

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The important focus of our activity this year has been the major conference and dinner we held to coincide with the Lines of Torres Vedras Day. The Annual General Meeting preceded the opening of the conference, when Major (Now Lt Col) Seán Scullion stood down as Secretary in advance of his posting overseas next year. We thank Seán for all he has done in helping get the FOLTV moving again. Our new Secretary is Ian Brewer, who moves over from Treasurer; Mary Brewer has taken on that role as well as Membership Secretary.

We investigated, with our Portuguese partners, the restoration of the plaques on the Fletcher monument, which were sadly stolen a couple of years ago. We obtained an affordable estimate for the replacement and agreed to fund this important work on behalf of the Rota. The new plaques have now been installed.

An excellent walks guide to the Lines area has been produced by the Rota and we have assisted with translation into English. See the website for more details. The Rota are working hard to build up tourism in the area and we are supporting their efforts. The Mayor of Torres Vedras attended our October conference as part of this work, on the back of meetings he had with specialist UK tour operators in London.

Looking ahead, we are asking for expressions of interest for a possible visit to Portugal and the Lines, possibly in conjunction with the Parliamentary All Party Portugal Group around Easter time, or October 2018: please let us know if you are interested.

We also hope to organise a visit in the summer of 2018 to Stratfield Saye; and to have a Lines of Torres Vedras Day dinner, with a top speaker next Autumn.

Finally, we have decided to recognise two long standing members and huge contributors to our knowledge of the Lines and to Anglo Portuguese relations, Clive Gilbert and Colonel (Retd.) Gerald Napier, with honorary life membership of the Friends. We made a presentation to them at the October conference.

Andrew Dismore
Chairman

EVENTS UPDATE 2017

Visit of Mayor of Torres Vedras

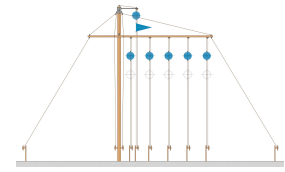
A group from the Câmara Municipal de Torres Vedras including the Mayor, Carlos Manuel Antunes Bernardes, visited London in October 2017 to promote tourism on the Lines of Torres Vedras. This included a reception at the Portuguese Embassy for organisations interested in Tourism and a visit to Apsley House where they met the Duke of Wellington.

Conference 21 October 2017

Pre-conference dinner.

The Pre-Conference Dinner was held in the Peninsular Room at the Cavalry and Guards Club, London. Twenty-seven guests attended including the Chairman of the Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras, Andrew Dismore and the Secretary-General of the British Commission for Military History, Andrew Grainger. We were honoured

THE FRIENDS OF THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2017



to welcome the Portuguese Ambassador, His Excellency, Manuel Lobo Antunes as our guest.

Conference

The conference on 21 October 2017 was attended by 55 People including the Mayor of Torres Vedras, Carlos Manuel Antunes Bernardes. The Conference was opened by the Chairman of the Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras, Andrew Dismore. The opening address was by the Mayor of Torres Vedras, who stayed to listen to the presentations. An open discussion on the building of the lines was led by Dr Mark Thompson with contributions from the audience including a number of Portuguese historians and the conference speakers. There followed four presentations. Professor Charles Esdaile spoke on the little known, Guerra Fantástica of 1762 and the curious parallels with Massena's third invasion in 1810. Colonel (Ret'd) Nick Lipscombe described the major role the Royal Navy played in supporting the war and the Lines themselves.

Just before lunch, Colonel (Ret'd) Gerald Napier and Clive Gilbert MBE were given life membership of the Friends for their work to support and publicise the Lines of Torres Vedras. After a wonderful buffet lunch, Professor Mendo Henriques then spoke on the war from a Portuguese perspective and the role of Portuguese guerrillas and militia. Dr Mark S Thompson spoke on the use of telegraphs on the Lines and Finally, Clive Gilbert MBE spoke on the work done in Portugal to preserve and protect the Lines. The talks were excellent and the contributions from the attendees added greatly to the success of the day.

REPORT FROM 2017 AGM.

Change of Officers.

Andrew Dismore was re-elected as Chairman.

Seán Scullion has stepped down as Secretary due to work commitments. The Committee would like to thank Seán for his hard work to support the Friends since its formation. Seán will remain a member of the Committee.

Ian Brewer was nominated and appointed to take over as Secretary.

Many Brewer was nominated and appointed as joint Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

Bill Henderson also stepped down from the Committee. We thank Bill for his help in collecting information on the current state of the forts on the Lines.

We will always be interested in hearing from members who would like to get more involved with the running of the group.

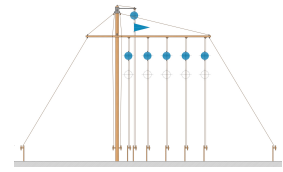
Finance Update

The Treasurer reported that the accounts had been audited prior to the AGM. We will have around £3,000 in the bank after all the accounting is completed for the weekend's events. Still outstanding is paying for the new plaques on the Monument at Alhandra.

Membership update

We currently have 41 members, having had one person sign up at the Conference. We also had several people enquire about joining and took away forms.

There are also two corporate members.



MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE.

Website

Development of the website has continued through the year with the addition of information on the individual forts on the Lines. There are now pages for over sixty forts, each of which has pictures and plans attached. We will continue to add information for the remaining forts.

Website Visitor number continue to increase. The last year has seen a 15% increase in visitors each quarter. Nearly 7,000 individuals have visited the website in the last year. We consider this a great success in line with the stated aim of the Group to publicise the Lines.

Facebook

The Facebook page continues to be active with many contributions from the UK and Portugal. Membership now stands at 170.

Royal Engineers Historical Association Conference 20 October 2017.

I was honoured to be invited again to their annual conference. The theme was fortifications and I presented on the Lines of Torres Vedras. It was a good opportunity to publicise the Lines to the near 100 attendees.

Royal Engineer visits 2017.

There have been three (that I know of) trips to the Lines this year by groups associated with the Royal Engineers: In May, 170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group led by Major Seán Scullion RE and Dr Mark S Thompson. The same leaders took out the Royal Engineers Historical Association in June. 36 Engineer Regiment visited in October, led by Mark Crathorne of the British Historical Society of Portugal.

EVENTS FOR 2018

Visit to the Lines

Despite interest in a visit by the Parliamentary All Party Portugal Group, elections and referendums have made this impracticable over the last few years. It is hoped that a visit can be arranged in 2018 to renew the relationship that was formed during the visit in 2009. If this happens, the Friends would hope that we can arrange a visit at the same time.

Visit to Strathfield Saye

Preliminary discussions are underway for a private visit to the Duke of Wellington's home at Strathfield Saye. Further details will be announced when finalised.

Lines of Torres Vedras Day, October 2017.

The Friends intend to arrange a dinner with a relevant talk in Autumn 2018.

Ultramarathon.

Now called the Running Challenge. This event, running up to 100km along the Lines of Torres Vedras will be on 26 May 2018.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the Lines, the Friends, or our events, please visit our website (www.f-ltv.co.uk) or our Facebook page.