

T. E. Lawrence Society Symposium 2002

**Exeter College, Oxford
13-15 September 2002**

*Programme organised by Jeremy Wilson
Chaired by Jeremy Wilson and Philip Kerrigan
Symposium administration by Suzanne Fox*

Programme

Note: Lawrence was not directly connected with Exeter College, although it is immediately opposite his own college, Jesus. It was, however, the college of William Morris, who inspired his interest in fine printing.

Friday 13 September

'Lawrence of Arabia' or 'Smith in the Desert' - A Historical Review of David Lean's Film
Workshop led by Jeremy Wilson

Is Lawrence of Arabia historically accurate? The question is frequently asked by visitors to the T. E. Lawrence Studies and Lawrence of Arabia Factfile websites. Jeremy Wilson, who wrote Lawrence of Arabia, The Authorised Biography, leads a discussion about how accurately the film portrays events and personalities.

This session is organised by T. E. Lawrence Studies as a supplement to the T. E. Lawrence Society Symposium.

Saturday 14 September

Opening Remarks by the Chairman

Tall Tales of T.E.L.: An Uncritical Romp through Continental European Myths and Legends about Lawrence the Spy
Jonathan Mandelbaum

The myths and legends surrounding Lawrence directly affected him in his lifetime. After his death, they took on a life of their own, influencing successive generations of biographers ostensibly concerned with "the facts." Jonathan's Mandelbaum's talk will focus mainly on examples drawn from French and Italian writings about Lawrence. Rather than dismissing the tall tales as irrelevant fictions, he will argue that they are worthy of historical study as evidence of changing popular (mis)perceptions.

Jonathan Mandelbaum, American by birth, has spent most of his life in Europe. An alumnus of the Lycée Français of New York, Balliol College Oxford and the École des Hautes Études

en Sciences Sociales in Paris, he is now a freelance translator based in France. His interest in T.E. Lawrence dates back to David Lean's film, which he saw as a child in Italy.

T. E. Lawrence in The Wilderness of Zin
Sam Moorhead

In the winter of 1913-14, T.E. Lawrence and Leonard Woolley accompanied a British survey party in the Sinai Peninsula. Their task was to provide archaeological 'cover' for a military mapping expedition. They described what they found in a report published by the Palestine Exploration Fund, called *The Wilderness of Zin*.

Sam Moorhead has excavated in Britain and Italy, but most extensively in the Near East. He has spent time with Bedouin communities in the Negeb and organised the first ever school exchange with Bedouin students. Currently, he is a Staff Lecturer for Archaeology in the British Museum and sits on the councils of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society and the British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology. He was responsible for the recent republication of *The Wilderness of Zin* by the Palestine Exploration Fund and Stacey International.

Discoveries - Early Texts of Seven Pillars
Shea Johnson

This wide-ranging talk will draw upon Lawrence's letters and the surviving early drafts of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (including material hitherto unavailable) to provide an account of the evolution of the text. It will cover such issues as the way Lawrence wrote the book, the dedication to SA and the dedicatory poem, and the development of some of the more memorable passages.

Shea Johnson graduated in English Literature from Radcliffe College (now merged with Harvard), and subsequently carried out research at St Hilda's College, Oxford. She is currently completing a D.Phil thesis on Rudyard Kipling. She discovered *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* when she was 14, and T.E. Lawrence some years later through Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*. Shea was secretary of the T. E. Lawrence Society from 1990-94 and North American Co-ordinator from 1994-2000. A collector of books and ephemera concerning Lawrence and the Middle East generally, she has made several visits to Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

A Tale of Two Effigies
Jonathan Black

Eric Kennington's friendship with Lawrence spanned the post-war period and was the closest of Lawrence's friendships with artists. In 1921, Kennington drew the Arab portraits that illustrated *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. He was later art-editor of both the 1926 and 1935 editions. His 1926 bust of Lawrence is in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral; while his posthumous effigies, the subject of this talk, are at St Martin's Church, Wareham, and in the National Portrait Gallery.

Jonathan Black is an art historian whose special interest is Eric Kennington and other artists in that circle. In 2001, he organised the Kennington exhibition held at University College London. Since then he has been teaching at the University of Newcastle.

Question panel

The panel will include Malcolm Brown, editor of *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence* (1988) etc, Jeremy Wilson, and a selection of the speakers. It will discuss questions from the floor about any aspect of Lawrence's life.

Sunday 15 September

Introduction by the Chairman

The R.A.F. in the Middle East and India in the 1920s

David Omissi

For two years, in 1927 and 1928, T. E. Lawrence served with the R.A.F. in India. From a biographical standpoint, these were two of the most interesting years of his life. Lawrence had also been involved in the 1921 Cairo Conference, which transferred responsibility for the defence of Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine to the Air Ministry. This talk will offer some context to Lawrence's involvement with the R.A.F., by assessing the nature and significance of the Air Force's role in the region in the 1920s.

David Omissi was born and raised in Jersey. He graduated with a First in History from the University of Lancaster, before taking an MA and PhD in War Studies at King's College, London. A revised version of his doctoral thesis was published as *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force, 1919-1939* (1990). He has also published extensively on the history of the Indian Army. He is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Hull.

The Hedjaz Railway

St. John Armitage

The Hedjaz Railway was a defining parameter of the Arab Revolt. On the one hand it was the supply line which enabled the Turks to dominate the Hedjaz. On the other, it was the Achilles' heel that crippled the Turkish defence. This talk about the railway described how it was planned and what it became.

St. John Armitage is a Middle East specialist whose experience of the region spans fifty-six years. After thirteen years' service with Arab armies in Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and Oman, he was manager of a geophysical exploration company in Libya. He joined H.M. Diplomatic Service in 1962 and served in Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Since retirement in 1978, he has been a consultant on Arab affairs and a regular visitor to the Middle East. He delivered the T.E. Lawrence: A Centennial Lecture to the Royal Society for Asian Affairs in 1988, and has made a number of contributions to the Society's Symposia, Journal and Newsletter. He is one of the T. E. Lawrence Society's Trustees.

Aircraftman Icarus; or Lawrence and the Golden Goblet

Edward Maggs

Lawrence's 1926 Subscribers' Edition of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was his first attempt at book-making. In production terms it was also extremely ambitious. It now ranks among the more expensive rare books of its time, and its many signs of amateurism are doubtless part of

its attraction. Both Lawrence, as author/project manager, and Manning Pike, as printer, 'learned on the job'.

Edward Maggs, an antiquarian bookseller who notionally runs his family's firm, Maggs Bros. Ltd in London's Berkeley Square, has specialised in T. E. Lawrence material for many years. He has recently been granted a column in the monthly Antiquarian Book Review which provides an outlet for his accumulated thoughts about books and their authors.

T. E. Lawrence's Friendships with Women

Jeremy Wilson

Much of the popular comment about Lawrence classes him as someone who avoided friendships with women. In reality, he had many such friendships, across the span of his life. This talk brings together the evidence about these friendships and shows that, while Lawrence may have been selective about his female friends, he can hardly be classed as a woman-hater.

Jeremy Wilson, who arranged the speakers at this symposium, holds degrees from Oxford and the LSE. He wrote Lawrence of Arabia, the Authorised Biography (1989) and is currently series editor of T. E. Lawrence Letters. While chairman of the T.E. Lawrence Society (1990-4), he founded its Journal. He was adviser to the National Portrait Gallery's Lawrence of Arabia Centenary Exhibition. As a professional web-content editor, he helps to build or rationalise major corporate websites. In his spare time he edits the two major T.E. Lawrence websites: the Lawrence of Arabia Factfile and T. E. Lawrence Studies. Since 1999 he has also been responsible for the society's website.

T. E. Lawrence Society Annual General Meeting