



The Society for Army Historical Research

Registered Charity No. 247844

www.sahr.org.uk

NEWSLETTER – Winter 2024

Newsletter Editor: Ashley Truluck chair@sahr.org.uk

RECENT EVENTS

TEMPLER DINNER - Wed 20 Nov 2024

Freddie Hyde, Events Member

Some 70 members assembled for the annual Templer Lecture evening – starting with a tour of the historic **East India Club** including the room where Major Henry Percy, hotfoot from Waterloo and carrying two captured French eagles, arrived to inform the Prince Regent of Wellington's victory (right).

Dr Adam Marks then 'sang for his supper' by giving a fascinating talk based on his acclaimed book '*England & The Thirty Years War*'. The book won this year's Templer Medal



award for research that had made the most significant annual contribution to British military history. As Dr Marks had been unable to attend the Annual Prizegiving earlier in the year, SAHR President, **Lt Gen Sir Edward Smyth-Osbourne**, marked the occasion by presenting Dr Marks with his Medal.

Forty members opted to stay on for an excellent dinner in the elegant Clive Room (left), followed by an informal get-together in the Bar.

We are most grateful for the warm hospitality of the East India Club and hope that this leads to a closer relationship between our two organisations in the future.



HISTORY WALK - 12 Oct 2024

Rohan Saravanamuttu, Hon. Treasurer

With expected turnout reduced due to erroneous BBC weather forecasts of a hurricane, half a dozen members & friends nevertheless turned out for a guided walk around sites of Military Historical interest around central London on 12 October.

Amongst many other interesting nuggets, walkers found out who waded through blood to the treasures of Hyderabad (General Napier), and the story behind the captured cannon in the picture (that the British were defeated by an Albanian general in Egypt in 1807). Positive feedback, including the following comment, encourages me to do another walk next year.

*“Thank you very much for an excellent walk in good company,
an excellent pub and even reasonable weather”. (Geoffrey Vesey Holt)*



FUTURE EVENTS

SAHR RESEARCH CONFERENCE - 22/23 Feb 2025

Rory Butcher, Research & Student Member



Following the announcement in the last Newsletter, tickets are now on sale for our **two-day research conference**, which will take place at the **University of Leeds** on the weekend of 22 and 23 February 2025 – with the theme of ‘*Land Forces of the Crown, c.1660 to the Present*’.

In addition to two keynote lectures, we have a total of 33 speakers across 11 panels. Topics range from experiences of the British Civil Wars to the challenges of maternity in the modern army; from military engineering in the Seven Years War to peacekeeping in late-Victorian Crete; and from infantry NCOs

on the Western Front to tactics & training in the Western Desert.

A full programme and ticket purchase is available via the university website, and can be found at: <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/history/events/event/3159/conference-land-forces-of-the-crown-c-1660-c-2000>.

(Editor's Note: Rory is well-known as a keen re-enactor and has appeared in many costumes – so I wish to reassure readers that the illustration is the Conference icon, not of Rory!)

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING – Wed 30 Apr 2025

Ashley Truluck, Chairman

We are pleased to announce that next year's **Annual Members Meeting** will take place at Armoury House <https://hac.org.uk> - the magnificent Georgian home of the venerable **Honourable Artillery Company (HAC)**, in the City of London:



The HAC is the oldest regiment in the British Army, formed by Henry VIII in 1537. Its operational role is as the Army's only Reserve *Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Regiment*. It retains a ceremonial Company of Pikemen & Musketeers (below) and a squadron of Light Cavalry, who act as honour guards for the Lord Mayor. It also retains a 25 Pdr Artillery Battery which fire salutes from the Tower of London.



Planning is at an early stage but we hope that we will have access to the museum and gardens so that members might tour them informally before the evening's events, which will include:

- Registration from c. 4pm
- AGM & Elections
- Keynote Lecture
- Annual Awards Ceremony
- Drinks & Finger Buffet
- Close at c. 9.30pm

As on earlier occasions when we have chosen a prestigious venue and arranged to conclude events in time for people to catch trains home, we hope this will make it easier for members from outside of London to join us.

Armoury House is indeed a lovely venue, and many of the attractions of the City of London are within walking distance – so do please join us, bring your partner or a guest, and make a day of it. Confirmatory details of the programme, and the AGM Agenda, will be included with the Spring Newsletter and posted on the SAHR website www.sahr.org.uk – meanwhile please pencil Wed 30 Apr in your diaries.

ONLINE TALKS 2024/5

Andrew Bamford & Dudley Giles

The programme for these popular talks for the start of 2025 is as follows:

15 January: Adrian Hughes:

Llandudno and the (38th) Welsh Division 1914/15

February, date TBC: John Alexander:

Frontier Scout-RAF Cooperation in Waziristan, 1928

March, date TBC: Ashley Truluck:

Barba del Puerco, 1810 – the coming of age of the rifle and modern infantry.

April, date TBC: John Laband:

The politics of command: Lord Chelmsford's conduct of the Zulu campaign 1879

May, date TBC: Josh Provan:

Native American allies & the Defence of West Florida, 1779-1781.

*(Right) 1/95th Rifles defeat French night attack at Barba del Puerco, Peninsular War, 1810
– by Christa Hook.
Anatomy of a skirmish with strategic results
- the subject of our **March** online talk.*



***Note:** we are currently short of post-1918 topics for next year's programme, so if any members want to offer a talk to help fill that gap, it would be welcome.*

COUNCIL NOTICES

FELLOWSHIP NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

Peter Swabey, Society Secretary



Since 2022, SAHR has conferred Fellowships (allowing the holder to adopt the postnominals FSAHR), on the basis of a lifetime achievement for a distinguished scholar of the Land Forces of the Crown, or to mark a significant contribution to the history of the Land Forces of the Crown - and/or that of the Society. Council will shortly be considering Fellowship awards to be made at the 2025 AGM.

If any member would like to propose candidates for consideration, and bearing in mind the high bar that the Society sets for such a distinction, please contact me at secretary@sahr.org.uk with the name of the suggested candidate and a short supporting note, by 31 Dec 2024.

UK SUBSCRIPTION INCREASE 1st JAN 2025

Charles Street, Membership Secretary



Just a quick reminder (see last Newsletter) that subscription rates for UK full members (not overseas) will rise from the present sum of £37.50 to £45.00 per annum with effect 1st January 2025. It is something that we as a Society have held off from implementing for as long as possible, but with the sustained price rises in printing and postage, we can no longer afford not to make the change.

Strenuous efforts have been made to remind all members (whether by email or letter) of the forthcoming change, apologies if you are one of the very few (I promise), with whom contact has not yet been made.

Should a member have a concern over the change in rate, please do not hesitate to email me at membership@sahr.org.uk or write to me c/o The Society for Army Historical Research, Vincent's Yard, 23 Alphabet Mews, London, SW9 0FN

RESEARCH GRANT DEADLINES

Dr Nicola Martin, Grants Officer



A reminder that the next **deadline for applications for both the University Research Grant scheme and the Independent Research Grant scheme is 1 May 2025.**

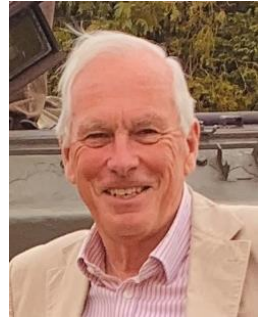
Full eligibility criteria and details of the application process can be found on the SAHR website. We encourage anyone seeking financial assistance with British military history research to consider applying.

If you would like to discuss eligibility, or have any queries, do not hesitate to contact me at grants@sahr.org.uk – which is also the address for all applications.

THE FUTURE OF SAHR – Council & Membership working together

Ashley Truluck, Chairman

I stand down at next year's AGM after 10 years serving variously as Vice President, Chairman, Newsletter Editor and Events Officer – mostly concurrently. During that time, we have conducted two 5-yearly reviews; formalised partnership and sponsorship opportunities; and moved into the digital age (whilst retaining our traditional values). Meanwhile, the SAHR Journal and the Templer Medal competition continue to enhance our academic reputation. As a result, over the past decade we have seen a steady increase in the number of both SAHR members and events – at a time when many other membership organisations are struggling.



But we cannot rest on our laurels. As both our Treasurer and new Membership Secretary reminded Council in the course of our recent discussion on membership fees:- numbers matter. We are currently sitting comfortably above the critical mass number required for the Society to be financially viable. But having deferred the increase in membership fees for a decade, this has only been achieved by starting to draw down on our reserves as prices increase all round. The forthcoming increase in fees (which represents an average of a little more than 50p per year since the last increase) will stabilize things. But our strategy has always been to hold fees at or below the rate of inflation and instead, to increase income by growing membership numbers. *The more we can continue to increase membership numbers, the more revenue we have at our disposal, and the more events, grants and membership services we can offer for the same fees – which in turn generates more membership.....*

These are issues which I will address briefly in my valedictory report at the next AGM. But by definition, these are not issues which a Chairman, or even Council as a whole, can address without the full involvement and cooperation of *all* our members.

Against this background, there are three areas of future development which we believe are key to SAHR's continuing success, and where we would appreciate help & advice from the membership at large:

SAHR COUNCIL – Leadership & Continuity

Leadership. I am currently the only (ex) military member on Council. If we are to retain our traditional link with our *raison d'être*, we need to line up suitably qualified Army candidates to join and/or chair Council. We are therefore now actively looking for military candidates for election to Council at the forthcoming AGM.

***How can you help?** If any military members wish to apply or know of anyone they feel could be a suitable Chair or Council Member – serving or retired, member or non-member – please let me know in confidence at chair@sahr.org.uk or ring to discuss without prejudice on 01722-780858.*

Continuity. Apart from my vacancy as Chair, we will have three other Council vacancies available to fill at the AGM elections next year – so we are casting around for possible volunteers now. The profiles we are particularly interested in are:

- Communications & Marketing – to grow the membership
- Schools & University – to develop our youth intake (see below).
- Serving/Retired Military – to fill the current dearth of military representation.
- Women – to further improve our gender balance.
- Generalists – otherwise, anyone with an active interest in promoting Military History and/or with experience of Charity management.

***How can you help?** If you are interested in taking your lay membership to the next level by becoming a Council Member or would be willing to volunteer professional advice as a Friend to Council, do please contact me as Chairman, or Peter Swabey as Secretary – or indeed any of the Council Officers (contact details in the Journal).*

SAHR MEMBERSHIP – Recruitment & Retention

Retention. Feedback from last year’s Strategic Review membership surveys showed that most members were very happy with the service they receive – and indeed pay for in membership fees (something we never forget). Where changes were requested, we hope you feel we have responded accordingly e.g. ‘pausing’ membership fee increases during the austerity & pandemic years; increasing the number of events; introducing online lectures; organising battlefield tours/walks; digitising access to past editions of the Journal – to name but a few.

***How can you help?** You already have - by staying with us so far! Retention is currently very good and feedback from our measured increase to membership fees has been positive so far – thank-you for your loyalty and understanding.*

Recruitment. At Council level, we are putting increased emphasis on Communications & Marketing next year to grow membership numbers. Meanwhile, at membership level, we deliberately encourage you to bring guests to our events and we allow non-members to join our online lectures. Our records show that once people experience the Society’s warm welcome at a Society lecture, dinner or battlefield tour, they often then apply to become members. These, and personal referrals, are a significant source of growth.

***How can you help?** Please tell your friends about us, and take full advantage of places available for partners & friends at our events by way of introducing them to the Society.*

BRINGING ON THE NEXT GENERATION – Essays & Journals

Essays. Although young members are under-represented in the membership as a whole, we now have a high percentage of younger people on Council – and they have led many of our recent initiatives including advances in Social Media (Eamonn O’Keeffe); rationalisation of our student grants process (Nicola Martin); and the organisation of the forthcoming Research Conference (Rory Butcher). We also have two former SAHR Essay winners who have graduated on to Council (Zeb Micic and Freddie Hyde).



Zeb Micic is working hard to rejuvenate our Essay Competition as a way of encouraging an interest in Military History and so generate future SAHR membership.

Meanwhile Freddie Hyde has introduced us to the East India Club and the young people of its Military History Society. A number of them attended the recent Templer Lecture/Dinner (left) and were given sample copies of our Journal – as a result of which several have since joined SAHR. All these are very encouraging trends for the future.

***How can you help?** If you are in the education sector and can help us make connections with schools which require students to write essays/reports on military history projects, please get in touch. Or simply encourage students to submit their work to us for consideration – they have nothing to lose and a cash prize to win.*

Journals for Schools. Last but by no means least, the **Hon Editor** has suggested a **new initiative to encourage more young people to join**, viz. that members pay for a subscription to the Journal for the library of their old school or the school which their children presently attend. In this way pupils in the 5th and 6th Forms will become familiar with the Journal and any budding military historians among them may feel inclined to take out Student membership on their own behalf when they go to university.

Council fully supports this initiative and has agreed that a member wishing to take out this second subscription should pay at a reduced rate of £35.00 (UK) or the equivalent of £50 for overseas members - approx. US\$64.

***How can you help?** Members wishing to participate should contact the Head Teacher to advise him or her that they wish to make this generous offer. Subscriptions may then be taken out in the usual ways to be registered under the official address of the School, c/o The Head Teacher, Head of History or Chief Librarian to whom the Journal should be sent.*

NB: An added advantage of this initiative will be that it makes more schools aware of the Society's annual essay competition and, for a little later in the pupils' studies, our University Research Grants.

It is hoped that this initiative will be enthusiastically taken up in order to encourage younger people to join the Society.