



# The Sealed Knot Society

## DISPLAY DESCRIPTION

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### Cavalry display

#### Sir Arthur Haselrig's Regiment of Horse "The Lobsters"

Safety Notice: This display includes fast moving horses and pistol firing, which may be loud. When we are about to fire you will hear the words 'present, fire' and will see the troopers point their pistols. Do not cross the safety ropes/barriers.

We will enter the arena with an officer accompanied by his trumpeter and a rank of troopers behind. A corporal is positioned on the right-hand side of the rank to help control the line.

Cavalry in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were organised into regiments of "horse". This regiment is Sir Arthur Haselrig's Regiment of Horse and fought during the English Civil War on the side of Parliament.

Haselrig was one of the five members of Parliament that King Charles attempted to arrest in 1642 that led to the Civil War.

Regiments of horse were typically 600 men, divided into troops of about 80.

The flag is called a cornet, which is also the name of the rank of the officer that carried it. Each troop had a different cornet to identify it, usually with the same colour background.

The cornet of this troop is that used by Sir Arthur Haselrig's own troop, known as his "lifeguard". On the cornet is an anchor suspended in clouds with the motto "only in heaven". This refers to securing your faith in heaven.

The trumpeter wears the livery of Sir Arthur Haselrig. His job is to relay the orders of the troop commander using calls that the men are familiar with. A trumpet can be heard more easily than a voice over the noise of the horses and the clanking armour and equipment.

This regiment was known as the lobsters, as they were unusual at the time as being equipped as cuirassiers, in articulated armour. Whilst there were some individual troops of cuirassiers in the English Civil War, the Lobsters were the only regiment fully equipped in three-quarter armour.

The armour includes a close helmet, cuirass (or breast and backplate), pauldrons for the shoulders and upper arms, vambraces for lower arms and tassels for the legs. Long leather

“bucket top” boots protected the lower legs. Some cuirassier helmets had facial features and were called totenkopfs or death’s head.

After the battle of Roundway Down, King Charles joked that had Haselrig been as well supplied as he was fortified, he could have withstood a siege.

Regiments of horse were equipped with a long basket hilted sword, known as mortuary sword, some with two sharpened edges and some with a single sharpened edge, known as a back sword. Some officers preferred a rapier which was even longer.

A pair of pistols were carried in holsters attached to the front of the saddle. They typically had long barrels and either had a wheellock, or a flintlock mechanism. Wheellocks worked by winding the mechanism with a spanner which when released caused sparks from a piece of iron pyrite. Flintlocks became abundant as the English Civil War progressed as they were cheaper to manufacture and maintain. They work by a piece of flint causing sparks when it strikes a piece of metal called a frizzen, that covers the priming pan.

The horses enjoy performing at re-enactment events and have all been trained to become accustomed to the noise and equipment.

It was usual in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to ride in spurs and curb bits. Whilst we try to maintain a level of accuracy, we are mindful of the welfare of the horses and use short, blunt spurs and curb bits that have far less leverage.

The controlled movement of troops of horse was practiced in the 17th century, just as we do it today. A troop that could act as a single body and successfully reform after a charge was far more effective. Many Parliamentarian commanders practiced slower, controlled movements.

At the battle of Edgehill Prince Rupert famously failed to reform his cavalry after a successful charge, giving away the Royalist’s advantage.

Firing pistols against infantry or “foot” as they were called, was done at the trot to maximise its effectiveness, before charging at them with swords. Pistol firing whilst turning as a line is called the caracole and meant the line of fire of the following ranks was not obstructed.

Sparring with swords one on one and as a melee with lots of troopers, was an important way of learning how to control your sword and horse at the same time. It also helped to prepare the horses for battle.

Heavy cavalry such as English Civil War cuirassiers were often used as shock troops, by charging as a body to break the enemy’s formation. I’m sure you’ll agree you might not want to stand your ground in the face of a charging troop of cuirassiers!

The Lobsters present themselves for review and the trumpeter blows a fanfare to thank you for attending our display.