

Chatham World Heritage News

The latest from Chatham Dockyard and its Defences

August 2011



Welcome to the August 2011 edition of the Chatham World Heritage newsletter.

I hope you've taken advantage of our (mixed!) summer weather to get out and about and explore your local heritage. I hope you enjoy this summer issue – please remember to sign friends and family up to the Partnership so they can receive their own copy. It's a great way to help us show support for the WHS bid and Great Lines Heritage Park. We are poised to sign up our 1,000th partner soon, and look forward to numbers well beyond that! Please do get in touch to let us know what you think of the newsletter, and with any suggestions for future editions.

Very best wishes,

Ludsey Morgan



Chair of the Chatham World Heritage Partnership

Chatham World Heritage Partnership Meeting: Save the Date

The next meeting of the Chatham World Heritage Partnership will be on the evening of Thursday 3rd November, in the auditorium, at the Royal School of Military Engineering (inside Brompton Barracks). More details and an agenda will be sent out nearer the time, but in the meantime, please save the date! Thanks to our kind hosts for providing the venue.



Save the Date - again!

This year's free fireworks display at the Great Lines Heritage Park takes place on Saturday 5th November. The bonfire will be lit at 7pm followed by fireworks at 7.30pm.

Spotlight On: Commissioner's House, The Historic Dockyard (1704), Grade I Listed



In 1703, Captain George St Lo took up the post of Resident Commissioner at Chatham Dockyard and found that his house (built c.1640 for the first Commissioner, Phineas Pett) was not up to the standard of that he left behind in Plymouth. He successfully petitioned the Navy Admiralty Board for authority to build a new residence. The result - Commissioner's House - is now the oldest naval building to survive intact in Britain. It is a unique combination of stunning Georgian architecture and beautiful landscaped gardens. Today, it is a thriving wedding and event venue offering elegant rooms to suit a variety of uses. One of the principal features is the main staircase and its magnificent ceiling painting. Painted on wood, it depicts an assembly of the gods and was originally in the Great Cabin of the first rate ship *Royal Sovereign*. Constraints created by the historic building have made it difficult to re-use the upper floors but the sympathetic uses ensure a significant contribution to the high running costs. The Commissioner's House has changed little since it was built, with only some internal modifications made between 1770 and 1780 and servants quarters added to the south, which are today the kitchen and offices.

Did you receive this newsletter from a friend or colleague? To sign up to receive the newsletter directly, please join the Chatham World Heritage Partnership via 01634 331176 chathamworldheritage@medway.gov.uk or www.chathamworldheritage.co.uk.

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Heritage Open Days:

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. Every year, on four days in September, buildings of every age, style and function throw open their doors. Visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk to see what your local heritage has to offer this year!

Don't forget that Fort Amherst's



parkland is now permanently free to explore, thanks to central government and European funding. The park opens at 6.15am year round, and closes at 7.45pm in summer and 3.45pm in winter. Thanks go to the Royal Engineers who kindly open and close the gates each day.

This year's Heritage Open Days run from 8th to 11th September throughout England.

Who's Who: Bill Ferris, OBE.

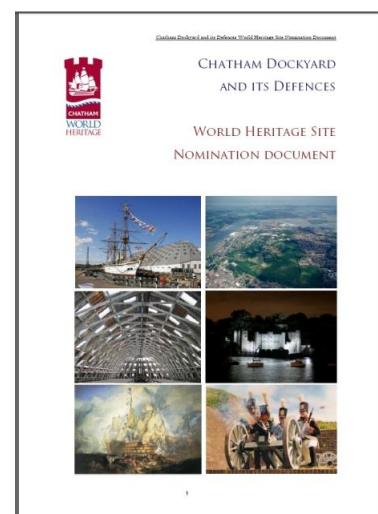
Bill joined Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust as chief executive in December 2000. He was awarded the OBE in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours for services to tourism. Prior to his role in Chatham he trained as an accountant and studied Management at Aston University before owning and operating a retail/wholesale bakery in Devon. On selling this he entered the heritage world in 1988 as Commercial Manager of the Yorkshire Mining Museum before moving to Kent to manage "A Day at the Wells" in Tunbridge Wells, then the White Cliffs Experience, Dover before taking on national responsibility for a number of attractions including the Jorvik Viking Centre and several Millennium projects. Bill has been a member of the Chatham World Heritage steering group since its first meeting in 2007.



Bill lives in mid Kent, loves fly-fishing, mountaineering and skiing as well as travelling – these days mainly to visit his grown up family!

Jargon Buster: Nomination Dossier.

All applicants for World Heritage Site status need to submit a two-part "nomination dossier" to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for assessment. The first part is a 'nomination document', which explains, in depth, why a site is internationally unique. This includes a detailed history of the site, and a comparative study, looking at similar sites throughout the world, and explaining why the nominated site is the best example. The second part is a 'management plan'. This explains how everyone with an interest in the site will help preserve and promote it. The Chatham Dockyard and its Defences nomination dossier was approved by stakeholders and landowners in 2009, and is ready for submission to UNESCO. No UK nomination for World Heritage Site status has ever failed, so Chatham is in an excellent position.



Thanks:

Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park would like to thank Medway Urban Parks and Green Spaces Forum for their kind grant of £100 towards promotion and publicity materials.

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Get Involved: Brompton Research Group

The Brompton Research Group will meet at 5.15pm on Monday 10th October at the Royal Engineers Library. The group (supported by Chatham World Heritage and English Heritage) is progressing two projects, one focussed on late 19th century census investigations, aiming to provide an understanding of what life as a civilian was like during the period of greatest naval and military prominence at Chatham, and the second capturing oral histories from Brompton residents from the 1930s-50s. If you would like to join in, or can recommend anyone for interview, please contact Joanne Cable, via 01634 331176 or joanne.cable@medway.gov.uk. All are welcome.



Thanks to Noreen Clare for the painting of Prospect Row, Brompton.

No. 1 Smithery – Impact:



The conversion of No. 1 Smithery from an “at risk” building into impressive museum galleries and facilities represents nine years of creative thinking, intense fundraising and pure tenacity. The building houses collections of the

National Maritime and Imperial War Museums, providing stunning display areas, excellent space for temporary exhibitions, and repositories. The impact on visitation has been dramatic. In the ten-week period following the launch, visitor numbers were 20% above the same period in 2009 and visitor income showed a 24% rise. In the period to August, visitors from Medway increased by 94% and from the rest of Kent by 32% indicating that the advertising and promotion launch campaign was extremely successful. In the same period visitors from the rest of the UK increased by 30% and from overseas by 50% indicating that the wider national campaign also had impact.

Visit us on Google Earth:

A masters student at the University of Greenwich has been working hard to produce some Geographic Information Systems tools to help the management and promotion of Chatham’s World Heritage. Benjamin Eze’s work includes producing a 3D virtual tour of the site, which will be accessible over the internet, and will contain photos, videos and audio clips. We’ll let you know when it’s ready for viewing later this year.



UK Tentative List latest:

The last newsletter had the exciting news that Chatham Dockyard and its Defences has kept its place on the UK shortlist of future World Heritage Site nominations. The shortlist is renewed every ten years, and the new list contains just eleven sites from the UK and its overseas territories. Chatham is the only site to have completed its nomination dossier, and - to the best of our knowledge - is the only site with a funded work programme. Government plans to formally submit this new shortlist to UNESCO later this year. New UNESCO guidelines require a shortlist to be submitted at least one year before a nomination from it can be drawn, meaning that the next available nomination date for Chatham is February 2013. This unfortunately contradicts earlier understandings that the next UK nomination would be possible in 2012, but rest assured we will do all we can to secure this new earliest possible nomination date!

Great Lines Heritage Park Update

www.glhp.co.uk



Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park:

FoGLHP held its most recent open meeting at Brompton-Westbrook primary school on 9th June. The group enjoyed an interesting and informative presentation by Rolf Williams of the RSPB who enthused everyone with his work and particularly the preservation and management of nature reserves in north Kent. Rolf paid tribute to the work of groups like FoGLHP who help to preserve urban green spaces and promote diversity of wildlife and flora. FoGLHP also held a successful litter-pick on 2nd July. The next open meeting is on 22nd September at Mid Kent College, from 7.00pm. All are welcome.



Award Winning Bridge:



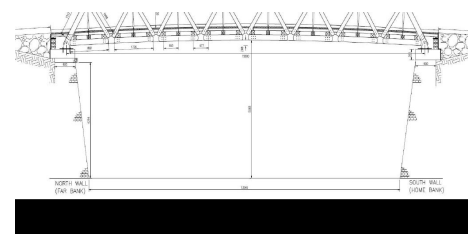
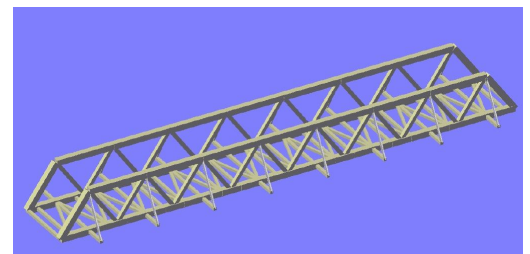
Prince William's Bridge at Fort Amherst was recently awarded the Institution of Civil Engineers' "Engineering Excellence" award for best structure in the southeast. We are delighted by this award, which comes so soon after the bridge's formal opening.



And the award winner of the future...?

We are delighted to let you know that we have been awarded £225,000 from the European Union for a further bridge crossing at the Great Lines Heritage Park – connecting the rear of Fort Amherst with the Inner Lines. This is an exciting partnership project with the Royal School of Military Engineering, helping to celebrate the bicentenary of the establishment of the Royal Engineers in Chatham, in 2012. The RSME Bicentenary Bridge will be constructed in the summer of 2012.

Bridge Location: ■ = RSME Bicentenary bridge, ■ = Prince William's bridge. ● = new park gates from Brompton



Project part financed by the European Union