOR. This made it a little easier to read what might otherwise have been, in parts, an incomprehensible book. I have to say that this book is a disappointment in far too many ways.

With a few exceptions (notably Anthony Beevor) military training and life may not be good training grounds for a literary life. A hint of the problem comes in the writer's own words when he writes 'from a young age a small cadre of regular soldiers suitably institutionalised'. I found this concept, frankly, repugnant. Such training, much of it, from what he describes being totally pointless, is hardly likely to help develop any latent literary skills. Later in the book, Thorp's comments on the suitability or otherwise of the Middle Class for sourcing officers are, frankly bizarre, not worth repeating and without foundation.

The Silent Listener is a book very much of 'parts' and, though the cover describes it as being about British Electronic Surveillance in the 1982 Falklands campaign, it is so much more but, at the same time, sadly, so much less.

The first part is his life as a Boy soldier; the second, as a trained signalman and linguist in the Royal Corps of Signals and then the Intelligence Corps, where he was commissioned leading to most importantly, the role he played in Sigint/Elint in the Falklands war. The final part which relates to the 'Belgrano' incident is, to me, again bizarre.

The best that I can say is that this is a thoroughly unsatisfactory book.

Review extract by kind permission of Paul Croxson. The full review will be published in the planned "Members' Area" of the Museum website as soon as it is available.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

At the time that the museum trust announced that "Friends activities had ceased" (R & L 2010 pp11) there were approximately 100 "Life" members who had paid £75 to the museum trust. At the time, these members' donations formed an invaluable contribution to development of the museum.

The recently formed FICM trust having re-assessed the "servicing costs" of providing newsletters, events and worthwhile activities for Friends decided to set Life membership at a minimum of £250 donation. This category has already attracted a steadily growing number of new Life members. Annual memberships are set currently at £15.00 with an e-mail address or £17.50 without.

In order to cater for former members a "Loyalty" rate of £10.00 pa was introduced and we are delighted to say, has been taken up by many members of the previous Friends "section". Following careful deliberation, the trustees of FICM have now decided to also offer former "Life" members the opportunity to upgrade to full life membership of the new trust upon payment of a one off donation not less than £175. We do hope that this financially equitable approach will appeal to those that it concerns.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS



Final designs of distinctive FICM membership cards have just been approved by the trustees and will be ready for distribution shortly. Annual cards will include a renewal date together with a membership number. This will be needed principally to obtain access to the members section of the museum website which is nearing completion.

PLANNED EVENTS

CORPS DAY - 21st JULY 2012 We propose to arrange one or two "Friends" tables (10 per table) for lunch in the marquee on Corps Day this year. If you might be interested in joining us **PLEASE contact John Quenby 01234 740894 or jquenby@btinternet.com asap!**

Late summer date TBA – Life Friends reception and meeting at Chicksands

October date TBA – Annual Intelligence Lecture Plans are in hand to arrange a lecture with a high class speaker who will appeal to a wide Friends audience. This will probably be held in London (possibly at the SFC) or Milton Keynes.



See you there!

WEBSITE

The museum trustees expect that the new website will be “open for access” very shortly. Museum Trustee Ian Cooling says the main objectives of the museum website over time will be:-

1. To leap over the wire at Chicksands and make the Museum, its Collections and its Archive accessible to a global audience.
2. To shift as much of our Archive on-line as is possible, perhaps through a digitisation programme
3. To provide an on-line “Home” for the Friends,
4. To provide an outlet for the Museum Shop
5. To launch an on-line Espionage, Intelligence and Security bookshop.

The dedicated area for FICM Friends will provide easy access to information about the Friends objectives, benefits of membership and importantly, downloadable application and gift aid forms.

There will also be a password protected area for members which will include a message board for the exchange of views and comments between members; a photo gallery; the newsletter archive; articles of historical interest; expanded book reviews and importantly news about forthcoming events.

CURATOR'S CORNER

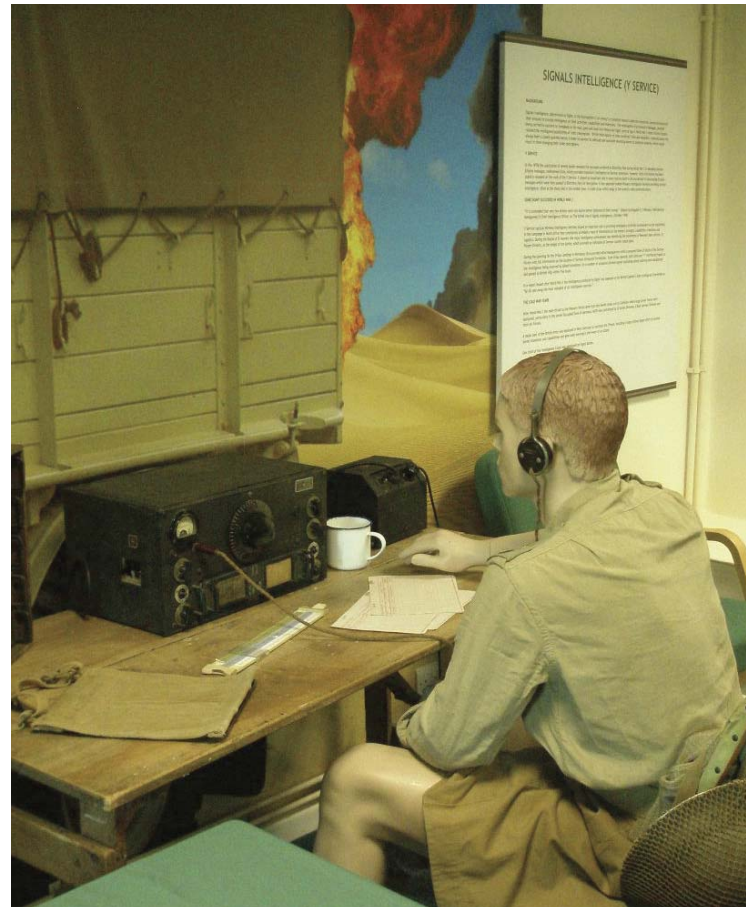
Museum Curator Sally Ann Reed loves radios. Amongst her favourites is this Soviet R-353 which should test a few of your memory banks! This fine example is on display currently in the museum.



More interesting items from the Curator will be featured in future newsletters.



FANY's display



Y Service display

DISTRIBUTION GUIDANCE

While this newsletter does not include any classified information, it is intended for the personal use of FICM members, their families and close friends only. Your co-operation in observing this guidance is much appreciated!