

Mapping Museums project interview transcript

Name: Tony Figg (Colonel)

Role: Head of Army Heritage, Ministry of Defence (2005-14); co-founder AGCM

Museum: Adjutant General's Corp Museum

Location of interview: Prison cell (the museum was housed in an ex-guard room, and it was the quietest place we could find).

Date: 05/12/2018

Interviewer(s): Toby Butler

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Name of interviewee, (year of interview), interviewed by Toby Butler, Mapping Museums project, Available at www.mappingmuseums.org/interviews Accessed (date)

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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). The interviewee has reviewed this transcript and minor amendments have been made for clarity.

TB: Excellent, so, first of all, if you could just introduce yourself and just tell me your name, the role or roles perhaps, that you've had. And also, your date of birth, if that would okay?

TF: My name is Tony Figg, I was a serving officer until 2004 and I then assumed the appointment of Head of Army Heritage and I stopped going to work in 2014. I was responsible during the last five years of service for heading the team that formed the Adjutant General's Corps Museum. And during my time as Head of Army Heritage, was responsible for the construction of various army board papers, both of which I've given a copy to the interviewer.

I think I should first set the scene. The Royal Navy, the Senior Service has one museum on four sites. The Royal Air Force, the Junior Service, has one museum on two sites. The army has a hundred and thirty-one museums on a hundred and thirty-one sites. So, the thought process in having a museum is completely different. I think one of the most frequently asked questions was, "Which was my favourite museum?" Always a difficult question. Was it the largest? Articulating the case to a hundred and twenty thousand visitors a year on a large site in the South of England.

TB: (00:01:41) Which one was that sorry?

TF: The tank museum.

TB: Oh, okay.

TF: Or was it perhaps one of the smaller museums in the highlands of Scotland or the highlands of Wales or some of the beautiful cities in Northern Ireland with lovely, wonderful collections? Or was it one of the large corps museums which articulates the case for a corps, sometimes as large as sixteen thousand strong. That's the baseline, what would you like to ask me?

TB: (00:02:09) Okay, wonderful. Just going back to what you were saying earlier what is the difference between the corps museum and a regimental museum?

TF: A regiment is normally a fairly small setup, normally around six hundred and fifty strong. Sometimes you might have five battalions in a regiment, like the Rifles, or the Guards, which obviously, means that they're five times larger. But they are articulating history over many, many hundreds of years and very often tied in with the local city or town or county or region that they're looking after. Rather like the Royal Hampshire's here in Winchester. Rather like some of the Scottish museums, rather like some of the museums in Wales. The wonderful museum in Cardiff Castle is articulating the history of a regiment and also the local area.

A corps museum, because of the nature of a corps, there are small parts of that corps in battalion groups, in brigade groups, individual groups and in corps. Corps as in the size of unit as opposed to type of unit. And so, they don't have the same sort of history, but their history is equally as illustrious and equally well looking after. But also, they tend to be where the documents are held on particular sorts of weapons. As in a tank museum or particular sorts of guns as in the Royal Artillery

Museum, Firepower. Or particular sorts of vehicles as in the Royal Logistic Corps Museum.

TB: (00:03:46) I see. So, the corps is basically, as opposed to a regiment, it was a kind of service unit that might serve many, many different regiments, is that right?

TF: Well, they tend to serve each regiment and each brigade. As I say, their bravery, their gallantry is equally well worth recording and keeping.

TB: (00:04:09) Sure, absolutely. Well, it seems to me that we've got two areas to cover now which is a really lovely surprise because I didn't know that you had this senior role in the Army Heritage branch, is that right? So, just tell me, what were the years that you were on the Heritage Branch, was it 2004?

TF: I started working on the Heritage Branch in 2005 and finished in 2014, nine years to the day, March 14th when I took over and when I handed over. And the three organisations which I tried my very best to ensure got a good deal. One was Army Heritage Branch, representing the Ministry of Defence to ensure that we got best value for money because of course, I was a civil servant and so value for money was important. The Army Museums Ogilby Trust, which is an excellent organisation based in Salisbury and looks after the interests of regimental museums. And obviously the National Army Museum in Chelsea, which has recently undergone a marvellous twenty-four million pound refurbishment, which is the very pinnacle of reflecting army history, army valour, and army standards.

TB: Okay, wonderful. So, for the first part of the interview I'd like to focus on that role and then we're going to come back to the Adjutant Generals Museum, which is really important too.

TF: The Adjutant Generals Corps Museum.

TB: (00:05:46) Corps Museum, sorry. Thank you. Okay. I'm going to ask you this, but do say if it's before your time or whatever but what would be great is to get a sense of... We can see from the figures that there are certain periods of massive expansion for army museums in terms of their numbers. And also, of decline as well a little bit later. And clearly, this is connected to the organisations and also the fact that many of these museums were becoming trusts and becoming independent museums basically, which is why they would suddenly turn up on the charity register records and so on.

So, it might be that in fact, they existed already but it was only really coming to the notice or set up an independent thing as opposed to being part of a regiment. So, already there is complication here for us to work out what is going on. But I wonder if you could just talk to me generally about the growth of these museums and about what you know of the history.

The period we're interested in is from 1960 all the way up to present. And clearly, you cover quite a bit of that latter part so, if you've got some background for us before that, great, but otherwise just talk about your experience.

TF: I think it would be sensible to lay out some sort of framework as to why and how we have regimental museums.

TB: Great.

TF: The army used to be the size that reflected the importance the United Kingdom had abroad. And as the authority of the United Kingdom abroad has drawn down a little, so, the size of the army has drawn down. As a taxpayer, I think that is a very good idea. I think it would be true to say that nearly every regiment has had a museum of some sort and all corps do have museums.

To have a museum you need to have people with ability and enthusiasm, you have to have a collection, and you have to have resources, money. When museums were first formed in the sixties... I think some of them actually were formed before that, but let's say the sixties when many of them were formed.

It's because they were formed as the army was decreasing in size, officers felt that the history of their regiment needed to be articulated. And so, they took over rooms in officer's messes, rooms in sergeant's messes, rooms in barracks, rooms in town centres, and put their artefacts there. They did this with integrity, honesty, and enthusiasm.

The longevity of those museums perhaps fell into doubt as we got into the seventies. The army got smaller, resources got less and so, they came into very sharp focus as to who is paying for the room, who is paying for the building, who is going to man the building, who is going to pay the electricity for the building? And so, something slightly more formal had to be organised.

It's around that sort of time that the National Army Museum was moving from Sandhurst, which is where it has been for some considerable time to a purpose-built location in Chelsea, opened by the Queen... I should know when it was opened but I've forgotten, and that became the focal point then.

You then had four or five very large collections. You had the Tank Museum, which is not just 'The Tank Regiment Museum' it is the history of armoured warfare. You had Firepower, the Gunner Museum, which is the history of gunnery. You then had the Parachute Regiment Museum, not a very senior regiment in terms of history but a very powerful regiment in terms of influence and ability; they had a museum. And the Army Air Corps had a very good museum which was partly made up of artefacts from what was there before the Army Air Corps. And those were the big ones.

Slowly but surely, there was a slightly more formal arrangement with where the museums were. My predecessor, a very competent officer in the Royal Green Jackets, wrote the first army board paper in the nineties. I think in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, we had lists of where the collections were and as all museums are also charities so that you can fundraise and the like, I'm sure there will be histories of those. And the older regimental museums of the older regiments will have records going back to the sixties and even before.

So, really my knowledge comes from the nineties. I think it was the 1996 Army Board Paper, which I am sure Army Heritage Branch can give you a copy. And that will give you the groundwork as it was then.

TB: Great.

TF: As the army became smaller and resources became tighter, it was only fair that the army looked at where and how museums were run. And this caused quite a discussion because in old speak, without being mischievous or dishonourable, I think some of the trustees thought that the regimental collection was for the officers and soldiers of the regiment. An honourable thought, but not very logical because army history needs to be articulated to the town, to the district, to the county, to the nation, for two reasons. A, it means that they become cost-effective, good for civil servants, me, and much, much better for the regiment. Because regiments justifiably have considerable pride in their history. The officers do, the soldiers do, the towns do.

The Durham Light Infantry, there were more than thirty battalions of the Durham Light Infantry. I don't think there are that many battalions in the British Army now. So, you could see that local pride wanted to help a lot.

So, the 2008 paper, which you have a copy of, drills down to a considerable depth on what the MOD wished to gain from army museums. Four and a half million visitors, more than five million web hits, these are enormous numbers. So, they are very cost-effective, so I could articulate the case to squeeze a little bit more money out of the system.

And also, it meant that the trustees of the museums had to... Join the real world is a little strong but had to gain credence. They had to get accredited which was then, I'm sure it still is the standard, for museums which meant that their toilets had to be cleaned, the windows had to be fitted, there was a fire alarm. That the artefacts were looked after correctly, that there was correctly trained staff. All the things which needed to be done. And the Army Board Paper ensured that it should be done.

I was very conscious that some museums are literally one man band. So, a sixty-year-old retired officer and the regiment has been disbanded, it could have been disbanded twice over. And so, he, very unusually she, needed to some help and assistance. Army Heritage Branch and AMOT and the National Museum came to the conclusion after a good deal of thought that it would be much better, as opposed to a collection just being left in the lurch when the last man died. It's a bit poetic but you know what I mean. It would be much more logical for that regiment if it had been subsumed or if it had been joined, or if it had been disbanded, to gift that collection to the regiment which almost automatically, it had become part of. All the corps which almost automatically it became part of.

This for some people was like pulling teeth without anaesthetic. But the slow process with the excellent guidance of AMOT and of the National Army Museum meant that we could achieve that aim in the vast percentage of cases.

Then I left in 2014, I'm sure that particular process is ongoing and in the Army Board Paper we had two particularly poignant challenging paragraphs in two studies that were done. One study was done in 2005/2006 and the second study was done in 2011. The Clement Study was done in the middle 2000s and the Bourne-May study was done in 2011-ish, they're referred to there.

And they said that as much as we hated to do it, if a museum is in a place which is difficult to visit, i.e. in the middle of a secure camp. Or if a regiment can only open the museum alternate Wednesdays, that's a bit of a challenge to visit. And/or, in the really unusual cases where the regiment was unable because of resources or manpower to look after the collection, that the army would cease to fund that collection and that regiment. That caused considerable distress particularly in the Royal Armoured Corps, the Cavalry and particularly in the infantry, which is basically the backbone of the British Army. Because those were the organisations that had very small museums, sometimes very small but extraordinarily wonderful collections.

But the public wasn't seeing them so, difficult for me to articulate the case to... Not hard-nosed accountants, but senior officers who wanted to help. But if it's soldiers boots or museums... I always used to start my presentations saying, "Soldiers boots are more important." But I know there is always a little bit left over and I'll have that, please.

TB: (00:17:22) Yes, I see. Gosh, that's fascinating. So, through this period it seems you had two things going on. One was a big focus on public access...

TF: And quality.

TB: Right, okay. And also, consolidation where the smaller ones were moving up the train as it were.

TF: And quality...

TB: Right, okay. Well, tell me about the quality thing?

TF: Quality, I think is in several areas. Governance. Governance is so important to ensure that the collections were looked after, that the staff are well looked after, that the regiment is well looked after, and the public is well looked after. All articulated in the strategy there. Also, standards which were set by the accreditation organisation, it changed its name half-way through so, I've forgotten. It was Arts Council the last time it was involved but before that, it was called DCMS, Department for Culture... It's the same organisation but with a different brass plate on the front building. I'm not quite certain that is politically correct, but you know what I mean.

TB: Yes.

TF: And they set UK wide standards. And the army was determined, and I was there to ensure that museums raised their game to those standards. So, I think those are the two areas.

TB: (00:18:49) I see, okay. So, just on the organisation part of it, I imagine most regimental museums in terms of organisation, I would have thought, would have simply been a part of the regiment. So, it would have been, as you said, a retired officer might take responsibility for that. Was that more common than not?

TF: I think that was the case in the sixties, seventies, and eighties. In one or two cases it is also the case, there aren't that many retired officers who want to work for a pittance now. Very often, the regiment was in Germany and their regimental museum was in Cardiff or Edinburgh. So, there was no synergy there, they wanted to help but common sense dictates you can't always do that.

And also, it was the raising of standards and so, slowly but surely, civil servants were introduced. And the quality of the civil servants was raised by ensuring that they had computer skills, that they had Arts Council skills, many of them became AMA's. We got to that stage, all of a sudden, we were faced with a new challenge in that although we had MOD funded civil servants in place, that normally represented maybe twenty-five percent of the staff. And in some cases, in the Tank Museum, only five percent of the number of people working there because they used to employ forty or fifty people.

And also in the Gunner Museum, in the Royal Engineers Museum and the like. I forgot the Royal Engineers Museum when I was talking about the big five. I knew there was a fifth one, but I couldn't remember.

So, the army then was taking further cuts financially. So, it was introduced about six or seven years ago after the Bourne-May study that slowly but surely, when civil servants left their appointment or resigned, or retired, or whatever that the funding for that person was set at so many thousand pounds for each grade of civil servant. And that the museum would be granted that each year but then would be responsible for hiring the person, firing the person, training the person, and also their pension.

So, it was a cost-saving which the army had to find. But also for the museums, it was a very good deal because we were in the rather unusual situation of quite a few museums had vacancies, but you could only hire a new civil servant if you passed a committee that was set up in army headquarters. So, do you want a new fireman? Yes. Do you need a new doctor? Yes. Do you need a new museum assistant in Cardiff? No. So, they kept on asking to have the post filled but then it was never filled because it wasn't an operational necessity or requirement as they used to be called.

So, this was a good deal for the museums and I think they have in many cases, there was an initial harrumphing but then the common sense of, "Do you want twenty-five thousand pounds for the post or the post and never be filled?" They said, "We'll take the money."

TB: (00:22:51) That's fascinating. So, centrally then there were some very straightforward funding for core staff in museums, which I imagine was a bit sporadic from regiment to regiment so, you had a big infrastructure there. And also, this was only from

museums that had a living from the regiment so, it didn't go to any of the regiments that became trusts and maybe became independent?

TF: All museums are charities. All museums have a board of trustees. All museums are responsible for their own governance. I think what you're aiming for but not asking the correct question, if I may say so, is, we have two differentiations. So, we have MOD funded museums, that is the museums that we give MOD civil servants to or give money in lieu of MOD civil servants. They tend in the vast percentage of occasions to be serving regiments on that picture I've just given you.

We also have MOD supported unfunded museums which don't receive direct funding but because they're in locations which the MOD is content to continue to give them free food and accommodation; so that's free fuel and light and free accommodation, they are there.

It means they can also ask to have equipment gifted so, you might have a museum which has been around for a long time, the regiment is long gone but it suits the army because of footprint to say, "Yes, we'll continue to assist." And if they wanted the latest MOD or sorry... Army combat kit from Afghanistan or Iraq or from wherever, they could write a case, send it to Army Headquarters Branch via their regimental chain and in the vast percentage of cases, they would be gifted. So, it's a fine balance and with fine-tuning, everybody gets a reasonable deal.

TB: (00:25:13) So, all museums are either one or the other of those two categories?

TF: Correct.

TB: (00:25:16) Okay, right. So, you're saying that if they go independent it's not like their severed from the entire infrastructure, but they can call on...?

TF: They can still call on army headquarters branch for support. It will get thinner and thinner as the savings are taken. There were savings taken in 2014 so, regiments that were formed after a certain date, it's quite complicated, I won't bore you with it and I won't bother the tape recorder. And there was another tranche in 2017, and there is another tranche in, I think it's 2025 or 2030. So, that then, we will go down to one museum per cap badge, which will receive direct MOD funding. Now, of course, that might have changed because, as I say, I'm very much out of date and the younger and more competent people will be able to fill you in on all those details.

TB: (00:26:17) Yes, but the trajectory is very clear here. So, presumably, if that is the case, what you will see is either amalgamation where the smaller ones might move to the one cap badge. Or, what is interesting to see here is that often, you've got in fact, two or three museums which kind of want to stay independent. And even though they're part of the same thing now... I'm just thinking of the Rifles here and the one next door to it, the...

TF: Gurkhas?

TB: Yes. So, you've got ones who, even though they've been amalgamated, they still want to carry on?

- TF: The other area which you've not explored yet is, in many occasions, for instance, in Manchester, the collection there is of the old Manchester Regiment. And it is proudly in the city hall, the town hall and they keep a beautiful collection there. The local serving regiment or the regiment which the Manchester Regiment used to be a part of many, many amalgamations ago, will also try and keep and watching, helpful brief if they can.
- TB: (00:27:25) I see. So, in that case, the collection is actually owned by the council, it's been given...
- TF: Gifted, not given, gifted.
- TB: Alright, okay. Sure.
- TF: I'm still in museum-speak. Giving away and selling is not popular speak.
- TB: (00:27:41) Right, okay. So, there is also this other hinterland of things that have been given to local museums?
- TF: And also the National Museum used to accept gifting of disbanded regiments. But because there were so many of them they stopped doing that some years ago.
- TB: (00:27:58) Oh, right. Wow, so, it's quite a complex picture but I think what is wonderful is that you have really given a sense of organisationally; A, how it works but also how some of those big central decisions have unfolded which is wonderful. And in terms of governance from becoming mostly part of the regiment to becoming a charity with trustees, it sounds to me like that probably happened throughout this period?
- TF: It happened right the way through this particular time and to ensure everybody gets a fair deal and to ensure that museums are articulating the modern army, the Army Heritage Committee meets once or twice a year, chaired by the Adjutant General, with some big hitters. So, you get the Assistant Chief of the General Staff, the man who does the majority of the staff working in the Ministry of Defence, on behalf of the army. You get the man who controls the purse strings for the army, the Command Sec. And you get the Director of the National Museum, the Director of AMOT. These are the sort of people that sit there to ensure that everybody gets a fair deal.
- TB: (00:29:12) Okay, that's great. Brilliant. Okay, let's move now to the other part of the things you do which is about the museum itself. And for this, I have got some questions, which I'm going to try and... If I can. Well, just, first of all, I think what would be nice is, if you could just give us an idea of how and why the museum came about and your role in it? So, yes, just start at the beginning.
- TF: Right. The Adjutant Generals Corps is a very young corps, formed in ~~2002~~ 1992 with the amalgamation of the Royal Military Police, the Royal Army Pay Corps, the Royal Army Education Corps, and the Army Legal Services. Accountants, policemen, teachers, and lawyers. And each of those did have a collection of sorts, open of sorts, for people to see. The Royal Military had its own museum and continues to have its own museum. But gifts or loans artefacts to the Adjutant Generals Corps Museum of which it is an integral part.

We didn't have a museum, we were seven percent of the British Army, this seemed to be very, very unfair. There wasn't a groundswell of popular opinion from soldiers, senior NCO's, and young officers, who don't tend to get involved in museums and heritage and things. They have very, very busy dangerous day to day lives. But amongst the older and bolder there was a move that we should have a museum articulating the history of all of those four antecedent corps.

And the Queen opened the museum in November 2003 and that was the culmination of an enormous amount of work by a small group of dedicated people. That was people nominated by the trustees of the antecedent corps and some of the retired officers working in regimental headquarters Adjutant Generals Corps who did work very hard. And also the help of General Sir Christopher Wallace who was the Chairman of Winchester Military Museums.

Because this was the old Royal Green Jackets guard room, which was sitting there six inches in water, nobody was doing anything with it. And so, basically, it wasn't owned by the Royal Green Jackets, it was owned obviously, by the army or by the DoE or whatever they're called now. And so, slowly but surely a plan was hatched. We had four collections, we had sufficient momentum with people who had the ability, drive, and enthusiasm to write the case.

Our principal challenge was resources which it always is. We were able to articulate the case to the army headquarters that seven percent of the British Army should have a museum. And because they all have loyalty to their cap badges and we had a Colonel Commandant who was very well-placed, an Assistant Colonel Commandant who was very well-placed, we got the money to refurbish completely, the museum.

We then had to write a case to get a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant and also to get the great and the good of Hampshire to help us. Here we had enormous support from Dame Mary Fagan, who was the Lord Lieutenant at the time and without her stewardship, drive and considerable ability, we would not have got anywhere. But we did enjoy that support and as I say, eventually, in November 2003, the Queen opened the museum. I think you can see there, the constituent parts that were required to actually make the museum; collections, ability, drive, and resources.

TB: (00:33:45) Yes. So, let's just go back to those then. You mentioned that there were four collections, but you didn't have a museum, which was a surprise. So, those four collections as you said, well, the Military Police does have one, but the others...

TF: The Royal Military Police.

TB: (00:34:02) So, was it the case that the collections were there but there were no museums or was it the case that some of those regiments had museums but the new one didn't?

TF: I think it's all a question of location. The Army Legal Service were moved to... I'm going junior to senior, which is wrong. Army Legal Services had a small collection which they used to keep at the Military Provost Staff Corps collection, which is at the Military Corrective Training Centre in Colchester.

TB: But that wasn't open to the public, that was just a collection...?

- TF: Just a small collection. The Royal Army Education Corps had moved from Eltham Palace to Beaconsfield to Worthy Down and so they had a collection that used to be open on occasions to the public, but it was basically boxed. The Royal Army Pay Corps had a collection which, they were already in Worthy Down but very few people could see the collection so, they decided, very honourably, to box it, waiting for the day when there would be a museum.
- The Royal Military Police did have a collection, but it was down, initially, at Chichester and then that moved to Southwick Park, but we're talking about the time when it was all in Chichester.
- TB: Yes.
- TF: So, it was a matter of ensuring that the artefacts that we wanted to show and display and look after in this museum were the best artefacts to look after and to keep and also, the most interesting artefacts. Driving licences are fairly boring, aren't they? But when you've got the Queen's driving licence, all of a sudden, it's interesting. When you've got a collection of bottles and a few bits and bobs, that's interesting but not quite so interesting as when you find it's from the Incident on the Yangtze. So, these were the sort of things that we needed. We're very lucky in having Ian, our first curator to ensure that we had the very best in artefacts. Ian has now retired, in fact, he retired earlier this year.
- TB: (00:36:14) Ian, who was that?
- TF: I cannot remember his second name.
- TB: Don't worry, it'll come back.
- TF: I cannot remember his second name. Bianca will know instantly.
- TB: (00:36:20) Sure, don't worry. Just tell me about that process then. Was it difficult to negotiate some of those collections coming together?
- TF: Yes.
- TB: (00:36:30) So, tell me about that process and how that works and also you chose?
- TF: The process was a meeting on a monthly basis between each of the four constituent parts and once we had... It's a concurrent activity. This is one of the mistakes that people make, they do all the collection work first and forget the resources. Or they do the resources first and forget the collection and they look at the building work and they forget. So, it was a concurrent activity full of youthful enthusiasm, as I was then.
- So, each month for about eighteen months, we had a meeting of the trustee of each of the four antecedent corps nominated by their museum. And we said, right, three months before a set date, which I think we said was going to be sometime in the autumn of 2003 because that is roughly when the building works were due. We did not know at the time that the Queen was going to open it. I knew a little while before, but we didn't make it public.

So, we had that set date. So, I said, "Right, working at that time was now eighteen months, you need to have your thought processes in a straight line in three months. You need to have the first twenty-five percent done in six months. You need to be fifty percent done in such and such a time. You need to be seventy-five percent done six months beforehand. And you should have the thought processes and identified what you wanted done, a hundred percent, three months before that set date." So, that then the graphics work would have three months to do, the artefacts could be conditioned ready for display for three months.

That was a discussion held behind closed doors and it was interesting. One old man inviting another group of old men to get their act together and do it on time, I'll just leave it at that.

(laughter)

TF: I wasn't that old then, but they were a lot older and in some cases, senior to me, so, senior when they were serving but they were no longer serving. We all took it with good grace and we achieved the aim.

TB: (00:39:03) But how did you overcome that; clearly there were some difficulties with that, was it a matter of supporting them in some way or how did you control them?

TF: Well, basically, I said if they didn't have it by that set time at twenty-five percent, how are they possibly going to have it done by fifty percent? And if they wanted their part of the museum to be empty then go for gold.

TB: Yes, okay. So, there's always that pressure there, I see.

TF: It does tend to focus people's minds and... Not mischievous but common-sense arguments like, "Oh, I didn't realise that other antecedent corps were so much better organised than you. So much more competent than you, so much better focussed than you."

TB: I see, yes. So, it's almost peer pressure isn't it, in that way?

TF: Yes. It was all done fairly good-naturedly, I'm sure.

TB: (00:40:06) But you mentioned... You said, a part of the museum. So, was the idea then that each of those four constituents or five was it?

TF: Four.

TB: Each of those four constituents would have a different section of the museum?

TF: No, the aim was that there would a timeline, and that is something that we all agreed, that the timeline, which was very popular then, I don't know whether it still is. But timeline focussed our attention on certain things. In some areas, there is slightly more about education, in some areas, there is slightly more about accounting and in some areas, there is slightly more about maintaining good discipline.

But the thought process was broadly there, that was favoured by the Arts Council, favoured by the Lottery Commission for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant. And you can

cope with that when you're trying to explain to people... So, find your oldest artefacts first, now you've got all your artefacts in a straight line, which are the ones that you would wish to show? And please ask for professional opinion. Just because you happen to be in the picture, it doesn't mean to say that picture is the best way to articulate the case of the Royal Military Police in Hong Kong in nineteen blankety blank. So, that was the kind of stuff.

TB: (00:41:32) But you did give them power then to choose what they wanted but albeit with some caveats?

TF: I think power is again, a very strong word; the authority to.

TB: Okay, yes, sure. It sounds like a really delicate situation actually because you're dealing with deeply symbolic things, aren't you?

TF: Imagine then, an infantry regiment that stretches back four hundred years being subsumed, amalgamated, disbanded and the feeling about some of those artefacts, it's enormous. Think of the cavalry regiments that have been amalgamated. Funnily enough, the cavalry because they've been amalgamated so many times since the Second World War are; A, very good at it and B, the considerable amount of discussion that went on is kept very much in-house, which I salute them for. I saluted them for it then and I salute them again for it because it was very good. Some other organisations could benefit from that thought process.

TB: (00:42:39) Do you mean that they weren't going to complain to the local papers about things?

TF: Well, that, and also falling out between senior officers and museum trustees and the like.

TB: (00:42:52) I see, yes. So, those examples, what are the conditions where it goes wrong? You've probably got a good sense of this because of your position overlooking the whole of the nation kind of thing. Were there certain...?

TF: I wish I was overlooking the whole of the nation. The whole of the military museum community across the nation.

TB: (00:43:18) Yes, but certain conditions or certain types of setup where actually, it often didn't work and fall apart and others where it did work very well?

TF: I was responsible for ensuring that those who had the authority to make key decisions were given the correct and timely information. So, if a museum's governance was poor, in other words, it hadn't sent its accounts in for four or five years to the charity commission and/or the Arts Council rep said, "We'll come back when we can find some of the artefacts." Or when the museum visitors were less than a hundred in a year and we were paying high utility bills. These were really isolated incidents and I'm not going to name them so, just dismiss that from your mind.

But the regimental system will quickly say, "Ouch." Because very often, they didn't know themselves. If you're the commanding officer of a regiment that is in Germany or somewhere else, you don't really know what's happening back at headquarters because that's where my retired officer is and once you get involved in

them sometimes, you get your fingers burned and everybody loses their name. So, basically, you've got a very busy job yourself and that's where by being sensible and being logical and trying to be graceful. Those things, the situation was ameliorated and in the vast percentages of cases, the trustees said, "Yes, we agree." And it was sorted out.

TB: (00:45:06) And so, sometimes, was it a matter of just trying to get some more trustees in or just trying to improve governance in that way?

TF: No, I think because AMOT had a very fine director for the ten years I was doing Army Heritage, he was able to, as a completely independent person, articulate a case. Because we had some very fine people in the National Army Museum, they were able to put a national and professional view on it. Because the people that DCMS, Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council used to send round, we normally had the same person so, he had considerable experience. He was able to ameliorate and people, normally, they've got common-sense, they're honourable people. And so, these cases were sorted.

TB: (00:46:02) Well, it's interesting. I'm glad that you mentioned the Arts Council and the... Because you were saying that for some of the museums, they needed some advice on which objects to pick and so on. But it sounds like you did actually have that on tap, in terms of the funding?

TF: The Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council had very professional staff as part of accreditation. And bear in mind when you're reading the paper there, that many, I won't say most of the museums, were already accredited or were trying to gain accreditation. The 2008 paper ensured that they had to gain accreditation by a set date, in four or five years ahead.

So, it just nudged them a little to say, "Alright, we've got to actually do something about this. The steps outside, the fourteen steps going up to the castle, we need disabled ramps and disabled people should be able to see it." Get assistance for that, guidance as to which of the artefacts were actually being very well looked after. If you've got a draughty, windswept castle that is open to the sea, then having your very best paintings in that room is not necessarily logical. And just because you've done it for fifty years isn't a sensible reason. So, again, they were able to take advice and guidance. And it was a matter of team effort and bringing people along.

TB: (00:47:39) Yes. Well, let me just throw this... Just put it out there. Do you think anything might have been lost by this professionalisation process; was there anything that you think was rather lovely about before?

TF: I think the thing which has been lost, if anything, although regiments try very hard to keep it, is, there is nothing like a retired officer who has served in the regiment for forty years and been there for ten or fifteen years and given his life to the museum when it comes to things like school children's visits. That is a great loss and very, very difficult to replicate.

You can have the army recruiting teams of different regiments there to help, I was a great believer in recruiting these young, fit soldiers being there articulating the case. There's a nudge there saying, "Gosh, he looks good, he seems to be enjoying himself. I might join the army." But also, that they've just come back from Afghanistan, just come back from Iraq, just come back from Northern Ireland or whichever phase of our history we were in. That is very useful.

You would be surprised how much knowledge civilians have about the army. I never cease to be amazed at the in-depth knowledge that not just academics, but some civilians have about their regiment. I will also say that when I was a young man, which was a very long time ago, the vast percentage of people had a brother, a cousin, a father, who had served in the armed forces. In the sixties, when I was growing up everybody was there.

By the time it got to the noughties and now, we're well into the twenty-first century, very few people know anybody who has been in the army, ever. And they certainly rarely see somebody in service uniform. Which is a great, great pity, so, there's the sadness. But I'm much more comfortable that the regimental history will be articulated, stored and be of benefit under this gradual professionalisation that has occurred over the last ten or twenty years. And hopefully, it will continue to happen.

TB: Yes. And also, I think having... One of the things we've noticed is that one of the things which can mean that museums carry on is in fact, having that trustee status where you've got some stakeholders and compared to ones that are just run by a couple of people. Because if they go, that's it, it's gone.

TF: Yes.

TB: (00:50:30) Going back to the AGC Museum, you were saying about the funding. Perhaps if we just... We discussed the collection... Oh, no, sorry, there is one last thing I want to ask about the collections. So, you've got your timeline, did you literally say, "Look, we've got room for two hundred objects here, it's fifty, fifty, fifty... How did that work?

TF: There is a finite space here, you can see it. And the thought processes were accounting, policing, teaching, lawyer, being a lawyer, which are the four professions to articulate and different parts of them. RMP has formed units so, you'll see formed unit stuff here. RMP used to have a mounted troop so, you'll see mounted troop stuff here.

The Royal Army Education Corps used to run schools. They used to run many schools in Germany, they used to run schools in the UK. Now, it is responsible for education and training in the army but it's a different thought process.

The Royal Army Pay Corps started the weekly pay parade, giving out five shillings or ten shillings depending what rank you were, on a weekly basis. Now, everything is done by computer. So, it was just doing that. And I can't recall any arguments or discussions because, by that time, Ian was on board and was guiding them, saying, "Look, we've got this room here, that would do really well for that."

So, that was the way it was done, I can't remember anybody saying, "Actually, I'm really miffed because the teachers have got more." Or, "I'm really miffed because nobody is really interested in the Royal Army Pay Corps." So, I'd say, "You're not interested in money at all, you weren't interested in being paid when you were serving, you weren't interested in your boarding school allowance? Your allowances for driving here and there? Hmm. So, that was the way it was done.

TB: (00:52:28) And so, some of the gallery decisions about themes or the way things were presented, did that happen in that committee or was it more of a curatorial decision?

TF: I think much a more curatorial decision, I think the broad principles were at the committee but common-sense dictates the professionals should get on with it.

TB: (00:52:46) I see. And just a little bit on your personal role. So, were you the Chair of that Committee?

TF: Yes.

TB: (00:52:50) And how did that role fall to you, was this something that you took on as a task alongside your other duties?

TF: Because I was the regimental Colonel for the Adjutant Generals Corps, it fell to me to ensure that it was delivered on time within budget.

TB: (00:53:06) I see, I've got you. That's great. And resource-wise, you mentioned, first of all, the HLF, was that a substantial grant?

TF: It was a grant of roughly a quarter of a million pounds, which was for us, a massive grant. Because there are three parts to resources. I'm not saying it lightly, but the easiest part is having the ability to construct the HLF case. Because the HLF are... Were, sorry, twenty years ago, fifteen years ago, sixteen years ago, very graceful in their support for military museums. The nation was behind the armed forces... Armed services. So, with good writing, good drive, good stewardship from the great and the good of Hampshire, and lots of good curry lunches, we got there.

The second part is fundraising which is really difficult. Especially in a county which has many museums and even on this forecourt here you've got six other museums. So, they were all wanting to fundraise as well. That was a task I took on myself, that was a hospital pass. But again, with help from the Lord Lieutenant, we were able to see our way around that and writing lots of letters etc.

TB: (00:54:31) This was big gift donations you were going for?

TF: Yes.

TB: (00:54:34) What sort of amount did you get from that just briefly?

TF: There used to be a book which was the fundraising book, it wasn't called that, but it was all the charities that are willing and able to give money. Some of them give all their money for a year on one day. Some of them give all their money for a quarter on one day, and some will give you dribs and drabs during the course.

Articulating the case to some of them was quite difficult. If you've got, "I'd like to put a new T-72 that has just fired in Afghanistan in our museum, would you like to give us some money?" "Yes, please, of course, I'd love to." "Can you give us something to control the quills and the pens and stuff?" It's more difficult to write. But people were very generous, serving army was very generous, the retired army was very generous. I might have obviously, liked them to give more but such is life. So, that was fundraising.

It is the on-costs that cause the challenges for museums. We were very lucky because we were seven percent of the British Army, we were given the site as a regimental museum so, the building was ours. Because we were a funded museum the fuel and light was funded by the MOD. Because we were a funded museum and seven percent of the British Army we were able to construct a case to say the curator should be this grade and we should have a museum assistant of this grade. So, that was that.

And also, we needed to have running costs. The Adjutant Generals Corps is not a wealthy corps, but it does have reasonable resources in it's Officer's Mess funds and it's regimental funds. So, were able to vote through the regimental council, a small income per year towards museum costs. So, for buying artefacts, for ensuring that they needed refurbishing or something, that there was a small amount of money given each year, guaranteed. Because it's the guarantee that you're going to get money next year means you can spend it next year on refurbishment, on buying a new artefact, a medal from a Pay Sergeant who served with Grenadier Guards somewhere in Sebastopol or whatever. I don't know whether they were in Sebastopol, but you know what I mean?

TB: Yes.

TF: And so, that is the ongoing costs. So, those are the three areas and we were generously served after some quite hard work.

TB: (00:57:22) I see. So, the fundraising really was letter writing by the sound of it. And also, you said some lunches and charity events that you were organising too? And also, you mentioned the role of Mary?

TF: Lord Lieutenant?

TB: Yes, that's right.

TF: She didn't have to write letters...

TB: She would talk to people, would she?

TF: By the very nature of how graceful she was in her support to the armed services in Hampshire, I think she was an Army General, so, I'll just go down the pecking order... I think she was a Navy Commodore, an Army Brigadier or General, and a Royal Air Force Air Commodore. And richly deserved, I can assure you. And by the very nature of her name and ability, we were able to do some Hampshire fundraising. That's not the letter writing to the antecedents, that's not the letter writing to army

headquarters to get its staff, to get the on-costs. And I was very grateful for her support.

TB: (00:58:34) Okay, great. So, she could open doors for you or if she was coming to something people would turn up; that kind of...? Great, okay, so, that was the collection, I think we covered the buildings haven't we? Because you got those, but still it sounds as if they were in a pretty dilapidated stage?

TF: They were six inches under water. So, it was completely gutted, new lighting, new heating, new roofs. Roofs were put over the two prison courtyards. So, if you walk into... There's a bit where there are lights up above, that's the old prison yard where the prisoners had to walk around all the time. And when they weren't in the prison yard they were in this little room here.

TB: (00:59:16) Okay, yes. Just to say for the recording, we are in a cell here. So, this guard room it did have a cell and that is presumably...?

TF: Oh, there were cells. So, this was... You didn't get one soldier doing something wrong, you got normally got quite a few.

TB: Oh, I see. So, they'd be in here for a couple of nights?

TF: That was a long time ago of course.

TB: (00:59:32) Right, okay. And also, the café is interesting. Was that a decision that was just part of...?

TF: It was part of the theme in that you have to give everybody an experience. And even looking at rifles after a while gets boring, even looking at cutlasses after a while gets boring. Looking at pens and pencils and army kit and pictures is very interesting, but there's nothing like a nice hot cup of tea and a [unclear 01:00:04]. That's an expression that you will often hear in museums. And so, we have a café here which has had varying degrees of success but under the current stewardship is doing very well providing an interest and a location for all of the museums, for Winchesters Military Museums, which is a very fine organisation and also, because it is co-located here, it's easy for us to pick up...

TB: (01:00:37) Yes, and it brings people in, of course, it's wonderful. Just on a personal note, what does this collection give you, why are you so interested in still being connected with it and the museum itself? Is there anything personal that you particularly get out of the objects and the things?

TF: I think that the ability that I have to ensure that people get a fair deal and succeeding in that is the pleasure that I have gained. I enjoyed immensely going all over the United Kingdom, I did sixteen or eighteen years' service in Belgium and Germany, Germany and Belgium. I now know which is further north, the southern part of Leeds or the northern part of Manchester, don't answer that question quickly.

I went all over Scotland, all over Northern Ireland, all over Wales and I enjoyed that immensely, being the man from army headquarters, I didn't walk into the room saying, "I'm here, I'm MOD, I'm here to help." That would get everybody running

away. But by trying to assist, it meant that they had an ear in court and that was the bit that I gained the greatest pleasure from.

TB: (01:01:59) I see. Okay. And what about more specifically, this museum, was there anything... Sorry, you first set out by saying this, when you said that... Well, was it the same situation where you were making sure that those old regiments had a voice or had some representation in this museum itself?

TF: When we were forming the museum I thought it was unfair for seven percent of the army, and of course, if seven percent of eighty thousand is X, seven percent of two hundred thousand is X plus Y. Seven percent of a million, I believe that their history and heritage and bravery should be articulated somewhere, and it is, it's here.

TB: (01:02:58) I see, okay. So, there was a bigger project in that respect of simply representation, okay. And if this museum wasn't here, how would your life be different?

TF: I think the challenges that I faced, which I look back on and smile now, I wouldn't have had to face. I'm sure there would have been other challenges. I think that it would be a great pity not to have done what we have done. And I think that about my role when I was in Army Heritage Branch and also as Regimental Colonel. You have responsibilities as Regimental Colonel, recruiting, retention, and regimental matters, I always used to say somewhat light-heartedly, parties, parades and going to the palace. So, in both of those, heritage is an important aspect.

TB: (01:04:03) Yes, absolutely. Given your role, it might be nice for you to talk to me about the role of the military museum. And it's quite different to say, a transport museum. Earlier you mentioned that it has two audiences, the public but also the members of the regiment and their families. So, just tell me about... Obviously, you've been all over the country, you've seen all of these things. So, just tell me about what you think the role of these museums are, what do they do, what are their function?

TF: The definition of the role of an army museum is in the paper there. I'll give you my version.

TB: Please, yes.

TF: But for the full one, please read the paper. The regimental museum is there to articulate the history and heritage of the regiment, to ensure that the artefacts are well cared for and that wherever possible, as many people as possible from the local community, either physically or online can see what their regiment has done. I like it when the community takes ownership of their regiment or their corps. And in the vast percentage of cases that is true.

So, the Adjutant Generals Corps, to use an example has the freedom of the City of Winchester and marches through once a year with its bayonets fixed. So, the museum here, when people want to get out of the rain or when they want to have a cup of coffee or they say, "Actually, in 1914, Sid, our great, great uncle was in the such and such." Well, they can get advice and guidance here for it. They will either show them where they can find out online or they'll produce the documents here that they've got.

And the same applies to all regiments. I think that particular personal service especially applies to, for instance, the regiments in Scotland, The Royal Scots, now known as the First Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, have got in that beautiful museum, in that wonderful castle in Edinburgh, all sorts of documents going back four hundred years.

You can go to the museums in Northern Ireland where they've got documents of the cavalry regiments in Northern Ireland doing all sorts of very good things, and perhaps some other not so good things. But the history is there for us all to see and be proud of.

TB: (01:07:02) I see. So, it's a way in that people could have a personal collection or an interest and they can pursue that and so, it is successful in that way? What does it offer though... Let's just go with say something like a family or someone serving in the regiment. I don't come from a military background so... Clearly, it's pride but I wonder if there is more that these museums do in terms of the regiment and so on.

TF: I think the great advantage of a modern military museum if there is such a thing is that nowadays, there are things for the wife and the family to see. Whereas in the past, I think it was solely for the serving soldier or serving officer. In most of them, there are children's areas. In many of them there is a coffee shop of some sort, so, that they can have a light refreshment or snack, in some there are proper restaurants.

For most of the women now, and women do make up fifty percent of the planet, I had to refresh people's memories on that fifteen years ago... Because women just weren't thought of. Whereas now they are, and I think they get a good thing. So, a young officer brings his new bride in or his girlfriend into a military museum, she'll say, "God, I didn't realise all that." It's probably not their first port of call, I think the latest show or the latest film or the latest sort of gin tequila or something is probably a first choice but one of the choices is there.

I think especially with the modern army exhibitions which the National Army Museum, have been holding very successfully now for a number of years and most of our regimental museums have. It gives the soldier the ability to see, touch and smell what he went through in Afghanistan or what he went through in Iraq. You can send as many Instagrams and Facebook pages back as you like, you're actually seeing the tent, and touching the uniform and seeing the rations and seeing in some cases, the weapons is astonishing. And I think it brings it home to them. In the vast number of occasions impressively, I'm sure there will be some occasions in which they will be upset by what they've seen. But in most occasions it's good.

TB: (01:09:50) That's fascinating. So, in a way, I suppose, serving in an army is a fairly closed experience. You're at camp and for your family to have access and so on and so. And so, this way that someone in the army can explain to their family or explain to other people what it is that they do.

TF: Yes.

- TB: (01:10:09) And you mentioned some of that trauma and you were saying it can be traumatic. I'm sure clearly, you're dealing with very difficult memories, aren't you? And I know a lot of regimental museums have a section in the museum which is a kind of memorial part, which is really unique compared to most museums. So, I don't know, do you have any thoughts about that role, which is perhaps a more difficult one of stress and so on but also of remembering those that didn't make it.
- TF: The National Army Museum has, or had, I haven't been over there recently, a very fine exhibition which is devoted to PTSD. Obviously, not called PTSD in the Great War or the Second World War, Korea, or the other places where we've had to go and work hard. Many of the larger museums have something along those lines. The smaller museums, you would have to dig a little deeper to find evidence of that.
- But I'm sure that the staff would be able to either direct people to where they can seek advice and guidance online or from being able to ring to regiment headquarters or from personal experience if there is still a retired officer working there. For instance, there isn't a retired officer working here but there are retired officers within forty metres who might be able to give a graceful assistance but professional assistance, they will know instantly where it can be got, give you the website, give you the telephone number, give you the address to get assistance quickly.
- TB: (01:12:00) There was a question which was raised yesterday at a meeting I had with the project director and she was wondering whether, is there a difference with regimental museums between places like this which are, you know... Home Counties environment compared to say somewhere like Glasgow or areas where in some parts of history, the army was a massive employer often in times when there much other work to be done. Have you noticed any just in terms of the...?
- TF: I think it's true to say that in the vast percentage of cases, let's say the majority of cases, the further north you go, for the North of England and Scotland that the city council and the town council and the district council and the county council are much more orientated towards the army.
- TB: Oh, really? Right.
- TF: So, they very often are much more supportive. So, you mentioned Glasgow. The Royal Highland Fusiliers Regiment Museum is in Glasgow and there was, I don't know whether it is still ongoing, a marvellous opportunity for the Royal Highland Fusiliers to be part of a new marvellous project to improve the history of Glasgow or the articulating of the history of Glasgow, and the history of the army and the history of the docklands etc. in Glasgow, a multi-million pound project. And they are part of it because the city council is very conscious that the Royal Highland Fusiliers, which used to be many, many battalions strong in the regiment, are part of their history. If you go to their museum it is in a beautiful building and again, I've forgotten the name the man... Rennie...
- TB: MacIntosh?
- TF: The building is a Rennie MacIntosh building and the lift in the centre is an original of his.

TB: (01:14:04) Yes, fantastic. So, that's fascinating so, much more state intervention or local state intervention?

TF: No, it's... State intervention are strong words.

TB: Support?

TF: Support.

TB: Or interest, you might say.

TF: It's not always financial support, but the support because they're more ingrained. I was a bit flippant on one occasion about the amount of support in one of the counties and one of the mayors stepped forward and he said, "My father was the [commanding officer] of the 9th Battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, he was the commanding officer. So, we do support the army here. It's not quite so obvious though."

TB: (01:14:53) I see, yes. So, maybe just give me a high point and maybe the toughest kind of part of your involvement with this museum?

TF: The high point was obviously, Her Majesty The Queen, Colonel in Chief arriving...

TB: (01:15:09) Tell me about that, what was that like?

TF: It was brilliant, it was stunningly, fantastically super. We were lucky enough to have the Colonel in Chief, The Queen, we had Prince Philip, and we had the Duchess of Gloucester all on one day from about half-past nine, ten o'clock in the morning until two o'clock focussing totally on the Adjutant General's Corps. The first forty-five minutes was here in the museum and then we went to the barracks where we had a hundred and twenty metre-long tent. I don't know if you can call it a tent that's as big as that. And we had exhibitions from the four antecedent branches but not focussing on the antecedents but run by each of the antecedents and it focussed on a particular thing so, we had one for Afghanistan, one for Iraq and one for something else. And it was wonderful.

The low point. I think the low point is when you're looking up the hill thinking, "Can we achieve it?" That's the best you're going to get.

(laughter)

TB: (01:16:31) Okay, great. I think we've covered pretty much everything. What is your involvement now, are you one of the trustees?

TF: I've retired. My last trusteeship was for the British Horological Museum, where I was their trustee responsible for basically, assisting them. I did that for three or four years. When the end of the three or four years came up, I basically said that after seventy, I wasn't going to do anything, I'll be seventy in a few months' time, so, that's it. Getting rid of tasks is, funnily enough, much more challenging than taking them on.

That's one of the problems that many organisations and charities are finding. My group were quite enthusiastic to volunteer, but I stopped going to work in uniform

fifteen years ago and stopped going to work completely effectively five years ago. So, in theory, there have been two tranches of people that would want to take over things.

But when I speak with my peer group in the military life, in Hampshire and funnily enough, across the United Kingdom, finding people willing to give their time for nothing and give it considerable emphasis and due diligence is becoming a challenge. And very often they're coming back to over seventy-year-olds, which I think is unfair. Where are the fifty-year-olds and where are the sixty-year-olds? They should be doing it.

TB: (01:18:29) Well, that's interesting. Is that a particular challenge do you think generally?

TF: Generally. I speak to people in my peer group with nothing to do with the military and they say that others are finding challenges of finding people who want to do this.

TB: (01:18:43) So, here, it's bringing people up, introducing them to it all or maybe it's more busy lives?

TF: I think people have got busy lives. The responsibilities of being a trustee are possibly slightly more onerous now. And people aren't so enthusiastic about it. I was enthusiastic to try and help someone, I was a trustee of these organisations. But there comes a time when actually, your foot is on other interests.

TB: (01:19:13) Where did your enthusiasm come from? Was it an interest in history?

TF: No.

TB: So, what was it?

TF: I think it's an enthusiasm to try and share the ability I have to ensure that due diligence on everybody's part is appreciated and carried out.

TB: (01:19:36) Okay, right. So, for you, the passion was more of a procedural sort of match, you could say?

TF: Well, it's to make quite certain that everybody got a fair deal. The person who had all the money and the authority and the people who had all the challenge and responsibility and it is making them meet in the middle.

TB: (01:19:53) I see, okay. So, when you're talking about people getting a fair deal, you're talking about the museums or you're talking about the soldiery almost?

TF: I'm talking about the organisation which is trying to reflect the history and heritage of clocks, or a regiment, or a corps. And to try and bring them together with the people who have the money/resources, money is a rude word to say... resources. And the power. So, it was the Ministry of Defence and the budget managers. For other museums it's the HLF or the county council or the city council, getting them to try and engage at the correct level, using the correct terminology in a way which is helpful as opposed to being just a little bit [unclear 01:20:53].

TB: (01:20:55) I see, yes. One last thing. This is a really interesting complex and clearly, it is the home of many museums uniquely, I would have thought, I can't think of anywhere else that has so many different regimental museums on one site, perhaps there is?

TF: There is nowhere else in the United Kingdom with so many regimental museums on one site.

TB: (01:21:16) So, why, how did that... Were you involved... I suppose you were really?

TF: I think you're now in a fairly political area. Regiments tend to have their museums where their regimental headquarters is or was. Regiments tended to have their museums where their depot was and training organisation. So, for the Rifles, the principle antecedents being the Royal Green Jackets and the Light Infantry, then their last depot before they moved to the Army Training Regiment was here.

Infantry had depots all over the country. So, each county, not every, but most counties had a depot because they had county battalions.

TB: (01:22:15) And that's where all their stuff would be kept?

TF: That's where the stuff would be, that's where their training was and that's where their retired officer community would be. So, that's why the Rifles is here, that's why the Royal Green Jackets, which has been subsumed by the Rifles. I think subsumed is an army word but it's one you understand. The formed amalgamation... I've forgotten what the word is. The Kings Royal Hussars, which are obviously, being a Cavalry Regiments are the senior organisation here are here because this is where their HQ is.

The Gurkhas are here because they moved here because they moved from Church Crookham some twenty years or more ago, to a MOD site which they are now here. They have a very fine collection which articulates not just the Gurkhas but the ethos of a nation.

And we have the Royal Hampshire Regiment which is obviously here because this is the capital of Hampshire. It used to be the capital of England... Or Wessex should I say. And this is where their depot used to be many, many years ago. So, it's logical why they should be here.

And the Adjutant Generals Corps is here because their depot is here, now called their regimental headquarters, and where their second and third phased training is held. So, that is obviously why they're here.

The Royal Logistics Corps, which is moving from Deepcut or Blackdown, which is up at the other end of the country, at the other end of Surrey, sorry. They are moving here in the near future because their regimental headquarters and their second, third, and fourth stage phase, or phase training, is moving to here. So, obviously, their museum is moving here as well.

TB: (01:24:05) Okay. So, why have they all come here, is it because it's a massive site...?

TF: Because they're here. It's been a slow... It's been happening, if you count the Green Jackets, they've been here probably a hundred years or more. So, the Rifles are

naturally here, the Kings Royal Hussars, I don't know how long they've been here because they used to have a museum in the south and a museum in the north, now they've just got the one. And the Hampshire's have probably sitting in here for three or four hundred years. The Adjutant General Corps was only formed in '92 so, we've been here since '92. I've forgotten, RLC will be here because they're moving here. So, that is why it's here.

It's a good place, it gets two million visitors a year, not all of them walk up the hill. I've forgotten how many hundreds of thousands visits the great hall. I don't know how many of those walk up the steps to come and see us but that is the thought process behind it.

TB: (01:25:06) Yes, sure. And is there much cooperation between the different museums here?

TF: There is considerable... It is coordinated by the Winchester Military Museums. The curators have a very close relationship and each of the museums nominates a trustee for the Winchester Military Museums which I think meet two or three times a year.

TB: Wow, thank you. It's been amazing, and it was just so lovely to have had this national picture from you which I wasn't expecting at all.

TF: But it is out of date.

TB: That's great, don't worry, that absolutely fine. Are there any... We are travelling around the country and looking at a few different ones. Would you recommend any... Not necessarily big massive ones, but in terms of independent, small museums, any that stand out...?

TF: It depends, if you would like a span of responsibility, go on the AMOT website, it will give you a name, address, website, telephone numbers of all military museums funded and unfunded. If you want to see scale, then go to the Tank Museum or the Royal Engineer Museum which is enormous, both of those are enormous.

If you would like to see a small museum with a considerable amount of history, go to the Welsh Museum in Brecon, or one of the museums in Northern Ireland, or one of the museums in Scotland.

If you would like to see a corps museum which has just moved, it's moved from Arborfield to one of the Royal Air Force bases, I've forgotten the name of it, over the last two or three years, that would be quite good.

Of course, the Royal Engineers is a corps, but they see themselves in a slightly different light. I think that would give you a difference in size. I think it would be sensible to visit a MOD sponsored unfunded museum and you could go to a number of those, many of them are in castles and the like. I would commend you to go and do that. And you can look at the list, there's a hundred of them.

TB: That's brilliant, fantastic. Thank you so much. Great, I'm going to stop it there.

Audio ends: 01:27:31