

A Biographer, Pimm's, and Winnie-the-Pooh: What has Baltimore been up to in 2024?

By: Zachary J. Dixon

The Saint George's Society of Baltimore kicked off 2024 with its third annual Prince of Wales brunch. The event was held at the beautiful Mount Vernon Club of Baltimore, where, after cocktails and brunch, journalist and biographer Sally Bedell Smith presented her 2017 book *Prince Charles: The Passions and Paradoxes of an Improbable Life* to the membership. Despite having to reschedule the event unexpectedly, it sold out twice! The 80 attendee turnout demonstrates the Baltimore Society's strong and engaged membership, the excitement and intrigue of the venue, and the interest in the day's speaker and topic.

In April, the chapter installed eleven new members and had numerous special guests, including Lt. Col. Steven Brooks, MBE, who, drawing from the story of Private John Moyses during the Second Opium War, his own experiences in the Princess of Wales Regiment, and Winnie-the-Pooh, gave a sincere and touching speech about truth and friendship and the special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States. Immediate Past President Daniel B. Fisher passed on the Saint George's



Members with speaker Sally Bedell Smith.



11 new members are installed at the Annual Dinner at the Maryland Club.

Society President's collarette to President Zachary J. Dixon. Thank you, Daniel, for serving your term with merit and dedication. The event concluded the evening with a ceremonial passing of the Scotch-filled President's Cup between the 12 attending past presidents.

The Annual

Dinner was followed by a well-attended Society-sponsored Evensong at Grace & Saint Peter's Episcopal Church the following evening, a truly ethereal experience. Several newly installed members played a significant role in the service, underscoring their immediate integration into our Society's activities. Father Christopher Pyles led the service, Brian McCarthy served as altar

server, Michael McCormick served as usher, and Dr. Jordan Prescott filled the nave with the music of beautiful hymns like Sir Hubert Parry's "I Was Glad" on the organ and the voices of a directed choir. President Zachary J. Dixon read the second lesson during the service, a moment that underscored our Society's deep-rooted traditions and values. He then toasted St. George at the reception afterward, a symbol of our shared heritage and commitment to our Society's mission.



Maintaining the Special Relationship--Several board members bid a fond farewell to Commander Derek Powles and gave a warm welcome to Commander Lyndsey Netherwood, our British Embassy and Royal Navy friends, while enjoying a sunny morning coffee overlooking the Chesapeake Bay from the Gibson Island Club.



On an unclouded July Sunday afternoon, members, their families, and prospectives traveled to Monkton's rolling countryside for the annual St. George's Polo Cup at the Maryland Polo Club. Under a forest-shaded sideline, they gathered and filled their cups with Pimm's, their stomachs with heavy hors d'oeuvres, their ears with conversation, and their eyes with spectacle. Sterling candelabras, silver platters, floral arrangements, oriental rugs, the colorful flags of the United Kingdom, guests wearing seersucker, madras, and linen, and nearly 15 MGs, Jags, and Triumphs brought by the MG's of Baltimore, Ltd. Car Club enhanced the scene. The opening ceremony paraded carriages up and down the field led by My Lady's Manor Driving Club and followed by President Zachary J. Dixon in an MG TD and special British Army guest Lt. Col. Nick Falinski in a Jaguar E-Type. The participants met the color guard at the field's center

for salutes and anthems, and then the match kicked off. After six chukkas of intense equine sport, everyone felt good. The day concluded with a ceremonial drinking of champagne from a large sterling punch bowl, speeches, and an awards ceremony led by event chairman J. Scott Watkins.

“It was a marvellous time.”
-Capt. John A. Rodgaard, USN, Ret.



Top: The presentation of awards. Bottom Left: Members enjoying the event. Bottom Right: Members cheese it up.



The annual Trafalgar Night Dinner took place at the Maryland Club in October. Candlelight illuminated the Club's mahogany, quartered oak, and Tennessee marble features, which were decorated with colorful signal flags spelling out the witty phrase 'drink up,' Royal Navy White Ensign flags, an antique handcrafted



wooden replica of the HMS Victory, and a chocolate ship of the line. Fifty-two members and ten prospectives, all dressed in black tie, began the evening with cocktails. A traditional mess dinner succeeded this, but not before the Club's chef paraded out the beef, and President Zachary J. Dixon declared it "A Triumph" fit for consumption. Dinner was served in a large horseshoe-style banquet seating arrangement. Special guests included Commander Lyndsey Netherwood, Assistant Royal Navy Attache, and Sub-Lieutenant Ben Fernando, DPhil, RNR. Event chairman, Captain James Hanna, USN Retired, ran through the evening's structure; Commander Netherwood gave a speech, toasts to the President of the United States, the King, and the Immortal Memory of Lord Nelson were given, national anthems were sung, and patriotic hymns like Rule Britannia, Heart of Oak, and Land of Hope and Glory were led by choraleists. The evening ended with the chocolate ship of the line's deconstruction, port consumption, and cigar drawing.

Then, on a quiet, clouded, and crisp autumn morning, where fallen leaves peppered the dormant sward, and a lonely Union Jack flag stood proudly flapping in the breeze, members gathered at the foot of a hill in Lorraine Park Cemetery and Mausoleum to mark seven British Commonwealth War Graves and conduct Remembrance Sunday services. Among the group of Society members who attended, Harry T. Aycok IV, BEM, Daniel B. Fisher, Zachary J. Dixon, and LCDR Ralph D. Day, USN Retired, had active roles in the ceremony. Readings were read, the Exhortation was spoken, Last Post was sounded



while the two minutes of silence was observed, Reveille was played, a wreath was laid, and the Kohima Epitaph was recited. A small party then traveled into the Mount Vernon neighborhood to enjoy brunch at the Engineers Club.

The Society wrapped up 2024 with it's first holiday happy hour at the L'Hirondelle Club of Ruxton. As a fire crackled in the library, attendees enjoyed a private bar, cocktails, charcuterie and each other's company. Fourteen members and three prospectives attended the event which we hope to replicate once a quarter as a smaller recruiting event.



This year, the Foundation is set to diversify and increase its giving impact. British families should feel supported when loved ones serve their country. No one should be left hungry. People should be able to look at beautifully maintained architecture, art, and landscapes preserved from industrialization for their mental health, pride, and

inspiration. For all these reasons, the Royal British Legion, the Trussell Trust, and the Royal Oak Foundation were selected as our Foundation's 2024 recipients. This diverse and impactful giving is a testament to our commitment to making a difference in the community. If you wish to show your support, please make a (tax-deductible) donation to the St. George's Society of Baltimore Foundation Inc., and your gift will be used to support these worthwhile causes. Then please mail your contribution to P.O. Box 147 Riderwood, MD 21139-0147

2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **February 2:** Prince of Wales Brunch w/Guest speaker and new member Michael F. Bishop @ Engineers Club
 - **February 16:** Prince of Wales Brunch **SNOW DATE**
- **April 12:** Annual Dinner @ The Maryland Club
- **May 4:** Evensong @ Grace & St. Peters Episcopal Church
- **June/July TBD:** St. George's Polo Cup @ The Maryland Polo Club
- **October 16:** Trafalgar Night Dinner @ The Maryland Club
- **November 9:** Remembrance Day Services TBD