

Secretary's Annual Report 2014/15

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen

I hereby submit my ninth annual report for the year just ended.

During the year we held 10 regular meetings:-

Apr 2014	'Legacies of Occupation' As always a thought provoking illustrated talk by Dr Gilly Carr.
June 2014	Ramble around Mole Verclut / St. Catherine's. As usual a superb ramble led by Martin Walton.
June 2014	St Malo & Le fort de la Cité d'Alet day trip Led by Neil Walker – A fine day and excellent now and then photos to compare as we sped around the various sites.
July 2014	French day trip to Normandy An excellent day trip led by Noel Le Fondre. Visits Included Juno Beach, Bayeux Museum and more.
Aug 2014	Ramble around Batterie Moltke A ramble around the newly refurbished Batterie Moltke led by Tony Pike
Sep 2014	Visit to MP3 A well-attended visit to MP3 and the surrounding bunkers led by Tony Pike
Oct 2014	Mirus An illustrated talk by three of our colleagues led by Steve Powell from Guernsey – a large number photos I have never seen before – thank you for coming over to give us this excellent talk..
Nov 2014	"Panzerknacker!" – Armour, anti-armour and other things – Wow, Neil Walker and the obscure! If you were there you will know what I mean if not I can thoroughly recommend you attend his next talk.
Jan 2015	La Bataille de Saint-Malo Aout 1944 A short (French) documentary and the local "8mm Bertram films" were shown.
Feb 2015	Visit to HO19 – Nearly 100 members and guests attended the visit, guided by Colin Isherwood and Neil Walker – I should have read the advice to bring wellingtons too. A lot of members and non-members I spoke to had never visited HO19 (myself included) thank you Neil for organising.

As usual, all the indoor meetings were followed by refreshments ably provided by Noel Le Fondre, with helpers, to whom all members are extremely grateful.

The CI Occupation Review for 2014 was published in Guernsey and ran to 172 pages, a quality publication as usual. A visit from Guernsey took place in September. I would like to see more inter island visits and initiatives. The Batterie Moltke Guide booklet was also published in late 2014 – the 4th in our series of on site booklets for visitors to our sites.

The Noirmont Command Bunker has opened every week during the season. This, together with the dedication of members who open the other sites in our care, has seen a steady income from bunker openings. A huge number of visitor specialist Groups have been accommodated throughout the year, and I would particularly like to thank Ian Chatterley who, having stepped down from the Board a couple

of years ago is really helping to co-ordinate and ever increasing number of Group visits. This is an area that to me is constantly under played by Tourism. A number of other people help with these ad-hoc Group visits mostly during weekdays – thanks especially to Paul Bernal, Damien Horn, Martin Walton, Tony Pike and Malcolm Amy and others for helping to make these visits happen, quite often at short notice.

I would like to appeal for members to help open Noirmont Command bunker on some Sundays during the summer, this is our flagship site and Paul needs more support in terms of helpers if you can spare one of more days to help please speak to Paul, training will be given and there is electricity on site so there are no heavy lifting or fuel to worry about. During 2014 we were asked about re-opening the mothballed Les Carriers bunker complex. Your Board considered this carefully, however with Millbrook and Corbiere (being better condition and similar sites) also being short of volunteers to open we would rather focus on opening the main sites rather than diluting our efforts, Les Carrieres is not a site we would not look to expand as the access is via a site of ecological beauty – by not opening this we gain some support from the ecology lobby.

During 2014 a number of fortifications were again “threatened” by development, and Matthew Costard, on behalf of your Board, has made representations to our Planning Department to ensure that our interests are taken into account. Plemont has been of particular interest to us and Matthew has done a superb job safeguarding the German aspects of the site and enhancing our reputation with the National Trust. However we cannot campaign or save every bunker threatened, we need to focus on the important, rare or best examples of each kind – a case in point was the Water Storage bunker at the Chateau Plaisir – we recognised at the outset this could not be saved and were grateful to the developer for access to record the site and the doors and fittings for use in other bunkers.

Donations – During the last year we have received a number of donations/loans, a separate Archivist report will be given by Colin at the AGM. During 2014, Colin Isherwood, has also greatly helped in organising events where our artefacts can be shown and with answering some of the ever increasing number of e-mailed enquiries on diverse (and sometimes very obscure) topics. In addition to Colin I would like to single out Neil Walker for thanks – he does an awful lot for us in terms of events, research and visits and does this quietly in the background – thank you Neil. Specifically with respect to donations I would like to thank Richard Le Tissier for donating his large local book collection for sale for our funds – a lot of these have been on sale here at the AGM.

Membership ended the year at 402 (418 last year), there has though been a steady turnover of members leaving and new ones joining, our Facebook group though has increased from 200 to over 400 members in 2014 and has been a good channel to encourage people to become full members. However Social Media does still have some drawbacks and I will delete any inappropriate comment and remove members where the views are not supportive to what we are trying to achieve. We will be looking closely at how we operate facebook in 2015 probably having a page to communicate whilst leaving the group for comments.

Your Board is recommending that the annual subscription be maintained to the following levels: Single member £18 p.a., Couple £27.00, Junior (under 16) £13.50, Family £27.00 (plus £6.00 for each child), Overseas (not inc UK) Members EUR25/US\$35/£23.

I would also like to thank Tony Chalker for undertaking the Fortifications co-ordination responsibility, deputised by Damien Horn, this role is greatly assisted by Tony's detailed knowledge of planning and building matters and I think we have a more robust control being taken of bunker restoration and associated activities to ensure we provide a consistent standard of opening all within our very small budget.

Even though I still get reports complaining that your Board does not do anything. I can assure you a significant volume of work is undertaken – voluntarily at no personal gain. I can report we have had 8 Board meetings in 2014 and have introduced a cycle of quarterly visits to the sites we manage to review safety and speak to the bunker team leader of their short to medium term plans and funding requirements. In the context of the Board I would like to thank Bernie Morris who is stepping down

having been our press officer for a number of years. Tony Pike, our able JEP photographer has volunteered to take on this role and Alex Fearn has stepped forward to join the Committee/Board. Alex has a wealth of expertise to bring to the CIOS, both with his retail and financial experience – he can also be seen with a paint brush and a shovel when any project is on the go.

In conclusion this year, I believe the CIOS is coming to a cross roads. A lot of the old informal ways are being replaced by more formal policies and governance – whether we like it or not. We need a medium term strategy to ensure the CIOS remains a viable organisation and allows us to punch significantly above our weight. Allowing us to be heard on the same stage as the National Trust and Societe Jerseys and in the process preserve the period of history we all love that draws us together.

The biggest challenge is finding volunteers to open bunkers – this is a very visible part of our activities and Heritage, Tourism and all our government supporters expect us to be playing our part in the partnership. We may need to look again at students, summer workers or other mechanisms to open for a sufficient number of openings of our sites – to not do this will longer term risk these sites being taken from us – something none of us want.

I still believe all of us are "*the Society*", I hope we can find resources internally for the bunker openings and multitude of other tasks we currently undertake, remember whether you are on the Board or not we can all make a difference to the organisation we refer to as "*the Society*" in the coming year.



Jeremy Hamon
Secretary
11 March 2015