

SAUNDERSFOOT AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For its March meeting the Society welcomed Sally and Alan Haynes to talk about the Sealed Knot Society and to lend colour to the proceedings both speakers were in costume and had brought along a number of period artefacts.

The Sealed Knot Society was founded in 1968 by Brigadier Peter Young who, after a distinguished army career, lectured in military history at Sandhurst. The Sealed Knot was not only the first re-enactment society in Europe but today it is the largest. It is also a charity raising significant sums of money for good causes. The original Sealed Knot though was a secret and clandestine group formed in the 1650's to fight for the restoration of the monarchy after the execution of Charles the first in 1649.

Alan explained that his uniform was a replica based on a musketeer of Birch's Regiment of Foot in Parliament's New Model Army. The red dye for the cloth had been chosen for its cheapness as a colour and rank would have been denoted by sashes. The Society emphasised authenticity in not only its dress but in closely following events and customs on the seventeenth century battlefields through replicating in their musters the weapons and tactics of the day. Musketeers were the infantry of the civil war; they fought on foot using muskets, which could dangerously miss-fire, and rapiers or short swords called hangers. The pikemen, employing pikes up to sixteen feet long, could be used in attack and in a defensive circle known as a hedgehog to ward off a cavalry charge. Dragoons were mounted soldiers but fought on foot and the cavalry provided the heavy force. Artillery though was used in the main for siege warfare. Women would also be seen on the battlefield, supplying matches for the muskets, and for ferrying water to the tired and thirsty combatants.

A number of contemporary artefacts were passed around the appreciative audience including a surprisingly heavy cannonball, a musket ball and a cartridge case known as an Apostle because of its twelve compartments. Sally and Alan completed their talk with a film of the Sealed Knot in action, recreating the events of a Civil War engagement.

Our speakers were warmly thanked by Mr. Doug Havard for an informative and engaging lecture.

The last lecture of the 2016-17 season takes place at the Regency Hall on 19 April at 7.30 when David Dando will speak about 'The Seas that launched a Thousand Dreams.' Non members are as ever welcome on the night. The Society will also hope to announce the venues for its trips in May and June and which differ from those described in the programme.