

T. E. Lawrence Society Symposium 2012

**St. Hilda's College, Oxford
21-23 September 2012**

Programme

Friday 21 September

Visits to see Lawrence material held at the Ashmolean Museum, All Souls College, and the former Oxford High School for Boys (now the University's History Faculty).

Lawrence and the Arab Revolt

Committee members Mike Hamilton-Scott and Mike Oldfield have embarked on a project to digitise the glass slides bequeathed to us by Siddons and held in the Society's collection at the Tank Museum, Bovington. A DVD, *Lawrence and the Arab Revolt*, produced using the slides and with the accompanying lecture notes read by an actor, will be shown in the auditorium.

Society Slides: Locations and Landscapes

John Winterburn

Following the slide showing, John Winterburn, Landscape Archaeologist with the Great Arab Revolt Project, will talk about the slides and their significance.

Saturday 22 September

Welcome from the Acting Chairman, Pieter Shipster

T. E. Lawrence by his Friend Vyvyan Richards: The Untold Story

Paul Helfer

Lawrence and Richards first met when Lawrence entered Jesus College. They formed a relationship that lasted until Lawrence's death. That relationship survived the strong opposition of both of Lawrence's parents; Richards' unrequited expressions of love for Lawrence; Lawrence's years in Arabia and in military service; breach of a mutual promise to establish a fine press enterprise; banishment of Richards from school-mastering at an all-boys school, and the unwinding of the Pole Hill property scheme. Richards frequently carried out assignments given to him by Lawrence and held Lawrence's unqualified trust. Virtually nothing about Richards' own accomplishments has been recorded, an unfortunate condition this paper will seek to remedy.

Paul Helfer is a lawyer, specialising in literary property and copyright law, and an independent scholar living in New York City. He began his T. E. Lawrence collection in 1970. This is the fifth paper he has delivered at Society symposia. He is a member of the Grolier Club, the Bibliographical Society of America and the Royal Asiatic Society. His T. E. Lawrence collection was exhibited at the Beinecke Library at Yale University and the John Hay Library at Brown University.

T. E. Lawrence: Military Uniform and Arab Robes, Costume and Identity

Joe Berton

This talk will examine the uniforms and Arab robes worn by Lawrence throughout his career for a variety of political and military situations. The types of Arab clothing will be explained and surviving examples of Lawrence's own robes and daggers will be presented. Lawrence's contribution in creating his post-war image in portraits and photographs will be examined, along with his active role in getting changes made to the other ranks uniform in the R.A.F.

Joe Berton is familiar with the major Lawrence collections in England and the US. He is an authority on the photographs and documentation on the Arab Revolt, especially the men who served with Lawrence in the Hejaz. He has spoken at two previous Society symposia and contributed articles to the Journal. He is an internationally recognised sculptor of military miniatures. He formerly taught art to middle school students in Oak Park, Illinois, US. He has just published a book entitled *T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt: An Illustrated Guide*.

Studies in Detraction: Aldington's Predecessor, Herbert Read

Mary Bryden

The appearance in 1955 of Richard Aldington's book *Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Enquiry* is often seen as a watershed in public perceptions of Lawrence. However, it is often overlooked that a smaller scale anti-Lawrence initiative had been undertaken nearly three decades earlier, by a close associate of Aldington, the poet and critic Herbert Read. This attack is important insofar as, unlike Aldington's publication, it appeared during Lawrence's lifetime and therefore offered him the possibility of responding to it. This paper examines in detail the basis for Read's attack, before tracing Lawrence's fascinating but private ripostes.

Mary Bryden is Professor of French Studies and Director of Research in the Department of Modern Languages and European Studies, University of Reading. She is also President of the Association of University Professors and Heads of French (AUPHF). She has published extensively on modern French literature, philosophy, and culture, and her books include *Gilles Deleuze: Travels in Literature* (Palgrave, 2007: includes a chapter on T. E. Lawrence), *Samuel Beckett and the Idea of God* (Palgrave, 1998), and the edited collections *Deleuze and Religion* (Routledge, 2001) and *Samuel Beckett and Music* (Oxford University Press, 1998). She is currently completing a book on cultural realisations of the Lawrence figure, provisionally entitled *The Transnational T. E. Lawrence*, to be published in 2013.

The Hejaz Railway - Construction, Destruction, Reconstruction, Abandonment - The Future?

Mike Schofield

This talk on the Hejaz railway will start with a brief history of its original construction to Medina, followed by the decision to rebuild the section wrecked by T.E. Lawrence and the Arab army between Ma'an in Jordan and Medina in Saudi Arabia while fighting the Turkish Ottoman armies. It will describe the setting up of desert construction camps, the organising of a working programme and labour force, and the highs and lows of life in the desert, with emphasis on the Mudawarra camp and its environs, and the reconstruction work carried out between Ma'an and Mudawarra. The immediate necessity of finding a source of water for the camp has since had a profound effect on the geography of the area and the desert scenery, but it has resulted in a big economic benefit to Jordan in general and to Amman in particular.

Mike Schofield commenced his civil engineering career in the Leeds office of the District Engineer for British Railways. As with many young civil engineers, his dream was to become

a bridge designer, but before this was possible it would be necessary to gain experience in the design of track work. However, permanent trackway design became a fascination in which he specialised for many years, being involved with track layout design for Leeds City Station, marshalling yards and power stations. An application for the position of Track Engineer for the reconstruction of the Hejaz railway resulted in his being employed as Project Engineer (North) and being responsible for the reconstruction work between Ma'an and Mudawarra.

Question and answer session with the speakers on the day's papers, chaired by Philip Neale

Society dinner in St. Hilda's College dining hall

After-dinner speaker is Mr Ed Maggs of Maggs Bros, established in 1853, one of the world's largest antiquarian booksellers.

Sunday 23 September

From Arabia to Albania: The S.O.E. service of 'Stirling the Suave'
Roderick Bailey

Colonel W. F. Stirling was staff officer to T. E. Lawrence during the Arab Revolt and remained a friend after the war. From 1923 until 1926, on the recommendation of the local British consul, he held the post of Inspector General to Albania's gendarmerie. From 1926 until 1931 he was Inspector General of Albania's civil administration. This background led in 1940 to Stirling's recruitment - through the offices of A. W. Lawrence, T. E.'s younger brother - by the Special Operations Executive, a secret British organisation set up to encourage resistance behind enemy lines. Drawing on recently declassified records, this paper reveals how Stirling drew upon his experience, including his service with T. E. Lawrence, to plan and prepare a revolt in Italian-occupied Albania: Britain's first attempt of the Second World War to foster guerrilla warfare in Europe.

Dr. Roderick Bailey is a graduate of Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities and former fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford. He is the author of *The Wildest Province: S.O.E. in the Land of the Eagle*, an acclaimed study of the Albanian exploits of Britain's Special Operations Executive. He is currently completing, for the Cabinet Office, the official history of S.O.E.'s war against Mussolini's Fascist Italy.

Wavell and TEL - A Military and Literary Friendship 1917-1935
Owen Humphrys

When Allenby entered Jerusalem in December 1917, Wavell and Lawrence walked in side by side. Both men wrote best sellers on the Palestine Campaign, and corresponded about each other's books. Their correspondence lasted until a few days before TEL's death in 1935, but only some extracts have been published. Wavell and Lawrence also shared literary and poetic interests. From 1938 to 1943, as a G.O.C. and C-in-C, Wavell was to give his blessing and support to several irregular forces, including the Long Range Desert Group and the Chindits.

Owen Humphrys served with the Black Watch and with the Artists Rifles. He is now the custodian of a family archive from 1900-1950, including some original T. E. Lawrence-related material.

T. E. Lawrence and the Iraqi Rebellion of 1920

David Murphy

This paper will discuss the development of the British administration of Iraq (the former Ottoman province of Mesopotamia) under the post-WWI mandate system. As the British presence in the region seemed confirmed under the terms of the mandates, there was growing discontent in late 1919 and early 1920. The outbreak of rebellion of 1920 will be examined, as will the methods used to suppress it. T.E. Lawrence's comments on the British administration and the rebellion will be discussed, as will his role in the Cairo Conference of 1921, which brought a level of stability to Iraq. The rise to prominence of Feisal, Jafar Pasha and others associated with the Arab Revolt in the government of the new Iraq will also be examined, as will the turbulent early years of that troubled country.

Dr. David Murphy is a graduate of University College, Dublin (BA, MLitt.) and Trinity College, Dublin (PhD). He was a major contributor to the Royal Irish Academy's Dictionary of Irish Biography. In 2004, he became the first Irish scholar to be awarded a fellowship to the West Point Summer Seminar in Military History. He is a member of various societies including the T.E. Lawrence Society, the Ormonde Military History Society and the Society for Military History. He has carried out extensive research on military topics, in particular the service of Irish soldiers in the British and European armies. He currently lectures in the History Department of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and teaches on defence studies programmes at the Irish Military College. He is a guest lecturer at the US Military Academy, West Point, the US Army Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth and the Dutch Military Academy. He has published several books including *The Arab Revolt* (Osprey, 2008) and *T. E. Lawrence* (2011).

T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Spring

Noel Brehony

This talk will examine the Arab Spring and how it has affected the countries in which Lawrence was involved and draw parallels with the Arab Revolt in 1916 and its consequences. How would Lawrence have viewed the events of 2011 and 2012 and what advice might he have offered to the British government?

Dr. Noel Brehony completed a PhD on Libya and spent two years on post-doctoral research on the West Bank before joining the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where he worked mainly on the Middle East, with postings to Kuwait, Yemen, Jordan and Egypt. He was then Director of Middle East Affairs at Rolls-Royce plc. He has been chairman of the Middle East Association. He was President of the British Society for Middle East Studies 2000-2006 and chairman of the Council for British Research in the Levant 2002-2008. He is on the advisory board of the London Middle East Institute at SOAS, where he was also a Research Associate 2008-2011. He is chairman of the British Yemeni Society and the Anglo-Jordanian Society. He is council member for the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia and a trustee of the Altajir Foundation. Dr. Brehony co-edited *British-Egyptian Relations from Suez to the Present Day* published 2007. His book on the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, *Yemen Divided: The Story of a Failed State in South Arabia*, was published in March 2011.

Question and answer session with the speakers on the day's papers, chaired by Philip Neale

The T. E. Lawrence Society Annual General Meeting