



The Society for Army Historical Research

Registered Charity No. 247844 www.sahr.org.uk

NEWSLETTER - Winter 2023

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MAJOR EVENTS

For full and up-to-date details of past & future events please refer to the SAHR website.

Templer Lecture & Dinner – Tuesday 31 October

Society members and their guests gathered at London's Army & Navy Club for the annual Templer Lecture & Dinner on 31 October. This year's speaker was 2022 Templer Medal winner **Dr Huw Davies**, who spoke on themes covered in his book *The Wandering Army* (Yale) – tracing the development of British military thinking and doctrine from the War of Austrian Succession to the Crimean War.



This was an ideal occasion to recognise the long & distinguished service to the Society of **Dr John Peaty** who was obliged to stand down as Chair of the Templer Medal Subcommittee for health reasons earlier this year after a decade in post. Society President **Lt Gen Sir Barney White-Spunner** presented John with a certificate marking the award of a Fellowship - making him the 11th person to be so honoured [pictured left, with the Honorary Secretary **Dr Andrew Bamford**, looking on].

Following the lecture, members enjoyed an excellent three-course dinner in the Club's Military History Library [right]

during which old friendships were rekindled; new friendships made; and the debate & discussion that had taken place after the lecture was continued in a more convivial and relaxed environment.



[Ashley Truluck / Andrew Bamford]

Annual Members' Meeting **22 April 2024** – *please make a note in your diary!*

The Annual Members' Meeting is the highlight of the SAHR year. The next one will take place at the National Army Museum and follow the successful format of:

- 4.00 pm – Refreshments and Registration
- 5.00 pm - Annual General Meeting [AGM] - *see below*
- 6.00 pm – Lecture
- 7.30 pm – Annual Prizegiving and Awards ceremony
- 8.00 pm – Finger Buffet / Reception
- 9.00 pm – close.

The AGM agenda will include annual reports by Council members - and we will be inviting membership votes on Council appointments, constitutional changes, membership fees etc as normal. ***This is your opportunity to learn about and shape the future of SAHR – as well as staying for what is traditionally an extremely friendly and enjoyable evening – so we hope that as many members as possible will attend this FREE event.***

Further details of the meeting and the Agenda for the AGM will be included in the Spring Newsletter and posted on the SAHR website www.sahr.org.uk.

Note by Membership Secretary

Membership fees have been frozen for some years and the expense of Society events and other activities will need to be matched by adjustments to membership fees if we are to cope with the significant rise in costs we have witnessed in recent years.

Your Membership Secretary will therefore be submitting a proposal for approval at the AGM to change all Student memberships from receiving the printed version of the quarterly Journal to receiving the electronic version of the same. [No other changes to the benefits a Student member is eligible for are proposed. However, MemSec requests that members who have received their doctorate can no longer claim to be eligible for Student memberships].

Your Membership Secretary and your Treasurer will also be submitting a proposal for approval at the AGM in April 2024 to increase the Full UK Membership subscription rate from £37.50 to £45.00 per annum.

These two proposals, and the explanatory notes pertaining to them, are presented in the two separate documents accompanying this Newsletter, and also posted to the AGM tab on our website www.sahr.org.uk. The MemSec and the Treasurer would welcome dialogue with members on either or both of these topics at membership@sahr.org.uk and/or treasurer@sahr.org.uk.

STRATEGIC REVIEW

Questionnaire

Council would like to record their sincere gratitude to the impressively large number of members who responded so constructively to the recent Membership Questionnaire. Not only did this reflect an active interest in your society, but it also provided a baseline for our Away Weekend on 22/23 Sep at the Chairman's home in Broad Chalke, when our



SAHR five-yearly Strategic Review was finalised by Council, including:

L to R: Eamonn O'Keeffe [Social Media], Rohan Saravanamuttu [Treasurer], Andrew Cormack [Journal], Chris Palmer [Membership], Rory Butcher [Students], Zeb Micic [Essays], Carole Dival [Schools], Andrew Bamford [Secretary].

Outcome

We will say more about the outcome of the Review at the AGM. In essence it confirmed the Society is generally on the right course, but some touches to the tiller will be required including [but not confined to]:

- **Research.** Simplifying our Grants application process [see 'Research Grants'].
- **Journal.** Introducing an Editorial Board to reflect modern practice and reduce the load on our single editor.
- **Templer Competition.** New arrangements to cope with the success that this competition has become, and to encourage more new authors [see website].
- **Events.** Building on the success of our online lecture programme and responding to members' interest in battlefield tours [see below].
- **Army.** Forging closer ties with, & increasing membership of, the serving Army.
- **National Army Museum.** Building an ever-closer partnership with NAM in order jointly to promote interest in Military History amongst soldiers and academics, and to pool funding for research [see 'National Army Museum'].
- **Resources.** Matching our current commitments and future aspirations to the financial resources available to fund them. This will require a combination of partnerships to share costs [e.g. NAM], efficiency measures to reduce costs, and a much-delayed decision to adjust membership fees to match rising costs [see 'Annual Members' Meeting'].

[Ashley Truluck]

ONLINE TALKS

Our popular series of online lectures, hosted with great aplomb by Dudley Giles, will be continuing into 2024. Precise dates will follow by email and on the website, but the speakers and subjects for the first half of the year are currently shaping up as follows: **Jan** - Evan Wilson talking about his book, *The Horrible Peace: British Veterans and the End of the Napoleonic Wars*.

Feb - Sarah Percy will be discussing her recent book about women in combat roles.

Mar - Adam Prime talking on the Indian Army during the Great War.

Apr [prov.] - Members who enjoyed this April's talk by Rob Davidson on the operations leading up to the assault on Spion Kop will be pleased to learn that he will be back in 2024 to complete the story and look at the battle itself.

May - Don Hagist, editor of the *Journal of the American Revolution*, talking about what regimental punishment books tell us about the British Army of that era.

Jun - We will mark the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Campaign with Andrew Wheale on 6th Airborne Div. based on his Templer First Book winning, *Ham and Jam*.

Jul-Dec - Still a few slots free - contact the Hon. Secretary with offers/suggestions.

Note – *If you ever miss a live talk, you can always catch up via SAHR YouTube at:*

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwP_hu-GM6b3RUZNAapNWMQ

[Andrew Bamford / Eamonn O'Keeffe]

BATTLEFIELD TOURS

Following feedback from the Membership Questionnaire, Council initiated the following tours:

Sedgemoor Battlefield Tour – Sunday 3rd September 2023

Some 25 enthusiasts, including many SAHR members, joined SAHR Chairman Maj Gen **Ashley Truluck** for his *Battlefields Trust* walking tour of Sedgemoor, where the Duke of Monmouth's ill-fated rebellion reached its bloody climax in 1685. The group followed the route of Monmouth's famous night march across the Somerset levels; viewed where the rebels' presence was detected and surprise was lost; and toured the defence lines of the royal camp, noting Churchill's tactical initiatives in this, his first victory. The day ended with a visit to the excellent little visitor centre in Westonzoyland church where rebel prisoners were imprisoned after the battle, and then a hearty Sunday Lunch in the Sedgemoor Arms next door.

Members' Note: *The Battlefield Trust is organised on a regional basis and hosts a series of battlefield visits led by Trust members each year. Membership fees are very modest and attendance at their battlefield talks/visits is free and open to everyone [voluntary donation invited]. Details of future visits can be found in the Trust's excellent quarterly magazine 'Battlefield' and on their website www.battlefieldtrust.com*

Naseby Battlefield Tour – Saturday 30th September 2023

Some 19 SAHR members and their guests visited the site of the Battle of Naseby [1645] where our guides were Mark Linnell, trustee of the Naseby Battlefield Project (www.naseby.com); fellow-trustee Jon Courtney-Thompson; and Prof Andrew Hopper of the Civil War Petitions project (<https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/>).

The tour began at Rupert's Viewpoint, focussing on the dashing Prince's role as commander of the Royalist right wing. We then viewed the Parliamentary positions just north of Naseby itself where Sir Thomas Fairfax's New Model Army started the day



tucked behind a reverse slope that even Wellington would have been proud of!

Unable to draw the New Model to attack the Royalists on ground of his own choosing, Rupert led a redeployment of the King's army that brought it down to Dust Hill with its right anchored on the Sulby Hedges. Here the tour party was met by a group from the Sealed Knot who gave a demonstration and then put several members of the SAHR party through their 17C paces [left].

Our subsequent stands took us to where the battle reached its zenith as Lord Astley's Royalist foot advanced against their red-coated opposite numbers under Philip Skippon – only to be enveloped and forced to surrender or flee.

Mark's narrative complete, we returned to Naseby and the convivial surroundings of the Royal Oak public house – evidence, if any was needed, that the Royalists came out on top in the long game – for a much-appreciated late lunch before making our various ways home.

Members' Note: *The success of this and the Sedgemoor tour means that we will hopefully be looking to run similar UK tours in the future as well as looking to resume our overseas battlefield tours programme. Any members who feel that they could act as guide to their local or favourite battlefield should make themselves known to a member of the Society's Council.*

[Andrew Bamford]

FUTURE TOURS

*The following two tours were featured in the summer newsletter and **full details and costs can be found on the SAHR website**. Unlike the one-day UK tours above, these overseas tours involve travel and accommodation costs – so in order to stage them cost-effectively, SAHR Chairman Ashley Truluck is offering to lead two of his standard tours with his tour company The Cultural Experience www.theculturalexperience.com who will provide a bespoke discount if sufficient numbers of SAHR members sign up.*

The Waterloo Campaign: 17-20 May 2024

Forget the film 'Napoleon' - this is the real thing!

Our tour takes place over a long weekend based in a comfortable hotel in historic Waterloo town. It traces the 4-day Waterloo campaign and starts by visiting Wellington's haunts in Brussels, then a full day walking the twin battlefields of Ligny [Napoleon vs. Blücher] and Quatre Bras [Ney vs. Wellington]. The finale will be a day and a half exploring the magnificent battlefield of Waterloo with entry to the 2015 Visitor Centre on the allied ridge; Hougomont Farm, the anchor of Wellington's right flank; and Wellington's HQ in Waterloo town. This, together with its Malta tour [below] is one of *The Cultural Experience's* most popular tours – and are always most enjoyable.

Fortress Malta: 9-16 October 2024

This 8-day tour takes in the broad sweep of military history, fortifications, and culture of Malta from the time of the Great Siege of 1565, through the rule of the Knights of St John, occupation by Napoleon and subsequent British colonial period - to then concentrate on the epic Second World War Siege. Based in Valetta overlooking the famous Grand Harbour, this is a tour for military enthusiasts as well as culture vultures – and for that reason is equally popular with individuals and couples alike.

The first few days are spent touring Valetta discussing the Great Siege and subsequent development of this great fortress under the Knights of St John and the British. Then, after a day visiting Victorian fortifications [including the largest gun in



Europe - right] in the centre of Malta, we enjoy a rest day exploring the unspoiled island of Gozo. Throughout the tour, and in the final 3 days in particular, our main focus will be on studying the fascinating evidence of the Land, Sea, Air, and Home fronts of the Second World War siege that earned the people of Malta their unique George Cross for collective bravery and fortitude. Oh – and the food & wine is pretty good too!

Members' Note - A goodly number of SAHR members have booked already, but we need a few more on each to reach our cost-effective threshold. Please confirm or register your interest by Xmas for the Waterloo tour, and by mid-February for the Malta Tour. If these tours are to run, and at a price you can afford, we need your bids asap.

[Ashley Truluck]

RESEARCH GRANTS

The SAHR minor & major university Research Grants were awarded in Aug and Sep. SAHR gratefully acknowledges the **National Army Museum's** generous contribution to the funding of our research grant programme. This year's winners were:

Minor Awards

Bethany Wyatt, Northumbria University. *'Cultures of Care in Britain's Country House Hospitals, 1914-1919'* - to support research at the University of Reading.

Martin McMahon, University College Dublin. *British Army Barracks in Ireland, 1690-1710* – to support research in London and Ireland to establish the relationship between British barracks and the Irish towns in which they were located.

Major Awards

Srijita Pal, University of S. California. *The impact of the 1918 flu pandemic during WW1* - the grant will support research on British aspects at Imperial War Museum.

Guillaume Yverneau, Cardiff University/Université de Caen. *'Tommies and Civilians: a study of the relations between the British military and civilians during the liberation in France (1944-45)'* – for research at the Imperial War Museum and Kings College London into personal accounts of the soldiers of Montgomery's 21st Army Group.

Note for future researchers: Applications for the 2023 Independent Research Grant have now been received and Council will be announcing this year's winner in December.

The deadline for all research grants for 2024 will be 1 May. The rules and guidelines for the grants are currently being updated to reflect this and will be available on the website by early January.

[Nicola Martin]

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Refresh. The Museum has undertaken a programme of refreshment for all our permanent galleries. In October 2023 we opened *Army at Home*, a gallery with a new narrative covering the Army's part in the creation of the United Kingdom, the role of soldiers in the defence of the realm and aiding the civil power, and their influence on society, culture, and ceremony. This follows *Conflict in Europe* (warfare on the continent from Marlborough to the present day) *Global Role* (the Army's impact worldwide) and *Formation* (the origins, development, and values of the institution). The refreshed galleries have more objects on show than previously, including both long-cherished material from the collection and new acquisitions. *We warmly invite Members who have not visited the Museum recently to come and see the new displays and tell us what you think.*

Latest Exhibition. Our latest temporary exhibition is *Shakespeare and War* which explores the ways in which the Bard has been used to explain, inspire, and reflect on conflict since the Civil Wars. It will remain in place until the end of summer 2024.

Chelsea History Festival. The autumn also saw the return of the Chelsea History Festival for a successful fifth year. Staged in partnership with the Royal Hospital and the Chelsea Physic Garden, the Museum hosted several days of speakers and events, including plenty of military history. A particular highlight was Michael Palin's moving talk about his research into a great-uncle who lost his life on the Somme.

Research Facilities. Many members will be aware of the Museum's extensive archive and library holdings, which can be consulted in the Templer Study Centre.

Enquiries can be sent to: tsc@nam.ac.uk

Lectures and Events. The Museum's programme of public lectures and events covering a wide variety of topics related to the Army's history.

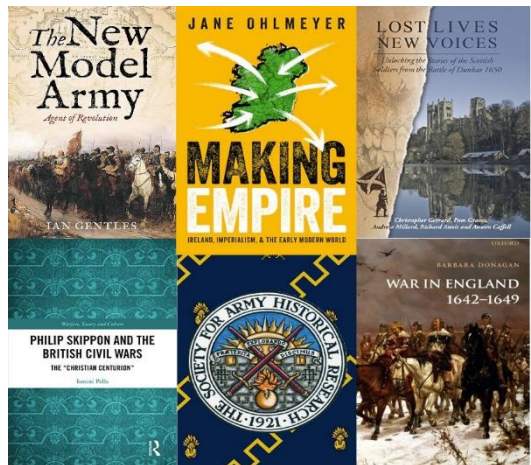
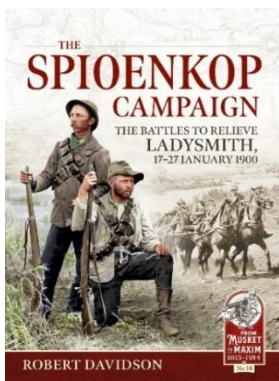
Details of upcoming dates can be found through our website: www.nam.ac.uk

[Glyn Pryor, SAHR NAM Representative]

BOOKS

Annual Christmas Reading List:

SAHR has once again collated a range of book recommendations from leading historians, including Templer finalists. Each historian lists 5 favourite books in addition to a suggestion for a book that *needs* writing. Some inspirational Xmas ideas here! – see the list on the website at www.sahr.org.uk/booklists.



Special Offer: The many members who enjoyed Rob Davidson's talk last April and are looking forward to Part 2 in 2024 (see 'Online Talks' above) will be pleased to know that his new book *The Spioenkop Campaign: The Battles to Relieve Ladysmith, 17-27 January 1900* (Helion) is now available with a special 20% discount for SAHR members. Please use the code **Spioenkop20** when ordering a copy of the book from the Helion website:

www.helion.co.uk/military-history-books/the-spioenkop-campaign-the-battles-to-relieve-ladysmith-17-27-january-1900.php.

Offer valid until 29 February 2024.