

T. E. Lawrence Society's Seventeenth Symposium RAF Museum, Hendon

Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd September 2024

Please note that this programme may be subject to change..

Members and guests are invited to a long weekend of lectures, visits, exhibitions and good company at the RAF Museum, Hendon. Accommodation will be at your own choice of hotel, with the closest being the Premier Inn (Hyde) in Hendon. Lunch will be available on Saturday and Sunday. On Friday enjoy an afternoon looking at TEL related objects in the museum's collections and a tour of the Grahame White WWI hangar, before two days of presentations, exhibitions, browsing the bookstalls, meeting Lawrence authors and much more.

Friday 20th September, 2024	
12:00	Registration opens at RAF Museum Hendon
12:30	View the RAF Museums TEL related artefacts
14:30	Tour of Grahame White Hangar with Stuart Hadaway with focus on 14 Squadron RFCTBC
16.30	End of visits and evening free or a social meal with friends and other delegates
Saturday 21st September, 2024	
10:00	Registration opens at the RAF Museum Hendon
10:45	Welcome and Introduction
11:00	<p>Adrian Martin: Sir Edward Marsh: TEL's Friend, Confidant and Conduit – <i>Sponsored by Michael Maddison</i></p> <p>Eddie Marsh served as Private Secretary to Winston Churchill for 23 years. Coming from a political background he moved amongst the political establishment for fifty years. But he was much more than that; an active and generous patron, friend and supporter to artists, poets, and authors he was equally at home in the literary and artistic circles in which TEL longed to move on his return from the Middle East.</p> <p>Adrian Martin is a longstanding Society Member. Born into a household with a copy of "Lawrence and the Arabs" by Robert Graves, and a 1935 Edition of "The Seven Pillars", on the bookshelves, what chance did he stand?! He has had a professional career of over 40 years in the law as a Solicitor, and Law Teacher. Over time a passing interest in early C20th English literary and artistic worlds brought him again into contact with TEL, and his connections with such figures. However everywhere he looked the figure of Edward Marsh seemed to be omnipresent. His curiosity was and continues to be, aroused.</p>

12.00	Refreshments
12.30	<p>Adam Fraser: England to Egypt in five days</p> <p>In June 1919, TE Lawrence was stranded with 58 Squadron on the island of Crete. At the same time, tensions were rising between the Hashemites and Ibn Saud and the British Foreign Office sought to send Harry St John Philby to quell the situation before it got worse. To get Philby to Cairo as quickly as possible, 22 year old Canadian RAF pilot Harry Yates was tasked to fly him the 3000 miles as quickly as possible. When they reached Crete, they decided that Lawrence should accompany them on the mission and made the remarkable last leg of the journey to Cairo and in doing so, broke the world speed record with Lawrence immortalising the event in his essay <i>A Sea Trip</i>.</p> <p>Adam Fraser is a Senior Heritage Consultant with the engineering consultancy, Arcadis UK. Adam has worked as an archaeologist since 2008 in the Middle East, Africa, North America, and Europe and the UK. He completed his MA in Biblical Studies and Archaeology at the University of Sheffield in 2012 and was the Librarian at the Palestine Exploration Fund from 2013-2015. In 2017 Adam joined the Iraq Emergency Heritage Management Training programme and worked at the site of Tello/Girsu and worked for Wessex Archaeology in the UK before joining Arcadis in 2019.</p>
13.30 - 14.30	Cold buffet Lunch
14.30	<p>Alasdair Soussi – James McBey – <i>Sponsored by Adrian Martin</i></p> <p>Alasdair Soussi, the official biographer of swashbuckling Scottish artist James McBey, will present a talk on the painter and etcher's period as Britain's official war artist on the Palestine Front during World War I. Covering McBey's arrival in Egypt in the early summer of 1917 until his departure from the Middle East in February 1919, Soussi will reveal the artist's encounters with the Palestine Front's leading protagonists, such as Allenby, Feisal - and, of course, T. E. Lawrence himself.</p> <p>Alasdair Soussi is a Scots-born journalist, writer and filmmaker from Glasgow. In recent years he has covered the Scottish independence debate and Brexit, and has made short films for Al Jazeera's social media platforms.</p> <p>His Soussi's biography, <i>Shadows and Light: The Extraordinary Life of James McBey</i>, was published by Edinburgh's Scotland Street Press in December 2022.</p>
15.30 -16.00	Afternoon Refreshments

16.00	<p>Richard D. Newton : Air Power, Irregular Warfare, and the Lawrence Connection - Sponsored by Richard Gardiner</p> <p>Richard will examine the connections between T.E. Lawrence’s advocacy of the use of air power in irregular warfare and the airmen he served with both during and after the First World War. Lawrence, or at least his reputation, influenced the roles air power played in irregular conflict during the Hejaz and Palestine operations and most of what he advocated remains relevant to air power and irregular warfare today. Lawrence was an early advocate for the application of air power to the challenges of irregular conflict. Lawrence would often assume the observer’s position in the air-planes and make personal reconnaissance’s. <i>Seven Pillars of Wisdom</i> explains how airmen applied air power to support the Arab irregulars in the Hejaz and Palestine. Therefore, this paper adds to our knowledge of Lawrence and air power by linking the actions of British and South African squadrons from the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps, who in 1914 began developing and applying tactics and doctrine to counter German guerrillas in East Africa to the later campaign in the Middle East. A few of those airmen were later assigned to 14 Squadron or 5th Wing in Egypt and flew in support of or as liaisons to Lawrence’s Arabs. After the war, Lawrence helped convince Churchill that the Royal Air Force was up to the task of colonial policing in the Middle East and Africa. Again, there were a number of airmen who had been connected to Lawrence during the war who developed and implemented the tactics and doctrine that made the air control scheme successful during the interwar years.</p> <p>Richard Newton served for 22 years in the U.S. Air Force as a combat rescue and special operations helicopter pilot, combat aviation advisor, and strategic planner. After retirement he continued serving on the faculty of Joint Special Operations University and NATO Special Operations University. He is the author of <i>The RAF and Tribal Control: Airpower and Irregular Warfare Between the World Wars</i> and <i>Valor Untold: Air Commandos During the Jonestown Massacre Recovery, 1978</i>, as well as numerous articles on air power, irregular warfare, and special operations. He continues to serve as an editor and occasional contributor to the <i>Air Commando Journal</i>, a professional journal by, for, and about special air warfare. Dr Newton holds a bachelor’s degree in military history from the USAF Academy, a master’s degree from the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, and a PhD from King’s College London. His upcoming book, <i>Air Power in East Africa, 1914 – 1918: Aviation’s Roots in Irregular Warfare</i>, explores the totality of air power’s contributions to the four-</p>
17.30	Close
	Evening event to be confirmed. Possibility of dinner at the Hyde Premier Inn or other venue.

Sunday 22nd September, 2024	
09:15	Annual General Meeting of the T. E. Lawrence Society, in the RAF Museum Sunderland Suite
10:00	Welcome and Introduction
10:15	<p>Martin Gething: The Knowles Family at Clouds Hill – <i>Sponsored by Kevin Winter</i></p> <p>In the late summer of 1923 T. E. Lawrence started renting the cottage at Clouds Hill and gradually transformed it over the next twelve years ready for his retirement – which, tragically, would be all too brief. After Lawrence’s death his brother, Arnold, arranged for it to be transferred to the National Trust (NT). Nevertheless, the rescue of this former farm-labourers’ cottage, which had become derelict during the Great War after being vacated by the last family in about 1914, had started a year or two before Lawrence saw it. Clouds Hill had been rented by Arthur and Henrietta Knowles, and they had started making repairs. After ‘sub-letting’ the cottage to Lawrence, Arthur continued with the renovations on his behalf, and he and Henrietta looked after the cottage whenever Lawrence was away. Following Arthur’s death in 1931 son Patrick took on much of the work, and then – after Lawrence died – he and his wife Joyce looked after the cottage for the NT. Joyce became the Trust’s custodian, a role she held for over fifty years until retiring in the early 1990s.</p> <p>Lawrence realised the precarious financial position the family faced after Arthur’s death. He bought the lease of the Knowles’s’ bungalow, allowing Henrietta to live there rent-free. In turn, Arnold transferred the lease to the NT with the stipulation that Patrick and Joyce could live there rent-free for as long as they continued to take care of Clouds Hill. The Knowles family were therefore key players in the history of Clouds Hill from the early 1920s to the 1990s, but have, regrettably, been largely side-lined in the numerous books and articles about Lawrence and about Clouds Hill.</p> <p>Martin’s talk aims to redress that balance, and fill in many of the gaps left by <i>An Handful With Quietness</i>, and <i>The Life & Times of Joyce E. Knowles</i>.¹</p> <p>After retiring from the Ministry of Defence in 2017, Martin has been a volunteer with the National Trust at Clouds Hill. Discovering little was known about the pre-WWI history of the cottage, he has extensively researched its history from the 18th century onwards, and the stories of the farm labourers who lived there in the 19th and early-20th centuries. Over the last three years, Martin has been following this up by re-researching the Knowles family and all their connections with Lawrence.</p>
11:15	Refreshments

¹ Bob Hunt (editor) and Patrick Knowles, *An Handful With Quietness*, E. V. G. Hunt, Weymouth 1992; Bob Hunt (editor) and Joyce Knowles, *The Life & Times of Joyce E. Knowles*, E. V. G. Hunt, Weymouth, 1994.

11:45

John Alexander: An airman on the RAF's front line in 1928: Aircraftman Shaw's 'Idyllic' service at RAF Miranshah – Sponsored by Joe Berton

John Alexander will examine T. E. Lawrence's service at Miranshah on India's North-West Frontier, the RAF's most front line base in 1928. Lawrence's biographers largely overlook his service at Miranshah, uncritically accepting Lawrence's letters describing its quietness, emphasising his writing instead. Furthermore, the RAF historiography concentrates on its aspiration to use independent air operations for colonial control, as Lawrence had advocated when at the Colonial Office, counter to the Indian Army's intent for the RAF to directly support its operations on the Frontier. This paper provides fresh insight by combining Lawrence's letters with Government of India official histories and intelligence reports, British and Pakistani Frontier Scout unit histories and accounts, RAF operational records, British oral and film archives, testimony by Lawrence's commanding officers (COs) and the author's own research in Pakistan. The paper finds that Lawrence, as Aircraftman First Class T. E Shaw, became an invaluable aide to the COs of the flights of six aircraft and around twenty men which rotated through Miranshah every two months, where they were collocated with the Political Agent and the Tochi Scouts under his control. One of just four airmen permanent staff and detachment clerk, Shaw accompanied the COs on visits to Scout units, reconnoitred air landing grounds, flew on reconnaissance sorties, and decoded signal messages, including the message ordering his repatriation. The paper examines why Shaw described his time with No 60 Squadron, conducting punitive operations against recalcitrant Mehsud tribes, as an 'idyllic two and a half months under the kindest CO of my experience'. The paper concludes Miranshah's progressive RAF organisational culture was evidence of Hugh Trenchard's vision in practice, a reason for Lawrence's choice of Service, and counters Lawrence's *The Mint*, a rare yet regressive other rank perspective of the early RAF. The paper also highlights the Political Agents' preference to selectively use air power for tribal coercion rather than provocative, costly Army expeditions.

John Alexander is researching for a PhD by publication on the beginnings of British air/land operational art between 1918 and 1942 and is currently editing a book on close air support. As a Royal Auxiliary Air Force group captain, he exercises the UK's high readiness joint headquarters. Previously as a regular RAF officer he specialised in air/land integration, in the Falklands in 1982, various campaigns in the Middle East, and in Afghanistan. He spent much of 2011 to 2020 in Afghanistan and Pakistan working on Taleban outreach, in UK and NATO diplomatic missions, and with the Pakistan military, which allowed him to visit the North-West Frontier. He has also conceptualised warfare for the UK MOD, the RAF and NATO and has twice been selected as a Chief of the Air Staff Fellow. He has degrees from the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Newcastle, the Pakistan National Defence University, and two from the Open University. He has published award winning research in the *Air and Space Power Review*, the *RUSI Journal*, the *Journal of the T E Lawrence Society* and *Asian Affairs* and is the outgoing editor of the *Journal of the T E Lawrence Society* and editor designate of the *Journal of the Royal Air Force Historical Society*.

13:00 - 1400	Cold Buffet Lunch
14:00	<p data-bbox="341 181 1482 219">Ted Scaplehorn: Lawrence's Legacy - High Speed Launches in the RAF</p> <p data-bbox="341 255 1482 618">At its formation in April 1918, the Royal Air Force inherited a substantial flotilla of small boats and other craft from its progenitor Royal Naval Air Service. Most of these ex-naval craft were intended to support flying boat operations but, as the fledgling Service settled into its new role, it soon became apparent that the majority were outdated, in many cases unseaworthy, and unsuitable for current and future tasks. The RAF set about designing replacements, and though early attempts proved uninspiring, a collaboration with Hubert Scott-Paine of the British Power Boat Company paved the way for the development of new craft capable of higher speeds and with better seakeeping qualities to meet their expanding operational requirements, which would eventually include the provision of high-speed launches for air-sea rescue duties.</p> <p data-bbox="341 658 1482 1093">In 1929, T E Lawrence, then serving in the RAF as Aircraftman Shaw, was posted to the flying boat station at RAF Cattewater (later RAF Mount Batten) in Plymouth where Scott-Paine was working. Though initially employed as a clerk, Shaw took a keen interest in the unit's boats, and soon became involved with Scott-Paine and Flight Lieutenant Beaufort-Greenwood of the RAF Marine Craft Section, in testing the new designs. Despite having no formal qualifications or experience in boat operations, design or engineering, Lawrence's intellect, sense of purpose and literary skills helped convince senior officers that the next generation of marine craft should include launches suitable for rescue work. Lawrence's involvement with boat design ended with his death in 1935, but the core characteristics of speed and seakeeping that he had promoted remained a distinctive feature of RAF marine craft for the next 50 years until the Marine Craft Section (by now the Marine Branch) was civilianised in 1986.</p> <p data-bbox="341 1133 1482 1317">This presentation will provide a broad overview of the history of RAF marine craft from the formation of the RAF in 1918 until their demise as a military component in 1986. It will describe Lawrence's work at RAF Cattewater and his involvement with Scott-Paine and Beaufort-Greenwood and assess how significant this proved to be for the overall design of rescue launches in the Second World War and beyond.</p> <p data-bbox="341 1357 1482 1680">Ted Scaplehorn joined the Royal Fleet Auxiliary as a Deck Cadet in 1969. He served in a variety of naval support ships and qualified as a Master Mariner. In 1980 he transferred to the Marine Branch of the Royal Air Force and subsequently commanded Her Majesty's Air Force Vessels <i>Seal</i> and <i>Sunderland</i>. On disbandment of the Marine Branch, he transferred to the Royal Air Force Police. Promoted to group captain, he served as Deputy Director of Defence Security from 1999 until 2002. He was appointed Deputy Provost Marshal (RAF) in December 2002 and held the office of Provost Marshal (RAF) and Chief of RAF Police from March 2005 until retirement in May 2006.</p> <p data-bbox="341 1720 1482 1827">Ted was appointed OBE in 1999. He is a member of the Society for Nautical Research and the Navy Records Society and is Honorary Secretary of the Liverpool Maritime Society.</p>
15:00	Afternoon Refreshments

15:30	<p>Kathy Haslam: T E Lawrence and William Morris</p> <p>This talk will explore some of the uncanny parallels between the extraordinary lives of Victorian polymath William Morris and TE Lawrence, and the enduring influence of Morris (1834 – 1896) upon the younger man. Each was self-determinedly individualistic: Lawrence has been described as being, from his earliest days, ‘an unusual character, combining practical skills, an antiquarian bent, and an interest in archaeology’, an assessment that could just as fittingly have been applied to Morris. Forty years after the young Morris was exploring out-of-the-way Essex on his pony, seeking out early churches and enthusiastically assimilating a knowledge of their architectural detail and the society from which they had arisen, a youthful Lawrence was cycling around Oxfordshire doing exactly the same. Time and technology had moved on and yet they seemed moved by the same impulse. In her talk Kathy Haslam will look at some of the many points of correspondence between their characters, sensibilities and accomplishments.</p> <p>Dr Kathy Haslam FSA, Curator at Kelmscott Manor, is a specialist in William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement. She has worked in curatorial roles at institutions including Victoria & Albert Museum, The Museum of the Home (formerly Geffrye Museum) and Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House. Since 2012 she has been responsible for the collection, displays and exhibitions at Kelmscott Manor and was a member of the Project Board for the Manor’s recent £6million capital project <i>Kelmscott and Morris: Past, Present and Future</i>, with particular responsibility for research, presentation and interpretation.</p>
16:30	Symposium Close

Society members can once again support our Symposium in a special initiative. You can help encourage new research, share Lawrence studies with a wider audience and strengthen your links with the Society. Even if you’re not able to attend in person, you can still make a difference and show your support for our major event. Members are welcome to sponsor any of the speakers for £100. Your name would be added to the final programme and you would be thanked as a sponsor prior to the talk at the Symposium. If anyone is interested in sponsoring a speaker, please contact either chairman@telsociety.org.uk or symposiumreservations@gmail.com and let us know which speaker you would like to sponsor.