

Otterburn XLIV

The forty fourth conference of The Otterburn Society

November 2025



Incorporating the Inaugural Otterburn Society Ploughing Match

Warbrook House Hotel, Hook, Hampshire

Forward

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the forty fourth annual conference of the Otterburn Society. Each year, as November approaches, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable journey we have shared, one built not merely on professional interest or academic enthusiasm, but on the deep and lasting friendships that have grown with us over nearly half a century. To gather once again, for the forty-fourth consecutive year, is an extraordinary testament to the strength of this community and the spirit that has sustained it since our earliest meetings.

What we celebrate this year is more than a conference; it is a living tradition. Every session, every conversation over coffee, every familiar face in the corridor echoes decades of shared curiosity, lively debate, and mutual encouragement. Many of us have grown older together through these November gatherings, some having attended since the very beginning, others joining along the way and instantly becoming woven into the fabric of our society. The continuity of these relationships is one of our greatest treasures.

I am continually inspired by the passion and generosity our members bring to this event. The breadth of experience represented here, coupled with the warmth of genuine camaraderie, creates an atmosphere unlike any other. It is this blend of intellectual engagement and heartfelt fellowship that makes the Otterburn Society so exceptional, and that keeps us returning, year after year, with eagerness and pride.

As we embark on this 44th conference, I hope you feel as I do: grateful for the past, energized by the present, and excited for all that lies ahead. May this year's gathering be filled with stimulating ideas, meaningful connections, and the joy of reuniting with friends old and new.

Welcome, and thank you for being part of what makes the Otterburn Society truly extraordinary.

Basil Firth, Chair

Conference Itinerary

Friday 28 November 2025

12:15 Hrs Horse Racing

Newbury Racecourse Coral Long Distance Hurdle Day

First race is at 12:15 Hrs. Please be there with sufficient time to select the winner of the first race. RG14 5AW

18:00 Hrs Reception and Supper

Residence of The Treasurer, [REDACTED]

23:00 Hrs Accommodation

Warbrook House Heritage Hotel, The Street, Eversley Hampshire, RG27 0PL

Saturday 29 November 2025

08:30 Hrs Breakfast

Warbrook House Hotel

09:15 Hrs Inaugural Ploughing Match

Ploughing Match Field location to be announced.

12:30 hrs Ploughmen's lunch

Ploughing Match Field

13:30 hrs Presentations Commence

Warbrook House Hotel

18:00 hrs Dinner

Warbrook House Hotel

21:00Hrs Annual general Meeting

Warbrook House Hotel

23:30 Hrs Wiltshire Ham Sandwiches

Sunday 30 November 2025

09:30 Hrs Breakfast

Warbrook House Hotel

10:15 Hrs The Great Otterburn Tractor Tyre Swap Speed Challenge

Storage location for the wee grey Fergie, to be advised

11:30 Hrs Farewells

Members' Presentations

Karl Beattie	"Ladies' [REDACTED] garments - [REDACTED]".
John Beck	"Exploring Malaysia in a Series III Land Rover"
Jeremy Featherstone	"A Reinterpretation of how the Groma was used in Roman Road Surveying"
Basil Firth	"[REDACTED] to [REDACTED] [REDACTED]"
Randall Flack	"Les 24 heures de [REDACTED]"
Andrew Jordan	"Milk Quotas, Not"
Alan Moore	"Gin, Lodges, and Long Hauls: Tales of an Enniskillen Wanderer in a Caravan"
Alastair Scarborough	"Tread Geometry vs. Draft Demand: How Tractor Tire Patterns Really Drive Ploughing Efficiency"
Zoom presentations	TBA

Appendix A

A G E N D A

Annual General Meeting

Venue: Warbrook House Heritage Hotel, Eversley

Date: 30 November 2025

Time: 21:00 Hrs

- 1 Welcome and opening remarks by the Chairman of Otterburn, B Firth FMOS
- 2 Apologies for absence, Treasurer, Alastair Scarborough
- 3 Presentation of the account of income and expenditure for the year ending
November 2024. B Firth
- 4 Presentation of the report of the Editor in Chief.
- 5 Resolutions

The following resolutions will be voted for acceptance by the members.

- 5.1 It is resolved that the accounts and balance sheet are accepted and that no
forfeits are appropriate in respect of these.
- 5.2 It is resolved that the Secretary of the Otterburn Society retains the confidence
of the members
- 6 The Wolfgang Award, Nominations, voting and Presentation
- 7 Otterburn Challenge Cup, Nominations, voting and Presentation
- 8 Election of Secretary to the Otterburn Society.
- 9 Election of Treasurer to the Otterburn Society.
- 10 Election of Chairman to the Otterburn Society.
- 11 Any other business

Appendix B

The Otterburn Society

Annual Report & Accounts.

Year Ending 30 November 2024

Chairman's Report

Dear Gentlemen,

I am pleased to present this Chairman's Report for the year ending November 2025. As we gather for the forty fourth time, it is worth pausing to appreciate the remarkable continuity of friendship that has carried the Society through more than four decades.

What began as an undergraduate conference to discuss departmental design projects has become a tradition marked by lasting connections and a shared sense of tradition. It is something quite special that, after so many years, we continue to come together with the same enthusiasm and familiar camaraderie.

This year was marked by a particularly happy occasion for our society in September: the marriage between Karl and Helen. A number of us were fortunate enough to attend, and it was a real pleasure to share in such an important moment for them both. The day was marked by a gentle sense of heritage and belonging, and it was clear to all present how well-suited they are to one another. On behalf of the Society, I extend warm congratulations to them once again.

This year is also the first year that a Conference of the Otterburn Society is to include a ploughing match. I don't know why somebody hadn't thought of this before, but this is a truly inspirational idea from Mr Scarborough and I look forward to this becoming a regular part of our Society conferences in the future.

As we look ahead, I am confident that the spirit that has kept this Society going, steady friendship, good humour, and an ability to pick up conversations as though no time has passed, will continue to serve us well. My thanks go to all members for their continued support and for helping maintain the character and continuity of the Otterburn Society.

Basil Firth, Chairman, Otterburn

November 2025

Treasurer's Annual Report

Dear Members,

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report for the financial year concluding with Otterburn 43, 2024. I am delighted to confirm that the Society remains in a sound and highly satisfactory financial position.

Financial Performance Overview

As is customary, the vast majority of expenditure relates to our annual conference. These costs encompass logistics, refreshments, and the inevitable expenses that arise when the membership is gathered together in high spirits for a November weekend.

This year, overall conference costs were lower than anticipated, largely due to the regrettable (yet financially convenient) loss of several receipts during the traditional Sunday-morning audit at The Grosvenor Hotel. Certain expenses, specifically those relating to certain evening sandwiches, and the Tank Museum, did not appear in the accounts. As the accounts had already been finalised and published a mere seven days after Otterburn 43, it was not possible to revise them, and the amounts were accordingly written off.

Income and Reserves

The Society's reserves have grown to the enviable total of £12,00 representing an extraordinary 432% increase on the previous year. This reflects strong financial discipline, timely reporting, and the admirable ability of the Society to operate on the very frontier of accounting minimalism.

Subscription income was lower than in previous years due to each member settling his own account directly with the Grosvenor Hotel. While this reduced centralised revenue, it streamlined administration considerably.

Expenditure Breakdown

- Friday Pizza Supper: Delivery, consumption levels, and cost were all precisely in line with long-standing expectations. Pizza continues to be one of the Society's most stable and predictable budget items.
- Soup & Sandwiches: Expenditure rose modestly, due primarily to enthusiastic participation at The Mitre. The lunch featuring excellent sandwiches preceded by generous measures of mulled wine, was universally praised and deemed excellent value.

- Toggies: Costs increased marginally, reflecting ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest standards at Otterburn Conferences.

Additionally, members enjoyed a splendid dinner at the Grosvenor, which was delivered to the usual high standard and priced entirely within the expected range. It was widely agreed that the quality of the food and the warmth of the hospitality represented first-class value for money.

Conclusion

Despite minor challenges relating to misplaced receipts and the occasional enthusiastic expenditure on sandwiches, the Society concludes the year in a relatively strong financial position. Results are considered highly satisfactory, reflecting prudent management and the continued capacity of the membership to enjoy itself without endangering the Society's solvency.

It remains an honour to step aside as Treasurer, and hand over the reins of responsible financial stewardship, and, of course, excellent sandwiches to another.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Firth, Treasurer, Otterburn Society

November 2024

The Otterburn Society

Statement of income and expenditure for the period ending 30 November 2024

	2024
Income	
Members' fees	1250.98
Expenditure	
Cultural visits	122.80
Refreshments	1094.52
Other consumables	20.00
Total Expenditure	1237.32
 Income less expenditure	 13.66

The Otterburn Society
Balance Sheet 30 November 2024

Current assets	
Cash in hand	13.66
Stock	12.00
Current liabilities	
Creditors	13.66
Total Assets less current liabilities	<u>12.00</u>

Notes to the accounts:

1 Current assets

Amount shown as stock includes 18 Toggies, valued at cost.

2 Creditors

The amounts owing to members are shown below.

Loan accounts:

Loans are made free of interest and are repayable on demand.

3 Expenses

The following expenses were incurred during the year

Boscombe Down Aviation	50.8	The Lamb, Hindon	69.05
Salisbury cathedral	72	Soup & Sandwiches	200.65
Rifleman's Table	65.25	Supper	<u>606.77</u>
Grosvenor Arms Hindon	172.8		1237.32

The above financial statements provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the Otterburn Society on 30 November 2024.

Signed by:

B Firth, 30 November 2024

Secretary's Report

Dear Members,

It is my pleasure to again present the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Otterburn Society. As you know, the principal responsibility of the Secretariat is the publication of the *Journal of the Otterburn Society*, traditionally released in June and eagerly awaited by those with the patience, fortitude, and refined literary taste required to enjoy its pages.

I must, however, address the obvious question: *Where was this year's Journal?* While some uncharitable observers may call it "missing," "overlooked," or "not remotely attempted," I prefer to view it as "strategically deferred."

The Treasurer will no doubt confirm that persuading members to submit articles on any subject, even the broadest conceivable subject, remains one of the Society's greatest challenges. History has shown that, with the sole exception of Milk Quotas, there is a near-total reluctance to commit pen to paper. As always, members would have gladly devoured Andy's contribution, for it continues to be the backbone, highlight, and in several years literally the *entirety* of the Journal.

This year, however, a variety of unforeseen circumstances hindered even the process of requesting submissions. Among the obstacles encountered were:

- A scheduling misalignment: June arrived much earlier than anticipated.
- Administrative prudence: It was deemed inadvisable to solicit contributions until the Treasurer could be protected from the emotional toll of receiving only one email.
- Technical challenges: The Secretariat's request list was accidentally filed under "next year's problems."
- Member welfare considerations: It was felt that the membership needed a sabbatical year to recharge their creative energies, gather anecdotes, and misplace receipts.

For these reasons, and in the spirit of maintaining the highest standards of editorial excellence, the Journal was *not* published this year.

Looking Ahead

I am, however, delighted to assure members that a Journal *will* be published next year. To achieve this ambitious and unprecedented target, I respectfully request that members begin preparing their contributions now. Any topic will be welcome,

historical, scientific, autobiographical, culinary, philosophical, or indeed entirely incomprehensible. Even better if it's about milk.

Submissions made early (or at least before June 30th) will be greeted with extraordinary gratitude and near-canonical reverence within the Secretariat.

In closing, I thank all members for their continued enthusiasm, good humour, and tolerance of the secretarial process. I look forward to a vigorous year of correspondence, cajoling, and, I hope, a bumper volume of the *Journal* in June.

Respectfully submitted,

J J R Featherstone, Editor in Chief, The Journal of The Otterburn Society

November 2025

Appendix C

THE OTTERBURN SOCIETY.

52 Rawdon Road,
Horsforth,
Leeds
LS18 5EW

Chairman: C B Firth
Treasurer: J.C. Beck
Secretary: Nick Burd

The Manager
OTTERBURN HALL
Otterburn,
Northumberland.

1st Dec 1983

Dear Kieth,

Firstly, I would like to thank you and your staff for ensuring that the second annual gathering of the OTTERBURN Society was a success, which was whole heartedly enjoyed by all our members.

However,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We hope this year to be able to produce the O.S.N.L. again, which we hope you may be able to contribute to. I think that we would for example be very interested to know more about the activities of the Hall throughout the rest of the year.

Best wishes for Christmas, and I hope my apologies are accepted.

Yours Sincerely,

Boil Firth

J .C.BECK
(Treasurer)

. C.B. FIRTH
(Chairman)



Dola AI





Dola AI