

# 200th ANNIVERSARY

of The Duchess of Richmond's Ball

Lecture

by Dr. Andrew Roberts



In aid of  
The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire's  
Charitable Fund

At the New Lecture Theatre  
Oxford Brookes University  
on 15 June 2015 at 6.30pm

## The Duchess of Richmond's Ball

On 15 June 1815 the Duchess of Richmond held the most famous ball in history in a coach house in Rue de la Blanchisserie in Brussels.

When asked by the Duchess whether he would permit her to have a ball, Wellington replied at his most charming: "Duchess, you may give your ball with the greatest safety, without fear of interruption."



*Prince Blücher in Oxford June 1814.  
Sketch by General Birch Reynardson*

In fact, Wellington's prediction of a drama free evening was misplaced. During the ball the Prince of Orange received a message that Bonaparte had crossed the frontier at Charleroi, much earlier than expected, and was himself heading for Quatre Bras.

The Ball soon became a hive of army activity with orders being given to all the officers to get to their positions by 3 a.m, and much anxiety amongst the ladies as they bade farewell to their loved ones. Even Wellington left the ball unfashionably early saying to the Duke of Richmond: "Napoleon has humbugged me, by God; he has gained twenty-four hours' march on me". The following day the Prussian forces under Marshal

Blücher were defeated at the battle of Ligny. The English retreated from Quatre Bras to the site at Waterloo which, remarkably, Wellington had inspected a year earlier. Fortunately, Napoleon's forces were unable to split the Prussians from the English forces, and the scene was set for the famous battle at Waterloo on Sunday, 18th June 1815.

## Andrew Roberts



Dr Andrew Roberts, who was born in 1963, took a first class honours degree in Modern History at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, from where he is an honorary senior scholar and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). He has written or edited twelve books, and appears regularly on radio and television around the world. Based in London, he is an accomplished public speaker, and has recently lectured at Yale, Princeton and Stanford Universities and at the US Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

His most recent book, *Napoleon the Great*, won the Prix du Jury des Grands Prix de la Fondation Napoléon 2014.

*"He is a rhetorical draught of champagne, entertaining, enlightening, elevating, and even electrifying".*

**Roger Kimball, Co-Editor of The New Criterion**

*"Andrew Roberts is compelling and passionate on stage. He's provocative, entertaining and challengingly revisionist".*

**Peter Florence, Chairman of Hay Literary Festival**

*"Andrew infects audiences with a passion for his topic and they leave feeling both educated and entertained".*

**James Riley, CFO of Jardine Matheson, Hong Kong**

## **The Evening's Entertainment**

We are enormously privileged to have Andrew Roberts speaking to us on the Battle of Waterloo on the two hundredth anniversary of the Duchess of Richmond's Ball.

Andrew is recognised as the greatest expert on the subject and has written extensively on the period. *Napoleon the Great* has received superb reviews.

Andrew will speak no doubt in fascinating detail about one of the most dramatic battles in history. The BBC has retained him to present a three part television series on BBC 2 in May and a five part series on Radio 4 in June, and we are lucky enough to have him "live" for the evening.

You will then have an opportunity to have a drink in the state of the art Abercrombie Glass Tank at Brookes University.

We have booked out the Brookes Restaurant and they will be preparing dinner for those who would like to carry on the evening there. Please indicate if you would like to do so and details will then be sent to you.

**Please reply by filling in the form on the reverse and either send it to the Secretary, HSOCF, Adwell House, Thame, Oxon OX9 7DQ or email it to [highsheriffoxon@outlook.com](mailto:highsheriffoxon@outlook.com).**

## The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire's Charitable Fund

This year's High Sheriff, Tom Birch Reynardson, has set up a fund to be used by him and future High Sheriffs of Oxfordshire for charitable purposes.

Money raised by the High Sheriff's lecture will be paid into this fund and will go towards Tom's project for his Shrieval Year, "Getting Court". This project is a link between the Crown Court in Oxford and the schools, getting children into the Court to see and hear the sometimes harsh realities of the criminal justice system being played out.

The Court visit will also provide an insight into how the Courts work, the way in which the various elements work together to achieve the best outcomes for society, and the employment possibilities within the Court system as barristers, solicitors, Court clerks, ushers, probation officers, police, etc.

In addition, funds raised will go towards specific projects in Oxfordshire aimed at preventing youth crime.

The fund is held and managed by the Oxfordshire Community Foundation.



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HSOCF, Adwell House, Thame, Oxon OX9 7DQ.**

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Please reserve me ..... places for dinner at Brookes Restaurant and send me further details.

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