

JANUARY MEETING

————— First Speaker —————

Fort Burgoyne – The Way Forward

A talk by Chris Valdus – Reported by Harry Harris



Fort Burgoyne



A Vision of the Future - Heritage Centre at Fort Burgoyne

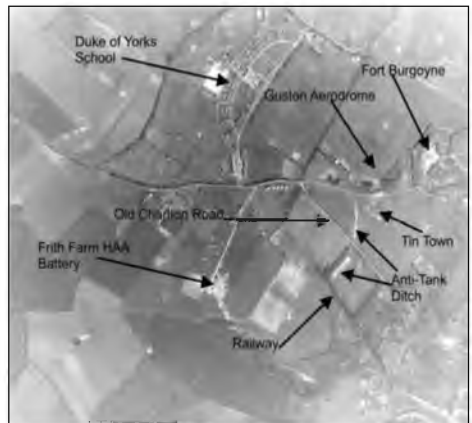
On the 21st of January we welcomed Chris Valdus from the Land Trust. The Land Trust is an independent charity with five long-term objectives which include enabling social cohesion and improving health.

Fort Burgoyne covers forty-two hectares and the Land Trust has scheduled ten hectares for their attention which are on the Ancient Monument Heritage 'at risk' register.

Chris told us that Fort Burgoyne was the result of a Royal Commission led by Lord Palmerston in 1859, with the main fort being completed in 1867. 'Castle Hill Fort' as it was known in 1872 became 'Fort Burgoyne' on Queen Victoria's instructions. Connaught Barracks was built in 1913 and an aerodrome was constructed at Guston in 1914. We were shown slides of the area by Chris that illustrated clearly the strategic significance of Fort Burgoyne and the

surrounding installations.

The Land Trust acquired Fort Burgoyne in 2014 and aim to secure funding of £12million; they already have £5million. As part of the National Great Place Scheme it is



Map of Fort Burgoyne and Guston Areodrome

supported by National Lottery funding through the Arts Council of England.

The Trust has already set about routine maintenance, with contracts in place to remove vegetation and to manage other issues. These include an unstable ditch wall and a rusting bridge which needs attention. A partnership with Lee Evans over three years costing £1.6million will lead to stabilisation through routine maintenance.



Casements Fort Burgoyne

Chris outlined three elements of the project; Dover Arts Development, Albion Incorporated - with their 'Year of Engagement' in 2019, and Animate Community Arts who have registered three schools with 'Artsmark'. The overall aim is to put the Fort on the map with a newsletter. Social media such as Facebook is also being used to promote the Fort and its intended facilities.

Chris emphasised that we have to "look after what we have" and Fort Burgoyne clearly has much potential under the aegis

of the Land Trust. His enthusiasm for the project and an excellent video showed us the extent of what has to be done to fully preserve and utilise this ancient monument. With assistance from the funding bodies and D.D.C., the next few years should see the aims of the Land Trust for Fort Burgoyne fully realised. It will be another asset for the town and a welcome restoration of an historic feature that has been neglected for too long.

We wish Chris and his team every success for the future.



Fort Burgoyne Bridge



Moat at Fort Burgoyne