



Salisbury Military History Society

February 2020 eNewsletter

Hello and welcome to our February 2020 eNewsletter,

If you've missed any previous editions, you can find them on our website – [click here](#).

The Curragh to Le Cateau, August 1914

Those of you who attended our January talk by Mike Watson were treated to a serious “tour-de-force”. His talk on “The Curragh to Le Cateau” was not only meticulously researched (the level of detail throughout was quite astonishing) but also delivered with great knowledge and authority. A thoroughly informative and enjoyable talk by a speaker who is a master of his subject. Thank you, Mike. What a way to start the year!



Saving the Guns at le Cateau by Terence Cuneo

SMHS MEETING, evening 22 Jan 20: FOLLOW-UP – ‘The Curragh to Le Cateau’

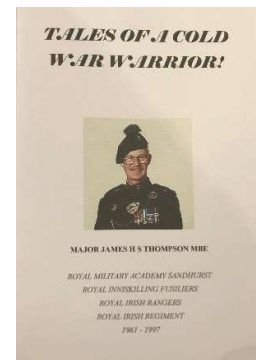
Mike asked me to include the following in our eNewsletter and I am more than happy to oblige:

If you would like to read a more detailed explanation of the recovery of the F Sub-section gun of 37 Battery at Le Cateau, you might be interested to peruse a paper that I wrote for 93 (Le Cateau) prior to them celebrating the Centenary of the action in 2014. Please be aware that, since then, having been able to discuss incidents with relatives and carried out further research, there are some divergences from my recent presentation to the SMHS. You should also be aware that the format of my paper altered while migrating onto the ‘Bristol 1914 The City and Conflict’ website. Mike Watson” (Please click [here](#))

At the January meeting we were also treated to a very interesting “Show-and-tell” by one of our Founder Member’s, Major James Thompson MBE (Ret’d), giving an intriguing insight into his time in Berlin in the 1960’s.



James was commissioned in 1963 into the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, amalgamated into the Royal Irish Rangers in 1968 and, finally the Royal Irish Regiment in 1992. He saw service in Northern Ireland, Gibraltar, Cyprus, Berlin, BAOR, Uganda, USA, France, Northern Iraq, England. His MBE was awarded in 1987 after service in Uganda.



26th February: "Could the British have won the American War of Independence?"

Professor Jeremy Black MBE

Opposition to London's insensitive Colonial policies on taxation and governance was provoked into outright rebellion when British soldiers attempted to disarm Massachusetts patriots in April 1775. British forces enjoyed some initial tactical successes around Boston, but these were not enough strategically to prevent the city's encirclement by the newly-formed Continental Army under George Washington. Seaborne evacuation followed in the spring of 1776. For the next 18 months the revolt hung in the balance with substantial British reinforcements taking Philadelphia and New York. But if London's plan for a two-pronged attack from Canada and New York had not ended in failure at Saratoga, would the Continental Army have survived, and would the French have got involved at all? Jeremy will draw these threads together and present us with his conclusions.



Jeremy is a British historian and a Professor of History at the [University of Exeter](#). He is a senior fellow at the [Center for the Study of America and the West](#) at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. He is the author of over [100 books](#), principally but not exclusively on 18th Century British politics and international relations, and has been described as "the most prolific historical scholar of our age". We are indeed fortunate in having him agree to give our talk.

Addendum:

A fellow Military History enthusiast in the USA, Linda Drake, very thoughtfully pointed to a similar lecture at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture entitled "The British Are Coming", delivered by the renowned author Rick Atkinson. This excellent lecture is free to watch at this [link](#) and is highly recommended. Thank you, Linda!

Refreshment break and book stall

During the break there will be a cash bar supplying refreshments and also Andy Sharpe, our Secretary, will be running our usual Book Stall selling a number of second-hand books, at very tempting prices! If you have any surplus books on military subjects that you are willing to donate, do please bring them in. All proceeds go to the Society.

As always, **the talk will start at 7.30pm** and be at:

St. John's Place,
Lower Road,
Bemerton,
Salisbury,
SP2 9NP.

Parking available. See [here](#).

Parish Notices

Saturday 4th April 2020: There are still two places left for our visit to [The Infantry and Small Arms School Corps Weapons Collection](#) at Waterloo Lines, Warminster. Please note that this is a Full Members only visit. Should you wish to add your name to the list please contact us via the website.

Future dates for your diary:

Wednesday 25th March: British Volunteers and the Spanish Civil War - [Ray Wilkinson](#)

Wednesday 22nd April: Reflections on the First World War - [Brig. Alan Mallinson](#)

Wednesday 27th May: Victory in Burma - Lt Col Mike Tickner

Wednesday 24th June: Seapower States: Culture, Identity and Strategy - [Prof. Andrew Lambert](#)

News Flash:

The talks for September 2020 to March 2021 are now available on the website [here](#).

Diary dates further afield:

I received a flyer from [Fugitives Drift](#) in Natal, advertising two of Douglas Rattray's 2020 London lectures, 2nd and 3rd of June, on the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, which may be of interest to some of our members.

In January's eNewsletter we advertised the upcoming meeting of The Annual [World Ship Society](#) Naval meeting being in Bristol on the 6th June 2020. Their itinerary has just been released and is shown below.

The flyer features the 'FUGITIVES' DRIFT' logo with 'RORKE'S DRIFT' underneath, and the 'CADOGAN HALL' logo. The main text reads: 'DOUGLAS RATTRAY PRESENTS STORIES OF THE ANGLO-ZULU WAR OF 1879'. It lists two talks: 'THE BATTLE OF ISANDLWANA: Day of the Dead Moon' on 2 June 2020 (19:00 for 19:30) and 'THE BATTLE OF RORKE'S DRIFT: The Immortal Defence' on 3 June 2020 (19:00 for 19:30). The location is 'CADOGAN HALL, SLOANE TERRACE, CHELSEA, LONDON'. Pricing is '£36 per adult per talk / £25 per student per talk *' with a note '* Transaction fees apply.'. Bookings are via 'daisy@fugitivesdrift.com' or '+44 20 7730 4500' and 'www.cadoganhall.com'. A photo of Douglas Rattray is in the background. At the bottom, it says 'MEET THE SPEAKER: DOUGLAS RATTRAY' and provides a bio: 'Douglas Rattray, of Fugitives' Drift Lodge near the Anglo-Zulu war battlefields in South Africa, continues the legacy of his famous late father, David Rattray. Anyone who has heard Douglas speak on the battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift will testify to his knowledge, passion and wonderful story-telling abilities. He brings the events of January 22, 1879 to life in a way bound to enthral and captivate. A bar will be available before and after the talk.'

42nd Annual WSS Naval Meeting

To be held in the Bristol Commonwealth Society, 14 Whiteladies Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1PD from 10.30 – 17.00

PROGRAMME

10.30	Coffee
10.40	Pre-meeting quiz answers
11.00	(1) Thirteenth DK Brown Lecture: Dr Ian Buxton: <i>The Goodall Dairies: Director of Naval Construction 1936-1944</i>
12.10	(2) Mark Brady: <i>The Art of Claus Bergen and the Revival of German Naval Power between the Wars</i>
13.10	LUNCH
13.45	(3) Professor Andrew Lambert: <i>Late Victorian Ship Design as a Symbol: The Development of the Iconography of Ships of the Ironclad/pre-Dreadnought Eras</i>
14.45	(4) Andrew Choong: <i>British pre-Dreadnoughts of the William White Era 1890 – 1908</i>
15.45	Afternoon Tea
16.00	(5) Dr Richard Osborne: <i>From Impotence to Triumph: The Indian Navy 1965-1971</i>
17.00	Meeting ends

If you would like to attend please contact Dr RH Osborne, 11 Beechwood Road, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 2AF (Tel: 01275 852183; **OR BY E-MAIL TO:**

Military History News:

Revolutionary War Battle Rages in Fishkill

It's being called the final battle of the American Revolutionary War: that between the Fishkill Historical Society and a property developer. Fishkill in New York state was General George Washington's largest military encampment of the war, but is now threatened by plans to build a retail complex and visitor attraction styled like a colonial village. The land was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, but debate rages over whether there really are war graves on the site. [Read more](#)

Youngest female soldier in World War One: world record set by Maria Zaharia

The World Record Academy has named Romanian Maria Zaharia as the youngest female soldier of the Great War, falling in Mărășești in the summer of 1917. [Read more](#)

Normandy Bunkers 'Frozen In Time' on D-Day Coast

British historian Gary Sterne discovered the Maisy Battery back in 2006; a range of German bunkers close to the beaches at Omaha and Utah. Having bought a 20-acre parcel of land, the Discovery Channel got to work exploring the tunnels further and revealed 12 buildings and 1.5km of tunnels. [Read more](#)

Your History Book Missed This: Was the Vietnam War Japan's Fault?

Was the war that saw the French and Americans ejected from Vietnam caused by Japan? A different perspective argues that Ho Chi Minh didn't leave China to lead the Viet Minh until after France had conceded IndoChina to Imperial Japan in 1941. However, it wasn't until the Japanese destroyed the last French presence in Vietnam in the spring of 1945 that a power vacuum was created into which the Viet Minh stepped. Would the French and American wars in Vietnam have erupted if the Viet Minh hadn't been offered a foothold as the Second World War came to an end? [Read more](#)

Inside the mysterious Bristol nuclear bunker 'untouched for decades'

Images of a Cold War bunker in Bristol have been shared by an urban explorer after he showed himself around the former Ministry of Works site. Built in 1953, the 24-room Grade II-listed shelter has passed through the hands of multiple Government departments over the last half-century and so 'Ste G' videoed his tour around the nuclear bunker and uploaded it to YouTube. Avon County Council rented the War Room until 1981 and a large number of files still remain in the shelter, but the bunker now appears to be owned by a private company based in London. [Read more](#)

Education of military leaders suffered due to absence of chronicled history: Army Chief

Speaking at a book launch, Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane extolled how not learning lessons from military history has meant that the education of military leaders has suffered. "Probably those leaders who succeed are the ones who have learnt the lessons from history and... avoid those mistakes. However, what was missing in [our] oral history, was an analytical insight into what was actually happening on the ground. What we want to know is what the order of battle was? How were the forces arrayed? What the relative strengths of these forces? Was there some plan of battle? Was there some strategy involved? How did the battle itself unfold? All such questions actually remain unanswered in most Indian accounts of military history." [Read more](#)

Current and forthcoming events in Salisbury (and around Wiltshire and across the SW)

Temporary exhibition: "WW1", Fordingbridge Museum ([click here](#))

15th to 23rd Feb – "Faces From The Past", Stonehenge ([click here](#))

15th Feb to 28th Nov – "Dunkirk", The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum at The Wardrobe ([click here](#))

18th Feb – "From Tiger Moth to Lightning, 50 years a Test Pilot", Boscombe Down Aviation Collection ([click here](#))

27th Feb – "Baron Manfred Von Richthofen", Wessex Military History Group, The Keep, Dorchester (email jameskrporter@aol.com)

17th Mar – "A Circumnavigation – in Comet 4", Boscombe Down Aviation Collection ([click here](#))

19th Mar – "Formation of the Rifle Corps in the Context of Changes in the British Army and the Development of the Light Infantry", Royal Green Jackets Museum, Winchester ([click here](#))

19th Mar – “The Great War in Africa”, Royal Green Jackets Museum, Winchester ([click here](#))

25th Mar – “656 Sqn talk part 1 - Formation and the Far East”, Army Flying Museum ([click here](#))

26th Mar – “Western Front Logistics” and “The Arras Counter-Attack, 1940”, Wessex Military History Group, The Keep, Dorchester (email jameskrporter@aol.com)

28th Mar – “Devizes Castle - Norman Stronghold to Victorian Folly”, Wilshire Museum, Devizes ([click here](#))

That about wraps it up for our eNewsletter for February 2020.

Any thoughts, comments, suggestions or criticism on any aspect, please do let us know.

Don't forget Professor Black's talk on “**Could the British have won the American War of Independence?**” at St John's Place next Wednesday, 26th February.

Hope to see you there!

Kind regards,

Keith Rigden
Membership Secretary

Dave Simons
Marketing Officer

Useful links:

Website - <https://salisburymilhist.com>

Email - SalisburyMilHist@gmail.com

Facebook - [SalisburyMilHist](#)

Twitter - [SalisburyMHS](#)

Who's who:

Joint Chairman & Speaker Secretary: Alan Rooney

Joint Chair: Bob Kershaw

Treasurer: John Loades

Marketing Officer: Dave Simons

Secretary: Andy Sharpe

Membership Secretary: Keith Rigden

Joint Events Officer: Alex Howie

Joint Events Officer: Sandy Forrest

