



Tankfest, June 2008 - 7000 spectators saw the new look Museum building.

FROM THE TEACHERS



Ateeeeeeen-shun! Chris Copson takes control of visiting school children.

How many of you are aware that The Tank Museum has an Education Service?

You may have an inkling if, during term time, you have seen groups of school children in the Museum intent on negotiating the dangers of the trench or taking cover in the air raid shelter at the side of the reconstructed Home Front House.

Despite being one of the less immediately visible parts of the Museum, compared to say, our workshops or supporting collections, The Tank Museum Education Service is in fact thriving!

In five years, the number of children visiting the Museum as part of school parties has risen from eight hundred to over three thousand per annum. Most of the groups who come to the Museum are Year 3/4 children (7-8 year olds to the un-initiated) - studying the Home Front 1939-45, or older groups from secondary schools looking at life in the trenches of the Great War.

Having been here for almost a year, I can state with absolute certainty that this Museum is a fabulous place to work. Very few children, bolshy teenage boys included, can fail to be completely overawed by the sight of the Collection;

(continued overleaf)

ALMOST THERE!

A major milestone in The Tank Museum redevelopment project has been reached, with the completion of building work on site.

The new tank arena was completed in time for Tankfest in June 2008, and spectators were treated to vastly improved views of arena events; with banked viewing areas and a new sound system improving the quality of in-show commentary.

The new 5000 square metre display hall, with new reception, gift shop, visitor facilities and restaurant was completed in late August, and the exhibition fit-out commenced almost immediately.

"There is still four months of hard work ahead of us until we can open the new hall to the public," said Museum Director Richard Smith. "But we are still on time and on budget - and this represents a magnificent achievement on behalf of our main contractors Norwest Holst."

"We now planning a spectacular launch event for Saturday 4th April 2009", he added.

Preparations are underway to move the thirty or so tanks that will form the basis of the new exhibition from their existing locations in the present Museum halls. Only then can the process of installing the exhibition hardware begin in earnest.

But this is no simple task, as Richard explains; "Many of the vehicles we will be transporting have not been moved at all for at least 25 years. Like all mechanical objects we are not 100% sure of the condition they are in or what problems we might encounter in manoeuvring them.

"Some will run under their own power, many will have to be towed, but they must all be treated with the upmost care as even though they are tanks - and built for warfare - they are now all historical relics of varying fragility. Cutting corners is not an option and every movement has to be planned in the smallest detail."

Look out for an exhibition preview and more information regarding the Grand Launch in the next edition of Tank Times.

LESS THAN £1M TO GO!



The Tank Museum is celebrating an award of £200k towards its £16m redevelopment from the Department of Media Culture & Sport/Wolfson Foundation.

31 English Museums will benefit from grants totalling £4m announced by Culture Minister Margaret Hodge.

Fundraising Manager Michael Bolton said; "This award is important as it takes us through the tricky £1m barrier. The last million is always the hardest to raise, but we are now well on our way to securing all the required funds with just £900k still to find."

"This excellent news provides us with an opportunity to rally our supporters for one last push to help finish the job. There are many ways individuals and organisations can help to reach our objective; and we would still like to hear from anyone who is interested in supporting us at this exciting time in our history."

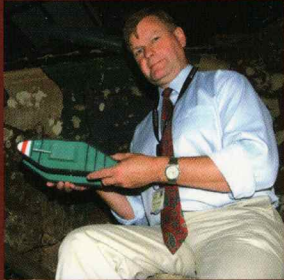
This is the seventh year of the current DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Museums & Galleries Improvement Fund, which has awarded a total of £24m to institutions around the country since it was set up in 2002.

INSIDE... 90 YEARS ON
REMEMBERING 1918-2008

- TANKFEST SUCCESS
- A MODEL PARTNERSHIP
- THE DEATH OF A VC HERO
- LATEST NEWS, EVENTS & TANK SPONSORSHIP



FROM THE TEACHERS CONTINUED...



Not just history: workshops are being developed to focus on Science, Design & Technology.

particularly the barrel-on view of Tiger II as they enter the halls.

Having established that this really is a great place to be on a school trip, the rest is fairly plain sailing. We have a superb and growing handling collection and most of our teaching is based on a thoroughly "hands-on" approach.

There is no substitute for actually allowing children to handle original artefacts – the coarse scratchiness of a WW1 serge tunic, the weight of an SMLE rifle or the claustrophobic feel of a gas mask. The same applies with our newly established Outreach Service; if a school cannot come to us, we go to them taking a large quantity of artefacts backed up by images from the archive as part of a PowerPoint presentation. This is particularly useful with the larger comprehensives, where the sheer cost of putting a whole year group on a coach would more or less bankrupt the school!

To date, the Education Service has largely focussed on the history side of the curriculum but we are increasingly beginning to look at the Collections as a source of material for Science, Design and Technology based topics. Tanks and AFVs are fertile ground for looking at everything from munitions and gunnery, survival skills and mechanics to camouflage and concealment.

The possibilities are endless!

Chris Copson
Education Officer

BEST OF BRITISH AT TANKFEST

Excellent weather and a dazzling line up made Tankfest 2008 (28th & 29th June 2008) the most successful ever.

7,000 people visited the Museum over the weekend, and here is a snap shot of what they saw...



MODEL PARTNERSHIP HELPS MUSEUM

The Tank Museum and Armortek, the worlds leading manufacturer of 1/6th scale armour kits, have launched a new model based on the Museum's King Tiger tank.

The all metal radio controlled model, which was publically unveiled at Tankfest, is the first of what could become a series of joint branded products based on vehicles in the Museum's Collection.

Tank Museum Fundraising Manager Michael Bolton said; "Armortek were able to use The Tank Museum as a resource to create a superbly accurate model. Not only were they given a unique

level of access to the tank itself but also the wealth of supporting material, which included documents and photographs held in our Archive and Reference Library.

"We intend to increase the number of private companies we work with who can help us achieve our charitable aims. We hope that Armortek will see the value of working with a charity, that is mutually beneficial.

"Their support for us will ensure that our collections and expertise can be used again in the future and enjoyed by the wider public for generations to come."

DEE-CENT TURN OUT



Jack Dee at The Tank Museum

Dead pan comic Jack Dee was amongst the crowds during one of the summer Tank Action displays at The Tank Museum.

Jack said; "I come to Dorset with the family every year to relax. The Tank Museum is an excellent educational and entertaining experience. The kids are really into it."

The stand up comic and his family looked on at a live action display as a variety of the Museums armoured fighting vehicles were put through their paces around the arena.

The award winning comedian added; "I've been to The Tank Museum a few times before and we really enjoyed the display. The building work going on behind us looks exciting and we will certainly be coming back next year to see how things are going."

The Tank Museum's programme features regular Tank Action displays, which will return on weekdays during the October half term (27th-31st at 1pm).

Armortek are donating £150 to The Tank Museum for each kit sold, and to date kit sales have provided over £9,000 towards the *At Close Quarters Appeal*.

For more information, click www.armortek.co.uk, or call 01404 892956

ARMORTEK



THE DEATH OF A HERO



A pencil drawing depicting Sewell's action.



Sewell's Whippet tank.

ON DISPLAY

The Victoria Cross won by this disarmingly young looking soldier can be found on display at The Tank Museum.

His 'Death Penny' - a bronze plaque that was issued to the bereaved next of kin - reminds visitors that his gallantry came at great personal cost.

Not far away, Cecil Sewell's Whippet tank provides an extra dimension of reality to the story. The Whippet (or Tank Medium, Mark A) was to meet the Tank Corps requirement for a lighter, faster tank to work with the Cavalry in open country and was introduced in 1918.

The Whippet was a difficult tank to drive; it had two engines, two clutches and two gearboxes but it was fast (capable of 7mph at a time when heavy tanks were only really capable of 3mph) and very manoeuvrable in skilled hands.



Sewell's 'Death Penny'.

ON-LINE

The new Tank Museum website allows visitors to browse the Museums medal collections on line.

The 'For Valour' exhibition at the Museum contains over 2100 medals belonging to over 2000 recipients. Visitors can browse the collections, read the citations and find out more about medals and the people they were awarded to.

The new on-line exhibition can be found on the new website; www.tankmuseum.org.

THE YOUNG VC WINNER WHO GAVE UP HIS LIFE TO SAVE HIS COMRADES...

Heavy machine gun and rifle fire raked the ground as Lieutenant Sewell leapt from the safety of his Whippet tank armed with a shovel.

It was 25th August 1918; The Great War was entering its final phase on the Western Front, and Cecil Harold Sewell was just 23 years old.

In attempting to avoid accurate shell fire, another Whippet in the young Officer's section had slid into a shell hole, overturned and burst into flames. Unable to open the hatches the crew were trapped; but Sewell was simply not able to stand by and watch as his comrades burned alive.

In full view of the German rifle pits that lay just yards away he sprinted to the nearby shell hole as bullets hissed all around him. He dug furiously away at the heavy soil until the hatches were freed sufficiently to allow the crew to crawl to safety. Later that day and undercover of darkness, this crew made it to safety.

But all was not well. Glancing back at his tank, he could see that his driver, Gunner Knox had been wounded. Without hesitation Sewell sprang from the shell hole to assist, making one last dash through a hail of bullets. This time he was hit again and again, but he continued to make for his stricken driver.

Sewell did what he could to dress Knox's wounds. He too was badly wounded, but his concern was clearly not for himself. Still under fire, Sewell sought to find cover for himself and his crewman. But as he rose he was struck by a bullet through the stomach that knocked him to the ground. This wound was fatal, and Sewell was not seen to rise again.

When the bodies were recovered, Sewell lay side by side with Knox, his arms wrapped protectively around him. They lie together still in Vaulx Hill Cemetery France.

His grave bares the mark of a soldier decorated for bravery, as engraved into the white stone face of it is the symbol of Britain's highest military decoration. For endangering his own life in order to save the lives of others, Lieutenant Sewell was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.



REMEMBER

Cecil Sewell will be just one of the thousands of British soldiers being remembered in the commemoration ceremonies this November.

This year sees the 90th anniversary of the end of a conflict that left a painful scar on the nation.

The Sewell family paid a high price for their contribution to the war. By the time Sewell's parents collected his Victoria Cross from Buckingham Palace in December 1918, three of the four Sewell brothers who answered the call were dead.

In modern times, Sewell's story of selfless courage continues to inspire. Sewell's story is just one example of the tales of heroism and valour told at The Tank Museum, which will help visitors understand the importance of remembrance as we mark the 90th anniversary of the end of The Great War.



Cecil Harold Sewell VC.
27/1/1895 - 28/8/1918

THE VICTOR

In 1968 Sewell was featured in childrens comic 'The Victor'. These are 3 cells from the 2 page story...



FROM THE EDITOR



In the latter stages of a capital project any fundraiser will tell you that even the smallest donation makes a significant difference.

Big sums from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and from large Trusts and wealthy individuals have been secured. With the end of the building project in sight, it's the individual museum supporters to whom we turn to help us meet our fundraising targets.

Where once we needed millions of pounds to make a difference, now even the smallest donation can have a real impact as we run to ground the last £1m of funds we need to turn The Tank Museum into a world class, 21st century facility that befits the Collection.

The Royal Armoured Corps regiments and Tank Museum Friends have been extremely generous in raising over £80,000 towards the *At Close Quarters Appeal*. The Regimental Associations have kept the score board clicking over and I was recently delighted to visit Bournemouth & Poole RTR Association to receive a cheque for £500 in return for a commemorative 'tile' in the new orientation hall.

Such conservative donations are exactly what is needed to finish a job that was started over eight years ago. The Tank Museum is extremely lucky to have such dedicated supporters and interested visitors to draw on, and I thank everyone who has donated to our cause over the years.

Michael Bolton

Michael Bolton
Fundraising Manager

Out of Hours

THE TANK MUSEUM

The Tank Museum has announced its programme of evening lectures, performances & talks for 2008 / 2009.

High profile authors and historical specialists complete a strong line-up that features Richard Holmes, Gary Sheffield, Robert Kershaw, Chris Hunter, and Christy Campbell.

Tickets for these evening events are available from The Tank Museum and with high demand expected, advanced booking is highly recommended. See our website, or call 01929 462359 for more information.

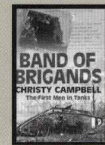
The following lectures are taking place at The Tank Museum before Christmas:

CHRISTY CAMPBELL

Thursday 23rd October 2008 - 7:30pm

BAND OF BRIGANDS -

THE PIONEERS OF TANK WARFARE



Journalist & author Christy Campbell examines the motley bunch of conscripts and volunteers who became pioneers in armoured warfare. First hand accounts from this group of men, dubbed a 'band of brigands' by one officer, describe the trials, tribulations and excitement of learning a new style of warfare at the sharp end of tank evolution.

GARY SHEFFIELD

Thursday 20th November 2008 - 7.30pm

DOUGLAS HAIG -

THE ACCIDENTAL VICTOR IN 1918?



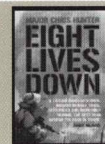
Douglas Haig was a controversial figure of World War One and his methods have been frequently called into question by historians ever since. In this lecture, University of Birmingham War Studies Professor Gary Sheffield talks about the final year of the First World War and discusses Haig's role in the victory of 1918.

CHRIS HUNTER

Thursday 11th December 2008 - 7:30pm

BOMB DISPOSAL -

EIGHT LIVES DOWN



Recipient of the Queens Gallantry Medal Chris Hunter will be talking about his experiences in one of the most dangerous roles in the British Army. As a counter-terrorist bomb disposal operator, Chris Hunter recalls his experiences from operational theatres, including the Balkans, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan and Iraq.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE TANK MUSEUM

THE TANK TIMES READER APPEAL

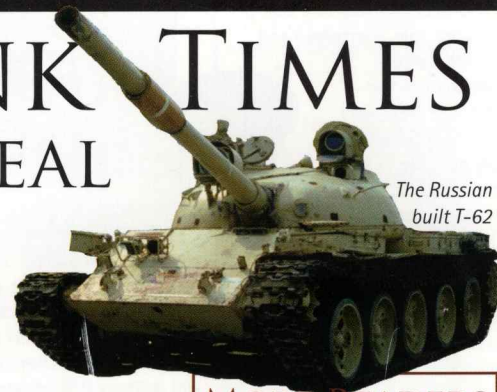
The Tank Museum is asking Tank Times readers to help raise £5,000 by sponsoring a tank in the New Display Hall.

If every *Tank Times* reader donated £2, The Tank Museum could raise at least £5,000 - enough to sponsor the T-62 when it is installed in the £16m New Display Hall.

To make this happen, we've set up an appeal on The Tank Museum's [justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) webpage. All you have to do is visit www.justgiving.com/tanktimeseditor to make your donation electronically.

The Appeal will run for just 6 months - enough time to secure the funds before the new exhibition opens in early 2009. Beside the T-62 a plaque will be displayed, reading: "Supported by [justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) donors."

[justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com/tanktimeseditor) <http://www.justgiving.com/tanktimeseditor>



The Russian built T-62

The T-62 was a Soviet built vehicle that emerged in the 1960's. Around 20,000 were produced and supplied to countries around the world. Many have been used (and are still in use) by the armies of the Middle East. This particular exhibit was captured from the Iraqi's during Operation Desert Storm, and arrived at The Tank Museum complete with battle damage in 1993.

Of course, you don't have to be a *Tank Times* reader to contribute to this Appeal. Why not email the link to your friends and colleagues?

We will keep you updated on our progress in the next issue of *Tank Times*.

MORE READERS WANTED!

Are you enjoying keeping up to date with The Tank Museum? Do you know anyone else who might be?

Tank Times is a newsletter posted free of charge to supporters, donors, volunteers, and those who have enjoyed our special events and lectures. If you know someone who might be interested in The Tank Museum's work, then please ask them to contact us (details below) so that we can add them to our distribution list.

THANK YOU

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