



The Society for Army Historical Research

Registered Charity No. 247844

www.sahr.org.uk

NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2025

Newsletter Editor: Peter Swabey secretary@sahr.org.uk

NEW CHAIR OF THE SOCIETY

At our Annual General Meeting on 30th April, Brigadier Dr James Cook, OBE, was elected Chair of the Society in succession to Major General Ashley Truluck CB, CBE.

Dear Members,

It is both an honour and a privilege to assume the Chairmanship of the Society for Army Historical Research. I do so with deep respect for the rich legacy of the Society, the dedication of its members, and the outstanding leadership of my predecessor, Major General Ashley Truluck CB CBE. Ashley has guided the SAHR with great warmth, diligence, and distinction, and I would like to thank him publicly for his tireless commitment and wise stewardship over recent years.



As a former British Army officer, I was fortunate to serve for thirty years in a variety of roles that continually reaffirmed for me the enduring relevance of our military past. My academic research, culminating in a PhD entitled *The transformation of the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front 1914–1918, via a process of learning, lessons, doctrine, and training*, only deepened this belief. It is clear to me that our ability to adapt and learn in extremis during the First World War holds profound lessons for the British Army today, particularly as we consider the evolving security challenges facing Europe.

History is more than heritage; it is a toolkit for thinking critically, shaping doctrine, and preparing for the unknown. That is why I believe the work of the SAHR has never been more relevant. Our shared mission—to promote the study and understanding of the British Army and its place in society—is not merely an intellectual pursuit but a vital contribution to the future of defence and the character of the Army that serves the nation.

I am delighted to report that the Society is in excellent health. Our membership continues to grow, our journal remains a leading publication in the field, and our outreach and grant programmes are expanding. Much of this is achieved with

commendable economy, a tribute to both the generosity of our supporters and the efficiency with which the Council and committees operate.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to every member of the SAHR Council, whose expertise, enthusiasm and voluntary service make all of this possible. Your dedication ensures the Society not only endures but also flourishes.

As I begin this new chapter with you, I do so with humility and optimism. I look forward to working with you all to advance the Society's aims and to share more widely the relevance and resonance of our Army's past.

With my best wishes,

Dr James P Cook OBE
Chair, Society for Army Historical Research

RECENT EVENTS

2025 AGM & PRIZEGIVING RECEPTION A GLORIOUS EVENING AT THE HAC

Freddie Hyde, Events Co-ordinator



On 30th April 2025, members gathered at the Honourable Artillery Company in London for our Annual General Meeting and Prizegiving Reception – a truly memorable occasion set against the backdrop of glorious sunshine. The evening began with a fascinating tour of Armoury House, the headquarters of the HAC and home to the oldest regiment in the British Army. The AGM followed, during which we expressed heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Chairman, Major General Ashley Truluck, for his many years of outstanding leadership and Members elected our new Chairman, Brigadier Dr. James Cook, OBE.

Guests were then treated to a gripping lecture by museum director Fiona Macklin on Operation Haggard – a daring 1944 SAS mission in occupied France, when men from B Squadron 1st SAS parachuted into occupied France, with orders to “cause mayhem” from a base camp deep in the forest. Her team’s archaeological finds, including thousands of spent rounds, vividly brought the operation’s chaotic intensity to life.



Fiona Macklin

We took advantage of the fine weather to hold our prize-giving on the terrace overlooking the beautiful five-acre Artillery Garden. The Templer Medal and Society awards were presented by our President, Lieutenant General Sir Edward Smyth-Osbourne, the Chapple Prize was presented by Dr David Chapple, son of the late Field Marshal Sir John Chapple. All prizes were generously supported by our friends at the National Army Museum and we are grateful to His Royal Highness the Sultan of Pahang for sponsoring the drinks reception.

Ian Beckett, Chair of the Society's Templer Medal Sub-Committee, commented "I am very grateful for, and would like to pay tribute to, the work of all my fellow judges, Professor Matthew Hughes, Professor Jennine Hurl-Eamon, Dr Alan Jeffreys, Dr Ismini Pells, Peter Robinson, and Major General John Sutherland."

Dr Alan Jeffreys and Peter Robinson will step down from the Templer Panel at the AGM in accordance with the agreed succession plan. Peter Robinson will be replaced by Dr David Grummitt of the Open University, who will retire at the 2030 AGM. The National Army Museum has nominated Dr Daniel Cowling to replace Dr Alan Jeffreys, and he will also serve until the 2030 AGM. Under the agreed rules, as Professor Jennine Hurl-Eamon has a book to be published in 2025 which she wishes to enter for the Templer competition, she will stand down from the panel for this year. As a one-year replacement, Council has appointed Professor Lynn Mackay of Brandon University, Manitoba.

In all, 71 titles were submitted this year with an additional four that were ineligible. This year those titles considered for the Temple/Chapple shortlists were of significant quality and the panel found it especially difficult to distinguish between them. Consequently, there was a full discussion before unanimous consensus was reached.

The criteria set are: whether the book is primarily about the British army; whether it made a significant contribution to knowledge, broached new questions, or re-examined older questions in an original way; whether it was accurate and thoroughly researched with full bibliography and referencing; whether the argument was clear and supported; whether it was well written and comprehensible to a well-informed reader of military history; and whether it was so controversial as to unduly threaten the reputation and role of the Society.

The Templer Medal for best book on British Military History published in 2024 was awarded to **Professor Kevin Linch** for *The British Army, 1783-1815* (Pen & Sword), who received the Templer medal and £2,000. The runner-up, receiving £1,000, was **Professor David Lambert** for *Soldiers of Uncertain Rank: The West India Regiments in British Imperial Culture* (Cambridge University Press) and joint third place (£200 each) went to **Lt. Colonel Sergio Miller** for *Pride and Fall: The British Army in Afghanistan, 2001-2014* (Bloomsbury) and **Lt. General Sir John Kiszely** for *General Hastings 'Pug' Ismay: Soldier, Statesman, Diplomat - A New Biography* (Hurst).



Professor Kevin Linch receiving the Templer Medal from Lieutenant General Sir Edward Smyth-Osbourne

MEMBERS' SPECIAL OFFER

Hurst Publishing have offered members of the Society a generous 25% discount on orders for Lt. General Sir John Kiszely's book *General Hastings 'Pug' Ismay: Soldier, Statesman, Diplomat - A New Biography* which are placed via their website (hurstpublishers.com) using the code **PUG25**.

The Chapple Prize for best first book on British military history published in 2024, an engraved Dartington Crystal and £1,000, was awarded to **Dr Roger Wood** for *The Best of Appointments? The Evolution of Infantry Brigade Command in the British Army on the Western Front, 1915-18* (Helion).

The runner-up, receiving £200, was **Dr Dennis Vincent** for *The Forgotten General: Sir Alan Cunningham* (Amberley) and the second runner-up, also receiving £200, was **Dr Stephen Quick** for *The Dhofar War: British Covert Campaigning in Arabia, 1965-1975* (University of Exeter Press).

The Society's annual essay prize was won by **Olly Hornshaw (Sevenoaks School)** for *To what extent were operational factors more significant than tactical factors in the outcome of the North African campaign in the Western Desert from November 1941 to September 1942?* The joint runners-up were **Amaya Ciruelos Schoenenberger (South Hampstead High School)** for *Did Punch aid the success of the British Army in the First World War?* and **Johnny Moesel (Sherborne School)** for *An avoidable disaster: lessons in British counterinsurgency from the 1920 Iraqi war of Independence that should have been applied after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.*

Dr Alan Jeffreys and **Peter Robinson**, who stepped down from the Templer Medal judging panel this year having served since 2014, and retiring Council members **Rory Butcher**, **Carole Divall** and **Eamonn O'Keeffe** were each presented with a Society award in the shape of a crystal trophy'. It also seems odd to mention this but not the similar awards to departing Council members.

The prize-giving concluded with the award of ten fellowships of the Society:

Professor John Childs for a lifetime of work on the history of the British Army from 1660 to 1702 and for his work on European military history of the early modern period.

Tim Cooke for highly valuable services to Council during the Society's financial difficulties of 2012 and for continuing advice to the Investments sub-committee.

Mick Crumplin for significant contributions into the study of and public engagement with British army medical history of the 18th century and the Napoleonic period.

Carole Divall for distinguished contributions to the history of the British Army in the Napoleonic era and charitable services in support of SAHR and Waterloo200.

Professor John Laband for significant contributions to the study of the Anglo-Zulu War.

Dr Kevin Linch for a lifetime of work on the Napoleonic British army, including a recent Arts and Humanities Research Council project to document the careers of thousands of officers.

Professor Jessica Meyer for a lifetime of work on gender, health, and British army service during the First World War.

Dr Ismini Pells for distinguished contributions to the history of the British Army and its antecedents in the 17th century and long and distinguished service to the Society.

Major General Ashley Truluck for distinguished services to the Society. He has served as Chairman twice: from 2014-2019 and then again when asked to take over from Ewan Carmichael at short notice to complete the unexpired two years of his term.

Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter for distinguished contributions to the history of the British Army and service to the Society.

We were delighted that so many of the new Fellows were able to join us for the evening.



The evening continued with a drinks reception and we enjoyed the music of the Regimental Band and watched a drill by the regiment, which added a special flair to the occasion. Prizes were presented in the golden evening light, and the celebrations carried on well into the night, with some members of the regiment known to the Society joining in.

Major General Ashley Truluck receiving his Fellowship certificate from Lieutenant General Sir Edward Smyth-Osbourne.

All photos by Andrew Bamford

FUTURE EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE - TEMPLER LECTURE AND DINNER 2025

Freddie Hyde, Events Co-ordinator

After a year of exploring new venues, we're delighted to be returning to familiar surroundings for this year's Templer Lecture and Dinner, which will take place on **Wednesday 19th November** at the Army and Navy Club in Pall Mall.

In an exciting departure from tradition, this year's lecture will take the form of a joint lecture and panel discussion. We are thrilled to welcome Professors Kevin Lynch and David Lambert, who were awarded first and second place in this year's Templer Medal competition. Together, they will share insights from their acclaimed research on the British Army in the long 18th century, promising a lively and illuminating evening of discussion.

This annual event is always a highlight of the Society's calendar, and we look forward to welcoming members back to the Club for what promises to be a thought-provoking lecture followed by a convivial dinner.

Members are warmly encouraged to save the date. Full details, including timings and how to book, will be circulated in due course.

AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (AWI)

2025 is the 250th anniversary of the start of the AWI. The Society is planning to hold a study-day on the AWI in early 2026, which we hope to make free for members to attend (in person or online). This will entail some expense. A generous sponsor has offered to match whatever we can raise from donations/sponsorship for this purpose, up to a certain limit. We are therefore requesting sponsorship/donations for this event.

If you would like to offer a donation for this purpose, please contact Rohan Saravanamuttu (treasurer@sahr.org.uk).

The Society has also started to collate a register of memorials, the definition of which will be wide, to include buildings and sites in the UK with connections to the AWI. More details on this, and a request for contributions of entries from SAHR members and the wider historical community, can be found in the summer journal.

ONLINE TALKS 2025

Andrew Bamford & Dudley Giles

The programme for these popular talks for the second half of 2025 is still being confirmed, but indicative dates to save are as follows:

17 June, Andrew Young:

'"Want of System": Rochefort and the lessons of failure'.

Amphibious Operations in the Seven Years War.

July, Date TBC, Jenny Grant:

The 1946 Victory Parade.

August, Date TBC, Lucy Betteridge-Dyson:

The Arakan Campaign.

September, Date TBC, Simon Shephard and Victoria Carr:

British Army Officer Selection 1660–2025.

October, Date TBC, Alexander S Burns:

Infantry in Battle 1733-1783.

November, Date TBC, Aimee Fox:

Soldier, Banker, Poet - The Lives and Loves of Major General Guy Dawnay.

December, Date TBC, Matt Taylor:

Black Redcoats.

Although we have a number of talks already booked for 2026, there are still some gaps in the schedule and any members interested in offering a talk should contact Dr Andrew Bamford at socialmedia@sahr.org.uk. Talks on topics pre-1739 and 1816-1913 would be particularly welcome.