

# T. E. Lawrence Society Symposium 2006

**St. John's College, Oxford  
22-24 September 2006**

## Programme

### **Friday 22 September**

*T. E. Lawrence: Aspects of Collecting*

Workshop led by Jack Flavell, Edward Maggs and Dr. Philip M. O'Brien

In 2004 this workshop discussed Lawrence's physical legacy - the documents, photographs and objects that provide direct evidence about his life. Little of the physical legacy has survived by accident. Most of it has been deliberately collected and preserved. Lawrence himself was a collector. He helped to build the collections of local mediaeval pottery and Hittite seals now in the Ashmolean Museum. His gift of the manuscript of *Seven Pillars* to the Bodleian was the foundation stone for the major T. E. Lawrence collection that the library now holds.

Interested collectors have gathered and preserved much of the evidence about Lawrence used by his modern biographers. This year's workshop will discuss aspects of that process. Collecting is not just a rich man's hobby. The 'collecting bug' afflicts men and women of all ages and from all walks of life. Collectors acquire specialist knowledge, undertake exacting detective work - and devote to their collections countless hours of unpaid time. Scholars owe much to their efforts: when many people are looking, less is overlooked.

Lawrence was involved in so many activities that his life opens up numerous collecting fields: mediaeval and Hittite archaeology, military history, Middle East history, diplomatic history and memoirs, fine printing, R.A.F. History and marine craft. In each of these fields, the material can be widely varied. It often includes books, ephemera, images, manuscripts and letters, objects, and more.

Jack Flavell, a Trustee of the society, was formerly an Assistant Librarian at the Bodleian Library and is now editor of its *Quarterly Record*. Jack played a key role in consolidating the Bodleian's holdings of T. E. Lawrence printed materials. He also organised the library's T. E. Lawrence centenary exhibition.

Edward Maggs, Managing Director of Maggs Bros., antiquarian booksellers, London, is the leading specialist in rare T. E. Lawrence books and manuscripts.

Dr Philip M. O'Brien, of Whittier College, California, is author of *T. E. Lawrence, A Bibliography*. This award-winning work involved assembling a noted bibliographical collection. Phil was also a friend of one of the greatest of all T. E. Lawrence collectors, the late Edwards H. Metcalf. The Metcalf T. E. Lawrence collection, now in the Huntington Library, is currently being catalogued.

*Lawrence After Arabia*  
Malcolm Brown

Malcolm Brown will introduce *Lawrence after Arabia*, the 1986 BBC television documentary produced by Julia Cave, with Malcolm as adviser.

### **Saturday 23 September**

*Cycling in the Early 1900s - Transport, Sport and Pastime*  
Dr Andrew Millward

Both Lawrence and his father were keen cyclists. Lawrence cycled large distances in quest of brass rubbings and, later, to visit mediaeval castles in Britain and France. In the last weeks of his life he cycled from Bridlington in Yorkshire to his home in Dorset. His cycling journeys seem remarkable today, but were not exceptional at the time. This paper will set these activities in context, discussing cycling in Britain in Lawrence's day.

Andrew Millward wrote his doctoral thesis on this subject.

*1906-2006: Centennial Reflections on Lawrence in Brittany*  
Professor Peter Hibbert

One hundred years ago, Lawrence explored Brittany in search of mediaeval buildings and ruins. Peter Hibbert has retraced his journeys, to examine the historical sites and buildings that Lawrence found so interesting. Extensive photographic evidence will help bring to life Lawrence's contemporary letters and recapture some of the excitement of his discoveries. Also covered are Lawrence's attitudes towards the people he met, and the key locations in Dinard mentioned in the letters.

Peter Hibbert studied archaeology at the University of Liverpool and worked for ten years on the excavation of Roman and medieval military sites. He subsequently took a degree in Law at Manchester University and is now a professor at the College of Law in Birmingham. He holds a degree in Theology and is a priest in the Church of England. His interest in Lawrence began at age six, when family holidays at Tremadoc took him past Lawrence's birthplace. More recently, his research has focused on Lawrence's pre-war exploration of France, and he has worked with French scholar Maurice Larès. Some of the pre-war material from his collection has been loaned to the Imperial War Museum's *Lawrence of Arabia* exhibition.

*Dr. M. R. Lawrence, and Evangelical Christianity in the Lawrence Family*  
Dr Michael Griffiths

Mrs. Sarah Lawrence and her eldest son Bob get a bad press as Christian fanatics. In letters to Charlotte Shaw, T. E. expressed his irritation at the way his mother had tried to ram her version of Biblical Christianity down his and Arnold's throats. While brothers Will and Frank were active members of the O.I.C.C.U., Bob was the only son who survived the war and shared his mother's convictions. The family had pulled out of St. Aldate's in 1909, when Bob and Ned resigned from their role in the Church Lads Brigade. Sarah followed Bob out to the China Inland Mission's Paoning Memorial Hospital two years after he arrived there. He returned to China again for the C.M.S. in 1932-5, making it a condition that they would accommodate his mother. The two were escaping from Communist incursions down the Yangtse in 1935 when they heard of T. E.'s death. From then on, Bob's life was overshadowed

by his famous dead brother and dominated by his mother until her death in 1959, aged 98. On return to Britain their housing needs were met by prominent women friends of T. E.'s. We find that Bob and Sarah were nicer people than we may have thought!

Michael Griffiths joined the Overseas Missionary Fellowship of the China Inland Mission in 1957, serving for ten years in Japan. In 1969 he became its General Director, pastoring 900 missionaries throughout the Far East. From 1980 until retirement he served as Principal of a Theological College in London, and then as Professor of Mission Studies in Vancouver. His interest in the Lawrences started when he read Robert Graves' comment that T. E.'s mother 'two years ago went off unconcernedly to end her days with a mission in Central China – but has recently been sent back home much against her will because of political troubles there.' He discovered immediately that while Dr. M. R. Lawrence had been a member of the China Inland Mission from 1921-27, his mother is not mentioned at all in surviving archives. She does appear in Church Missionary Society archives, as Bob served as a locum in the Maechan Hospital in 1932-35. Because of the interest in T. E.'s family, we know more about the life and character of Bob Lawrence than of most other China missionaries of that period.

### *Lawrence and Maps, 1914-16*

Dr Peter Chasseaud

In the winter of 1913-14, Lawrence and Leonard Woolley joined a survey party led by Stewart Newcombe in the Sinai Peninsula. Their role was to provide archaeological 'cover' for military map-making. Lawrence observed and helped the surveyors. Within a year, war had broken out and, on the strength of his Sinai experience, Lawrence found himself at the War Office in the Geographical Section of the General Staff. From there he went to Military Intelligence in Cairo, where he was involved in map-making. Serving as a liaison officer in the Arab Revolt, he continued to provide cartographic information for map-makers in Cairo.

Dr Peter Chasseaud is a leading historian of military cartography. He is Hon. Archivist of the Defence Surveyors Association, and has a special research interest in 1914-18 field survey and mapping. He has written three books and several articles on the subject, broadcast on radio, and assisted with television documentaries. He is a committee member of the Palestine Exploration Fund. In October 2005 he gave a paper at the British Museum titled: The Secret Survey - Newcombe's Survey of Southern Palestine 1914.

### *Bumpus & Bumpus Booksellers to HM The King and Champion of T. E. Lawrence: A Tale of Subscribers, Bindings and Exploitation*

Paul F. Helfer

J. G. Wilson, manager of Bumpus Bookshop in Oxford Street, was bookseller to King George V. Under his guidance, Bumpus was the most fashionable London bookshop of its day. It was to Wilson that Lawrence turned when his friends failed to attract enough subscribers for a fine-press edition of *Seven Pillars*. Thereafter, the two remained in friendly contact.

Paul Helfer is a New York attorney specialising in literary property and copyright law. He has previously given papers at T. E. Lawrence Society symposia in Oxford and the US. With Jennifer Lee, he taught the course in bibliography and book collecting at Brown University from 1993 to 1995. He is a member of the Grolier Club, the Bibliographical Society of America and the Royal Asiatic Society. His T. E. Lawrence collection has been exhibited at the Beinecke Library at Yale and the John Hay Library at Brown University.

*Symposium Dinner in St John's College dining hall*

## Sunday 24 September

### *TEL and DHL: Overlapping Circles; Parallel Lives*

Jack Flavell

T. E. Lawrence (1888-1935) and D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) were near contemporaries; but despite T. E.'s great interest in his namesake's writings, the two men never met. Although T. E. and D. H. inhabited very different worlds and moved in different circles, they had several common acquaintances, and there were also some surprising parallels in their lives. The focus of the talk will be on their mutual interest in the literary world of the 1920s and on the publication of two of the twentieth century's most important books.

Jack Flavell, a Trustee of the Society, was at the time of his early retirement in 2003 a Senior Assistant Librarian at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. He organised the Library's T. E. Lawrence centenary exhibition in 1988, and now edits the Bodleian Library Record.

### *Lawrence and the Schneider Trophy*

Pieter Shipster

This paper will explore the origins, purpose, history and significance of the international Schneider Trophy seaplane races from 1913–31. It will describe the preparations for the 1929 race and the role of the Air Ministry - particularly the part played by Wing Commander Sydney Smith and Lawrence while they were both stationed at R.A.F. Cattewater (later renamed Mount Batten) in Plymouth. The paper will also reflect on the importance of this period in Lawrence's life.

Pieter Shipster is an Assistant Director of Public Health in the National Health Service. He began a life-long interest in Lawrence while at school and this in part led to him taking a degree in Near and Middle East Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. He later spent four years in Saudi Arabia and has also travelled widely on the 'Lawrence Trail' in Jordan and Syria. He has been an active member of the T. E. Lawrence Society since its foundation twenty years ago. Pieter also has a strong interest in the First World War, aviation, and the origins of the Royal Air Force.

### *The 'Lawrence of Arabia' Photographs by Harry Chase, 1918-19*

Joe Berton

In 1918, the American journalist Lowell Thomas, accompanied by his photographer Harry Chase, briefly visited the Arab forces at Akaba. While there, Chase took his first photographs of Lawrence. The following year, Thomas and Chase came to London to present the illustrated 'travelogue' which launched the Lawrence of Arabia legend. To enhance the Lawrence section, Chase then took a further series of photographs. Among them are some of the best known images of 'Lawrence of Arabia'. Despite the fame of these images, relatively little has been published about their history or about Harry Chase.

Joe Berton has researched extensively in the Lowell Thomas archives at Marist College and in other major Lawrence collections in Britain and the US. He is currently working on a book of the Harry Chase photographs of Lawrence, Palestine and Arabia. He has lectured in the US on the Chase photographs, on the uniforms worn by the British troops in the Hejaz, and on Bedouin dress. He teaches art at Oak Park, Illinois, and is also a well-known sculptor of military miniatures. Examples of his work are in collections in Europe, the US and the Middle East.

*The Hedjaz Railway Today*  
The Rev Bob Jackson

Bob Jackson, a frequent visitor to Jordan and an enthusiast for the Hedjaz Railway, will discuss the present state of the line and its rolling stock, and its future prospects.

*Rails to the Arabian Desert*  
Nick Lera

Nick Lera, who won the News Cameraman of the Year award in 1970, has specialised in making films about the world's steam railways. As the foremost specialist in the field, he worked in Southern Africa and Peru on the acclaimed BBC series *Great Railway Journeys of The World*. This film about the Hedjaz Railway, originally made for television, is now part of the series *Nick Lera's World Steam Classics*.

*T. E. Lawrence Society Annual General Meeting*