THE DURAND GROUP
[For Historical Research Into Subterranean Military Features]

CONSTITUTION
(Revise No 13 – February 2026)

1. NAME

The name of the Association is **The Durand Group (For Historical Research into Subterranean Military Features)** ("the Group").

2. ETHOS

The Durand Group is a fraternal association of individuals who have voluntarily undertaken to work together to further research and investigation into military related subterranean features[1]. The central ethos is derived from that of the Tunnellers of the First World War:- mutual trust, personal compatibility and confidence in the competence, capability, resolution and mutual support of all Members.

3. OBJECTS

a. The objects of the Group shall be to:-

(1) Further the knowledge, through historical research, of all aspects of military tunnelling and mining, underground military works and related subsurface features and, where appropriate, other historic underground systems.

(2) Undertake on-site investigations of subterranean features accessing where practical, and recording.

(3) Develop surface and underground working methods and techniques for the location, surveying and recording of underground features.

(4) Facilitate protection of historical features and promote good archaeological practice, ensuring that artefacts found in the course of investigations are systematically recorded and, where recovery is appropriate, that they are suitably protected and preserved.

(5) Provide expertise and develop safety techniques appropriate to the special hazards relating to exploration and investigation of subterranean features, including the development of methods for making safe, or disposing of, bulk explosive charges placed and abandoned underground.

(6) When required provide advice to others engaged in similar work and in the event of misadventures assist if needed with rescue or recovery operations.

(7) Disseminate research information and co-operate with other bodies with similar aims.

(8) Do such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

[1] For the purposes of this Constitution the terms subterranean or subsurface or underground features should be taken as primarily meaning man-made tunnels, subways, chambers, dugouts, bunkers or caverns constructed for, or adapted to, military use, but not necessarily excluding historic features of this nature such as caves, labyrinths, refuges, aqueducts, tomb systems or underground dwellings.

b. In seeking to achieve its objects (and in particular when undertaking on-site investigations) the Group will have special regard to the commemorative and memorial nature of sites and the protection of historical archaeological features.

4. MEMBERSHIP

a. There shall be four categories of membership of the Group:-

(1) Honorary Members.

(2) Full Members.

(3) Associates.

(4) Emeritus Members.

b. **Honorary Members**

(1) Honorary Membership will normally be accorded to persons who the Members consider it appropriate to 'honour', or persons who have a close affiliation to the Group or have given especial support but who are not in a position to participate closely with Group activities

(2) Any Full Member may propose to the Committee an appointment to Honorary Membership. Subject to the agreement of a majority of the Committee the proposal shall then be put to the AGM, or in the event that there will be a lapse of six months or more until the next AGM, by mail[2] to all Full Members. Approval will be subject to the agreement of at least sixty percent of the Full Membership.

(3) Honorary Membership will be reviewed at every AGM.

(4) Honorary Members will be eligible to participate at all Group occasions, but will not be entitled to a vote.

(5) Honorary Members will be kept informed of major Group events; provided with minutes of AGMs; advised of publications and other matters of particular interest; but will not be 'on distribution' for routine Group matters.

(6) Honorary Members will not be required to remit an annual subscription, but where they participate with a site project may be invited to make a contribution on the same basis as Associates. Provision of insurance cover to be as specified for Guest participants in the Administrative Protocols.

c. Full Members.

(1) Full Members shall be persons who are either 'Founding Members[3] or persons who have been elected to become Full Members in accordance with the procedures described immediately below. In either case acceptance of Full Membership comprises a de facto commitment to uphold the Constitution and ethos of the Group and to abide by its rules and protocols.

(2) Full Members must be over the age of 18 years.

(3) The number of Full Members shall not exceed forty.

(4) Full Members will be required to remit an annual subscription due in January each year, at a rate to be set at each AGM.

[2] Throughout this document the term 'mail' shall include e-mail unless otherwise stated.

[3] A Founding Member is any person who participated in a site investigation and a Durand Group project between (and including) the Broadmarsh Project in October 1997 and the end of October 1998.

d. Election to Full Membership.

(1) To be eligible for election to Full Membership a person must acknowledge or have shown their commitment to uphold the Constitution and ethos of the Group and to abide by its rules and protocols.

(2) Normally, to be eligible, a person will also be required to participate on several site projects as an Associate, and to have gained the confidence of Group Members, demonstrating that in situations of high risk they may be trusted, and have shown themselves to be comfortably compatible working with, and relating to, other Group Members.

(3) Exceptionally, a person who can bring to the Group a specialist skill or expertise that will contribute significantly to the Group objectives outside of site project activity, may be put forward for Full Membership without a prior period as an Associate, provided it is considered that they will be comfortably compatible working and relating to other Group Members.

(4) A candidate for Full Membership must be proposed by at least one Full Member and seconded by at least two other Full Members. The proposal must be submitted to the Secretary for preliminary review by the Committee and then be put to all Full Members at least two weeks in advance of an AGM with any observations that the Committee may have. Should 15% or more of the Membership object the proposal shall be withdrawn. It will otherwise be put to the AGM for endorsement by at least 75% of the Members attending. Exceptionally the Chairman may 'fast track' a proposal by calling for a postal[4] vote of all Members and the proposal approved if 75% vote in favour.

e. ASSOCIATES

(1) Associates shall be persons who have expressed a positive interest in sustained participation with the Group on projects, or on research, or other forms of support (for example: IT, Web, publications, sponsorship, promotion etc).

(2) Proposals for appointment to Associate Membership are to be to the Group Secretary and subject to subsequent ratification by the Committee or at an AGM.

(3) The Secretary is to maintain a listing of Associates, and ensure that they are advised of activities and events, and informed of publications and other material relating to the Group. They are to be provided with a copy of the minutes of the AGM, but not minutes of Committee meetings.

(4) Associates will have priority over 'guests' for participation in projects and social events, and will be entitled accordingly, subject only to any particular constraints on numbers.

(5) Associates will not be entitled to participate in 'open' Committee meetings nor AGMs unless invited to do so by the Secretary, but may attend any social events that follow.

(6) Associates will not be required to make an annual subscription to the Group, but when they participate in site project work will be required to make a per diem contribution not exceeding 5% of the annual subscription.

[4] E-mails may be construed as 'postal'.

(7) An Associate who has either not participated in any Group activity or otherwise contributed within a twelve month period, will automatically be removed from the list of Associates. The individual may subsequently re-apply to the Secretary for return to the listing if they are in a position to fulfil the original expectations.

f. EMERITUS MEMBERS.

(1) Full Members who have effectively retired from activity with the Group but who wish to remain in contact, may opt to become Emeritus Members.

(2) Emeritus Members shall be required to pay an annual subscription at half the rate of Full Members.

(3) They will be entitled to participate in Group social activities on the same basis as Full Members and to attend AGMs but without a vote. Should they exceptionally choose to participate in a Group project they may do so but would be liable to make a contribution to the project on the same basis as Associates (that is to make a per diem contribution not exceeding 5% of the annual subscription). Provision of insurance cover to be as specified for Guest participants in the Administrative Protocols.

(4) They will be entitled to receive the minutes of AGMs and any Special General Meetings; any Group newsletters or reports or such media material (e.g. CDs or DVDs) as are provided to Full Members; and to be kept informed on the same basis as Full Members of any publicity or other media matters relating to the Group. Likewise they may have access to the Durand Group DROPBOX..

(5) Emeritus Members may also communicate directly with the Chairman of the Group on matters that they consider of consequence to Group activities or policy.

g. GUESTS and OTHER PARTICIPANTS

(1) Subject to the agreement of the designated Project Manager, or Member otherwise responsible for an activity, persons who are not Members or Associates may be invited to participate with the Group on projects, or in other Group activities. In approving the participation the responsible Member should, where it seems appropriate, consult with other Members who will be involved.

(2) At the discretion of the Project Manager, Guests and other Participants may be required to make a per diem contribution to Group funds on the same basis as Associates.

(3) Other rules concerning Guests or other participants are contained in the Protocols.

5. RESIGNATION

a. A Member shall cease to be a Member if he or she gives written notice of resignation to the Secretary.

b. Failure to pay the annual subscription after three reminders shall be deemed to be a resignation and the Member shall be so notified by the Committee in writing.

6. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

a. The Committee may terminate the membership of any individual when, in their opinion, it would not be in the interests of the Group for the individual to remain a Member. The Member is to be informed of the reasons, and may require that these be given in writing.

b. Should the Member want to dispute the decision, or refute the reasons given, he or she shall be given the opportunity to make representation before a meeting of not less than four Committee Members. If withdrawal of membership is upheld by a majority of the Committee Members present the Member may appeal to a General meeting, in which case he or she must notify all Full Members in writing of the appeal at least seven days in advance. Pending appeal, membership will be held in abeyance.

7. HONORARY OFFICERS

a. The Honorary Officers of the Group shall be the **Chairman**, the **Treasurer,** and the **Secretary**. All must be Full Members of the Group.

b. The Officers shall be proposed, seconded and elected at the Annual General Meeting and shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting when they shall retire but, if they so wish, may submit themselves for re-election. Any vacancy occurring between AGMs may be filled through appointment by the Committee.

c. The Annual General Meeting, if it thinks fit, may elect a President and Vice-Presidents. A President or Vice-President need not be a Member of the Group and on election shall, *ex officio*, be an Honorary Member of the Group.

8. COMMITTEE

a. The Committee shall consist of the Honorary Officers and not less than two nor more than five other Full Members

b. The Committee Members shall be proposed, seconded and elected at the Annual General Meeting each year and shall remain in office until re-election or replacement at the next Annual General Meeting. Any vacancy occurring between AGMs may be filled through appointment by the Committee.

c. Committee meetings should be held at least twice in each year and notified by the Secretary to all Full Members as much in advance as practicable. The quorum of a meeting shall exist when there are at least four Committee Members present, one of whom is either the Chairman or the Secretary . Decisions of the Committee shall be made by a simple majority and in the event of equality of votes the Chairman (or the acting Chairman of that meeting) shall have an additional casting vote. The Secretary is responsible for arranging that minutes of the meeting be taken and circulated to all Full Members.

d. In addition to the elected Members the Committee may co-opt up to three further Full Members or Associates who shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting. Co-opted Members shall be entitled to vote at the meetings of the Committee.

e. Any Full Member of the Group, may attend a Committee meeting, and participate in discussions, but will not be entitled to cast a vote, unless they are a Member of the Committee.

f. The Committee may invite any other person to attend the Committee meeting but such persons will not be entitled to cast a vote.

g. In the event that the Hon Secretary is unable to attend a Committee meeting the Chairman may appoint another Member of the Committee to assume the Secretaries role.

9. EXECUTIVE CONTROL

a. The Group shall be managed and administered by the Committee.

b. The Committee may from time to time appoint from among their number such sub-committees as they may consider necessary and may delegate to them such of the powers and duties of the Committee as the Committee may determine. All sub-committees shall promptly report their proceedings to the Committee and shall conduct their business in accordance with the directions of the Committee.

c. The Committee shall have power to make, repeal and amend such rules and protocols as they may from time to time consider necessary for the conduct of Group business. Any such changes must be notified in the Minutes of the meeting and subsequently ratified at an AGM.

d. The Members of the Committee will be entitled to repayment of reasonable expenses incurred by them in the course of managing Group affairs. Any such claims must be agreed by the Secretary or the Treasurer and one other Committee Member.

10. SUBORDINATE SUPPORTING ASSOCIATIONS

a. The Group may establish and maintain subordinate supporting associations or other legal entities in jurisdictions outside the United Kingdom where this is considered desirable to facilitate the Group's activities.

b. Any such association or entity shall operate solely in support of the Group's objectives, shall have no independent purpose, and shall remain subordinate to the authority of the Group, its Constitution, and its Annual General Meeting.

c. The establishment and oversight of any such subordinate association or entity shall be subject to approval by the Group in General Meeting and administered under such arrangements as the Group or the Committee may determine.

11. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a. An Annual General Meeting of the Group shall be held each year to transact the following business :-

(1) to receive the Secretary's report on Membership and consider any proposals for new Members and other changes to membership.

(2) to approve the minutes of the previous AGM and consider progress on actions required.

(3) to receive reports on Group activities from the Chairman, and other Officers and Members of the Group.

(4) to receive and consider the accounts of the Group for the previous year and the Auditor's report on the accounts and the Treasurer's report as to the financial position of the Group.

(5) to remove and elect the Auditor or confirm that he or she remain in office.

(6) to elect the Honorary Officers and other Members of the Committee.

(7) to consider and approve the subscription for the forthcoming year.

(8) to schedule projects and other activities.

(9) to decide on any resolution which may be duly submitted in accordance with paragraph 11d.

(10) to consider and transact any other business.

b. Nominations for election of Members to any office or for membership of the Committee should be made in writing by the Proposer and Seconder to the Secretary not less than seven days before the Annual General Meeting; excepting that those who were holding posts immediately prior to the AGM may submit themselves for re-election at the meeting.

c. Office holders who wish to retire from their posts should notify the Secretary at least fourteen days in advance, this so that Members may be notified of the intended vacancy with sufficient time to consider and nominate a replacement.

d. Notice of any resolution proposed to be moved at the Annual General Meeting shall be given in writing to the Secretary not less than seven days before the meeting.

e. In the event that the Hon Secretary is unable to attend the AGM he is to arrange for another Full Member to fulfil his role and brief that Member accordingly.

12. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

A Special General Meeting may be requisitioned at any time by the Committee or by a requisition to the Secretary by not less than one third of the Membership. The SGM should be held as soon as practicable, and in any event within forty days of receipt (in writing) by the Secretary of the requisition. The reasons for the SGM must be notified to all Full Members shortly following the requisition and at least fourteen days ahead of the meeting.

13 . PROCEDURE AT THE ANNUAL AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

a. The Secretary shall send to each Full Member, at his last known address[5], written notice of the date of the General Meeting together with the resolutions to be proposed at least seven days before the meeting.

b. The quorum for the Annual and Special General Meetings shall be ten Full Members, or one third of the Full Membership (whichever is the greater), of whom at least two must be Honorary Officers including either the Chairman or the Secretary. It shall also be customary to feature a Great War mining artefact, but omission shall not be cause to adjourn the meeting.

c. The Chairman, or in his absence one of the Honorary officers, shall take the chair. Each Full Member present shall have one vote and resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority. In the event of an equality of votes the Chairman shall have a casting or additional vote.

d. Minutes of the meeting are to be taken by a person nominated by the Secretary. The draft minutes are to be submitted by the Secretary for approval by the Chairman, or in the event of the Chairman's absence from the Meeting to another Committee Member who was present, and following any required amendments, to all Members and Associates as soon as practicable.

[5] 'Address' includes e-mail address. It is incumbent on Members to advise the secretary if they are unable to receive through e-mails.

e. The Chairman of the meeting may at his discretion direct that an issue of particular contention is put to a postal ballot of all Full Members. All replies received within twenty one days of dispatch of the papers objectively setting out the issue shall count in the ballot.

14. ALTERATION OF THE RULES

The rules set out in this Constitution may be altered by resolution at an Annual or Special Meeting provided that the resolution was notified to all Members at least two weeks before the meeting. Unless objections to the alteration are registered by mail before the meeting by Members who are unable to attend, the alterations may be carried by a majority of at least 75% of Full Members present at the General Meeting. Where objections by those unable to attend put the approval in doubt then the issue is to be put to ballot of all Members by mail.

15. FINANCE

a. All monies payable to the Group shall be received by the Treasurer and deposited in a bank account in the name of the Group. The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that any balance in excess of that likely to be required for immediate use be placed in an instant or short notice deposit account to earn interest.

b. Payments by the Treasurer in excess of £500 must have the approval of at least two other Committee Members, one of whom must be an Honorary Officer.

c. The income and property of the Group shall be applied only in furtherance of the objects of the Group and no part thereof shall be paid by way of bonus, dividend or profit to any Members of the Group save as set out in Paragraph 15d.

d. The Committee shall have power to authorise the payment of expenses to any Officer or Member of the Group and to any other person or persons for services rendered to the Group.

e. The financial transactions of the Group shall be recorded by the Treasurer in a form allowing for accountability and audit

f. An Auditor (who may be a Member of the Group) shall be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting to audit the accounts and books of the Group.

g. In the event that the cash assets of the Group exceed £20,000 the Committee shall appoint an advisor (not necessarily a Member) to advise on appropriate investment. The advisor will be required to report to the AGM.

16. BORROWING

a. The Committee, at their own discretion, may borrow money on behalf of the Group and for the purposes of the Group or, with the sanction of a General Meeting, for any other expenditure, providing such borrowing does not exceed the realisable assets of the Group.

b. The Committee shall have no power to pledge the personal liability of any Member of the Group for the repayment of any sums so borrowed.

17. ASSETS

Assets, other than the financial assets managed by the Treasurer, are to be managed and maintained by one or more Members appointed by the Committee or at the AGM. They are to be periodically checked at intervals not exceeding one year, and apart from those deemed expendable through wear and tear, to be evaluated.

18. DISSOLUTION

a. A resolution to dissolve the Group shall only be proposed for a Special General Meeting held for this purpose and for which proxy or postal votes shall be eligible. It may only be carried by a majority of at least three quarters of the Full Membership, including proxy and postal votes.

b. The dissolution shall take effect from the date of the resolution and the Members of the Committee shall be responsible for the winding-up of the assets and liabilities of the Group.

c. The Committee, taking account of the views of the Members, will decide by simple majority of those present on the disposal of any property and funds remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Group.

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