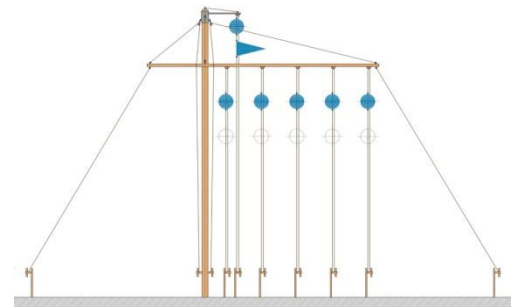


# **The Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras**

## ***New Year 2017 Newsletter***

### **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

After our relaunch event in October 2015, the Friends are now going well, with our visit to Chatham to coincide with our AGM last summer and further activity in the autumn. We are building strong links with other organisations such as the Anglo-Portuguese Society with mutual advertising of (and attendance at) events. There are a number of other similar organisations we are looking to engage with, too. Amongst these are Waterloo 200, the British Commission for Military History (BCMh), the Royal Engineers Historical Society (REHS) and the Friends of the Royal Engineers Museum (FoREM).



Earlier 2016, I visited the Lines and met the Rota (the local councils who maintain the forts in their ownership despite the considerable expense involved at a time of austerity). I recommended that as an organisation, the Friends should affiliate to the Rota to show our support and solidarity with them. We are also proposing a follow up visit to Portugal in the middle of this year.

The Rota has also continued to produce some very good material about the Lines, (see also the English version of their website (<http://www.cilt.pt/en>), and they would like our help to promote awareness in the UK and to encourage tourism to the area. I have discussed a number of ideas with them which I am following through, by the good offices in Portugal of Friends member and Chairman of the British Historical Society of Portugal, Clive Gilbert. This will be an important part of the Friends' discussions and work over the coming year too. There was also support in the Rota for the initiative of Friends member Bill Henderson, to survey and report on the condition of forts that are visited, especially in private hands, as this might well help to support the Rota's ongoing request for classifying the whole of the Lines as a national monument. We are working to improve our own website too. So far we have information about the condition of almost half the forts in the Lines.

Regrettably, the Fletcher Monument was vandalised last year, with the theft of its bronze plaques. We are considering how best the Friends can assist with a more secure and less tempting replacement for them.

Finally, members will be saddened to learn of the death last year of our founding Chairman, Lord Roper, who worked hard to get the FLTV up and running. For a full obituary on John Roper's full life and varied career : <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/07>

### **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

*Prepared by: Mark S Thompson*

#### **Website**

Development of the website continues.

Over the summer, I have redesigned the site with the intention of including a page for each fort on the Lines. These forts are grouped into the seven districts as created by Wellington in 1811. Each page will have a plan of the fort, a number of photographs and a Googleearth image showing the area around the fort. To date there are pages created for forty forts.

My thanks to Bill Henderson for the reports and photographs he has provided for some of the forts. Other photographs have come from several sources including my personal

collection, Gerald Napier and Mike Hyde. We are particularly grateful to Sergio Tavares of the sister Facebook group, 'CÍRCULO DE ESTUDOS DAS LINHAS DE TORRES' for permission to use photographs from their site.

Use of the website continues to grow. The last 12 months has seen the number of users grow by around 25% to nearly 4,000 unique visitors. I expect this number to continue to rise as more information is added to the website.

This year it is planned to start adding contemporary maps and plans of the Lines to the website.

# **The Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras**

## **Facebook**

Like the website, there is regular usage of the Facebook site. There are several other regular contributors who keep us up to date on activities in Portugal. The number of members of the group continues to grow slowly, there currently being 152 members.

## **New Treasurer and Membership Secretary Prepared by: Ian & Mary Brewer**

I would like to introduce myself as the new Treasurer of the Friends and my wife Mary who has agreed to take up the new position of Membership Secretary.

The good news is that the Friends are in good financial health and the latest bank statement shows that we are over £3.5k in credit and Mary informs me that our membership is somewhere between 25 and 30 now you will immediately ask yourself, as did I, why we do not have an exact number for our membership and the problem is that over the years some people have paid their subscription by Standing Order, some by Cheque and some by cash – some we believe that are members don't appear to have paid at all over the last couple of years!

Mary and I, with your committee's support have decided that the time has come for a "root & branch" update of our records and therefore we will be contacting you on an individual basis either by email or post to ask you to fill out a form so that we can carry this out. Therefore when you receive your form could I please ask you to take a few minutes to fill it in and return it to us.

Ian Brewer – [IJBrewer@msn.com](mailto:IJBrewer@msn.com)  
Mary Brewer – [hib0u@msn.com](mailto:hib0u@msn.com)

## **RECENT EVENTS**

### ***Friends of the British Cemetery (FBC) Symposium, Long Melford, November 2016.***

Mark Thompson presented two papers at this conference and took the chance to publicise the 'Friends'. He spoke briefly about the group and showed them the website, encouraging the attendees to keep in touch. At least one person has joined the Friends as a result of this presentation.

Also presenting was Major-General Rui Moura (an excellent paper on the 'claimed' massacre at Coimbra in 1810.) It was good to meet him again and have an opportunity to talk with him at length about the Peninsular War and the Lines.

### ***Great Royal Engineers Conference, Chatham, November 2016.***

The conference had two objectives: Firstly, to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Corps and secondly, the formation of the Royal Engineers Historical Society (REHS). Mark Thompson presented a paper on John Burgoyne and briefly mentioned the Lines during his talk. The event was primarily an in-house, Royal Engineer event but was also attended in force by the British Commission for Military History (BCMh).

It is proposed that the REHS arrange a Battlefield Tour to Spain and Portugal in June and this will include the Lines.

Independently, another Royal Engineers party from 170 Engineer Group are considering a trip to Spain & Portugal and will spend some time on the Lines.

After the conference, an email dialogue occurred with a suggestion that the BCMh and the Friends hold an event on the Lines of Torres Vedras. Discussions are ongoing (see further down for initial details).

# **The Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras**

## **FRIENDS EVENTS FOR 2017**

9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017 – Committee Meeting.  
June 2017 – Proposed visit to Portugal.  
Jul 2017 – AGM & Committee Meeting  
(location tbc).  
22<sup>nd</sup> Jul 2017 - LTV Ultra Marathon.  
Mid Sep – Committee Meeting.  
20<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017 – REHS Fortifications  
Conference – Chatham.  
20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2017 – Lines of Torres Vedras  
Event (details tbc)  
Early Dec 2017 - Committee Meeting

### **Visit to Portugal in June 2017.**

The REHS will be carrying out a Battlefield Tour of Portugal and Spain from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June. They will visit the Lines and travel to Badajoz, Elvas, Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca. A potential visit by the Cross-Party Group for Portugal may occur during this period and there may be an opportunity for the Friends to be part of this also. More to follow.

### **“Fortifications” Event at the Royal School of Military Engineering, Chatham on Fri Oct 20<sup>th</sup>.**

This event will be organised by the REHS and will cover fortifications through the ages.

### **Lines of Torres Vedras Day and Possible Conference 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Oct.**

At their last meeting the committee discussed how best we would recognise the important date in our calendar in October and although our plans have yet to be finalised we would like all of you to “keep the date” for the evening of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Oct and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> Oct.

On the Friday we are looking at a dinner in London in the evening and on the Saturday a full day’s conference to discuss various aspects of the Lines and their history. Topics to be considered could possibly include some, or all, of the following:

- The 1810 - 11 Campaign
- The strategy of the Lines
- The Engineering aspects
- The Portuguese POV
- The Consequences of the LTV
- Communication Behind the Lines - The Signals' System.

If anyone has any other suggestions we would be grateful to hear from you and please send your suggestions to our Treasurer Ian Brewer, who is leading on this matter. Ian’s email address is [I\\_J\\_Brewer@msn.com](mailto:I_J_Brewer@msn.com)

If interested in any of the events above, please contact the Secretary via the website at:

<http://fltv.weebly.com/contact-us.html>

### **Friends of the Royal Engineers Museum (FoREM)**

If you are interested in attending any FoREM events please contact Robin Lloyd-Owen at [robin.lloyowen@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:robin.lloyowen@tiscali.co.uk)

### **Anglo-Portuguese Society events for 2017**

If you are interested in attending any A-PS events please go to:

<http://www.angloportuguesesociety.org.uk/>

### **Contacting the Committee:**

Website: <http://fltv.weebly.com/>

Contact: <http://fltv.weebly.com/contact-us.html>