

Mapping Museums project interview transcript

Name: Patrick Beresford

Role: regimental secretary and honorary curator (retired)

Museum: HorsePower Museum

Location of interview: Museum office/archive above the museum

Date: 5/12/18

Interviewer(s): Toby Butler

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Name of interviewee, (year of interview), interviewed by Toby Butler, Mapping Museums project,
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The project is based at Birkbeck, University of London. The interview recordings and associated materials are archived at the Bishopsgate Library, London.

For readability the transcript has been made using 'intelligent' transcription (removing ums, ers etc).

TB: Could you just start by giving me your name and date of birth?

PB: My name is Patrick Beresford and I'm a major retired date of birth XX-XXX 1942.

TB: Could you just tell me what's your role has been here at the Museum.

PB: At the home Headquarters and Museum I was regimental secretary and honorary curator of the museum from the middle of 1996 until 2007. And now I am a volunteer helping at the Museum.

TB: Ok that's great there's also something you mentioned from memory I don't know if it was you or your wife but you were saying that you were involved in the Winchester military museum group. Is that right?

PB: My predecessor set up an overarching group known as Winchester's Military Museums which basically is the curators or sometimes the chairman of the trust getting together and trying to agree joint tactics and plans particularly on things such as publicity marketing, education, schools coming in, outreach to schools; and anything that we can do together to enhance the experience of coming to the museum.

TB: Did you have any formal role in that group...?

PB: I was for a while chairman of certainly the curator's side, we had a retired general who appointed himself as chairman of the larger group which used to include the curators and the chairman of the museums; and some of the outside bodies like Hampshire Museum service and people like that.

TB: OK great. As far as the interview goes there are two kind of areas that I'd like to talk to you about. One is that really, about the kind of networks and development of the museums in the area, because mapping the development of the military museums has been really interesting. And probably to you would make total sense but to an outsider it is quite surprising. and that was that military museums in 1960 to present absolutely massively expanded, from 50 to over 100. And the other thing was that Winchester comes out of all the areas in the whole country it has more of an expansion than any other local authority or place.

PB: Yes.

TB: So here are two mysteries to us, and I'm slowly starting to understand some of those patterns. But we're trying not to just have a simple answer as to what happened, but to get a sense of some of the issues and reasons for these changes. Not only that, but in a case study sort of way just to find out about particular individual museums. Why don't we start with the museum itself. can you just give us a sense of the history of the Museum and when did it start exactly and what are the key moments of its development.

[00:03:48]

PB: I was going to give you some books to read, I mean you can take these away with you, these are journals. This particular one, the article is entitled 'Museum Saga 1969 to 1980' and it goes through year by year what went wrong or right, which ended up basically with lots of negotiations trying to find a place to have a museum. The collection was building up I think people were quite keen that bits and pieces that they perhaps had from their family homes, or maybe on display somewhere, should be brought together to form a regimental museum. and there was one particular person, a Colonel Peter Upton who was regimental secretary, devoted himself to establishing the museum of

the Royal Hussars. because it was pretty clear that there was no point in trying to establish a 10th or 11th Hussars museum because we knew they were going to be amalgamated. And so all through the 70s and up to November '79 was when work actually started on a building, we actually got a site in Winchester; not where we currently are but in what's called lower barracks which is a couple of hundred yards away, and a site was given to us and pressure was applied to get some funding and there was fundraising campaigns in the Regiment to help with that, and Peter Upton and a team of people established the Museum and put it together, and put on the displays and wrote the labels and did all the things you have to do for a museum and it was opened by our then colonel in chief Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester in June 1980.

[00:06:01]

TB: right Ok so that was the key moment. So just tell us about the different regiments and how they came together in this museum.

PB: Yes there were basically two regiments, the 10th Royal Hussars and the 11th Hussars, Prince Albert's own, both raised in 1715 as independent regiments and went their own merry way for 250 years before they were amalgamated as a reduction of the size of the army in 1969. They both brought with them various traditions and had taken part in many actions over those 250 years. Fortuitously some were together, or both at the same action and some were, it was particular actions such as the Charge of the Light Brigade which a lot of the general public have heard of or know about, which the 11th took part in, the 10th were still in India at that stage. But other conflicts like they were both involved in the First World War. The 11th Hussars were the first regiment to change from horses to armoured cars, along with the 9th Lancers, so they pioneered that, for that change.

TB: Before 1969 there would have been a collection of sorts attached to the regiments but they wouldn't have been publicly accessible?

PB: No they certainly wouldn't have been accessible to the public. I've always looked and I still look a bit at, one talks about reserve collections and duplicates, well there is a reserve collection if you like with today's serving regiment; they have got pictures and medals and silver and lots of stories from the past, not just the last 20 years but going back into the dim and distant past. So that is a sort of a reserve collection. There is a store that you haven't seen here which occupies another area which is a lot of duplicate uniforms and they're items which are particular to the Regiment what particular to certain people in the Regiment who are famous either because of who they were or what they had achieved.

TB: I see. So the thing about the reserve collections which is interesting is that they're still working items, presumably the silver comes out once a year.

PB: Indeed, indeed. So when you get to the stage of trying to put a museum together you need to draw upon what the regiment is holding perhaps, and what individuals, former members of the Regiment, have. There's an awful lot of the covers behind you there, albums of photographs. There is a fine borderline between museum and regiment and what belongs to who. But museums, to be in museums, have to own their collection. They can have a certain amount on loan, but to be a recognised Museum they have to own their collection. So most of what you saw downstairs is owned by the trustees' museum who is a different group from the regimental trustees or the trustees that own what the regiment holds. There is always a controversy over certain items,

particularly over uniforms and; as the home headquarters, as this organisation is called, with the museum under its wing they are different organisations. And although I am double hatted as an honorary curator of one as I have no professional training, and a regimental Secretary of the other, one is frequently torn between guarding the interest of the museum, or making the Regiment look as smart as it can be for the Freedom of Winchester parade where the regiment came to us and says you've got x y and z which is perhaps not on display that sitting in your reserve collection for example the shabrack which is the thing which goes over the horses, and the decorated bridle and the show harness, can we please have them for the parade. Because it's on parade they inevitably get damaged so you've got to get a balance. And people say why was that on parade and you have to say if you want to see that you can come to the museum and you can appreciate it because it doesn't belong to the regiment anymore, it belongs to the museum it was gifted across so the museum trustees are there and wearing one hat saying no you can't have it, and another hat saying oh, it would be great if we could have it.

[00:12:05]

But interestingly enough on those particular items like that harness, because I know the man involved because he is still alive, one of the quartermasters when we were in Germany, had some modern copies made for just this sort of purpose, for today's parade purpose, not the actual items. There's an actual item in that cupboard just outside the door here. There's an actual one on the model down in the museum, the real thing dating from 1860.

[00:12:55]

So what point did the museum start the charity, the trust part?

PB: That was 1980, it might have been the year before, that sort of period.

TB: So the two regiments came together in 1969?

PB: Yes, but they did have a joint home headquarters at that stage. The Royal Hussars home headquarters was established in Lower barracks in Winchester period and the regimental Secretary of the day Peter Upton spent most of his day trying to find somewhere for the museum; because that's where we have this funny position of honorary colonel, somebody who has been a commanding officer, if not a Brigadier or a colonel or even a general in the Regiment, when he retires he gets appointed for five years as the honorary colonel, flying the flag for the Regiment, encouraging young men to come and serve as officers in the regiment, interviewing them and trying to promote the Regiment in whatever way they can. And in those ten years it was sort of one of we going to get this museum together sort of thing. Because I think probably across the army there was quite a drive to have a museum to be able to show off your bits and pieces of your history.

TB: Why at that time do you think; was it because of the reorganisation?

[00:14:28]

PB: possibly it could have been something to do with it. Before you lose all the bits and everything Vanishes into the woodwork, let's grab some items and establish a museum, a museum both to help with recruiting but also to help remember those who have gone before.

TB: so the honorary colonel, it sounds to me like it often fell to that job role to get it together, because it was a very public facing position, that would also explain why it's quite tricky to find founders because they tend to be older and at the end of their career.

PB: Yes.

So for those 11 years between 69 and 80, was it still two regiments or was there a third that came in?

PB: No, 69 through to 92 it remains the Royal Hussars. In 92 the 14/20th King's Hussars came in. The 14/20th had been amalgamated at the end of the first world war in 1922 I think it was. And they came and joined to form the King's Royal Hussars in 1992. So I've been through three lots of uniform. Sometimes dramatically. When the 10th and the 11th amalgamated we all adopted the cherry coloured trousers in a formal dress and our Officers Mess dress and various dresses, but we kept the Prince of Wales cap badge, the 10th Hussars cap badge. When we got to be next amalgamation the colour was kept for the trousers but we ended up the Prince of Wales badges on our collar dogs, and adopted the 14/20th cap badge which is a double headed Prussian eagle. So your trying to have a compromise, including the most distinctive parts of each regiment.

[00:17:14]

TB: Which I'm sure is a very troubled and difficult process for all concerned and for obvious reasons. And for museums it's also deep be difficult as well, you were saying how this this is happening again. So just explain that bit. So in 92 we've got the third one coming in.

PB: So what we've now got is 6 regiments you've got the 10th, the 11th and the Royal Hussars, you've got the 14th, the 20th, the 14/20th and today's regiment the King's Royal Hussars, so you've actually got seven regiments, which you were trying to tell the story of in that little space downstairs. So that's what the next headache is, not mine!

TB: Has there been any amalgamation since 92?

PB: No, not in our case.

TB: But at the moment there was a challenge to get some more objects down from another regiment; but that's to do with a museum closure?

PB: That's the 14th/20th; that's because the museum - when we amalgamated in 1992 we were allowed - the 14/20th had the equivalent of our regimental headquarters in Preston. And we were allowed to maintain that, as long as we did it with the manpower strength of one headquarters. So I worked here, my second in command as it were, worked out of Preston, which was very convenient! And he had one clerk up there and I had one here. And he had a museum up there, but his museum was in a house by Lancashire County Council, in a joint museum in which they were one of the regiments on display, along with the police and the fire and the Lancashire Fusiliers and one or two other people, in the old prison in Preston. And about three or four years ago Lancashire County Council decided that it could no longer fund all these museums, and gave them six months notice, so they were closing. And the people in there tried to set up an independent trust leasing the building from the County Council for a peppercorn rent, but it has proved after several years of negotiation to be a non-starter. And in the meantime, the home headquarters up north, the then colonel of the regiment decided it was a waste of resource trying to run two headquarters and we should all be put in here. So we have got Peter Garbutt next door, his second in command Steve ? at the other end of the office, two or three clerks and everything being centred in one place, which has an enormous advantage because one of the things, it sounds minor, but it is politically in the regimental sense very sensitive, is letting people what is going on in the regiment, and letting people know when

people die particularly. And because of our split it was getting mis-transmitted, because down here looked after officers, and up there looked after soldiers. And there is a huge overlap between officers; senior soldiers, sergeants and sergeant majors would want to know if there officer had died and vice-versa. And those messages were not getting through properly. Now that it is all in one place and all on one database they can all be told, even if they aren't really interested in attending funerals, they can drop a line to the widow or whoever it might be. And that is a hugely important aspect. And also the welfare aspect, because the regiment has a welfare fund that is available to help officers or soldiers who have fallen on hard times, so having it all under one roof makes it work much more efficiently.

TB: I see, OK, so it is fascinating how bound up it all is with the regiment, and you can't understand one without the other, because it is all part of it isn't it. And it is interesting that you are sharing the same offices because it is quite unusual for a museum to be so entwined with an organisation like that.

[00:22:04]

PB: It is just, it's a fact that we haven't got the staff to have a separate entity of museum; it would lovely to have another person who could be museums, that's it, don't worry about the regiment, don't worry about all these other aspects of life, but it has never been like that and although Elliott downstairs, we call him assistant curator and he is university trained and things; and he does quite a lot, he is not professionally qualified as a museum man really, he hasn't done a three year university degree but he does very well with limited resources. We all have limited resources don't we.

[00:23:01]

TB: So your personal involvement was 92?

PB: 96 - 92 was the year of amalgamation, 96 was when I came here.

TB: Let's just talk about, I've got a much clearer sense of regimental reorganisation, in 1980 it wasn't based here it was based down at the lower barracks.

PB: Yes, it was literally a hundred yards away; where there is now in lower barracks, next door to lower barracks is a house called Serles House, which used to be the HQ of the Hampshire Regiment, and today the Hampshire Regiment Museum is in the lower floor of that building. Hampshire County Council now own the building, it was an army building but Hampshire County Council were persuaded to buy it, but they have kept the ground floor for the Museum of the Hampshire Regiment. Which is a Regiment that has vanished, it doesn't exist anymore. It has been absorbed into the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment which covers half of the South of England these days. If not the Rifles that cover the rest of England as far as I can work out. The Gurkha museum here, which we share this building with, they have got much bigger, they are running a different organisation, they are running purely a museum, they are not running a home headquarters, they have got quite a large staff, they are, the money they make is supporting Gurkhas, Gurkha welfare funds; obviously they have got to do things for the museum, some funds have to be spent on that, but they have half this building for the work that they do. They have got double the display that we have downstairs, they have got two floors and they have then got offices up above here, and on the other side they have a gallery where they can do corporate entertaining of one sort and another, or they do museum talks and lunches and things like that. So they are on a different footing really. and

they are working for the Gurkha Museum trustees, they are not working for the Gurkha regiment, or brigade or whatever it is called these days.

[00:25:35]

TB: So on this site you have got quite different types of museums.

PB: Yes you have, you heard about the Adjutant General's Corps Museum, that's a very specialist, rather smaller museum but it has got a story to tell.

TB: And it's a corps rather than a regiment.

PB: A corp is much bigger than a regiment, so you would have thought it should have a bigger space but it didn't work like that. There is about to be another museum, not here but just on the outskirts of Winchester at Worthy Down. The Logistic Corps Museum is moving there from Deepcut. They are building; Worth Down itself used to be the Pay Corps but it is now a large part of the AGC, it is their base and is about two or three miles out, North of Winchester. And they are going to have another museum out there. So there is seven in or near Winchester.

PB: Why Winchester? Some of it is to do with the MOD selling off land and property and people fighting for a corner and they decided in their wisdom, this barracks in my time was converted from a barracks which has been sitting empty, into smart houses and flats and things. But that conversion, they decided they would keep two buildings and the guard room for the museums. And that is when they decided that our museum would move from Lower Barracks up to here, to be centralised. There was a plan shortly before my time, but it wasn't taken up, there used to be a building where the white building behind us now called Queen's Court, there used to be the NAAFI building there, that was going to be knocked down and there was going to be one building for the five museums as there were then; we where going to have a wing each and centralised hub to share museum services; the conservation and all that technical side of running museums. Which would have been terrific in hindsight, but no there's no money for that, you can't do that, you get on and muddle through in your own little corner, you can have that corner of that building, get on with it. And we got no assistance from the MOD, no financial assistance for moving up here; fortunately Hampshire County Council were very pro-military at the time and there was more money around at the time in 1990 when we moved up here and my predecessor did the move up here although the good Colonel Peter Upton did all the displays and layout and all the rest of it. Not as you see it today, but in a similar pattern to how it was down below, with much more open displays. But now everything is... well things got nicked I suppose, things went walking and were much more vulnerable. Now most things are behind glass or wired in, or replaceable and there is CCTV now days, when there wasn't in the past.

TB: At that time you were a serving member in the regiment?

PB: I was serving up to 1996 when I retired. and the title of regimental secretary is a retired officer's appointment, basically a civil service appointment. So Peter Garbutt next door is doing the same job, as regimental secretary.

[00:29:36]

TB: So you remember that museum very well?

PB: Not terribly well, because although I was serving, I was serving in all sorts of odd places, I wasn't serving in Winchester. One would come to Winchester to visit the museum shop, buy a few things to

present to people as presents in odd places, and say hello to whoever was regimental secretary at the time and go out for lunch or something. And have a look at the museum and see if anything had changed.

TB: So although the headquarters are here, the regiment's aren't, they are serving.

PB: We talk about headquarters, but the infantry call them regimental headquarters, but the cavalry have their regimental headquarters with the regiment, and what we have on the ground in England, and that is why it is called home headquarters, it used to be the focus for the families who might well be in England, or the Royal connection who didn't want to be bothered by all these changing of people in regiments, they wanted one person who was in post for ten or more years who they could talk to and understand things and work out programmes and that sort of thing. Which is the regimental secretary, and the home headquarters is where the regimental secretary is. When I first took over the regiment is in Germany and I'm still dealing with things like there was an accident outside the front gates at the regiment where someone got knocked down by a vehicle and taken off to a German hospital and I was on phones left, right and centre and I was on the phones trying to calm down his wife, who fortunately was a nurse and understood about people being hit on the head. But that has all changed and now the regiment and the families are permanently back in England, although the regiment is deployed abroad. At the moment it has people in Estonia, in a squadron out in Estonia on a permanent basis, changing every six months; that is where we are flying the flag at the moment.

[00:31:53]

TB: So when you came in the move had happened?

PB: It had happened, I inherited an up and running museum here, with an assistant basically doing the running while I learnt how to be a regimental secretary and what was required. And gradually over time, when I got that side of the job under my belt, with a bit of persuasion from my wife, she is a museum professional, you've got to do this, you've got to do that etc. We got things on a better footing. When I first took over we were provisionally registered I think it was called in those days. Then we got registration and now it's fully accredited. So it's jumping through all these hoops that the museum authorities, South East Museum service and the Museum Council requiring museums to be, which was very different from when Peter Upton was setting it up. It was a sort of private display of bits and pieces for the benefit of the regiment and the bureaucracy for want of a better term, of museums and how you run museums, and what you need to run museums, that was all relatively new to my predecessor and myself.

TB: So just tell me about that process, that's fascinating because I now understand that the Ministry of Defence, this was a big national policy and museums have to be accredited and this was quite centrally led. So just tell me about that I've heard that it's quite onerous to go through.

PB: It can be, for example there are downsides, if you are not up to standard and deemed to be up to standard in all sorts of aspects, nobody is going to give you any money because it's just money down the drain basically. And that goes up as far as the National Lottery and people like that. We got a lottery grant for our last refurbishment which was done towards the end of my time. But one have to be an accredited Museum and being an accredited Museum means you abide by the rules and regulations of the Museums Association, really. The museums Association lays down what museums should be, you've got to have a permanent collection you can't dispose of bits and pieces of the

collection without a disposal policy, and you have got to abide by that policy and that policy is all got to be approved by them, and it is deemed that the museum has a collection in perpetuity. And then the regimental side comes in, you end up with dozens of uniforms of the same sort and it is particularly physically difficult here because people leaving the Regiment would dump their uniforms; 'have this, you know, pass it on to young officers'; hang on we want that for the museum; or vice versa and suddenly what is a regimental asset becomes a museum asset. But then the Regiment says oh no we need that. And there can be a little bit of conflict. But now having been through all those processes, and things like the archives here. Is it a regimental archive or is it a museum asset? It is a grey area, and it has never really been sorted out except a lot of the things now belong to the museum. They are accessioned. They are all listed in the accession book, and we go through phases depending on who I have; I have two or three assistants, one of whom was a charming young girl half Italian half German, who was meticulous about everything that came in, went in the Ledger when half of it belongs to the Regiment. It shouldn't have gone in the Ledger. So then you'll have to go through a de-accessioning process, which means the trustees have to physically check and see and agree that x y and z can be written off the accession book. That's my memories running a museum, some of the aspects of running a museum.

[00:36:48]

you are also constrained by - one of the other things you're trying to do is get the visitors in. For a long time, in my time we never charged. I was a great one for the free entry. Unfortunately we don't get the big grant that the free museums in London get from the government to allow them to continue being free entry. So along with the various other museums around here who are charging we put a small charge on for a visit.

TB: So was that a difficult decision to make.

PB: Yes well I didn't make it. It was made and it does bring in a reasonable income for the benefit of the museum. Because otherwise the income comes from applications for grants and things or there are a number of people who give donations or have a regular subscription to keeping this museum running.

TB: Were there any other sort of challenges two getting up to speed with all of this accreditation and so on that you can think of or does that cover it.

PB: they physically come and inspect you, they inspect your displays, they look at what you're doing and how you are doing things; are they well protected, are they well presented, Have they got good labels, are they relevant to the story, and they look at the store and see how you; what may appear small items, but the protection of goods. I mean now there is a fly trap on the window, and the fly trap under there. Those sort of details. One of our great problems in this building is the control of temperature and humidity. In the winter it's nice and warm in the summer sometimes it's too hot as well, but we have no great control. There is one boiler for the building and those who work in offices want to be nice and warm where are the Gurkhas have gone down another road, they have installed air conditioning, because they're bigger and better off. It would be lovely to have air conditioning for the Museum and climate control, but it's just not cost-effective. but they are all sorts of little problems that come along in Museum life.

TB: something that we touched on earlier with picking objects for display, and this is representation and terms different regiments and so on. I appreciate that perhaps you weren't confronted by that

in the early iteration of the museum but you certainly have been, looking at the stuff you have downstairs, how do you negotiate that or think that through?

[00:39:55]

PB: Well, when we were refurbishing the museum we had a small committee of the trustees and the designers, and we decided on what the key features of what we wanted to put in, obviously from the 11th Hussar point of view the charge of the Light Brigade is important and it's a good story and people know about it, so that attracts people. We wanted to emphasise the horse side, so we had a few models of horses and the horse at the front. And we've got a lot of medals that we wanted to display so there's a medal cabinet, and that type of thing came into being. You saw one army vehicle downstairs, we used to have half a dozen. Including a blooming great tank; the back where people park their cars there was a row of armoured vehicles, we have 6 armoured vehicles out there. But looking after armoured vehicles which are in the open and available to the public - there is a university up there - for the young to clamber over as and when they feel like it, is a bit of a hazard. So they initially got whittled down when the whole of the back area was re-tarmaced. And we were allowed a couple of a wheeled vehicles which went out the front. And even those in the fullness of time went to the Imperial War Museum I think, the last two.

TB: Did you model the displays on another Museum, you mentioned the fact that your wife is involved?

PB: On the current one, yes. Not really, no. We didn't start with a clean sheet of paper but we wanted to keep certain displays from the old one. But it was virtually gutted for 6 months and rebuilt and reorganized, we even not too few holes in the walls, but again it's a listed building, so we had to get permission for that, to bring that little tank in. Fortunately the building, when the Ministry of Defence were here and the whole Barracks was Ministry of Defence, this building has been a quartermaster's department and I have some double doors on the back which had been bricked up when we got to it, when the museum first moved in. The guy from the planning department who is giving me permission to knock another hole internally suggested that the bricks that been put in with the wrong bricks and it would be nice if that could be removed, where the doors had been, and the metric bricks and the wrong cement taken out and it could be put back properly. So well there was a hole there, we pushed the vehicle in! It will never come out.

TB: so that was a win-win then. So this building a still owned by the MOD and that building was owned by the council, down at the lower Barracks.

PB: It is now, well Lower Barracks is all private houses now, Serles House is owned by Hampshire County Council, which is one stand-alone building on its own which happens to have the Hampshire regiment museum in the bottom, in the lower floor.

[00:43:37]

TB: OK, great. Tell me a little bit about the wider Museum network. Do you know when it started, the Winchester Museum network.

PB: I'm looking back at a 1991 journal, I give you this, my predecessor talks about the new Museum being created up here by Peter Upton and various other people. And he talks there about they're being 4 of the museums, the Gurkhas, the Light Infantry, the Royal Green Jackets and the Hampshires. And the curators have now formed a committee. So they talking about 91, forming this

committee, which became Winchester's military museums. Which now has its own trust deed. And now it still continues trying to do you things jointly for the good of the museums. And it was headed up by a retired general from the Green Jackets who pushed it along; and things like the signage within Peninsular Barracks; where you had to negotiate not with just the museums, but all the people who live in here, and the people who live outside who might want to come in, and Hampshire County Council and Winchester City and all that sort of stuff. That took a lot of effort and a long time. And things like joint ticketing between the museums on a rather complicated formula; you get a ticket in one Museum and that will let you into all of the others, but you don't have to do them all on the one day; and the free ones are still free, the AG Corps is free, the Hampshires are still free, but the others all have different chargers, so the ticket gets split in some complicated way.

TB: Yes, but that drives for visitors around between the museum which is a good idea.

PB: yes and you can go back again I think it lasts about a year or so.

TB: so there been any kind of major challenges for the museums as a whole, this is been going some time, 30 years or whatever are there any big issues or challenges that you have faced collectively?

PB: The big issue, and I only know this because my wife is chair of this organisation at the moment, and she is hopefully returning soon, she only took it up because she was deputy chair to General Wallace, who sadly died in post as it were, while he was still chairman; the great problem for that organisation is that it's very much a voluntary organisation. There is no big stick you can wag to make people do anything. People have got to cooperate; its only income is the subscription that each Museum pays. So it has limited resources. My wife has obtained small lottery heritage grants for small projects. She organised a small exhibition in what is now called The Discovery Centre, but what you would I know as a library, to commemorate the end of the First World War, drawing on objects from all of the museums; and the schools on the Scouts and things all put up posters, and it was open for 6 weeks, it closed last week. So that's a sort of joint challenge and there are more joint challenges. We have an annual Armed Forces Day which tends to be the military museums doing it here on the square and around the museums, in June time. But again that's Winchester's Military Museums joint initiative; trying to get them all to - they all get different jobs to do and the mayor comes and opens it and participates, and everything is free for everybody, they will go round the museums and see what the forces are up to. But those of the sort of activities, and I'm sure they'll be more in the future. But it makes sense to have an organisation, some sort of organisation like that where you have a cluster of half a dozen museums sitting together; for them all to be going independently to visit schools or have Education programs to bring schools in, it's much more sensible to have a specific person doing it for the whole organisation.

[00:49:23]

TB: Yes, we I'm going back to that idea of there being a hub and other museums being in one thing.

PB: But it is quite difficult when each Museum has its own focus and its own agenda and what it's trying to do. After suddenly be told by an overarching group or person who is not actually involved, in the case of my wife, not involved with any of the museums - well she is a trustee of our Museum, but she is trying to do it for the good of the whole rather than a specific Museum. It's quite tricky.

TB: And I suppose it's similar to those little regimental museum to become amalgamated it can be a feeling of a loss of control can't it?

PB: Yes indeed. You're talking about museums and you see into the future, I know there is a bit of pressure on the Royal Armoured Corps which is the cavalry as a whole, have the Tank Museum at Bovington, and there was a move that I understand, to have displays from each regiment incorporated in that museum which is an outlet for an overflow maybe and it makes sense because all the Royal Armoured Corps soldiers in their early stages of training go through Bovington and visit the museum, the Tank Museum, and if they can see their Regiment, they're wearing cherry trousers, that's your lot, and the maroon beret.

TB: I see what you mean for those soldiers coming back they're more likely to see it there perhaps.

PB: well they would certainly see it there if they're not brought here. Hopefully when they have spare time, which is not much, from Tidworth they would on occasion a troop would come across here and visit the museum. They always come on armed forces day for example, they would always support that with an armoured vehicle or some sort, probably one of the light track vehicles, which people like to see; they are army in the middle of the city.

TB: Great. Let's talk about the role in the community; you mentioned that the regiment was given freedom of the city and so on. But if the museum wasn't here would the world know, do you know what I mean. Do you think that has an impact, a local significance?

PB: It doesn't have as much significance as it should quite honestly. I mean the people around about who live in Peninsula Barracks would soon know that it wasn't here, and probably cheer! No I don't think so, a lot of them visit. And we get quite a lot of interaction with the University now as we have got two or three volunteers who come and work in the museum, largely on the archive side, on research and photocopying and that sort of work, as part of their course from the University. So that's a good link.

TB: So is it fair to say that your core audience is the regiment and its families, first and foremost?

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PB: It is, yes.

TB: And what does the museum give those people to think? As an outsider I don't know...

PB: it shows that there is still an interest in the past and where they came from and what the foundations of the regiments are. It is very useful for the young soldiers to be stirred by what their predecessors have done before and to learn a bit about the history. I'm not sure to get an awful lot at school these days, is it on the curriculum still? But yes that's an important aspect.

TB: You were saying that they do pick up some history from this. What is the history that's important do you think? To know the regiment was called one thing then another, it's very abstract isn't it. But at the core of it what are the messages of a nuggets that you want to pass through to this younger generation be at school children or young cadets?

PB: I think one is looking at - and one of the reasons we are trying to develop the stories behind medals and things like that is to bring in the human aspect; these aren't just shadowy figures in the past they are real living people. The Fowler story highlights an individual and what he did and what he survived. One is trying to perhaps give them a standard to live up to, in their own lives, but this is what people did and this is what they went through in the various campaigns and wars. And they did it for their country and they did it for their Regiment, the good of their Regiment. And they should be inspired in a similar sort of way.

TB: Lovely thank you that put it very nicely. As far as networks go, you have the support of the local network group, but are there any other big players or networks?

PB: there is there's the Army Museum Ogilby Trust, AMOT, who are based in Salisbury who are a benign network looking after all the army museums. The army museums are strangely split into funded museums and the non-funded museums. And there are as many of the non-funded museums as there are funded museums. So we are a funded Museum and the allocation now is that each Regiment should only have one Museum. So the closure of the one up North is fortuitous, because we are abiding by the rules of the MOD, you know. You were allowed to keep two museums for I think it was 15 years or something. Now we are well past 15 year point from 92 so we should by now have one Museum; that is the one funded Museum. If you wanted an unfunded one then you'd have to be doing it yourself. So the one up north was actually living on the good offices of the Lancashire County Council really. The collection was there and all we had to do was provided a museum attendant, who was then funded by MOD but that funding stops after I think it was 15 or 20 years from amalgamation. so in a funny sort of way it was fortuitous that Lancashire County Council said no we've had enough.

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TB: On that I was going to ask you why didn't it work out as a voluntary run thing?

PB: it's getting volunteers it's extraordinarily difficult. We have had colonels of the regiment writing to all the old soldiers within spitting distance, or a reasonable distance, and it's often difficult to get them to come and run the thing. We get a number who come at the weekend, Elliot downstairs doesn't work at weekends, he is a 9 to 5 Monday to Friday man, employed by us in fact, but I used to be employed by the Civil Service, and on the weekends at relies on volunteers coming in to open the place up. For a while I did it myself after I retired and there are a small band who will do that. But there's not the numbers or skills to run it full-time on a voluntary basis.

TB: and the Ogilby Trust, what input do they have, was it advice?

PB: The Ogilby Trust, it has advice, it has funding, it has money which you can make applications for grants for particular projects, particular things to help you along. If you want to do in a refurbishment or anything like that they will always chipping a bit, as well the regiment, as well the Old members of the Regiment, they will all contribute, and I'm sure they are all going to be asked again. the national Army Museum also has a dedicated person who is supposed to help museums. There was a time when they offered a service at a price, which we didn't take up, for helping with the business of accreditation and that side of things. There used to be something called Hampshire Museum Service but that has long gone, I think it is now called Hampshire Cultural Trust. Then again the council's the people who founded these things, well everyone's pennies are getting tight, so Hampshire Cultural Trust now help but I'm not sure they've got money. I'm really out of touch as to whether they got the funds. But they have certainly got the ear of people who might have funds to help. Because it usually boils down to money if you want to do something, if you want to make changes, if you want to improve the service, it usually boils down to pounds shillings and pence.

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TB: Can you give me a high point if you're involved with the museum, or maybe the biggest struggle?

PB: My high point would be the refurbishment of the museum in 2006/2007 when we spent an awful lot of time and a lot of physical input as well. Prince Michael who was in the Regiment came and did the formal opening. I was here at two in the morning and my wife and the team were here all night trying to get it finished. And we had a huge number of people came to that. And we had a reception in the Great Hall which is the building next door, you can get to quite easily from here. A big reception and that was good.

TB: And the biggest struggle of the toughest time you can think of? Or has it been playing sailing?

PB: The struggle is probably the ongoing one between regiment and Museum. The silly things I can give you an example, in the middle of my time we went through all our reserve collection, and decided that we have far too many of these old-fashioned dress uniforms with the old lace ribbing etc. And we've got several on display downstairs, we've got some good condition reserve ones, and the wonderful of there were never going to be any use to anyone because they were physically too small to be worn. And the trustees decided to de-accession them, and raise some funds from them. And they got as far as the auction rooms in London, and one of the retired officers, old and bold, heard about it and stopped it basically. Because he had engineered acquiring those from the families, bringing them together for a regimental purpose. It was all to do with the 150th anniversary of the regiment or something, some very important event where everybody dressed up in these things, breathing in. Anyway I won't go on any further; they're still there, there are de-accessioned, sitting in the store, being neither one thing nor the other. Waiting for disposal eventually. And they were going to make a lot of money, because they are a lovely thing to put on a dummy perhaps, or to have on display.

TB: did he use them for that event did it happen?

PB: No; I think I'm number of them were used for the ball for the smaller chaps. it's just so very sensitive. One just has to be terribly careful of what you're doing and I always find it there's this conflict between what belongs to the Regiment and what belongs to the museum. And in my heart I'm a regimental officer; if we are trying to put on a showy display or whatever, and the regiment wants something from the collection, as long as they're not actually raiding what is on display downstairs, well it is better to air it and let them get on with it. But it's a tightrope. If it is actual museum property it shouldn't really be worn by a soldier on top of a horse on muddy Salisbury Plain. It's not good care and it's not looking after the fabric of the museum.

TB: Thank you so much.

[Ends]