

## SERF Research Agenda conference discussion points for the Defence theme

Britain's medieval-post-medieval military defences, especially those of the south-east have been extensively studied and published. But our knowledge of them is challenged by many remaining uncertainties, as well as by the existence of a range of under-explored themes. As an indicator, over 60 research-need signposts have been identified. These embrace a need to explore general themes spanning the centuries and topics within periods. Among these signposts are:

General themes:

- Geographical – (a) changes to coastlines and the extent to which they influenced defence + location of defences destroyed by erosion and (b) the effects on landscapes of defensive systems, training camps and areas
- Strategic and organisational – (a) evolution of defence as a relationship between fortifications, armies, the fleet and other instruments of defence and (b) the extent to which defences were anticipatory as well as reactive to imminent threats, when and why
- Transport - consideration of the evolution of the methods of transport for movement of military forces
- Science and manufacturing – the influence of the interaction of science, technology, industry, manufacturing and supply on the development of the defensive infrastructure of the region and its economy
- People and communities – (a) the socio-economic effects on communities of the presence of fortifications and barracks (b) lives and living conditions of soldiers and their relationships with the world around them and (c) the effects of war on people living in the region
- Archaeological investigation - where archaeological investigation/survey might address questions unanswerable by other means or where this might provide supplementary diagnostic information or where its might preserve threatened sites in the record
- Statutory protection and heritage tourism - (a) the need for further statutory protection for sites and (b) strategising the possibilities for interpreting and presenting the region's defences to its communities and to visitors as part of a heritage tourism initiative.

Topics within periods:

- Private enterprise raiding threats in the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and local or private enterprise defences
- Role and extent of use of firearms in the region's defence in the 14<sup>th</sup> /15<sup>th</sup> centuries and the study of gunports as a genuine defence or martial display
- Understand the imperfectly-known defences of Dover, Sheppey, Grain and the Sussex coast during the 16<sup>th</sup> century
- Gun and gunpowder manufacture in the region during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and supply to its defences
- Establishing more fully the nature and placement of the region's defences during the Spanish Armada, 1588

- Extent of fortification work and military/defensive infrastructure in the region during the English Civil War
- Better understanding the 1770s fieldworks on Dover's Western Heights and the new, enlarged landward defences at Sheerness during the same period
- French Revolutionary- Napoleonic Wars – (a) establishing the extent of successive stop lines behind the coast and their supply infrastructure (b) barrack expansion scheme and effects on urban/social development
- Better understanding the pre-Royal Commission (1840s and 50s) defences of the Sussex coast and defences of the new Dover Harbour
- Setting the defences of the 1860s Royal Commission in their wider European, technological and architectural context
- Better understanding the understudied transitional period from muzzle-loading to breech-loading, the infrastructure of new fire control, electricity and other attendant technologies
- Study of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Harbour of Refuge at Dover and its defences
- Chatham and London defences of the 1870s/1900 – comparison and contrast with contemporary Continental schemes
- First World War –(a) establishing the believed extensive layout of inland defence lines (b) the anatomy of anti-aircraft defence and (b) the extent of civil defence preparations against air attack
- Extent of survival of the interwar aircraft vertical searching sound mirrors in the Kent coastal hinterland
- Understanding the measures of defence taken during the Munich Crisis of 1938
- Second World War – (a) Possible extension of the KCC Defence of Kent 'research, search and record' Project to the whole of the region, to establish the pattern of the whole militarised landscape (b) understand more fully provision for Operation Overlord and British Fortitude deception plan
- Determining scope of post-Second World War anti-aircraft gun defence and survival of sites (especially new ones)
- Changes in the scope of civil defence provision during the Cold War.