



Founded 1961

## NEWSLETTER

NO. 36

June 2011

### EDITORIAL

With the onset of spring, it is good to see that Festung Guernsey Group has restarted work and, as usual, are achieving so much in such a short time. The acquisition of one of the *Batterie Mirus* gun sites is an exciting development and I'm sure all members look forward to seeing the results of the group's massive work effort that will be put into such an important site. Once again I'm sure that I represent all members of the CIOS when offering them congratulations on their present and future achievements.

**TREVOR DAVENPORT**

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2010

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**Newsletter and Review Editor:**  
Trevor Davenport  
**Members:** Richard Heaume  
June Money  
Jim Adamson

### PROGRAMME AND FUTURE EVENTS FROM JUNE UNTIL DECEMBER 2011

**Thursday 30 June:** Site visit to *Batterie Scharnhorst* led by Ian Brehaut; meet at 7.00 p.m. Parking on site in Route des Clos Landais

**Sunday 17 July:** Ramble around Vazon and *Batterie Lux* led by Ian Brehaut; meet at 2.15 p.m. in the car park by the kiosk at the Richmond end of Vazon Bay

**Sunday 21 August:** Ramble with Phil Martin & Richard Heaume; meet at 2.15 p.m. at Beau Sejour

**Thursday 8 September:** Lecture by John Goodwin on *Air War over Guernsey 1940*; 7.30 p.m. at La Villette Hotel

**Sunday 18 September:** Ramble around Beaucamp de Bas led by Lord Eric de Saumarez with Roy Burton; meet at 2.15 p.m. at the playground car park at Saumarez Park

**Saturday 1 October:** 50th Anniversary Dinner; 7.00 for 7.30 p.m. at Les Cotils

**Thursday 13 – Sunday 16 October:** Members' visit to Bletchley Park

**Sunday 13 November:** Remembrance Day lunch; 12.00 for 12.30 p.m. at Moores Hotel

**Sunday 11 December:** Christmas lunch; 12.00 for 12.30 p.m. at the Hotel de Havelet

### REPORTS ON SOCIETY EVENTS

#### **March Quiz Night:**

The Society's first ever quiz night was a great success with 47 members and friends enjoying a good evening of fun and challenging questions. Paul Le Pelley and June Money are to be congratulated on the tremendous amount of work that must have gone into putting together and running such an excellent event. The raffle raised £128 for the Red Cross.

#### **April lecture:**

Gilly Carr's lecture on the Falla Papers was one of the best-attended meetings in recent years, with at least 80 members and guests present. It was a clear and well-presented account of her research project and how the Falla papers fit in to that research. There was also strong emphasis on her campaign for a memorial to those who died in camps and prisons in Europe, and audience opinion was canvassed through a questionnaire handed out during the evening.



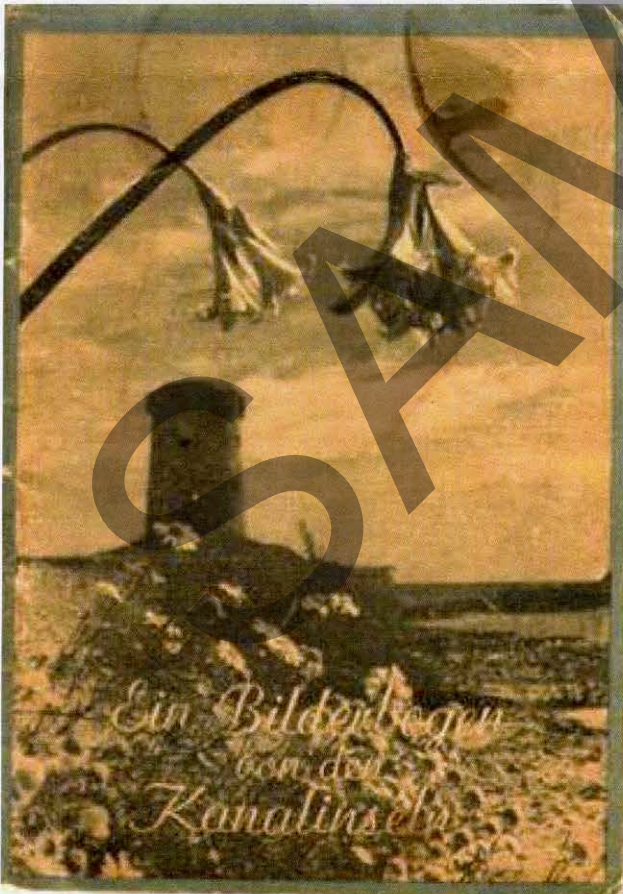
### Liberation Day Dinner:

Seventy members and their guest enjoyed an excellent dinner at Les Cotils on Liberation Day. Edgar Blampied entertained the diners as they arrived but, sadly, was unable to continue later in the evening. Dorothy Langlois stepped in with a lovely extempore talk on entertainment during the Occupation before leading everyone in the singing of 'Sarnia Cherie', ending just in time for people to get outside to watch the firework display - a spectacular end to a most enjoyable evening. The raffle raised £261.60 for the Red Cross.

LIZ BOXALL

### EIN BILDERBOGEN VON DEN KANALINSELN

Well-known collector Damien Horn from Jersey sent me an interesting photo taken from the inside cover of *Ein Bilderbogen von den Kanalinseln*, or 'Impressions of the Channel Islands' - a book written by Baron Hans Max von Aufsess and printed in Jersey in May 1943.



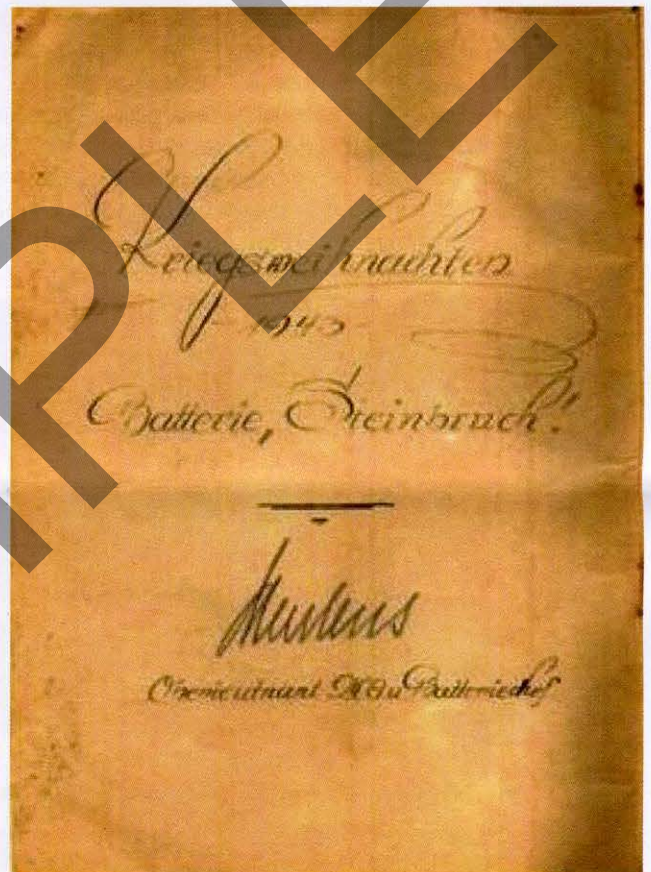
Above: Cover of *Ein Bilderbogen von den Kanalinseln*

What was particularly interesting about this copy was the inscription inside the book, which translated reads:

War Christmas Eve  
1943  
Batterie Steinbruch  
Lieutenant-Colonel Kulens, Battery  
Commander.

The assumption is that this book was presented by Kulens to the men of Steinbruch for the battery mess.

SH



Above: Inside inscription and Kulens signature



## A CONNECTION WITH THE PAST

Looking back at the photographs relating to the *SS NORMAND* visiting the Islands in *Newsletter* No 35 (February 2011) has prompted an association between a Guernsey relic and that vessel. One of the captions states that the *SS NORMAND* carried two guns that I identified as 90mm mle 1877 Elswick guns. Subsequent investigations have indicated that I was not quite correct about that identification.

The basic gun was indeed a mle 1877 but it was a 90mm de Bange field gun barrel converted for the naval role to become a mle 1891. The original de Bange gun family was introduced into French Army service commencing in 1877. There were four calibres, 80, 90, 120 and 155mm, all having the same basic breech-loading system, but all four bereft of any form of recoil system. This omission was corrected with the mle 1891 on which a flange was bolted around the barrel just forward of the breech section. This flange acted as the connector to a spring-based recoil cylinder so that the gun could recoil within a sleeve around the barrel.

The intention seems to have been to enable the gun to be employed in a naval role at relatively low cost. There does not seem to have been any application for the add-on recoil system in the land artillery role; the French field artillery continued to field them until just after the start of the Great War. The Great War witnessed the widespread use of submarines against merchant shipping so some form of defence against that threat became a high priority which could not be easily met at a time when the scale of the conflict was growing on a massive scale. It was here that the Elswick connection arose for it was a straightforward measure to build large numbers of a relatively simple Elswick pattern pivot mounting, the mle 1916, to accommodate the 90mm mle 1891 guns with their add-on recoil systems. Aiming was manual using the shoulder piece seen in the *Newsletter* photograph.

As already mentioned, the *SS NORMAND* had two of these guns and mountings, indicating that a mle 1891 gun, albeit on a more modern mounting, was still employed during the Second World War.



**Above: The stern of *SS NORMAND* showing the two guns – only the shoulder piece can be seen of the second gun to the right of the mast**

There remains a connection with these old guns and Guernsey. The remains of an artillery barrel have for years been displayed outside the Imperial Hotel. After all the investigations outlined above it is now possible to identify that barrel as a 90mm de Bange gun with the added flange above the breech section indicating it was converted to mle 1891 standard. The recoil mechanism, barrel sleeve and the breech block have long since disappeared.



**Above: Gun outside the Imperial Hotel - the 90mm de Bange gun barrel with the added flange above the breech section indicating it was converted to mle 1891 standard.**



**Left: Flange at the breech of the gun outside the Imperial Hotel**



According to most accounts the Imperial Hotel gun was salvaged from an armed merchant vessel sunk off the Islands during the Great War (see below) so any link with the *SS NORMAND* is almost certainly ruled out. Even so, a tenuous relationship remains.

As an odd artillery history footnote, in 1940 a batch of 100 90mm de Bange field guns, still without recoil mechanisms, was sent to Finland to help them out during their 'Winter War' with the Soviet Union. As late as 1951 the Finns still retained 39 of them in service and many act to this day as gate guardians at museums and military establishments.

#### TERRY GANDER

**ADDENDUM:** It was pointed out by Paul Bourgaize that the guns of the *SS NORMAND* were very similar to the gun on display outside the Imperial Hotel. This gun actually came from the wreck of the cargo ship *FIGARO* which was launched on 23 September 1907 under the name of *VOREDA* for R. Williamson and Son, Workington. It was sold in 1912 to G. Levasseur and Son, of Rouen and renamed *FIGARO* under the French flag. The French navy requisitioned the ship in 1915 and fitted it out with a deck gun which was mounted on the bow. *FIGARO* was sunk on 26 January 1918.

Two stories have emerged: the first that the ship was sunk by a torpedo from a German submarine; and the other that the ship struck a sea mine. Whatever happened, *FIGARO* made for the closest land and sank just off Pliemont, Guernsey. The wreck was found by local salvage diver Len Gallienne in 1960, who identified the wreck from the remaining bronze letters on or near the bow. The gun was salvaged and placed outside the hotel as Len's brother was one of the locals at the bar. Strangely enough when I asked Len about the ship he stated that he had recently decided to give the bronze letters from *FIGARO* to the Guernsey Museum's and Gallery who, despite this being the only WW1 casualty in local waters, turned the offer down and sadly the letters were scrapped. I hope the Guernsey Museum is not making similar mistakes with Occupation related items.

SH

#### FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

I recently obtained a photo which showed Dr. Franz Hueber. Hueber who was an Austrian notary and politician, briefly serving as Justice Minister in 1930 and again in the short-lived government of Arthur Seyss-Inquart in 1938. Hueber was heavily involved in the preparation

of the *Anschluss*, the annexation of Austria, and as a reward, he was appointed as a *SA-Brigadeführer* in May 1939. Hueber was an Under-Secretary of State in the Reich Ministry of Justice.

However it would appear that he was also a military man because in the summer of 1940 Hueber became a *Hauptmann* (Captain) in a Flak unit in the Rotterdam area; and then in August 1940 he was appointed as the commanding officer of *Reserve-Flakscheinwerfer-Abteilung 298* (Reserve Searchlight Battalion 298), whilst the unit was in Bordeaux. Here he was promoted to Major. Following this he was moved in late autumn to become commanding officer of *2./Flak-Regiment 43* in the Berlin area.

Hueber was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* whilst stationed in Cherbourg in late 1942 and at the time he commanded the *Flak Abteilung 364*, but it is unclear when he joined this unit. The *Gemischte Flak-Abteilung* (Mixed anti-aircraft Battalion), was deployed in Cherbourg, Jersey and Alderney from February 1941 to June 1944, after which the Cherbourg batteries were moved and 31 batteries remained on Jersey and one in Alderney until Liberation.

Hueber was replaced by *Oberstleutnant* Walter Bethge in July 1943 and returned to Berlin where he became the presiding judge of the *Reichsverwaltungsgericht* (Reich Administrative or Federal Court). In 1945 he was drafted again into Flak and then went into American captivity in May 1945. Later that year he was arrested as a war criminal and in 1948 was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to 18 years in prison. In 1950 he was conditionally discharged and released. Hueber died 10 July 1981 in Salzburg.

It is clear that he commanded the Flak units of the 364 in Alderney and Jersey but it is not known if he ever came to the Channel Islands. As to the friends in high places, well, what has not been mentioned was that in 1920 he married

Paula Göring and became the brother-in-law of Hermann Göring.

Dr. Franz Hueber



SH



## Festung Guernsey Project



### **Wn.Schönbucht-Mitte: 4.7cm Pak casemate**

In last year's February *Newsletter* we reported on the investigation of the 4.7cm Pak casemate at The Half-Way. Work has been continuing since February this year to open this bunker permanently. The entrance gate was removed and taken away for repair and sand blasting prior to painting. The interior has been cleared of earth and stones, and the remaining equipment is being conserved.

Once the entrance had been tidied, attention was turned to the front embrasure and spent-shell case pit; here was the first surprise. Expecting an open pit in front of the embrasure, we quickly discovered a concrete roof over the pit with a small entrance hatch. The interior was completely flooded, and once pumped out the remaining rubble took several weeks to clear with a pulley and buckets.



**Above: Spent-shell case pit**

A number of interesting items had found their way into the pit. These included the barrel cleaning rod, the front of the bunker phone and a number of small posts that had been fitted on

the beach to hold the barbed-wire defending the front embrasure area. The phone cover was in a very poor state, but careful cleaning revealed the original hand painted instructions. This will be treated and re-fitted along with other fittings. One solitary 4.7cm shell case was also found as the last of the sludge was cleared from the pit.



**Above: 4.7cm shell case and barrel cleaning rod (minus bristles) found in the pit**

Fitting post and wire fencing and planting gorse have helped protect the steep drop over the entrance. A short flight of concrete steps will be built down the entrance to meet up with the original steps. During excavation a granite retaining wall has emerged, together with the remains of a pre-fabricated Tobruk pit that had been built close by.



**Above: Spent-shell case pit cover in the right-hand corner**



Once again, our thanks go to Tony Froome for his help with the large amount of excavation needed to open this bunker.

#### ***Batterie Mirus:***

For many years we had debated the fate of the largest gun battery to be emplaced on the Channel Islands. Nearly every visitor we meet is interested, and asks to see the various structures. It was therefore decided that acquiring one of the gun positions was a priority. After lengthy negotiations had taken place, Gun-Site No.1 has now been purchased by Bob Shafer.



**Above: No. 1 Gun Pit – present condition**

We have worked with Bob at *Batterie Scharnhorst* for a number of years, and he was keen to acquire the site. This ensures its long-term security and, at last, work can start to clear and secure the area from any further vandalism. Some time ago Festung Guernsey acquired a large diesel generator which will be fitted into the plant room to provide light and power.



**Above: Cleared ammunition entrance to No.1 Gun Pit**

#### ***Batterie Scharnhorst***

The arrival of spring and the improving weather has meant work can continue at *Batterie*

*Scharnhorst* after a break for the winter. Plenty of growth meant hours of strimming was required to get the site looking tidy.

Work in the first two fields surrounding the *Sudetenland* emplacement is almost complete. The repaired roof of the ammunition bunker has now been landscaped and the area grassed. The various lined trenches and defensive positions surrounding the *Brandenburg* emplacement were badly damaged during post-war back-filling. Being constructed in granite and concrete bricks, these are being carefully reconstructed to their original form.



**Above: Reconstruction at Batterie Scharnhorst**

There are large sections of trench which are still to be excavated to link the personnel and ammunition bunkers adjacent, and this will hopefully progress this year. **PB & DC**

#### ***KLAUS WILHELM***

Built in 1939 by Schulte & Bruns, Emden for Klöckner Humboldt Deutz AG, Köln, the



dimensions were 250 BRT, 127.1 feet in length, 25 feet in breadth, and a draft of 8 feet; it was powered by a 4-cylinder diesel engine.

The vessel passed to Wilhelm tom Wörden, Hamburg on 12 March 1940 but on 20 March 1940 the *Kriegsmarine* took control of the vessel. The vessel prepared for *Operation Sealion* and was designated H 2841 MK. on 1 September 1940. The 'H' designates it as registered at the port of Le Havre and 'MK' as *Motorküstensegler* (or *Kümoose* when abbreviated).

In 1941 the vessel became a supply ship for the Channel Islands. On 29 January 1943 the *KLAUS WILHELM* in convoy with Vp 206, Vp 211, M 4606 and M 4612 sailed from St. Peter Port to Cherbourg. At about 2300 hours, and approximately two miles off Guernsey in the middle of quadrant B.F. 3572, the vessel collided with M4606, and had to be taken in tow back to St. Peter Port by M 4606. In St. Peter Port the vessel was repaired temporarily by plugging the hole in the hull just above the waterline, but was left to dry out on a hard standing alongside the Castle Pier. At low water the hole was repaired with great difficulty using new wood. The vessel just passed an inspection and was allowed to return to sea on 2 February 1943.

The vessel continued to ply its trade locally and was in St. Peter Port Harbour at Liberation on 9 May 1945. As the vessel was registered and owned in Germany it was seized as a trophy of war and passed onto the Ministry of Supply to become an 'Empire Ship' and was registered as *EMPIRE CONGREVE* from 26 June 1945 and was operated by the London based company of J & A Gardiner and Co. Ltd. In March 1946 the vessel was sold and transferred to Russia and re-registered as *KOIDA* in Leningrad. The vessel was removed from the Lloyds register in 1960 and it is suspected it was broken up for scrap.



Above : *KLAUS WILHELM*



Above: *KLAUS WILHELM* in Alderney

#### NEW EXHIBIT AT MUSEUM



The German Occupation Museum has a new exhibit. The MG34 in the photograph was left at the museum entrance overnight and was found when Richard opened the museum on a Saturday morning in April. The gun bore a close resemblance to one previously displayed at the Priaulx Library and questions were asked if it was in fact still on Licence.

Left: MG34 in the German Occupation Museum

In the 1980s the gun disappeared and was believed destroyed by the police. It would appear someone else had other ideas. If it is the same gun, it was found at La Corbière, Forest in the 1950s by John Hayes. It can now be seen displayed in its unpreserved state at the museum. SH



**We are still looking for volunteers to man the Signals Bunker on Thursday & Saturday afternoons. At present we have September and October free for anyone who is interested in helping. Please contact Paul Bourgaize on 07781 107632**

#### GUERNSEY'S GERMAN TUNNELS

Over the last few months we have been busy gathering information and photographs for an updated book on German tunnels in the Bailiwick of Guernsey to be published later this year. This will now be a standalone publication covering the Bailiwick of Guernsey and will be our first archive book. If members have any relevant photographs or information that they feel could be included, please contact Paul Bourgaize on 07781 107632 or e-mail [pbourgaize@cwgsy.net](mailto:pbourgaize@cwgsy.net)

**Open Day at Batterie Generaloberst Dollmann,  
Sunday 3 July. 1.30pm-4.30pm**

Guernsey Armouries welcomes CIOS members to the first open day of the 2011 season, marking ten years of the site being restored and open to the public.

Featuring living history re-enactment, displays of weapons and related equipment, and a display of military vehicles by the Guernsey Military Vehicle Group.

The gun will be fired at 2.00pm, 3.00pm and 4.00pm.

#### GERMAN BURIAL MYSTERY

I recently became partially involved in some research relating to German Soldiers killed in the Channel Islands. It is hoped that this will become a separate section of the revamped CIOS Guernsey website. It was interesting when I received information which suggested that the graves of four German soldiers killed in the Channel Islands now lie in the German War Cemetery at Marigny, Normandy. The German War Cemetery (*Kriegsgräberstätte*) contains 11,172 graves of German soldiers.

Most of the casualties were buried here after the Second World War, when they were brought together from lonely field graves and small cemeteries. The exhumation and re-burial of the soldiers in the cemetery took place between 1956 and 1961. At the present time it is not clear if these soldiers were previously buried in the Channel Islands or elsewhere before being transferred to this cemetery. If anyone has any information it would be useful for my research.

First Name	Heinrich	Lorenz	Karl	Artur
Last Name	WELSCH	LODES	SCHUBERT	HELLMANN
Rank	Obergefreiter	Gefreiter	Obergefreiter	Obergefreiter
Born	09.11.19 Duisburg	19.12.22 Weiher	24.07.23 Breslau	04.02.23 Hamburg- Finkenwerder
Died	25.05.43 Guernsey	23.05.1943 Guernsey	18.02.1944 Jersey	08.06.1944 Entrance to the port of St.Helier
Buried	Block 2 Row 24 Grave 923	Block 2 Row 24 Grave 913	Block 2 Row 53 Grave 2034	Block 2 Row 21 Grave 808

The object of the research is really to allow family genealogists to search out relatives buried in the Channel Islands during the Occupation. It is quite an undertaking as clearly some details are known about each burial and it may be interesting to record in some cases the cause of death on the database and include any existing photographs. **SH**



**Above: German War Cemetery at Marigny, Normandy**

#### New Members

**Mr Louis Jean:** Val House, Le Val, Alderney

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