

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Our Spring event this year was the great day out at Stratfield Saye (see report in this newsletter). Friday 18 October this year will be our 'Lines Day' dinner at the Cavalry and Guards club, preceded by our (short, hopefully) AGM and talk by Marcus de la Poer Beresford, on the Portuguese contribution to the Peninsular War, which promises to be a fascinating event.

Our links to the municipalities of Torres Vedras remain strong. We are suggesting to them that the Friends might 'adopt' a fort, to support financially its restoration and maintenance – we would need to be considering one of a modest size, and to be sure that the cost is sustainable in the longer term. This would be building on our financing of the restoration of the Fletcher memorial last year.

An issue raised with us was concern that there has been some 'heavy duty' undergrowth and vegetation clearances, damaging habitats for wild life and wild flowers. We investigated this and have established the work was essential for fire prevention purposes. We cannot argue with this, given the serious forest fires in Portugal in recent years.

Looking ahead, we are already thinking about activities for next year. For the Spring, please save 1 May for the 'Wellington in London' walk we are planning, to include personal, social and political sites relating to the 1st Duke. Early thoughts include both exclusive locations and some quite quirky ideas; any suggestions for inclusion are welcome.

October 2020 will also be the time for our return to Portugal and the Lines, for our alternating 'home and away' pattern for Lines Day. We are starting to think how we can improve on our successful visit in 2018; any suggestions also welcome!

Andrew Dismore
Chairman

EVENTS UPDATE 2019

Report on visit to Stratfield Saye, 9 May 2019.

Our Spring event this year was our exclusive visit to Stratfield Saye on Thursday 9 May 2019, courtesy of his Grace the Duke of Wellington, President of the Friends. The date also commemorated the 633rd anniversary of the Treaty of Windsor, signed with our longest ally, Portugal.

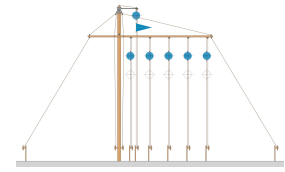
In attendance were 24 members and guests. On a showery day, after breakfast at the Cavalry and Guards Club, Piccadilly, we travelled by coach to Stratfield Saye, the estate purchased by the state in 1817, in order that it

could be given by a grateful nation to the victorious Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke.



After coffee and an introduction by our volunteer guides, we were shown round what is an elegant and intimate home, as the first Duke intended it to be. Unlike the grandeur of Blenheim Palace, built for a former national hero

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the Duke of Marlborough almost a century before, Stratfield Saye is a more modest house, lived in and enjoyed by the Duke and his family.

Split into two groups for the tour, we saw the fascinating collection of family portraits, paintings, many gifted from Spain to the 1st Duke and furniture, whilst we learned the stories behind many of the rooms, particularly the hall's grand entrance and the library which was clearly well used.

After lunch (with our own wine, appropriately mostly from Portugal) we toured the stable block to see the wonderful Wellington Exhibition charting the 1st Duke's military and political life.



If there could be star of such a fascinating day, this was the opportunity to see the grandeur of the 1st Duke's magnificent, enormous funeral carriage, made from melted-down French guns captured at the Battle of Waterloo. The extraordinary 12-ton, six wheeled funeral car was constructed in under 6 weeks for the funeral in 1852.

Our visit concluded with afternoon tea and cake in the estate farm shop, worth a visit in itself!

Many thanks are due to our committee member Bernard Hornung, who made the arrangements and hosted breakfast at the C and G club.

Adopt a fort

The committee is considering a suggestion to 'adopt' the costs of maintenance of a fort on the Lines. The implications are being considered.

Lines of Torres Vedras Day, Talk and Dinner, 18 October 2019.

Cavalry and Guards Club, London

Please book early for this great evening.

The inclusive price for members is £75; Non-members, £95; Talk only, £25.

Email our Treasurer, Mary Brewer, to book. HibOu@msn.com

18.00 wine reception and AGM

18.30 Talk by Marcus de la Poer Beresford, on *the Portuguese Contribution to the Peninsular War*

19.30 drinks: White Port and Tonic

20.00 dinner: with two glasses of wine included.

Menu:

Kiln Roast Salmon en Gelée with Quails Egg & Roast Yellow Pepper Puree

(veg option) Asparagus, Fennel, Rocket & Chive with a Pink Grapefruit Dressing

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Partridge Wellington with a Madeira Sauce

Fondant Potato

Pont Neuf Carrots

(veg option) Aubergine Cannelloni, Cous Cous with a Roast Tomato Sauce & Basil Salad

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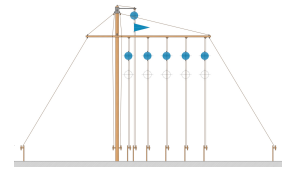
Strawberry & Mint Crème Brulée

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Tea and Coffee

Andrew Dismore

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Events for 2020

Two events are proposed for 2020. In the spring, we are considering a 'Walk with Wellington' in London. See proposals in the Chairman's introduction.

In the autumn, we intend to again visit the Lines for the Lines of Torres Vedras day on 20 October. We are considering including a visit to the nearby battlefields of Roliça and Vimeiro. Other suggestions are welcome.

FRIENDS COMMITTEE

We will always be interested in hearing from members who would like to get more involved with the running of the group.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We currently have 55 members.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE.

Website

Development of the website continues. Recent additions are links to Google maps for the main forts. I will be adding more in the coming months.

Website visitor number continue to increase. Over 16,000 individuals have visited the website in the last year, an increase of 50% on the previous year. Visitors to the website have trebled in the last two years.

Facebook

The Facebook page continues to be active with many contributions from the UK and Portugal. Membership has increased to 190.

OTHER RELATED EVENTS

BCMH Conference, London, 13/14 September 2019.

The British Commission for Military History will be hosting a conference at Kings College London; War & Peace in the Age of Napoleon. Details at <http://www.bcmh.org.uk/events/>

Waterloo Association, Royal Armouries, Leeds, 14 September 2019.

Mark S Thompson will be speaking on the Lines of Torres Vedras at this public event. Details at:

<https://royalarmouries.org/event/waterloo-study-day/>

Waterloo Association, Higham Hall, 27-29 March 2020.

Mark S Thompson will be speaking on the Lines of Torres Vedras and the role of the Royal Engineers. Details at <http://highamhall.com/course/waterloo-building-armies-and-armies-building/>

Mark S Thompson is currently writing a book on the Lines which will be published by Helion in 2021.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the Lines of Torres Vedras, the Friends, or our events, please visit our website (<http://www.f-ltv.co.uk/>) or our Facebook page.

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