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ALL ABOUT

HISTORY



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YAGA?**

**ANCIENT
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and tragic bravery of those who tried to save all



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ISSUE 159

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SCAN TO GET
OUR NEW-LOOK
NEWSLETTERS



Welcome

What is it about RMS Titanic that makes it so compelling over 100 years after its tragic sinking? I've been thinking on this question a fair amount, as you might expect, having selected it as our cover feature this issue. The human tragedy factor is clearly the primary focus; empathy for the victims, marvelling at those who put their lives on the line for others. We're also drawn to such events for less flattering reasons. A 'thank goodness that's not me' factor, let's say. And then there's the 'unsinkable ship' element and how we are drawn to stories of hubris that end in failure. Titanic is a living allegory. It's hard to argue against the power of that.

So how do we add to that? First, by getting historian Kevin Brown, author of *Titanic: Ship of Lost Illusions*, to be our guide, and then to dig

less into the events of the tragedy itself and more into the decisions that preceded it. Was Titanic always doomed? Was there a fatal flaw?

Also this issue, we explore royal scandals that threatened thrones, learn about America's first serial killer, investigate Baba Yaga and delve into ancient sports, to name-check a few pieces. So, get reading. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor



Titanic was a symbol of its era, for good and for ill

Find our social media channels and more at linktr.ee/AllAboutHistory

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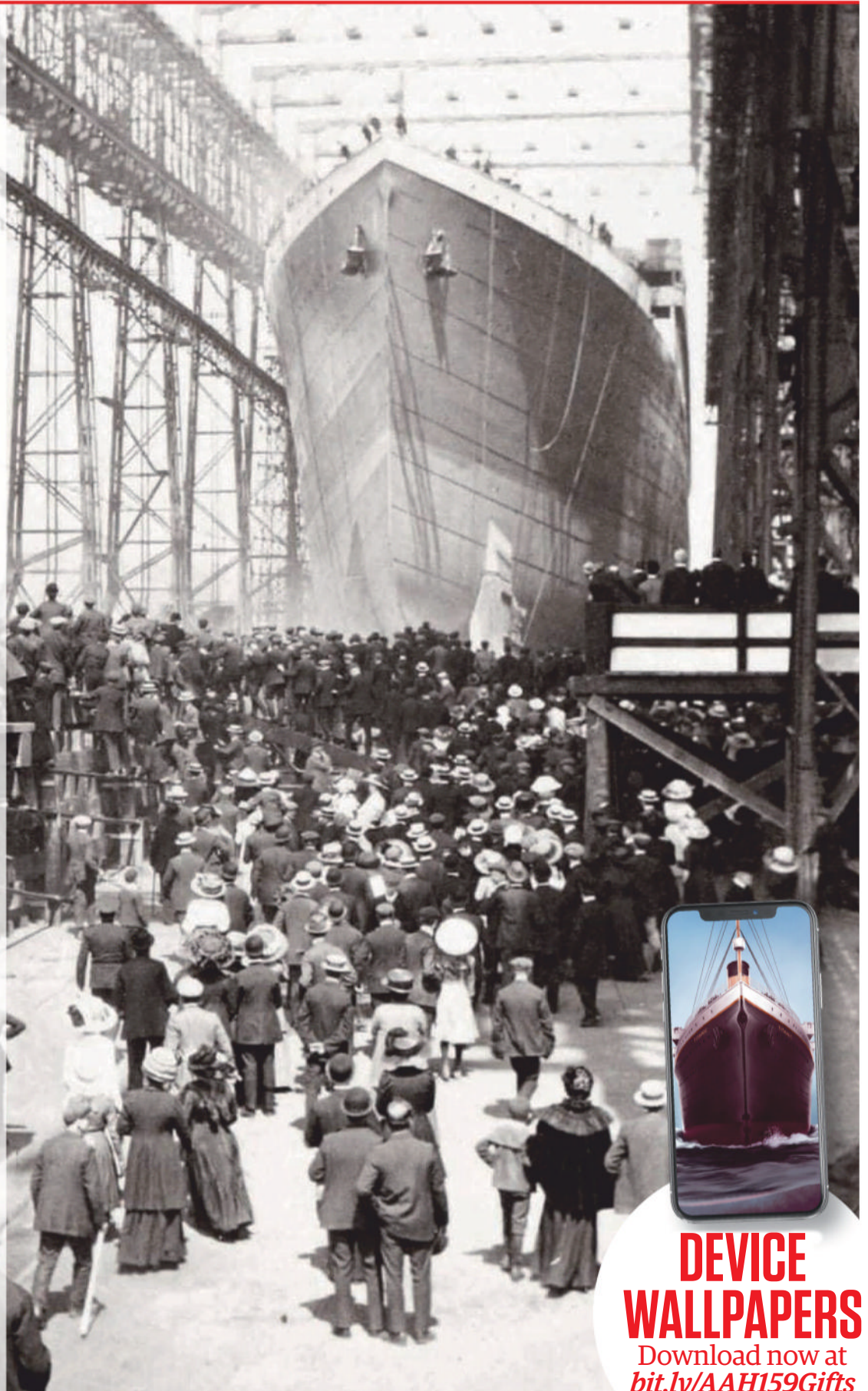
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Who is this witch who
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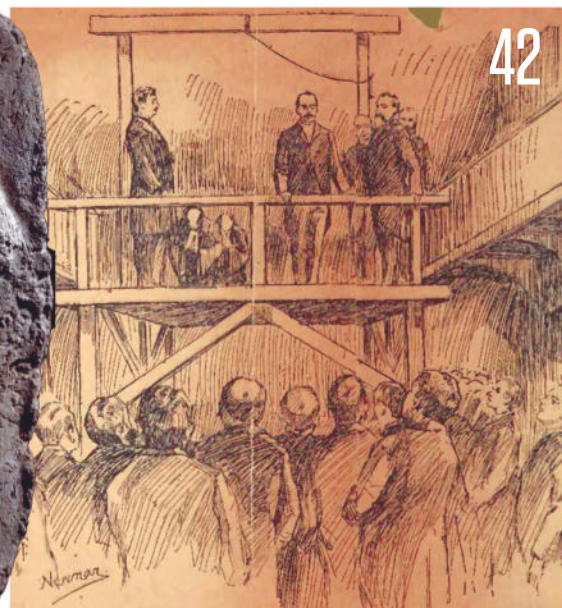
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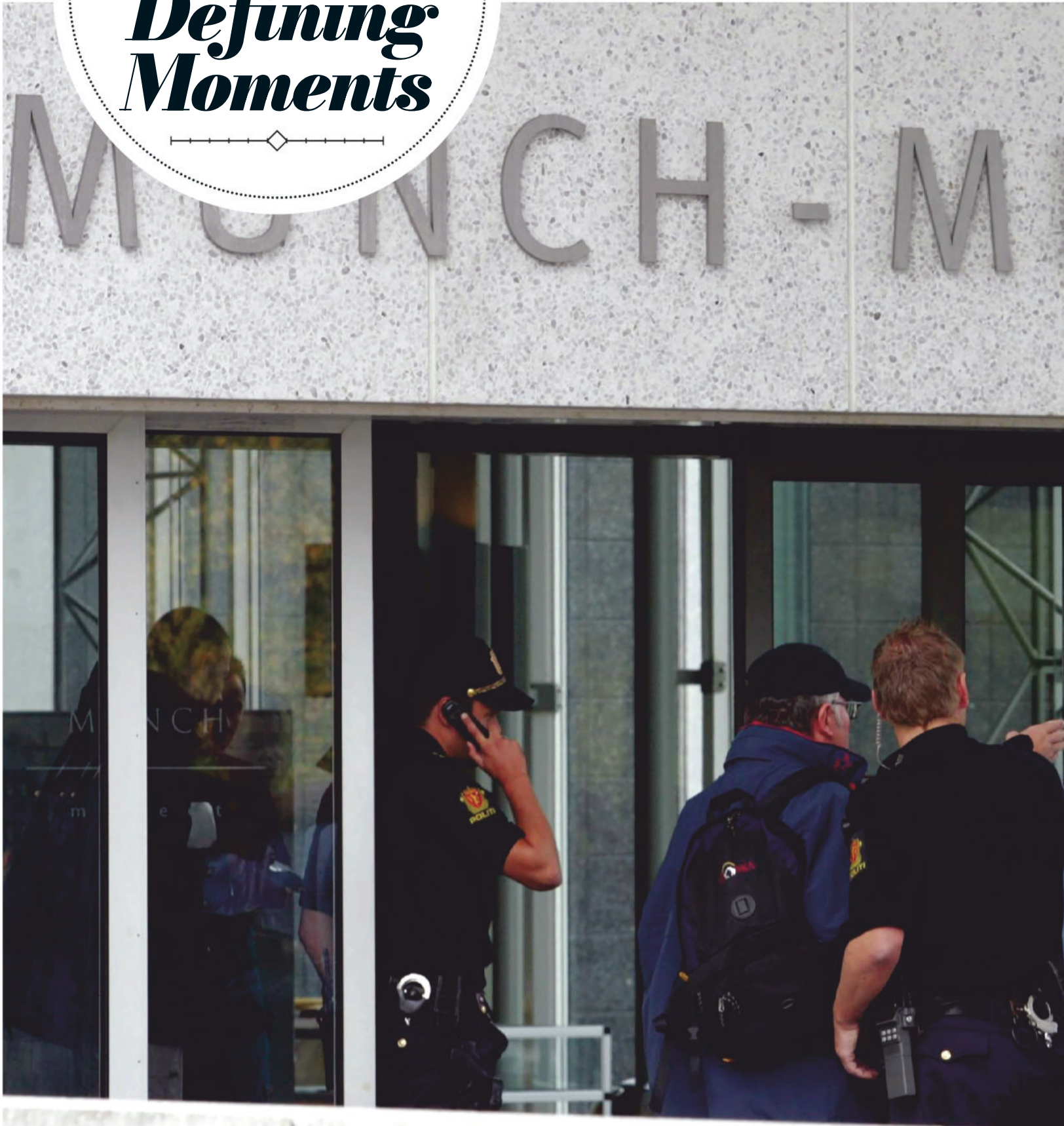
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Defining Moments





22 August 2004

MUNCH MUSEUM ROBBERY

Two paintings by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch, *The Scream* and *Madonna*, were stolen from the Munch Museum in Oslo during the middle of the day. The heist was carried out by two armed robbers, who tore the works off the wall. As they exited the museum, no alarms were set off. In 2005 six men were charged for their part in the audacious robbery, and the paintings were recovered a year later. Luckily, the artworks had only suffered minimal damage and were returned to the museum.

26 August 1978

JOHN PAUL I ELECTED AS POPE

Following the death of Pope Paul VI, a conclave was held at the Vatican to choose the next pontiff. After just two days of voting, Italian cardinal Albino Luciani was elected pope despite the fact he had expressed his wish not to be chosen. He picked the papal name John Paul in honour of his two predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI. However, the new pope's tenure was extremely short: he died suddenly just 33 days after his election.

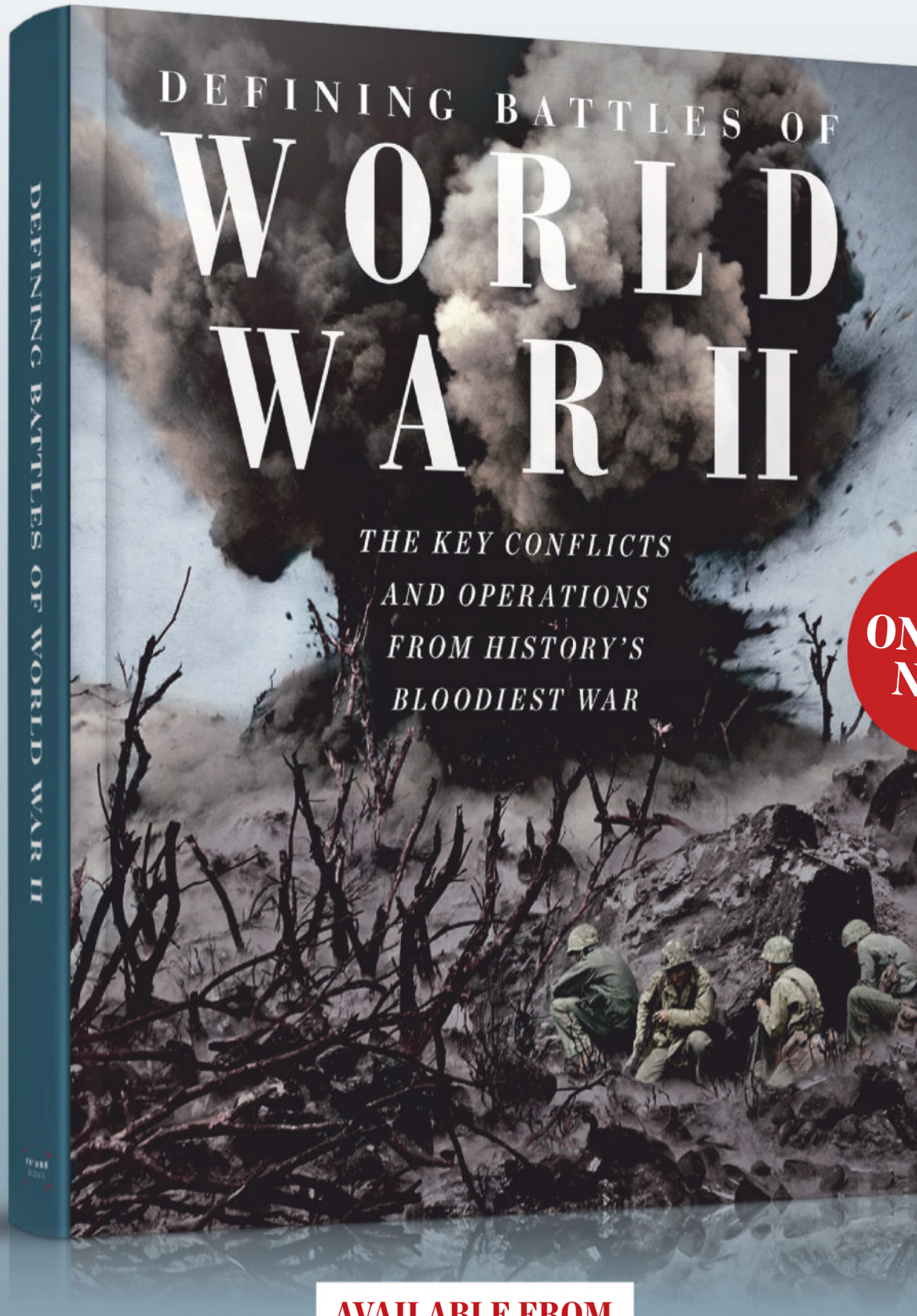




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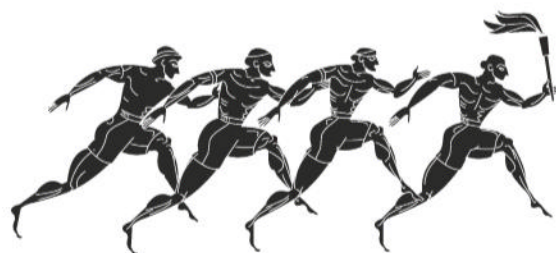
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SCAN ME



ALL ABOUT ANCIENT SPORTS



From Mesoamerica to Japan, we explore the sporting traditions of nations across antiquity



**INSIDE
CIRCUS MAXIMUS**



**ANATOMY OF A
HOPLITODROMOS RUNNER**



**ANCIENT
ATHLETES**



**LOST
ANCIENT SPORTS**

Written by Jonathan Gordon, Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth



Key Events



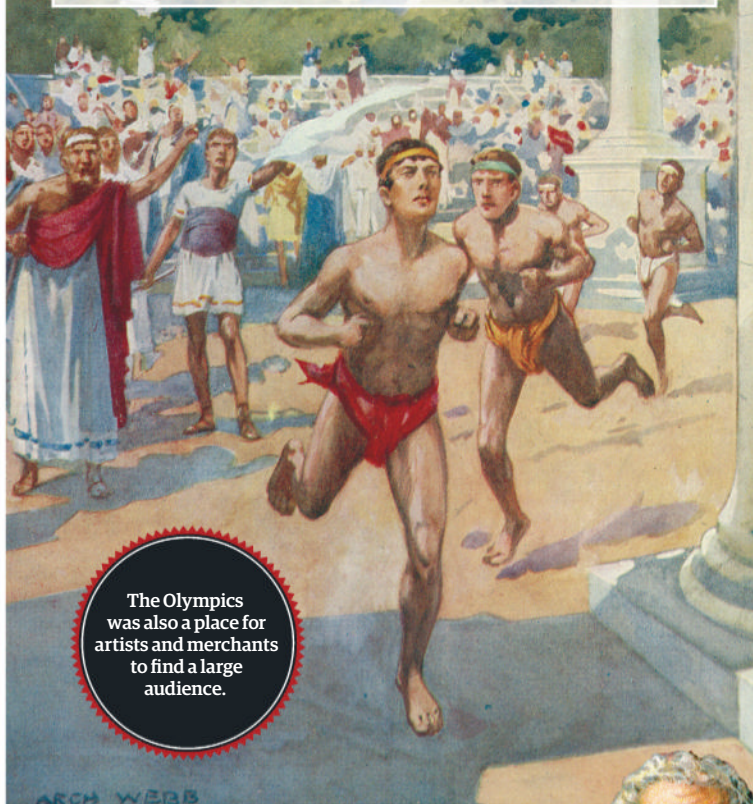
The first gloved boxing appears to have emerged from Minoan Crete from 1500 BCE or so.

c.3000 BCE FIST FIRST

Ancient Mesopotamia develops an interest in more direct martial sports, with reliefs depicting something like boxing appearing. The earliest is from Sumeria, but further art from Assyria and Babylonia also emerge in later centuries.

776 BCE FIRST OLYMPICS

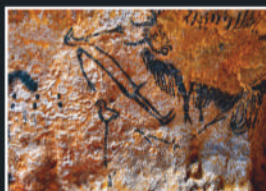
The first Olympic Games is held in a sanctuary to Zeus in Olympia as part of a religious festival, run by the people of Elis, Greece. The first gathering has only one event - a footrace - but later Olympics, held every four years, add wrestling, long jump, discus, javelin and more.



The Olympics was also a place for artists and merchants to find a large audience.

FIRST SPORT c.15,000 BCE

Wrestling is believed to be one of the earliest competitive sports, with depictions possibly included in the cave paintings of Lascaux, France.



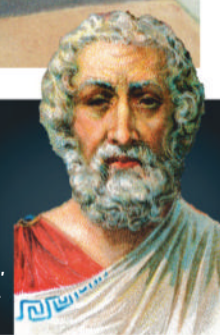
ICE SKATING c.1000 BCE

Early evidence of bone skates can be traced to Scandinavia, made to glide on ice rather than cut into it. Skating for leisure comes some time later.



PATROCLUN RULES 675 BCE

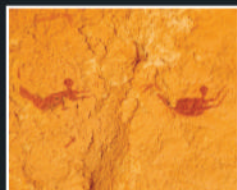
The first record of formalised boxing rules is depicted by Homer in his tale *The Iliad*, in a funerary bout to honour Patroclus, supposedly held around 800 BCE.



c.3000 BCE

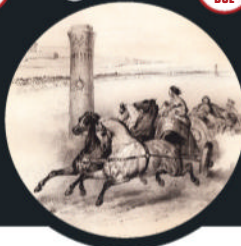
1650 BCE

776 BCE



DESERT SWIMMERS c.8000 BCE

One of the earliest depictions of people swimming can be found at Wadi Sura in the Libyan Desert, where art referred to as the Cave of Swimmers can be found.



OLYMPIC CHARIOTS 684 BCE

The thrilling spectacle of the chariot race is added to the Olympic lineup in Greece, becoming a mainstay of the sporting calendar for Greeks and, later, Romans.

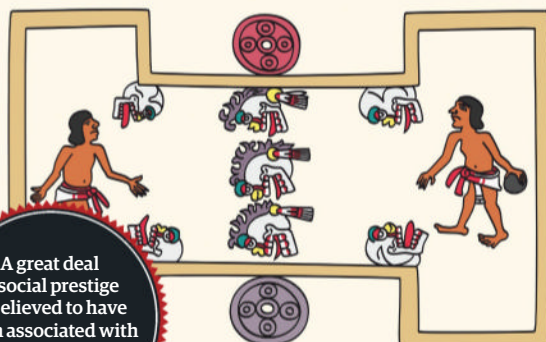


MMA 648 BCE

What could be considered an early form of mixed martial arts, called Pankration, is added to the Olympic Games, involving wrestling, boxing and other fighting skills.

1650 BCE THE BALL GAME

The sport known as the Mesoamerican Ball Game emerges with the Olmec people. The game involves a rubber ball, often propelled off players' hips. Part sport and part ritual, it's played across a number of cultures on capital I-shaped courts.



A great deal of social prestige is believed to have been associated with hosting the ball game.

c.500 BCE GYMNASTICS

The Greek term 'gymnazein', meaning to exercise naked, develops into gymnastics as a form of training for soldiers. At first, this includes wrestling, fighting, jumping and running, but gradually calisthenics and tumbling emerge as their own disciplines.



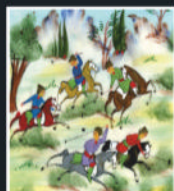
Sumo still train at the Sumiyoshi Shrine at Fukuoka where this statue stands

c.250 CE SUMO WRESTLING

The art of sumo wrestling is used as part of ceremonies dating back to the Kofun period of Japan, from 250 - 538 CE. The first writing about the form appears in later legends, explaining how sumo wrestling was a tribute to the gods.

POLO c.600 BCE

The earliest records of the game of polo come from Persia, with matches used for military training for mounted warriors, sometimes including as many as 100 participants.



CHINESE SOCCER c.100 BCE

The game of Cuju, or 'Tsu' Chu, begins to be played in China, the name translating to 'kick-ball' and structured similarly to sports like football/soccer, volleyball or basketball.



ANCIENT HACKY SACK 220 CE

The game of jianzi emerges in China. It evolves keeping a weighted shuttlecock in the air using any part of your body except your hands or arms.



c.500 BCE

GREEK RUGBY c.300 BCE

The Greek poet Antiphanes records a team game similar to later versions of rugby and football, known as Episkyros.



264 BCE

ROMAN FOOTBALL c.100 BCE

Seemingly inspired by the Greek game of Episkyros, the Romans take up their own ball game as a means to warm up before attending the Roman baths.



c.250 CE

393 CE

JAPANESE SOCCER 644

A further adaptation of the art of kicking a ball arrives in Kyoto with the game Kemari, adapting some of the rules and tools of Cuju from China.



264 BCE

FIRST ROMAN GLADIATORS

The first gladiator contest in the Roman era, adapted from previous Etruscan traditions, is held in honour of Junius Brutus by his sons. The practice of including gladiatorial bouts grew in popularity until it became a major element of festivals, known as munera, put on by the wealthy.



393 CE

OLYMPICS BANNED?

It's commonly stated that an edict passed down by Roman Emperor Theodosius I outlawed the Olympics as he targeted pagan practices in his increasingly Christian empire. However, there is evidence of games as late as 420, under his son Theodosius II.





Inside History

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

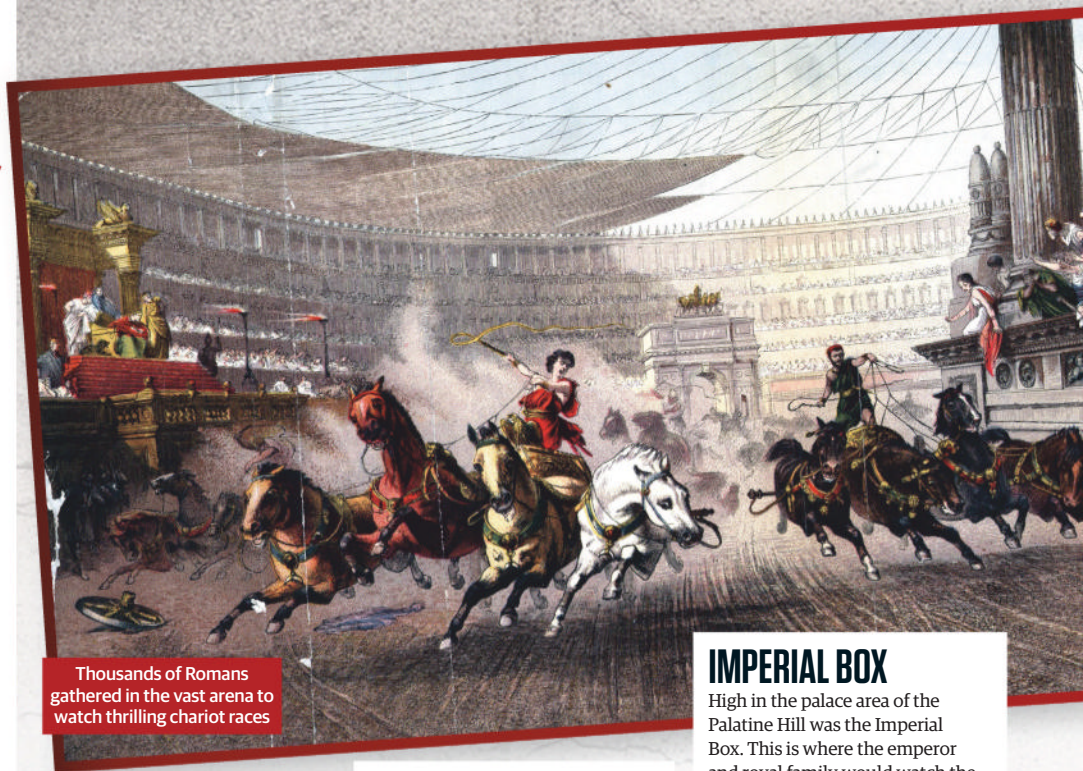
Rome

6th Century BCE
– 6th Century CE

The Circus Maximus was the ancient Roman equivalent of a modern-day stadium. This huge sports venue was host to a plethora of exciting, dangerous and exhilarating activities enjoyed by the entire city. The circus was originally built in the 6th century BCE as a chariot racetrack, located in the valley between the Palatine and Aventine hills. Its main purpose was to host the Roman Games, the oldest and most famous games in the city. Held every September, the event featured 15 days of perilous, heart-pounding chariot races.

Chariot racing was no casual pastime; there was huge monetary and personal reward for those brave riders who emerged from the track victorious. Similar to modern footballers, chariot racers were beloved by fans and celebrated for their valiant victories. However, winning was no easy task, and all the men who competed risked life and limb for fame and fortune. The different chariot teams were colour-coded green, red, blue and white, and rivalry between the supporters of different teams was heated and occasionally violent. The chariots used were akin to war chariots, and the riders were held in place at their feet. The sharp turns were the most dangerous part of the race, where chariots could be knocked, overturned and crushed. Although causing opponents to crash was strictly illegal, collisions were still very common.

The Circus Maximus was not only used for chariot racing; it was also host to a variety of other thrilling spectacles such as wild animal hunts, gladiator fights and public executions. It was also the venue for events such as religious ceremonies, public feasts and plays. The site continued to be used for chariot racing until the 6th century, when it was left to decay, many of its materials being used for building works. Since the mid-19th century excavations have uncovered more of the original seating and today it is used as a large park area, hosting concerts and festivals.



Thousands of Romans gathered in the vast arena to watch thrilling chariot races

IMPERIAL BOX

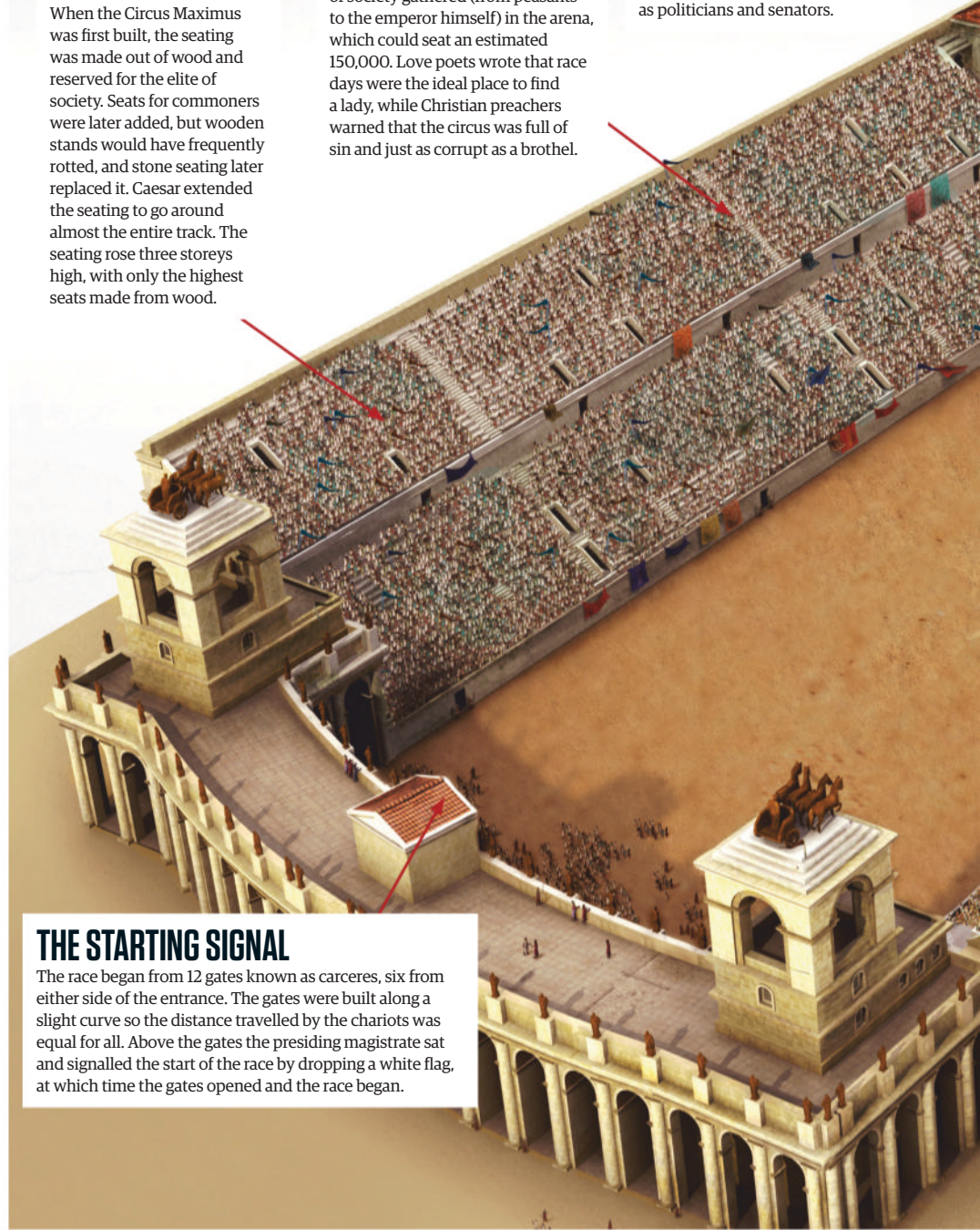
High in the palace area of the Palatine Hill was the Imperial Box. This is where the emperor and royal family would watch the events unfold. The emperor wasn't the only one with his own box; there were permanent viewing stands and private boxes for many powerful and wealthy citizens such as politicians and senators.

THE AUDIENCE

The games were one of the most important events in the Roman calendar. Members of every echelon of society gathered (from peasants to the emperor himself) in the arena, which could seat an estimated 150,000. Love poets wrote that race days were the ideal place to find a lady, while Christian preachers warned that the circus was full of sin and just as corrupt as a brothel.

SEATING

When the Circus Maximus was first built, the seating was made out of wood and reserved for the elite of society. Seats for commoners were later added, but wooden stands would have frequently rotted, and stone seating later replaced it. Caesar extended the seating to go around almost the entire track. The seating rose three storeys high, with only the highest seats made from wood.



THE STARTING SIGNAL

The race began from 12 gates known as carceres, six from either side of the entrance. The gates were built along a slight curve so the distance travelled by the chariots was equal for all. Above the gates the presiding magistrate sat and signalled the start of the race by dropping a white flag, at which time the gates opened and the race began.

STARTING PROCESSION

Before the race began there was a procession through the circus. Images of the gods were carried around the track in a grand display - some were in carriages, some in frames, and others on men's shoulders. They were followed by attendants on foot and horseback and behind them were dancers, musicians and combatants. This procession was followed by sacred rites delivered by priests.

SPINA

The Spina was a brick wall barrier that ran straight down the middle of almost the entire length of the Circus Maximus. This wall was approximately 3.5 metres wide and 1.2 metres high. Emperor Augustus erected an obelisk in the middle, which reached 40 metres high and had been brought from Egypt. The chariots would turn around the ends of the Spina, which were protected by three ornamented cones.

COMPETITORS

The drivers of the carriages were of low social status, often slaves or freedmen. Slaves especially had something to gain from winning races, as if they won enough they could buy their freedom. Often the driver did not own the chariot and horses he raced with, instead using those belonging to wealthier citizens. This meant that, as women were able to own chariots, they could be the winners of a race they were prohibited from taking part in through ownership.

EGGS AND DOLPHINS

There were two columns near the end of the Spina with marble crossbars. Mounted on these crossbars were large sculpted eggs, one of which was removed every time the chariots completed a circuit to indicate how many laps were remaining. Eggs were chosen as they were believed to be the symbol of the divine patrons of Rome, Castor and Pollux. In 33 BCE, large bronze dolphins were also added for greater visibility of the current race progress.

THE TRACK

The circus itself was a long oblong that measured 621 metres by 118 metres wide. The entire circumference of the stadium was 1.6km around. A canal, three metres wide by three metres deep, was later cut between the track and the seating, which protected the spectators and helped drain the track.

OUTSIDE

The festivities weren't confined to inside the arena. Outside the Circus Maximus there were many shops open to the spectators. Every shop had a separate entrance and exit to accommodate the huge number of people visiting them without risk of overcrowding. Dionysius wrote that this area of shops was inhabited by cooks, astrologers and prostitutes and was the site of the fire of 64 CE.





Anatomy

HOPLITODROMOS RUNNER

Greece

520 BCE

– c.393 CE

SHIELD

Hoplitodromos runners carried a hoplite aspis shield. These large round wooden shields typically measured about one metre in diameter and were gilded with bronze. Carrying the heavy, unwieldy shield provided an extra level of difficulty during the race.

THE HOPLITE

The hoplitodromos race was named after the hoplite - the citizen soldiers of ancient Greece who were known for fighting in a phalanx formation. The shield, helmet and greaves worn by the hoplitodromos runners were part of the hoplite military uniform, and the race itself was similar to a military training exercise.

THE RACE

First established at the Olympics in 520 BCE, the hoplitodromos was the last running race to be introduced to the games. Wearing aspects of hoplite armour, which weighed up to 6kg, competitors raced the length of the 'stadion' track. Typically, the contest ended after the runners had completed two laps, though this varied across the Panhellenic Games of ancient Greece.

HELMET

The helmet worn by the hoplites was a typical Corinthian design. It provided great protection but likely hindered hoplite soldiers in their ability to see. The lack of visibility would've presented an additional challenge for the hoplitodromos runners.

NUDITY

As with most ancient Greek Olympic sports, athletes in the hoplitodromos competed in the nude. Despite wearing some aspects of armour, the runners abided by the naked athletic tradition as a way to honour Zeus with their physical form and to show off their muscular physique.

OILED UP

Before and after competing, ancient Olympic athletes rubbed oil over their bodies. There are several theories as to why they did this: to clean the body, for aesthetic reasons, to honour the gods, or to warm up the muscles before competition. The oil was kept in a pot known as an aryballos and was removed from the body using a curved scraper called a strigil.

GREAVES

When the hoplitodromos was first introduced to the Olympics, competitors wore greaves that covered the lower half of their legs. They were heavy and cumbersome and likely difficult to run in as they restricted mobility. By the mid 5th century BCE, greaves were no longer worn during the race.



Historical Treasures

TERRACOTTA PANATHENAIC PRIZE AMPHORA

This ancient vase holding precious olive oil was gifted to the victors of an ancient athletic contest

Ancient Greece, 530 BCE

In ancient Greece as in the world of contemporary sports, the winners of various athletic competitions were given trophies. And for these ancient athletes no prize was greater than the amphorae - large decorated vases. The vases contained olive oil - the real prize for the athletes - gathered from the sacred groves of Athena herself. Each vase would hold around 40 litres of oil.

The amphora shown here was not awarded after any standard contest, but for a very special celebration. Taking place from 566 BCE to some time in the 3rd century CE, the Panathenaic Games were part of the wider Panathenaic festival, arguably the most important event held in

Athens. Mixing religion with culture and sport, the festival took place every four years, over a period of one week to 12 days, in the summer. Other celebrations that occurred during the festivities included a procession and a vast banquet, with 100 cattle sacrificed for the feast.

The example below is one of a number of amphorae attributed to the Euphiletos Painter. The identity of this mysterious individual remains unknown, though he appears to have been a master of the 'black figure style', which was distinctive for its dark silhouettes against the red of the clay. His prize amphorae are some of his most noteworthy works and it is from one example that he earned his given name. Excavated

among the remains of Vulci and now in the collections of the British Museum, it contained the inscription "Euphiletos kalos", meaning "Euphiletos is beautiful".

The amphora shown here was also discovered during the 1829 excavations at Vulci, which is about 80km northwest of Rome. The excavations were carried out by Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino, after peasants discovered an Etruscan tomb on his lands in 1828. Among the many finds were vases from ancient Greece, and many of these artefacts were later sold to museums and collectors around the world. This amphora can now be found among the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

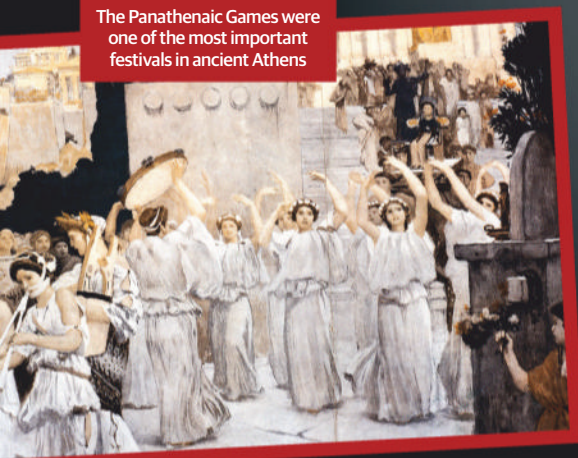
A VALUABLE COMMODITY

Olive oil was a highly prized commodity in ancient Greece, used in numerous aspects of daily life such as cooking and lighting, and in religious and funerary rites. It was also mixed with herbs such as cinnamon and worn as a perfume.

A RARE FIND

It's estimated that anywhere between 1,400 to 2,000 amphorae were awarded every Panathenaic Games. However, only 400 are thought to have survived.

The Panathenaic Games were one of the most important festivals in ancient Athens



A GIFT FROM ATHENA

The Panathenaic Games were held in honour of Athena, who is depicted on the rear of the vase, the patron goddess of Athens. According to myth, Athena gifted the city its first olive groves.

RUNNING FIGURES

The Euphiletos Painter's work depicts a running race. A variety of different races were held during the Panathenaic Games, both short-distance sprints (which this likely depicted here) and long-distance.



Hall of Fame

ANCIENT ATHLETES

From boxers to charioteers, weightlifting kings to trainers in drag, here are ten sportspeople from the ancient world

CYNISCA OF SPARTA

SPARTAN, c.440 – 362 BCE

The first female Olympic champion, Cynisca was the daughter of King Archidamus of Sparta and the sister of King Agesilaus II. She was persuaded to enter her horses into chariot races at the Olympic games. Despite some depictions to the contrary, it's likely Cynisca didn't pilot the chariot herself but acted as trainer. The fact she was able to afford a four-horse chariot demonstrates her immense wealth. Cynisca's team competed twice, in 396 BCE and 392 BCE and was victorious on both occasions. Despite Cynisca being allowed to compete, women were forbidden from participating in the winners' ceremony and she was prevented from attending.



Kallipateira of Rhodes **Greek** **c.3rd century BCE**

Ancient Greek women were forbidden from having any involvement in sport, be it participating or observing. But one woman, Kallipateira of Rhodes, defied these laws. She trained her son, Pesiodoros, in preparation for an Olympic boxing match. Unable to attend, she disguised herself as a male trainer and entered the stadium. When her son was victorious she was so ecstatic that in her celebrations her tunic came undone and 'revealed her gender'. Although the punishment for her transgression was death, her wealthy family and connections meant she was spared.

Following Kallipateira's transgression, male trainers had to strip before entering the stadium.

Milo of Croton **Greek, c.540 – 511 BCE**

Highly regarded for his prodigious strength, Milo of Croton was one of the ancient world's most famous wrestlers. He was said to have trained for the Olympics by carrying a newborn calf on his back every day, continuing to do so as the animal grew. While attempting to split a tree trunk, his hand became trapped and, unable to

free himself, he was helpless as lions gathered and devoured him. Following the revitalisation of interest in the ancient world in the 18th and 19th centuries, Milo's death was depicted in numerous sculptures and paintings, including the example shown here, which was painted in 1795 by French artist Charles Meynier.

Other depictions of Milo's death portray wolves or other wild animals feasting on the young athlete.





Spartacus and his fellow slaves are said to have escaped by using kitchen utensils as weapons.

Spartacus

Thracian

c.103 – 71 BCE

One of the most famous gladiators in all of Roman history, Spartacus is best remembered today for leading a rebellion. Likely deserting from the Roman army, at some point he was sold into slavery. He was sent to the gladiatorial school at Capua and trained to become a murmillio - a heavily armed masked fighter. In 73 BCE he escaped from Capua with around 70 of his fellow slaves and eventually led an army of around 100,000 men. He and his troops were finally defeated at the hands of Roman General Marcus Licinius Crassus.



AMENHOTEP II

EGYPTIAN
c.1440 – c.1401 BCE

The seventh pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt, Amenhotep II was known for his athleticism. Inscriptions found at various sites proclaim his mastery at a variety of sports including archery, horsemanship and running. In the ancient Egyptian world such activities were deeply intertwined with religious beliefs and as such Amenhotep's prowess was not merely for fun or physical fitness - it was a demonstration of his ability to rule.

ARRHICHION

GREEK, UNKNOWN – 564 BCE

One of the most fearsome athletes associated with pankration (a combination of wrestling and boxing), Arrhichion died while defending his championship. His opponent had him in a headlock and was slowly squeezing the life out of him, and it's said that Arrhichion, with the last of his strength, either tore his opponent's toe or his entire ankle from the socket. Despite dying from suffocation, Arrhichion was still declared the winner.



PORPHYRIUS

ROMAN, c.480 – c.538

Porphyrius was one of the most successful of all Roman charioteers, racing until well into his 60s during a career that spanned over 40 years. He is said to have won a diversium twice in one day, in which a victorious charioteer took the reins of a team of horses he'd just defeated and guided them to victory. Seven statues dedicated to Porphyrius once stood in the hippodrome in Constantinople, but now the base of one is all that remains.



NARCISSUS

ROMAN, UNKNOWN – c.193 CE

Little is known about this Roman wrestler, save that he was responsible for the death of one of Rome's most notorious rulers - Emperor Commodus. Narcissus helped train the emperor and was handpicked by a group of conspirators as the perfect assassin. On 31 December 192 CE, Narcissus throttled Commodus in his bath. A year later the young athlete met his end in the jaws of wild beasts on the orders of Emperor Septimius Severus.



Diagoras of Rhodes

Greek, c.4th century BCE

Boxing has its origins in the ancient world and one of its most famous champions was Diagoras of Rhodes. He was extremely successful, winning numerous times at the Olympic Games, the Pythian Games, the Nemean Games and the Isthmian Games. Diagoras' legacy was continued by his children and grandchildren, and the Diagoras family became one of the most important sporting dynasties in the ancient world. Among them was his son, Damagetus, who twice won a combat competition known as pankration, which involved numerous fighting techniques including boxing and wrestling.



KING WU OF QIN

CHINESE, 329 – 307 BCE

Like Amenhotep II, King Wu was not a sportsman in the traditional sense, but was very fond of weightlifting. One evening, in competition with the weightlifter Meng Yueh, he attempted to lift a pot. Raising it into the air, the king's ankle bones suddenly shattered. Stories vary as to what happened next but some suggest he died shortly afterwards, blood pouring from his eyes. Meng Yueh was blamed for the tragedy and executed.



Q&A



LOST ANCIENT SPORTS

Professor Peter J Miller discusses which ancient sporting traditions have continued into our modern world and which have been lost to time

Over the centuries, many sports have come and gone. What ancient sports have survived to the modern day?

Many ancient Greek sports have survived to the present day; in fact, most of the sports that made up the Panhellenic festivals (the Olympics, Pythian Games, Isthmian Games and Nemean Games) are still practised, though the specifics may have changed. The ancient Greeks, for example, ran footraces of various distances: the stadion (one length of the

Miller is a historian specialising in ancient sport and ceramics. He is professor of Classics at the University of Winnipeg and the author of a number of journal articles and books, including *Sport: Antiquity and Its Legacy*.

stadion, or around 200 metres), the diaulos (two lengths of the stadion) and the dolichos (anywhere from eight to 24 lengths of the stadion). Two of the so-called combat sports, wrestling and boxing, remain popular and have long histories in the modern era. Ancient Greek boxing is similar to modern boxing, except the ancient Greeks did not wear gloves or any head protection. Moreover, the match had no rounds or weight classes - boxers had to look to wear out their opponent,

whom they defeated when he submitted or was unable to continue. The sports of the ancient Greek pentathlon are a notable case in continuity into the modern period. The pentathlon was made up of the three field sports (discus, javelin and jump) along with running and wrestling; the field sports were never staged as separate events. The winner of the competition was the first to win three events. Despite the end of antiquity, many of these sports never stopped being staged.





ABOVE
Wrestling is an ancient Greek sport that is still practised today

The Roman Empire came to largely dominate the Greeks, absorbing many aspects of their culture. Were there any sports or sporting traditions they did not adopt?

Firstly, we should distinguish political from cultural domination. While the Greek city-states and leagues became parts of Roman provinces, Greek athletic culture never stopped. The

first Greek athletic games at Rome and by the early Common Era, Rome had a stadium (the Stadium of Domitian) and its own games, the Capitoline Games. Romans may never have been as captivated by athletics as the Greeks, but we know of Roman victors at their own games and in the old Panhellenic circuit in Greece (Not the least of which was the Emperor Nero!).

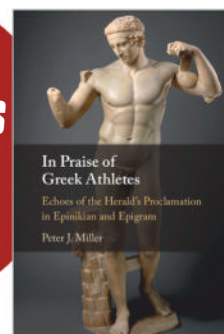
“Ancient Greek pankration, an anything-goes mixed martial arts competition, shares many similarities with modern Brazilian jiu jitsu”

Romans were hesitant about many Greek traditions and sport was certainly one. Some Roman writers worried that too much influence from Greek culture could spur decadence and decline - a common concern among empires throughout history. They were also unsure about the Greek practice of athletic nudity; for Romans, nudity was generally associated with slavery or humiliation, whereas for the Greeks the nude athlete could be a semi-divine, heroic and alluring figure. Even with conservative Roman rhetoric, we know that Romans were interested in Greek sport from an early period, and they visited sites like ancient Olympia as early as the third century CE. In 186 CE Marcus Fulvius Nobilior staged the

One of the most high-profile ‘lost sports’ is chariot racing. When did this fade in popularity and why?

Chariot racing outlived the end of Classical Antiquity and chariots were still being raced in Constantinople into the 1200s. Nonetheless, the sport never regained the popularity it once had. Some of the reason for this decline is to do with the logistical support structure necessary for it; a key point is the vast amount of time and money necessary to keep horses for racing. These are luxury items, so much so that Aristophanes uses rearing horses as a joke about a profligate son in one of his comedies. Raising horses was a prototypical activity of a wealthy elite in Classical Greece. Beyond the horses themselves, there had to be reliable and safe transport

**IN PRAISE OF
GREEK ATHLETES**
BY PETER J MILLER IS OUT
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to travel long distances to compete at places like Olympia or Delphi. Charioteers were largely enslaved people who had to be trained and

housed by their wealthy owners. When, therefore, the world of antiquity began to fall apart in the 300s and 400s CE, it's not surprising that chariot racing, which relied on cultural, political and economic stability, faded away.

Are there any sporting traditions which are largely no longer played but have similarities to modern sports or games?

The first that comes to mind is ancient Greek pankration, an 'anything-goes' mixed martial arts competition that was staged across the Greek world. While some people have revived pankration proper, I compare it to 'ultimate fighting' or, as another colleague of mine argues, Brazilian jiu jitsu. It certainly seems to share the bravado and emphasis on personality and strength with ultimate fighting, but the interlocking bodies of Brazilian jiu jitsu fighters and the focus on 'figuring out' your opponent's body may be a better analogue.

How did the tradition of the Olympics come to survive over the centuries?

In some ways, the Olympics never vanished, even if the games themselves slowly petered out and likely were gone by the early 400s CE. Because of the integration of the Olympic games into so much Classical literature, not least the poet Pindar, memory of the games was always part of the Classical tradition across Europe. In Greece, it's clear that competitions in imitation of or inspired by the Olympics and Panhellenic Games were staged in the medieval period, even if they were far more constrained in size. A true interest in revival of the Games coincides with the birth of the modern Greek state; indeed, poet and journalist Panagiotis Soutsos argued for their revival as part of a project of nation-building. Eventually, Olympic games were staged in Greece in the second half of the 19th century, and these, along with a separate revival of sports festivals by Dr William Penny Brookes at Much Wenlock in England, were fundamental to Pierre de Coubertin's version of the Olympic Games.

LEFT
One of the most famous 'lost' ancient sports is chariot racing.



Places to Explore

ANCIENT SPORT SITES

Where to learn about athletic prowess around the world



Olympia was the home of the first Olympics

1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF OLYMPIA ELIS, GREECE

The remains of Olympia, the original home of the ancient Greek Olympic Games, sit on the western side of the Peloponnese in southern Greece. This celebration of athletic ability and competition was started in 776 BCE and recurred every four years, just as the modern games. It was complemented by other Hellenistic games in alternate years, taking place in other cities, so there was a major competition held annually. Among the ruins of Olympia you can see temples and other buildings, as well as the remains of many sporting structures.

Olympia goes back much further than its sporting legacy, however, with structures dating to about 2000 BCE and reaching forward to the 600s CE. Important buildings include the Heraion, the temple of Hera at the foot of the Kronios Hill, the temple of Zeus and the ancient Olympic stadium itself, estimated to have welcomed 40,000 people as spectators for events.



The wider archaeological sites of Olympia are well worth exploring

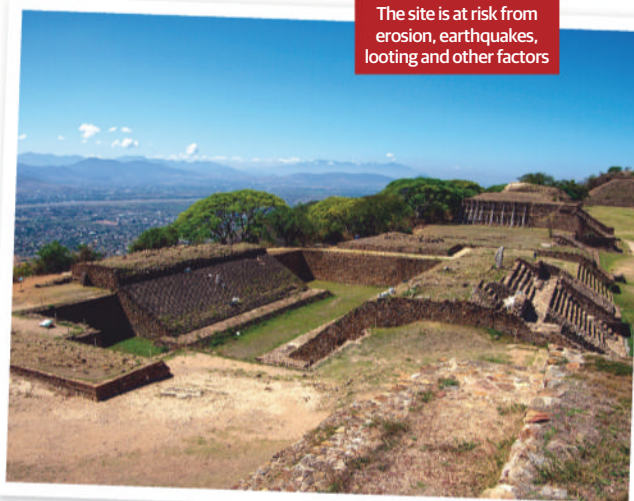


2 MONTE ALBÁN OAXACA, MEXICO

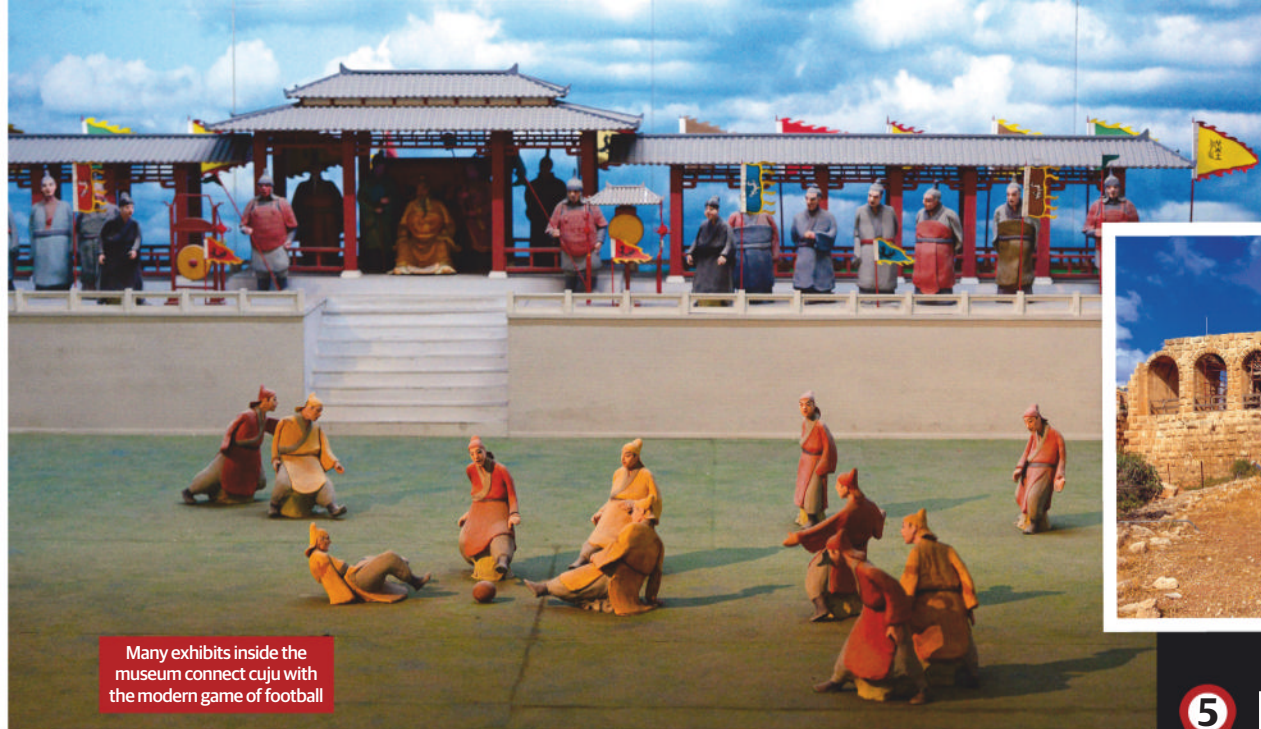
The ruins of a classic Mesoamerican ballgame playing area are just one of the highlights of this site, which was home to the Zapotec and Mixtec groups, indigenous cultures to this region of Mexico. The Aztec would have known the game as tlachtli, although it had many names in its similar guises across cultures in the region. The

ball court is about 41 metres long by 24 metres wide and doesn't appear to have had rings attached to the walls at any stage, which would make the sport here a little different from other iterations. The distinctive sloping walls of the court would have been coated to make them smooth so the rubber ball used would always return to the court floor.

The oldest structures here have been dated to about the 8th century BCE, with examples of a pyramid, underground tunnels and 170 tombs making up just some of the impressive structures. The whole complex covers about 6.5 square kilometres and was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987, but the site has been considered under threat since 2008.



The site is at risk from erosion, earthquakes, looting and other factors



Many exhibits inside the museum connect cuju with the modern game of football

3 LINZI FOOTBALL MUSEUM SHANDONG, CHINA

China can't make a claim to be the origin of football as a modern sport, but it does trace the sport of cuju, or ts'u-chü, which was an early precursor to the sport known around the



A statue outside the museum depicts a cuju player

world. Cuju can be traced back 2,000 years and translates simply to 'kickball'. Celebrating this history and its connection to football is the Linzi Football Museum in Zibo city, in the east of China. This city was once part of the Qi state, which is where the game of cuju is thought to have originated.

The museum lays out this ancient sport in some detail with recreations of the game, dioramas and many artefacts telling its long history. The museum as a whole, opened in 2005, is an impressive celebration of the beautiful game, occupying over 11 square kilometres and packed full of artefacts from the sport, such as boots from famous players, posters, shirts and much more.

4 STADIUM AT APHRODISIAS GEYRE, AYDIN PROVINCE, TURKEY

This significant arena is notable for many reasons. For a start, it's considered to be one of the best-preserved stadiums from ancient Greece, constructed some time in the first century CE. It also has some notable construction differences from other stadiums from this time and culture, such as being closed off at the ends rather than open. Spectators would approach the stadium from the town and enter at the wider south end, filtering across 30 rows of seating with a capacity of up to about 30,000 people.

The stadium, named in honour of the goddess Aphrodite, hosted what would have been considered Pythian games, a second tier of athletic competition to the Olympics. Even so, it would have still included sports like running, wrestling, long-jump, discus and javelin throwing. Pythian games also included more artistically focused competitions, such as musical contests. The stadium was damaged by an earthquake in the 7th century, after which the eastern portion of the arena was rounded off and used for circuses, gladiator combats and other entertainments.



Aphrodisias features many ruins and interesting artefacts



These gates are one of the most impressive elements of the hippodrome

5 JERASH HIPPODROME JERASH, JORDAN

While this hippodrome is thought to be the smallest surviving example from the Roman Empire, it is also one of the best-preserved today, and at 265 metres in length and 76 metres wide it's an impressive space. This sight in modern Jordan would have been used primarily for chariot racing, as well as other popular Roman spectacles. With its 17 or so rows of seating, it's thought that the capacity of the arena was about 15,000.

The most impressive elements are the arched carceres at one end, which is where the horses and their charioteers would be positioned at the beginning of the race. The initial structure was built in the second century CE, with an amphitheatre for gladiatorial bouts added on the northern side around the fourth century. However, by the sixth to eighth centuries it's believed that many of the stones from the hippodrome were being repurposed to repair the dilapidated city walls. There is evidence the arena was used by the Sasanians, invaders from Persia, for polo games in the seventh century.



The site includes Hadrian's Arch, seen here in the background



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TITANIC

MAKING AND BREAKING

Uncover the inherent flaws and misplaced confidence that allowed a catastrophe to unfold

Written by Kevin Brown

One of the most moving scenes in both James Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic* and the 1958 film *A Night to Remember* is of Thomas Andrews, the man who designed the ship, standing in despair at the fireplace in the Smoking Room of *Titanic* and adjusting a clock. He's taken off his life jacket and is resigned to his fate and the loss of his greatest achievement as a naval architect. Based on the testimony of a steward, who remarked that Andrews looked "stunned", it's the iconic image of the only man who was present at the birth and the death of the ill-fated ship.

While the stillness of this portrayal of Andrews has almost quasi-religious

overtones suitable for the quiet hero of *Titanic*, it does not reflect his actual indefatigable energy and reputation as the man everyone went to when there was a problem to be solved.

When *Titanic* sank on 15 April 1912 after colliding with an iceberg, Andrews was 39 years old. He had worked his way up the ranks at Harland & Wolff, the Belfast firm of shipbuilders specialising in ocean liners, from premium apprentice to chief designer, naval architect and managing director. Being nephew of Lord Pirrie, owner of Harland & Wolff, may have helped his rise, but it was his own skills and attention to detail as a naval engineer that led to him overseeing work





TITANIC

THE SHIP OF DREAMS

on the construction of two prestigious new ocean liners for the White Star Line: Olympic and Titanic.

These Olympic-class ships, as they were known, were intended to consolidate the position of the White Star Line in the lucrative transatlantic emigration market. While all the advertising for Titanic emphasised luxury and glamour for its wealthy passengers travelling in First

Class, profit for the company actually came from high-volume steerage ticket sales. While Third Class facilities were an improvement on what they had been in the previous century, and White Star prided itself on offering the best in terms of comfort, they were still economical to provide. The much-vaunted luxury of elite travel offered prestige, but the emigrant trade was more lucrative. ►

"THE MUCH-VAUNTED LUXURY OF ELITE TRAVEL OFFERED PRESTIGE, BUT THE EMIGRANT TRADE WAS MORE LUCRATIVE"

The main competition to dominance in the emigrant business came from Cunard, which enjoyed the advantage of subsidies from the British government for the building of new liners such as Lusitania and Mauretania, launched in 1906 to maintain British supremacy in Atlantic traffic. In return for these subsidies, the Cunard liners were designed for easy conversion for use by the Royal Navy in the event of war. In contrast with the close links of Cunard with the British state, the White Star Line, while sailing under the British flag, had since 1902 been a constituent company of the International Mercantile Maritime Company, formed from various shipping companies by the American financier JP Morgan in an attempt to monopolise North Atlantic shipping.

The White Star Line emphasised comfort over speed and positioned itself to attract passengers who were in no hurry but enjoyed luxury, whereas Cunard boasted of its Blue Riband-winning liners capable of speeds of 26 knots. In 1907, White Star's main operational base was moved from Liverpool to Southampton. A weekly service sailed from Southampton every Wednesday, crossing the English Channel to the French port of Cherbourg that evening, then calling

at Queenstown (since renamed Cobh) in southeast Ireland the following morning before striking out across the Atlantic for America. (This was the route that would be taken by Titanic on her maiden voyage.) On return eastbound crossings, ships did not call at Queenstown and instead docked at Plymouth on England's south coast, before proceeding to Cherbourg and Southampton.

Southampton was closer to London than Liverpool, which made it more convenient for wealthy passengers, who travelled down by train. Meanwhile, the terminal at Cherbourg was convenient for European passengers, whether relatively poor emigrants from throughout the Continent or the wealthy travelling by train from Paris.

Titanic and her sister ship Olympic were conceived to consolidate the future of White Star and challenge Cunard not through speed but by size. The almost-identical ships were to be 256 metres long and of 52,000 gross tonnage, far outdoing the Cunard flagships. When launched in 1911, Titanic was even larger than first planned: 269 metres long, 28 metres broad and

53 metres high, with a gross tonnage of 46,328. Yet despite her hitherto unparalleled scale, Titanic was expected to "reign supreme as the largest vessel in the world" for only a year until the completion of the Hamburg American Line's Imperator.

"THE OLYMPIC-CLASS SHIPS WERE PROMOTED AS MONUMENTS OF MODERNITY AND WONDERS OF THE MODERN WORLD"

Harland & Wolff, with which White Star had a close relationship, had a reputation for constructing large and technologically advanced vessels. Its chairman Lord Pirrie believed that with the advent of these new, mammoth ocean liners there was "no limit to the size of ship except

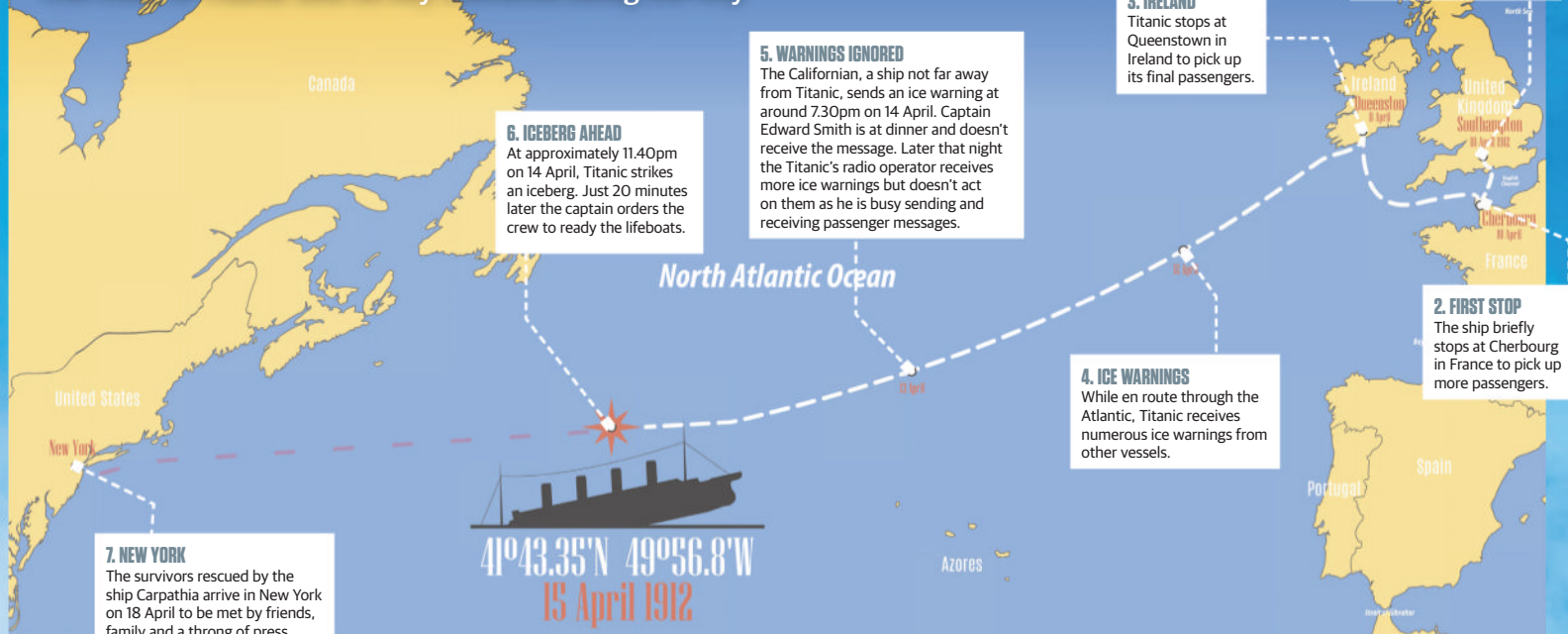
BELOW J Bruce Ismay (right), managing director of White Star Line, was vilified for escaping in one of the last lifeboats rather than going down with the ship like Captain Edward Smith (left)

BELOW-RIGHT Titanic leaves Belfast for Southampton and her maiden voyage, 2 April 1912



THE FATEFUL JOURNEY

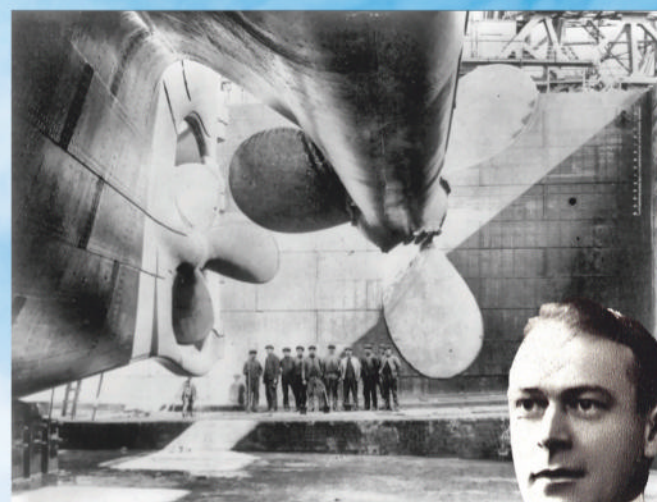
The route of Titanic and its key moments along the way



RIGHT The drawing office of Harland & Wolff where Titanic was designed under the supervision of Thomas Andrews

FAR-RIGHT Titanic's propeller dwarfed the Harland & Wolff workers

BELOW-RIGHT Thomas Andrews, the quiet hero who witnessed the birth and death of Titanic



All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

that imposed by accommodation in shipbuilding yards and docks."

Its Belfast shipyard needed to be upgraded before work could begin on the enormous Olympic-class ships. Four of the slipways were replaced by two larger slips, over which was erected a gigantic steel gantry fitted with a system of cranes and travelling frames and accessed by electric elevators and walkways. The gantry was so huge it could be seen from most parts of Belfast. The Thompson Graving Dock, built by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners as the largest dry dock in the world for ship repairs, was extended in 1911 to accommodate the Olympic-class ships.

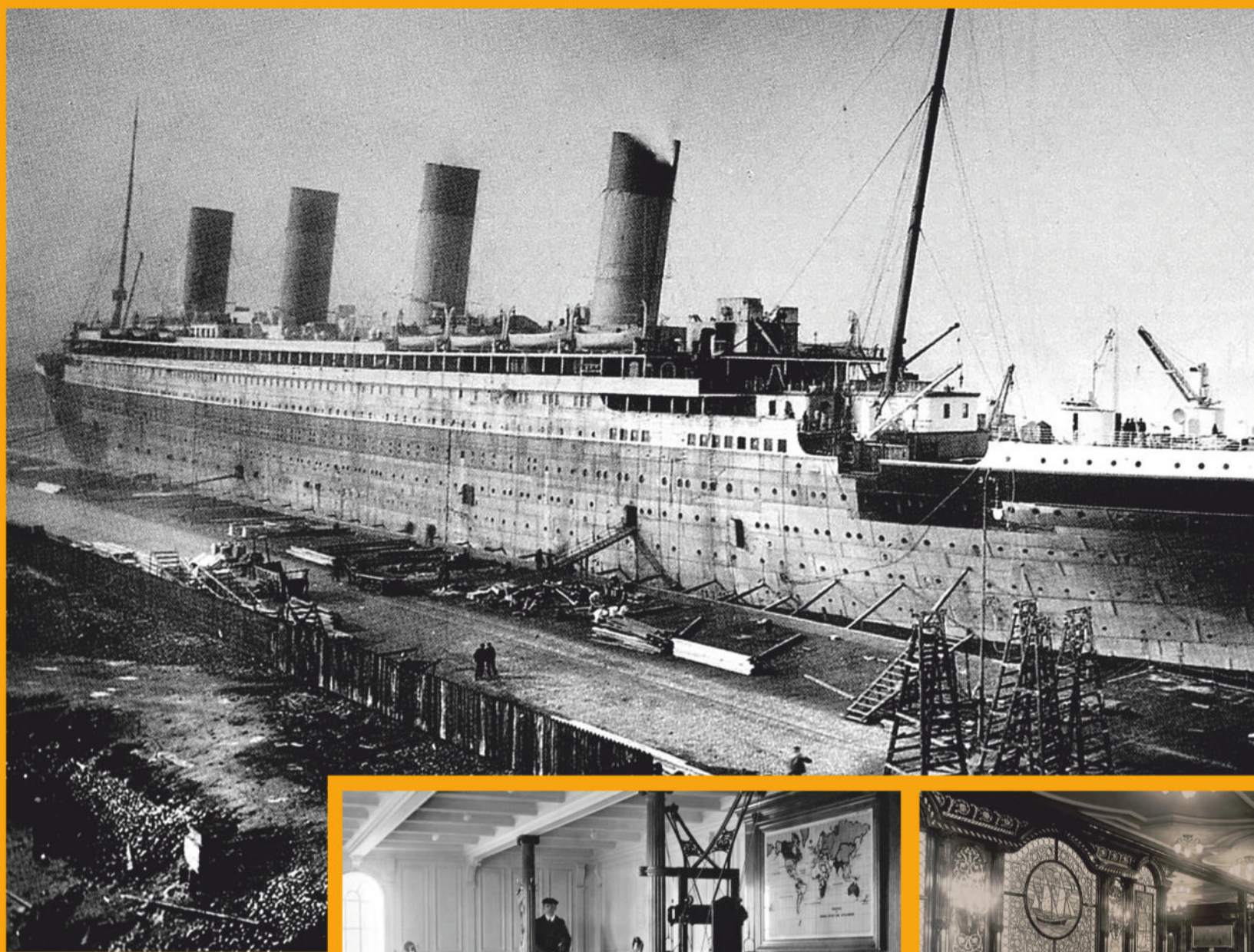
The vessels were promoted as monuments of modernity and wonders of the modern world. Titanic

was a technological marvel of its age, featuring the most up-to-date navigational equipment that allowed her officers to calculate the position of the ship, the distance travelled, speed and depth of water. The vessel was powered by two reciprocating four-cylinder, triple-expansion steam engines and a centrally positioned low-pressure Parsons turbine, each connected to its own propeller. This combination of engines, first adopted on the Laurentic in 1909, was an efficient and innovative way of powering a ship as big as Titanic. The furnaces supplying power to the engines and electricity-generating plant required over 600 tons of coal to be shovelled daily by hand by 176 firemen. The combustion gases produced by the ship's 29 boilers

were vented through three of the Titanic's four funnels, each measuring 25 metres high. The fourth funnel was a dummy - it provided ventilation and contained a crew staircase but its main function was aesthetic, giving the vessel a powerful, distinguished silhouette. Contemporary observers noted that each funnel, if laid horizontally, was large enough to accommodate a dinner party of 50 guests or permit the passage of two railway carriages side by side.

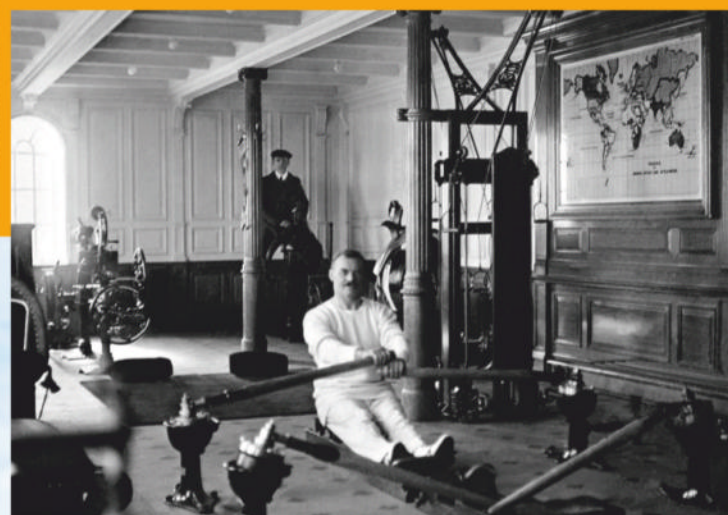
Titanic incorporated a double-bottomed hull as a precaution against damage from running aground, but

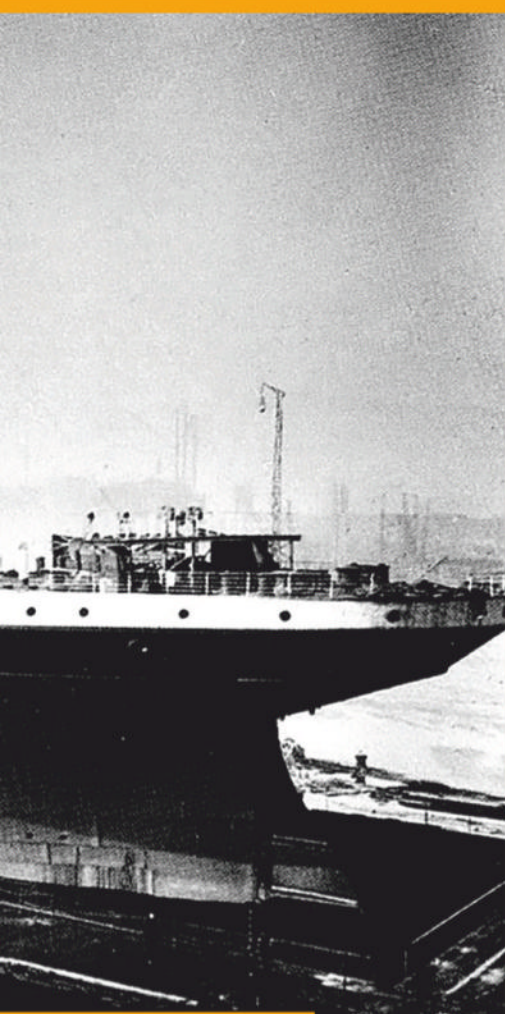




lacked the double-hull specified for Cunard's Lusitania and Mauretania.

Titanic was divided into watertight compartments separated by 15 steel bulkheads. These bulkheads could be sealed by remotely operated watertight doors, which would also close automatically if water reached a certain depth in any one compartment. Titanic was designed to remain afloat if the first four compartments or any two central compartments were flooded. However, in a cost-saving measure, the bulkheads did not extend to the full height of the hull. This design flaw meant that if more than two compartments filled with water, flooding could spread unchecked over the tops of the bulkheads into adjacent compartments. When Titanic struck the iceberg, six compartments were compromised. As the bow submerged, water progressively spilled into each subsequent





Titanic under construction at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast

TOP-LEFT The gym was only for First Class passengers. It offered the latest ways of keeping fit under the guidance of gym instructor Thomas McCawley

TOP-RIGHT The Smoking Room on Olympic was identical to that on her sister ship Titanic

BOTTOM-LEFT The Grand Staircase epitomised Titanic's iconic luxury

BOTTOM-RIGHT Second Class passengers walking on deck. To the left can be seen some of the ship's 20 lifeboats

compartment, overwhelming the ship's pumping capacity.

While the watertight compartments may have delayed the ship's sinking, they could not prevent it. Joseph Conrad, the author and former seaman, observed that these bulkheads merely prolonged the suffering of passengers who could not be rescued. He rejected the notion that design improvements, such as continuous bulkheads with direct escape routes to the deck,

"BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING SAFER DESIGNS WERE NOT TECHNICAL BUT COMMERCIAL"

were technically impossible. In his view, the barriers to implementing safer designs were not technical but commercial, and the reluctance to address these flaws stemmed from cost considerations rather than engineering limitations.

While it had seemed unthinkable that Titanic, with its watertight compartments, could sink, it was still necessary to comply with Board of Trade regulations on the provision of lifeboats. Aware that the Board of Trade was considering new regulations for a greater number of lifeboats on ocean liners, Alexander Carlisle, general manager at Harland & Wolff until 1910, proposed that Titanic be supplied with 48 or even a generous 64 lifeboats, but as soon as it became obvious that the regulations would not be changed the number of lifeboats was cut to 20, which was still more than the 16 mandated by the Board of Trade for a ship of this size. In case the Board of Trade did increase its requirements in the future, the extra davits for raising and lowering lifeboats were installed to ensure future compliance with potential regulations, but without the extra lifeboats that could have saved most of the passengers and crew.

There was a belief that the role of the lifeboats

LAST STAND OF JACK PHILLIPS

The radio operator remained at his post as water flooded in

The senior Marconi wireless operator, 25-year-old Jack Phillips, like Thomas Andrews, is remembered as a hero for his devotion to duty until the very end. He and his colleague Harold Bride were highly trained in the exciting new technology of wireless telegraphy, and were employees of Marconi International Marine Communication Company rather than White Star Line. Phillips had trained with Marconi in 1906, worked at the Marconi station at Clifden, Ireland, and then aboard many ships. Much of his work on Titanic was concerned with receiving and transmitting passenger messages. On Sunday 14 April the equipment had broken down and taken six hours to repair. Faced with a backlog of passenger messages, the overworked Phillips ignored warnings from other ships of icebergs ahead and did not send them to the bridge promptly. However, once instructed to send out distress signals as Titanic foundered, he stayed at his post until the power ran down and water was flooding the Marconi shack. He remained even after being told to stand down by Captain Smith, and did not survive the sinking.



BELOW Wealthy First Class passengers snapped up tickets for the ship's prestigious maiden voyage



was to transfer passengers and crew to rescue ships, then return to the sinking ship for further loads, but this presupposed that other ships would be nearby and there would be enough time for an orderly evacuation. Some passengers even dismissed the possibility that Titanic could sink as absurd and believed it safer to stay on the liner rather than risk the dangers of a lifeboat in the open sea. When wealthy young book-collector Harry Widener was advised by a friend to find a place in a lifeboat, he replied: "I think I'll stick to the big ship, Billy, and take my chance."

In the aftermath of the tragedy there was a suggestion by some that, as survivor Lawrence Beesley puts it in *The Loss of the SS Titanic* (1912), "the provision of Turkish baths, gymnasiums and other so-called luxuries involved a sacrifice of some more essential things, the absence of which was responsible for the loss of so many lives. But this is quite an erroneous impression." There was actually enough space for lifeboats amid the opulence. These luxuries were extras for the comfort and convenience of passengers and they did not take up space that could have been occupied by lifeboats. The failure of White Star Line was in not providing enough lifeboats, rather than the lack of space for them.

Modern technology made many of these luxuries possible. A vessel such as Titanic was like a floating hotel for the wealthy in which the discomforts of ocean travel were

THE FINAL MOMENTS

With 1,500 people still on the ship, the Titanic plunged into the freezing water

Tipping point

As the bow sinks below the water, hundreds of passengers and crew are washed overboard.

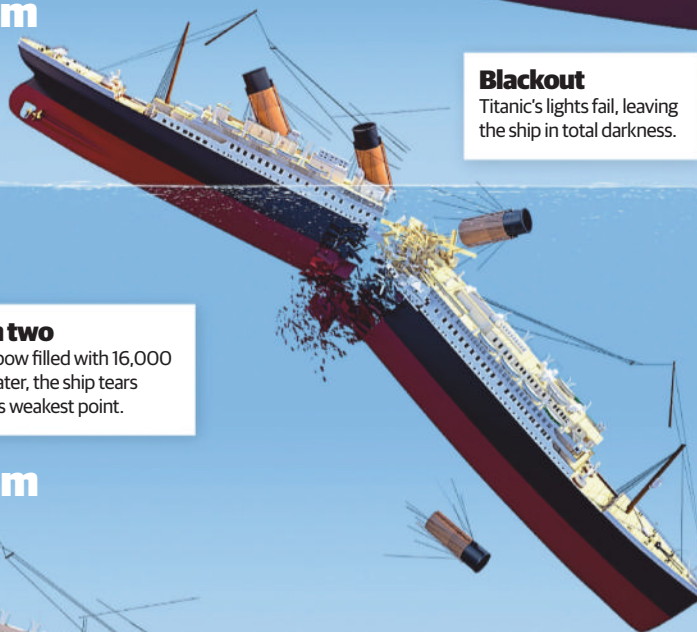
2:17am



2:18am

Blackout

Titanic's lights fail, leaving the ship in total darkness.



Split in two

With the bow filled with 16,000 tons of water, the ship tears apart at its weakest point.

2:19am



The first plunge

After breaking loose from the stern, the bow plummets towards the seabed.

Brief hope

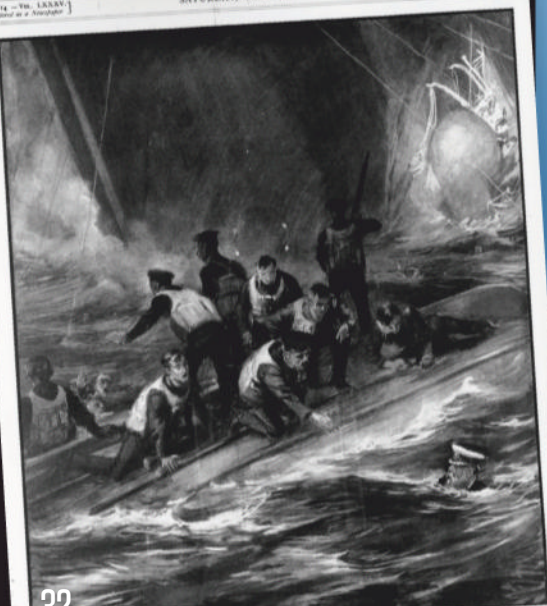
Freed from the weight of the bow, the stern begins to rise, giving hope to those who are still onboard.

LEFT Newspapers and magazines were full of sensationalist accounts. *The Graphic* claimed Captain Smith had refused help from survivors on an upturned lifeboat

minimised thanks to improved shipbuilding technology. First Class accommodation had been moved amidships away from the vibration of the engines, and where there was less motion from the action of the

waves. Class distinction pervaded the whole ship. First Class passengers, accommodated in luxurious suites, staterooms and cabins on the upper decks, were pampered as soon as they stepped aboard. The cabins for

THE GRAPHIC
AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1912



2:20am

RIGHT Survivors photographed from the Carpathia. Many of Titanic's lifeboats launched without being filled to capacity



"REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE.

Standing vertical

Shortly after, the stern of the ship rises up once more, pouring an avalanche of Titanic's contents into the ocean.

COME AT ONCE.

WE STRUCK AN ICEBERG.

Vanishing beneath

Once vertical, the rest of Titanic disappears below the surface. The huge rudder swings to one side, causing the ship to spiral the 3.7 kilometres to the bottom.

SINKING."

Laid to rest

The bow crashes into the ocean floor 27 minutes before the stern, despite beginning its descent just a minute earlier.

Second Class passengers were plainer and smaller but were considered to be the equivalent of First Class accommodation on other ships. Steerage passengers, dignified with the status of Third Class, were on the lower decks in cramped cabins for two, four or six, and in small dormitories reserved for single men. These cabins had little space for more than bunk beds, unlike the comfortable rooms of their social superiors.

The First Class passengers enjoyed lavish meals in an à la carte restaurant or the formal dining room, where dressing for dinner was as strictly observed as on land. The gentlemen then retired to the mahogany-panelled smoking room with its open fire, and the ladies to one of the public reception lounges. The Café Parisien and the Veranda Café offered refreshment in a more informal setting. A library and a writing room offered quiet spaces, an orchestra played in the public areas, while the more energetic First Class passengers could enjoy a well-equipped gymnasium, swimming pool and Turkish bath, or take part in deck games. Second Class passengers had their own dining saloon, lounges, library and smoking room, all less lavish but still comfortably appointed. Third Class facilities were more basic with a general public room, two dining saloons (offering two sittings for meals), a promenade and a smoking room. Each class of passenger was strictly segregated from the others, separated by locked gates in compliance with American immigration regulations, which later made evacuation from the sinking ship more difficult.

The latest Marconi wireless telegraphy system was installed, with a transmission range of about 800km during the day and up to 3,200km at night. The transmitter's innovative rotary spark gap

"THE FAILURE OF WHITE STAR LINE WAS IN NOT PROVIDING ENOUGH LIFEBOATS, RATHER THAN THE LACK OF SPACE FOR THEM"

FIGHTING THE FLOOD

As the engine rooms filled with water, up on deck passengers kicked around fragments of the iceberg, oblivious to the ship's mortal wound

The first act

After hitting the iceberg, First Officer William Murdoch immediately orders the closure of the watertight doors in the engine rooms.

The first cracks

On the port side of the ship, water suddenly surges into Boiler Room Six before the doors have fully closed.

Darkness under deck

When water damage causes the engine rooms to go dark just before midnight, crewmen use lamps to continue working.

Evacuation

When the watertight doors are locked, the crew have to escape the flooding compartments using emergency ladders.

The iceberg caused multiple slashes in Titanic's hull, flooding six compartments

Stop

Ordered to stop the engines, workers quickly react to shut off the steam. Within 15 seconds all engines are still.

produced a distinctive 11 signal for Titanic. Operated by two highly trained Marconi employees, the wireless system was widely used by passengers for both business and social correspondence, being viewed as a luxury and novelty. When soap manufacturer Thomas Pears, a lover of fast cars, motorcycles and speed rather than leisurely ocean liners, sent a rather inconsequential message to his family that all was well, he was not to realise that his faith in the new technology was illusory since the message was not received until several days after the sinking and raised false hopes that he had survived. As there was not yet an established practice of keeping a clear channel for emergency communications, the emphasis on sending passenger messages meant that urgent warnings could easily get lost amid the congestion of Morse code traffic. Only with the Radio Act, signed by President William Howard Taft in August 1912 and informed by the deficiencies of shipboard wireless communications revealed by the

experience on Titanic, was there a restriction on the wavelengths that could be used.

It was inconceivable that all this technology and luxury could end up at the bottom of the ocean. When asked at the British inquiry into the sinking whether it was the view of White Star Line "that the Titanic was unsinkable," the response of J Bruce Ismay, chairman of the company, was that "we thought she was" - a false sense of confidence successfully sold to trusting passengers in all classes.

For naval architect Thomas Andrews, Titanic was a triumph of modernity, but not everyone shared his confidence in progress and technical excellence. Joseph Conrad deplored the materialism implicit in the faith most people had in the power of technology and condemned the opulent trappings that disguised the mechanics of a modern ship. It was a view shared by fellow author GK Chesterton, who believed that such luxury made passengers and crew alike ignore the risks of sea

travel. Edward Talbot, Bishop of Winchester, denouncing the "hyper-luxuries" enjoyed by the wealthy, preached that "the Titanic in name will stand for a monument of warning

"ANDREWS WAS ALWAYS REMEMBERED AS A REASSURING PRESENCE"

to human presumption," and was "a mighty lesson against our confidence and trust in the strength of machinery and money."

Despite the allure of a lost golden age that Titanic has come to represent, there were numerous problems onboard as the ship got underway. Andrews was present with a group of Harland & Wolff workers, the

BELOW Titanic's furnaces required 600 tons of coal a day, shovelled in by 176 men



Guarantee Group, who were there for the express purpose of 'snagging'. Their role was to make sure that everything was working efficiently and report on any improvements that could be made once its maiden voyage was completed. Despite Titanic having an electric control panel that worked all the fans, generators and lighting, and a network of insulated ducts that used electric fans to convey warm air around the ship, there were problems with the heating throughout the vessel and passengers complained of freezing cabins. First Class staterooms had electric heaters but some passengers worried that they might not be safe. Some areas of the ship seemed unfinished. Even the ornate carved wooden panel showing "Honour and Glory Crowning Time," which was a prominent feature of the First Class staircase, was incomplete. There had not been time to set a clock into the panel and a mirror had been substituted until the clock

could be installed. Meanwhile, the fittings for the Second Class ladies' lavatory were still in crates and the smell of fresh paint was disguised by fragrant flowers. The Guarantee Group was kept very busy. In survivor accounts, Andrews was always remembered as a reassuring presence, "here, there and everywhere, looking after everybody, telling the women to put on lifebelts, telling the stewardesses to hurry the women up to the boats, all about everywhere, thinking of everyone but himself." Bareheaded and dressed in his working clothes, Andrews tried to calm the passengers but also urged



TOP The wreck was discovered on 1 September 1985

ABOVE Titanic's sinking was covered extensively in sensationalist papers such as *The Sphere*

them to put on their life jackets, even reprimanding stewardess Mary Sloan and others for not setting an example by failing to wear theirs, then giving them the order: "Ladies, you must get in at once. There is not a minute to lose. You cannot pick and choose your boat. Don't hesitate! Get in, get in!" He was seen helping to load the lifeboats, going onto the bridge to speak to the captain, inspecting the flooding in the mail room, speaking to the engineers, firemen and trimmers below, and throwing deckchairs overboard to people floundering in the ocean.

Andrews' corpse was never recovered. A tall, likeable man with an unassuming manner who abstained from tobacco and strong alcohol, he was the epitome of the selfless man who put women and children first, the type of person whose sacrifice was eulogised in newspaper reports even before eyewitness accounts were available to the journalists.

Although not the end of an era as some commentators such as Walter Lord, author of the book *A Night to Remember*, have suggested, the sinking of Titanic was certainly a challenge to the early 20th century faith in technological progress. Andrews had been a strong proponent of that faith but his ship also represented hubris. After the disaster the world was never again so confident in modernity, but it still held on to the ideals of chivalry epitomised by Andrews - a disciple of progress who also represents the old-fashioned values of calmness and self-sacrifice in the face of mortal danger. ○

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ROYAL SCANDALS

THAT THREATENED THRONES



From illicit relationships to illegitimate children,
these affairs put entire kingdoms at risk

Written by Alice Barnes-Brown

Where royalty goes, scandal, duplicity and drama usually follow. Ultimate power, combined with wealth and inevitable human frailty, create the prime conditions for affairs of the heart as well as the state. Kings, queens, princes and princesses often find themselves at the mercy of their own longings - perhaps caught up in a tragic tryst, or even manipulated by their clever *objets de desir* to act as a puppet monarch for ambitious courtiers. Love, lust and lies are often the making of downfall - whether an ancient pharaoh or a 20th-century absolute monarch, no one is immune from scandal.



Robert de Vere crosses the Thames in disgrace after being defeated at the Battle of Radcot Bridge, 1387

THE KING'S MAN

Robert de Vere's disastrous downfall

1384 – 1394

Sometimes, becoming the king's right-hand man isn't always a winning strategy, as Robert de Vere found out. The dashing young noble - the earl of Oxford and Lord Great Chamberlain - rapidly became a favourite of Richard II when he ascended the throne in 1376. De Vere convinced the grandiose King Richard to give him more and more lofty titles, such as the marquess of Dublin and duke of Ireland - he was then able to boast that he was the first Englishman to hold those positions.

However, de Vere's ascendancy angered the nobility. The title of duke was typically reserved for close relatives of the monarch, which de Vere was not. De Vere continued his rakish path by initiating lascivious affairs and attempting to divorce his wife Philippa, the king's first cousin. A French chronicler called Froissart wrote: "This duke of Ireland twists the king round his finger and does what he likes in England."

Despite the scandal he attracted, Richard II kept his controversial advisor close. The king's powerful uncle, the duke of Gloucester (and his allies, the Lords Appellant) did not approve. So the Lords Appellant raised an army against King Richard II in 1387, and defeated de Vere's forces at Radcot Bridge in Oxfordshire. At the moment of surrender, de Vere had disappeared, having fled in disguise to the Continent. He died in 1392, aged 30, from wounds received in a valiant battle - this time, with a wild boar.

CLEOPATRA'S LOVE TRIANGLE

Eroticism and egoism in Egypt

48 BCE TO 31 BCE

Even as a teenager, Cleopatra knew how to wield her wit and beauty. Aged 18, she ascended to the Egyptian throne with her ten-year-old brother, Ptolemy XIII, but wanted it all to herself. Julius Caesar happened to be in Alexandria at the time, and Cleopatra believed getting the Roman leader on side before her brother would be key to her success. The Greek historian Plutarch writes that Cleopatra "stretched herself at full length inside a bed-sack", and her servant carried her into the palace.

What happened between the two is uncertain, but once Ptolemy XIII found out his sister had gone behind his back, he besieged the palace the power couple were in. In the nick of time, Caesar's reinforcements arrived from Syria, and Cleopatra's power was secured. In 47 BCE, she gave birth to their son Caesarion: but when the (illegitimate) new family arrived in Rome, Cleopatra found herself very unpopular with the Roman people. Things went downhill fast. Caesar named his grandnephew Octavian as his successor, before being assassinated in 44 BCE. A power struggle ensued between Octavian and the powerful General Mark Antony, and Cleopatra returned to Egypt.

Mark Antony went to meet her, as he needed money from wealthy Egypt to fund a campaign in the Parthian Empire. But clever Cleopatra had her own agenda - to expand her empire. Playing on Antony's penchant for Greek culture, she sailed up the Tarsus River dressed as Aphrodite, a vision Antony could not resist.

The two lived relatively happily until 40 BCE, when Antony's influential wife started challenging Octavian back in Rome. Antony returned to plead his innocence of the plot, but couldn't stay away from Cleopatra, and went back to Egypt in 37 BCE. Octavian saw a chance to be rid of his rival for good, and sent ships to fight Antony and Cleopatra's forces at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. The pair were defeated, their dreams of dominance in the eastern Mediterranean shattered. They took their own lives - together in the afterlife, at least, if not on the earthly plane.



Cleopatra reveals herself in the dead of night to Caesar, winning his military support and his heart

SIX WIVES... AND EVEN MORE MISTRESSES

Henry VIII's wandering eye

1510S – 1520S

Henry VIII is arguably best known for marrying six women, but his love life didn't begin and end with holy matrimony. The Tudor monarch had more than his fair share of mistresses, particularly in his early years, when he is said to have been quite the looker.

Henry's doubts about his marriage to Catherine of Aragon began creeping in around the late 1510s and early 1520s, and he wasted no time in finding extramarital affairs to satisfy his appetite. His first documented mistress was Bessie Blount, a courtier who was just a teenager when she arrived in Catherine of Aragon's household in 1513. As a 15-year-old, she was partnered with Henry in a New Year's masque performance. By 18, she was pregnant with his child. Thomas Wolsey ushered her away from London, and she soon gave birth to Henry's only acknowledged illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy. Bessie was married off in 1522, by which time Henry is believed to have moved on to his next paramour, Mary Boleyn.

The beautiful Boleyns arrived at court in 1522. Both Mary and her sister Anne were held in high esteem by Henry; their father Sir Thomas Boleyn had helped mastermind the Field of the Cloth of Gold meeting, where the French and English thrones tried to outdo each other's grandeur. Although she was already married, Mary was the first woman to catch Henry's eye - little is known about the details of their affair. All Henry admitted, when questioned about his relations with the Boleyn girls and their mother, is that his carnal relations were "never with the mother".

Mary Boleyn was a famed beauty, and Henry could resist neither her nor her dark-eyed sister Anne



LES MIGNONS

Henry III's dangerous liaisons

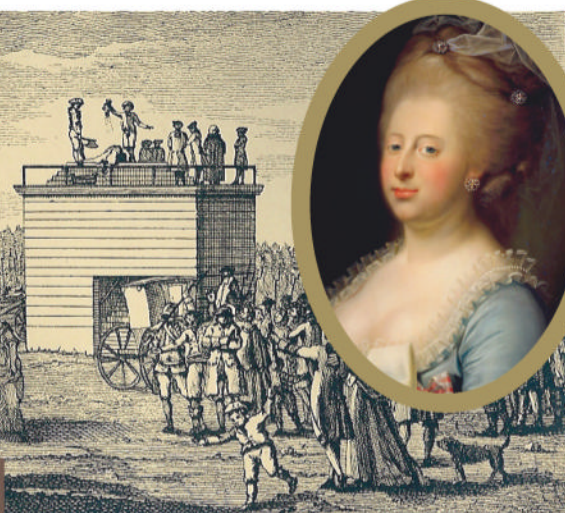
1574 – 1689

Henry III of France started his reign with much potential, but outrage was to overshadow his time on the throne. During the 16th-century French Wars of Religion, he flouted his disdain for hostile public opinion by lavishing favours on a group of male courtiers, deemed 'the Mignons' (which can mean both 'darlings' or 'minions' in French). The Mignons occasionally went with Henry on his visits to ordinary Parisian districts, but their appearance was rarely welcome. For Parisians, the Mignons represented the worst of the king's ostentatious personality.

According to a handful of chroniclers and popular poets, including the vitriolic Pierre de L'Estoile, homosexuality was said to run rife in the court of Henry III. The king was often depicted as engaging in sexual acts with 'effeminate' men, who dressed themselves in makeup and ornate clothing. However, in an age when this was common practice for wealthy men, the Mignons have perhaps been unfairly targeted.



Struensee's head is thrust in front of a cheering crowd, 1772



THE RIGHT TREATMENT

A Danish queen falls for a dashing doctor

1770 – 1772

When the young British princess Caroline Mathilde married King Christian VII of Denmark by proxy in 1766, little did she know that their union was to be an unhappy one. The king was mentally unstable - possibly the product of losing his mother at a young age, and having a brutal and violent teacher.

A young doctor from Germany, Johann Struensee, was called to treat the king in January 1769, as he had expertise in a new type of mental health treatment. He prescribed a kinder method than institutionalisation: fresh air, exercise and cutting back on alcohol, one of the king's vices. As a result, the doctor gained the trust of both the king and the queen. Christian VII made Struensee a confidante, and he had vast influence over the king's policy. It's said that the abolition of torture and capital punishment for theft in Denmark were all Struensee's doing.

Meanwhile, Caroline Mathilde fell for Struensee's charms, and the two embarked on an affair. It's widely believed that Caroline Mathilde's daughter, Louise Augusta, born in 1771, was their love child. However, their affair incensed the king's powerful mother.

A garter, given to Caroline Mathilde by Struensee, was the damning evidence used in an accusation against him of lèse-majesté (wronging a royal).

Struensee met his end in 1772 by being decapitated and dismembered. Caroline Mathilde, horrified, formally confessed to their affair and went to live out her days in exile, but died only a few years later at the age of 23.

SPARRE-CROSSED LOVERS

**A brilliant queen explores
gender boundaries**

1632 – 1654

Raised with a boy's education, Queen Christina of Sweden would never be content simply to sit on the throne and look pretty. She set about transforming Stockholm into the 'Athens of the North', a centre for education, philosophy and literature. She questioned her Lutheran religion, and preferred masculine dress to constraining feminine attire.

The 15-year-old queen was secretly engaged to marry her aunt's son Charles. However, Christina was averse to marriage. Instead, she found companionship in her lady-in-waiting, Ebba Sparre. The two were the same age and, like Christina, Ebba had suffered the loss of many close family members. Placed under the queen's protection, Ebba became 'Belle' to Christina, and the pair were inseparable. They even shared a bed, although during Sweden's chilly winter nights this was not particularly unusual.

Queen Christina ultimately broke off her engagement with Charles, preferring to keep Ebba close at all times. Christina would never marry, but as her dear companion came of age, she ensured that Belle would be well cared for by arranging for her nuptials to the younger brother of another of her favourites. Even after Christina abdicated the throne in 1654, she continued to write loving letters to her faithful Belle, who died in her early thirties in 1662.



Ebba Sparre was nicknamed 'la belle comtesse'

All images © Alamy © Getty Images



Stanisław August Poniatowski

Grigory Potemkin



Grigory Orlov

Platon Zubov



CATHERINE THE GREAT AND HER STABLE OF LOVERS

The Russian empress had a certain notoriety

1774 – 1791

Thanks to an unflattering smear campaign led by her enemies, Catherine the Great's sexual reputation precedes her. Rumours abound that the empress wasn't picky with her lovers, and had an unquenchable thirst for all things boudoir. In reality, only a small handful of men – not including her husband, Peter III – made the grade.

Catherine took her first lovers early on in her marriage to Peter, and the paternity of her children was always in question. Grigory Orlov, a Russian lieutenant, was one of her first lovers; it's said that the two actually

plotted Peter III's 1762 overthrow while the latter was off holidaying in St Petersburg. The unpopular monarch was arrested, forced to abdicate, and died under suspicious circumstances soon afterwards.

The fateful day of Catherine's coup was to bring her into contact with another future lover, Grigory Potemkin. The distinguished young general made quite the impression, though the pair did not become lovers until 1774, at the peak of Catherine's reign. Potemkin matched Catherine the Great's ambition, intellect and desire to expand Russian territory; the two

made powerful alliances and struck savvy deals with European powers. The 1783 annexing of the Crimean Khanate from the Ottoman Empire is said to be Potemkin's work. Perhaps most curiously, he is said to have had "elephantine sexual equipment", according to the prominent historian of Russia, Simon Sebag Montefiore.

Their romantic affair was deep and intense, but lasted only two years. While Catherine went on to take at least a dozen more lovers throughout the rest of her life, none of them matched Potemkin, and she was beside herself with grief when he died in 1791.

CARR CRASH

How King James' young favourite fell out of favour

1566 – 1625

King James VI of Scotland, who later also became King James I of England, attracted scandal north and south of the Scottish border. Crowned the Scottish king at just a few months old, the young James had favourites from an early age – including an older relative, the well-travelled Esmé Stewart.

In March 1607, when King James was much older, he witnessed a handsome young man called Robert Carr fall from his horse. James ensured that Carr was nursed back to health, teaching him Latin daily to keep his spirits up. Once recovered, Carr was elevated to high-powered positions, such as the earl of Somerset in 1613. Carr was disliked for his dismissive attitude, so many in James' circle sought to oust him.

The anti-Carr faction hatched a plan. The son of an MP, George Villiers, had just arrived at court, with little money or prospects. Manipulating the king's perceived homosexuality, Villiers was manoeuvred into King James' line of sight, a beautiful new person for James to fall head over heels with. The plan worked: Villiers was made a Knight of the Garter in 1614 and Carr was exiled in the same year.

Villiers was made duke of Buckingham in 1623, and as King James' memory began to fail him, Villiers took over de facto rule of the kingdom. Villiers then began building a close relationship with James' successor, Charles, and some historians have even suggested that Villiers hastened James' death to make way for Charles.



King James VI & I (inset) cast aside Carr in favour of Villiers (above)

THE HAIJBY AFFAIR

A sex scandal of the highest order

1930S



Haijby (left) and his lawyer on their way to court for Haijby's extortion trial

In 1912, an adorable boy scout, Kurt Johansson, was granted an audience with King Gustaf V of Sweden for his charitable fundraising efforts. But as he grew up, Johansson became a serial conman. He was sentenced to hard labour numerous times, and even changed his name to Kurt Haijby to reinvent himself. In the

early 1930s, he decided to open a restaurant with his wife, but owing to his criminal record could not obtain an alcohol licence. He gained an audience with King Gustaf for a second time in 1933 to plead his case, and Haijby claims that in that meeting, the 75-year-old king seduced him.

In total, the crown allegedly paid 170,000 Swedish kronor to keep Haijby quiet, including buying him a new life in America, then forcing him to emigrate to Nazi Germany. Once WWII was over, Haijby tried to publish his sordid story in 1947, but the Stockholm Police bought all 5,000 copies so it could never be seen by the public. Once Gustaf V had died, Haijby asked for an investigation into the way he had been treated by the Swedish authorities, but it backfired and he ended up being tried for extortion and sentenced to even more hard labour in 1952. Haijby was ruined, and took his own life after serving out his sentence.



PRINCESS MARGARET'S MISMATCH

A divorced war hero falls out of love with the House of Windsor

1952 – 1955

When Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in Westminster Abbey in 1953, all eyes should have been on her – but the tabloid press couldn't stop talking about her younger sister, Margaret, who was seen picking lint off the jacket of her supposed lover, air force veteran Peter Townsend. Speculation that the two were intimate had begun a year earlier, and here was 'proof'.

Townsend may have been 16 years older than the young, beautiful princess, but he was intelligent, worldly and handsome. There was just one problem: Townsend was fresh from a divorce with his wife, who had been unfaithful to him.

Queen Elizabeth II certainly felt sympathetic to her sister, but was caught in a difficult position. As the head of the Church of England, allowing her sister to marry a divorced man would directly conflict with her religious duties. Margaret,

meanwhile, needed her sister's permission to marry, but would never have gained it. She could have gone to Parliament, but that would have caused an even larger embarrassment for the family. Besides, Churchill's staunchly Conservative cabinet indicated that they did not approve and no permission would have been given.

The young princess was faced with the unenviable choice between marrying the man she loved and losing her titles and income, or giving him up in the name of the Crown. In 1955, Margaret reluctantly released a statement that she had decided not to marry Townsend. "Mindful of the Church's teaching that Christian marriage is indissoluble, and conscious of my duty to the Commonwealth, I have decided to put these considerations before any others." Margaret would marry another, Lord Snowdon, but it would end in divorce.





HH Holmes

THE FIRST SERIAL KILLER

DIGGING UP THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MAN WHO CLAIMED HE MURDERED DOZENS OF PEOPLE

Written by Callum McKelvie

"I was born with the devil in me. I could not help the fact that I was a murderer, no more than a poet can help the inspiration to sing"
HH Holmes

The horrifying crimes of serial killers have long held a macabre grip on the public's imagination. The United States has seen 3,613 serial murderers between 1900 and 2020, compared to England's 176, and the first documented case dates from two centuries ago: HH Holmes. He bragged of slaughtering 27 people, but later accounts suggest the number may have been far higher. These victims are said to have met their demise in Holmes' 'Murder Castle' - a labyrinthine nightmare of secret passages, acid baths, gas chambers and basement dissecting tables. Today, Holmes has metamorphosed into a contemporary boogeyman, his crimes almost an urban legend. So what is fact and what is fiction in the story of America's first serial killer?

Born Herman Webster Mudgett on 16 May 1861, as a young man Holmes clearly demonstrated a keen intelligence. Although he would later say he considered himself to be "below the average" in "mental ability", his intellect made him an easy target for classroom bullies. It's said that one day they forced the quiet lad to touch the bones of an anatomical skeleton (either in the schoolroom or the local doctor's office, accounts differ) hoping to terrify him. The effect, however, was quite the opposite. As Holmes stared into the skull's empty sockets, he found a strange feeling consuming him. This experience began his lifelong obsession with death - some sources state that as a child he carried out dissections on small animals and even dogs.

As a young adult he set his sights on a career in medicine, and in his early twenties he secured a place at the University



of Michigan's Department of Medicine and Surgery, graduating in 1884. It was here that he developed another interest: fraud. He quickly proved himself adept at complex swindles, robbing graves to help supply the university anatomy tables and occasionally utilising the odd cadaver in increasingly elaborate insurance scams.

By 1885 he had left Michigan (abandoning a wife and child) and moved to Chicago. Adopting the moniker HH Holmes, he worked in the pharmacy of Elizabeth Holton, until she agreed to sell her store to him. Why she did this remains a mystery, and although it's been claimed

a matter for debate - some sources claim there was a 'hanging room', gas chamber and chutes that sent his victims' remains down to the basement for disposal. Felix Northwood's *The HH Holmes Confessions* claims that the basement was home to a "laboratory", "17,000 feet of dark, twisted, airless crypt with a sumpy [submersible pump] in the gory centre," and "purpose-built ovens."

However, others such as Selzer suggest that these stories have been exaggerated. The castle did "have a number of secret rooms and secret passages", Seltzer writes, "but the city knew all about them before

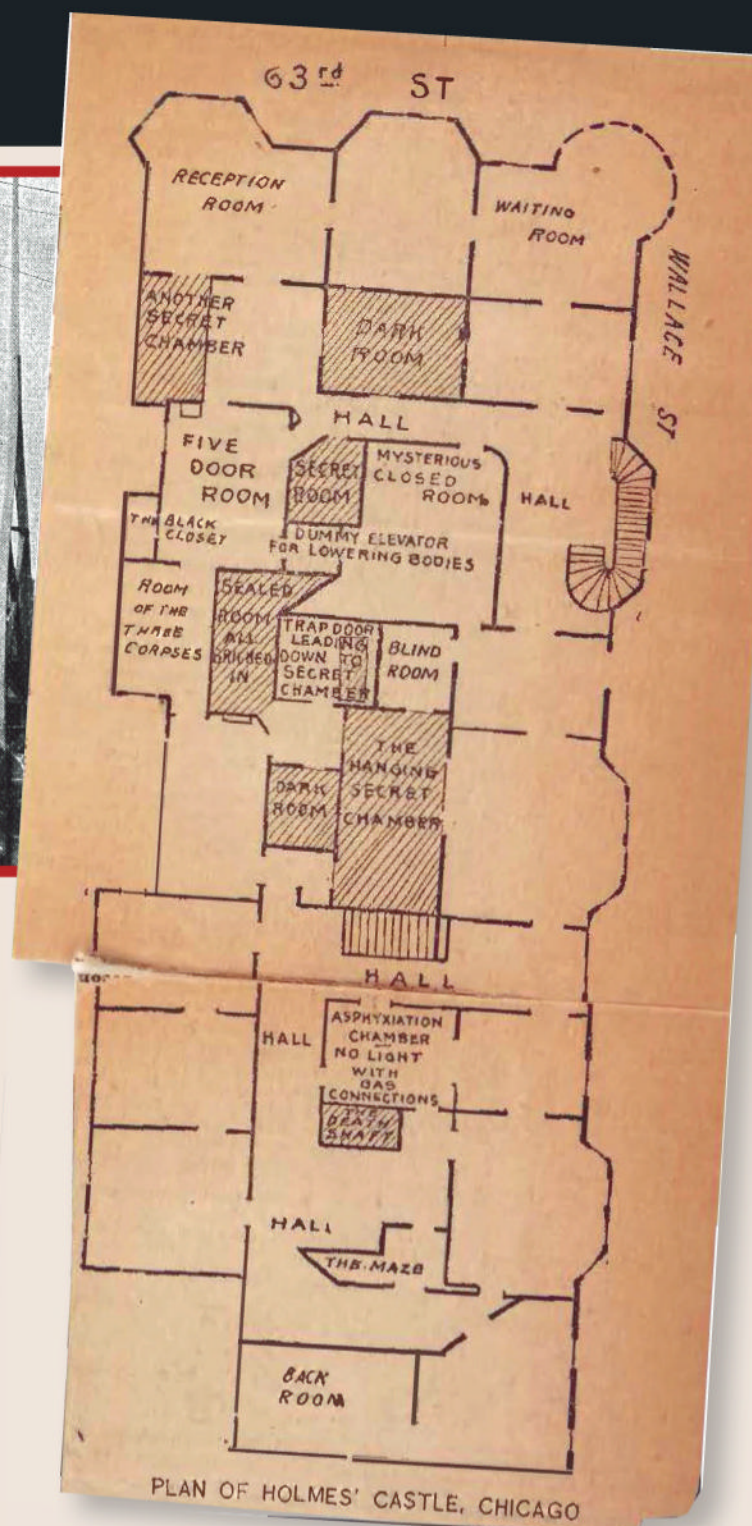
"Today, Holmes has metamorphosed into a contemporary boogeyman, his crimes almost an urban legend"

that Holton was one of Holmes' victims, Adam Selzer of *Mysterious Chicago* and numerous crime books states that she actually outlived him, passing away in 1933. Now the sole owner of the popular store, Holmes began to eye an empty plot of land across the street. Purchasing the plot, he hired numerous construction teams and borrowed much of the necessary funds to build what would later become known as his 'Murder Castle'.

The three-storey building has often mistakenly been referred to as a hotel, but the ground floor actually housed shops (including an expanded pharmacy), while the third floor contained apartments. Yet it was the second floor and basement that would become infamous. Exactly what horrors were held there continues to be

the World's Fair even opened." Holmes was discovered at some point around 1893 having used "hidden rooms to hide furniture he'd bought on credit and never paid for." That year would prove to be an important one in the creation of the HH Holmes legend, as Chicago played host to The World's Columbian Exposition - better known today as the Chicago World's Fair.

Much of the mythology surrounding Holmes claims that it was tourists visiting the fair, seeking accommodation and unwittingly staying at the 'Murder Castle', who comprised the majority of his victims. Yet it was two years prior that Holmes first committed murder, at least as far as we can tell. It's thought he began an affair with 50-year-old Julia Conner, before becoming tired of her and murdering her



ABOVE Holmes' vast 'Murder Castle' was said to contain a variety of sinister death traps

and her young daughter Pearl. Holmes was a flagrant womaniser and a number of his other victims, including 23-year-old Emelina Cigrand and 24-year-old Minnie Williams, succumbed to his charms before meeting their demise.

Despite the popularity of these claims there is only evidence that one of his likely victims had any connection to the Chicago World's Fair. So who were the others? That too remains largely unknown. According to Selzer, there are four confirmed, five probable and 27-28 suspected victims. Among them are John DeBruil, one of Holmes' wealthy investors who died supposedly after he forced him to ingest a mysterious black liquid, and Emily Van

Tassel, one of a number of missing persons possibly connected to the Holmes case.

During his incarceration in 1895, Holmes wrote an autobiography and gave an extensive interview to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, in which he confessed to 27 murders. However, many of these would prove to be false. For example, Dr Robert Leacock, supposedly one of his first victims (whose body Holmes disposed of using a large trunk that he reportedly later gifted to friends) had actually died some years earlier in 1889. Holmes also claimed to have roasted alive Mr L Warner, the owner of a glass-bending factory, inside his own kiln. But he too would later be discovered alive and well, and living in Iowa.

Ironically, it was not a murder investigation that alerted the authorities to Holmes' activities, but fraud. He had concocted a scheme with Benjamin Pitezel to fake the latter's death and collect a \$10,000 insurance payment. Pitezel had been informed by Holmes that he would acquire a corpse, similar in stature and appearance to Pitezel, to present to the insurance company. In fact it would be identical - it would be Pitezel's own. For reasons that are still unclear, Pitezel's wife Carrie stayed with Holmes and allowed her three children Alice, Nellie and Howard to remain with him. John Bartlow Martin, writing in 1943, states that Holmes worked tirelessly to convince Carrie that not only was her husband alive and well, but that her children, who had 'disappeared', were also unharmed.



ABOVE Crook Marion Hedgepath's testimony helped lead to Holmes' capture in Boston

BELOW Visitors flocked to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair - how many met their end in Holmes' 'Murder Castle'?

BELOW-RIGHT Holmes was executed on 7 May 1896. He took 20 minutes to die

Meanwhile, the law began to catch wind of Holmes' scam. Another accomplice, Marion Hedgepath, approached the police with an offer of information. A few years prior, Holmes had served a short jail term for a separate scheme, where the pair had met. In what Bartlow Martin describes as "inexplicable circumstances", Holmes told

Hedgepath every step of his plan with Pitezel. Should Hedgepath be able to recommend a reputable attorney who might help, Holmes agreed to pay him \$500. Hedgepath kept his part of the bargain, Holmes did not. Angered at Holmes' betrayal, Hedgepath informed the police of the plot and a manhunt began, which eventually led to Holmes' arrest in Boston on 17 November 1894. Earlier that year, Police Inspector Frank Geyer had discovered the bodies of two of the Pitezel children in a house in Toronto, which sparked an investigation of the 'Murder Castle' in Chicago. Holmes was tried and found guilty for the murder of four of the five members of the Pitezel family. Among criminologists, there is little doubt he was also responsible for the death of the youngest child, Howard.

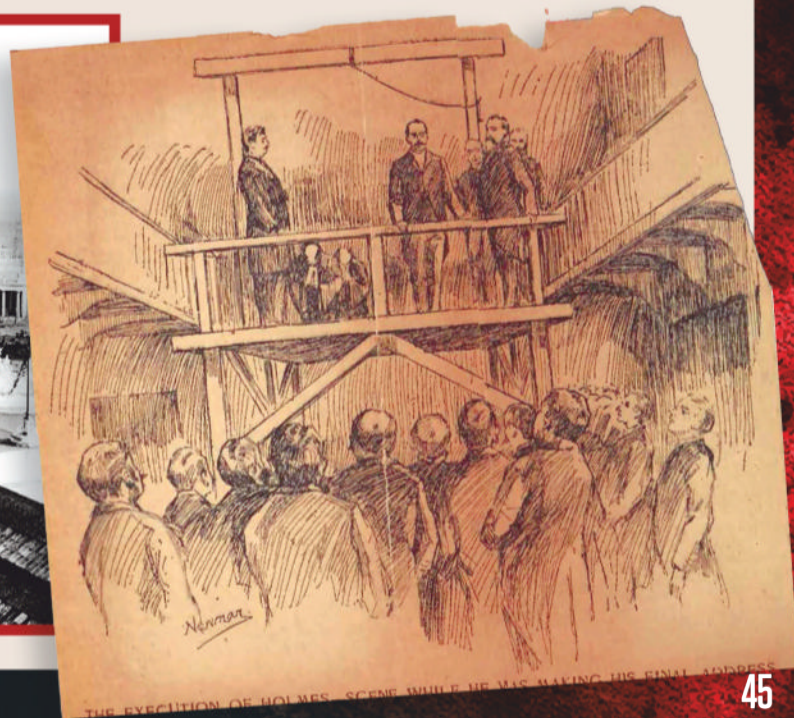
On 7 May 1896 Holmes was taken from his cell and led to the gallows. But as the trapdoor opened and he plunged down, the rope failed to snap his neck. He hung there, choking and convulsing, as life was slowly squeezed from his body. The onlookers did not intervene and merely continued to observe. After 20 minutes, Holmes was pronounced dead.

In 1895 the 'Murder Castle' had been severely damaged by fire and, at some

point during the 1930s, was finally torn down. Some of the site is now the home of the Englewood Post Office, the rest an empty patch of shrubland.

Today, the surging popularity of true-crime books and TV shows has helped further popularise the gruesome story of America's first serial killer. In fact, so strong is the legend surrounding Holmes that until 2017 rumours persisted of his survival. That same year Jeff Mudgett, Holmes' descendant, presented *American Ripper*, in which he attempted to prove his ancestor was also responsible for the Jack the Ripper murders in London. As part of the research, Mudgett granted permission for Holmes' grave to be disinterred. Terrified that he might become a target for grave robbers - perhaps due to his own lack of respect for the deceased - Holmes had requested his grave be filled with concrete. Because of this decomposition had not occurred as extensively as might be expected, with some of Holmes' moustache remaining intact. DNA was extracted and the corpse confirmed to have indeed been Holmes.

Now more myth than man, attempting to analyse the true story of America's first serial killer is a complex investigation in itself. With America's so-called 'yellow press' (sensationalist newspapers) of the time fixating on every gruesome rumour, as well as likely inventing several more, legends of Holmes' infamy persist to this day, despite the fact he was only convicted for the murders of the Pitezel family. Unfortunately, the true extent of his crimes, as well as the identities of any further victims, are now likely lost to time. ○



Medieval Pilgrimages

From penance to indulgence, everything you need to know about Christian holy journeys in Middle Ages Europe

Written by Emily Staniforth

For centuries, pious people have undertaken long, arduous journeys to display their religious devotion and visit sites of spiritual significance. These ventures, known as pilgrimages, also served as spiritual and moral journeys for an individual who wished to bring themselves closer to their god, expunge themselves of sin or heal themselves from a specific malady. Pilgrims travelled to a number of different destinations, from large religious buildings and historic sites, to places of religious significance such as shrines to saints or holy historical figures.

It's unclear when the first Christian pilgrimage in Europe took place, but by the 4th century CE they were a well-

established aspect of Christian faith. During the Middle Ages, the Christian Church was one of the main pillars of most communities and religion had a significant role in day-to-day life. Pilgrimages were encouraged by the Church as a way of spiritually cleansing oneself and strengthening your relationship with God. For the Church, pilgrimages also provided an opportunity to make money. Indulgences were paid by people to reduce their punishment for sins that had already been absolved through confession, and donations at shrines and other holy places filled the Church purse.

WHO WERE THE PILGRIMS?

It's a misconception that most people of Middle Ages Europe had little opportunity to travel. Anyone could





A scene from the legendary
4th century tale of Saint
Ursula's pilgrimage to Rome
accompanied by 11,000 virgins

© Getty Images

go on a pilgrimage, and many ordinary people made lengthy journeys to visit a specific holy site at least once in their lifetime. In fact, some historians have estimated that around one-fifth of Europe's population went on some kind of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages. While travelling to far-flung sites like Jerusalem or Constantinople, or to holy shrines closer to home, pilgrims travelled on foot or horseback and occasionally by boat. These journeys could be hard on the body and soul, but the primitive nature of a pilgrimage meant they were accessible to everyone. As particular pilgrimage routes across Europe became more and more popular during the Golden Age of Pilgrimage (between 1000 and 1500), new roads were built and facilities like inns were established to accommodate the number of pilgrims travelling. The majority travelled during the summer months when the weather was drier, making the trip easier.

Pilgrimage was also used in some judicial systems in Europe as a form of penance to atone for worldly crimes such as murder, adultery and assault, and the associated spiritual sin. Crimes with religious connotations such as blasphemy and sorcery were also punishable by enforced pilgrimage.

For those of a higher social status going on pilgrimage, such as European nobility and royalty, the journey may have been somewhat easier as they sometimes travelled in carriages rather than on foot. However, on some pilgrimage routes the roads were not suitable for carriages so they too may also have had to walk. Arguably one of the most famous instances of an elite individual on pilgrimage is Henry II's journey of penance to Canterbury in 1174. Four years earlier in 1170 his knights had murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket,



who had been an adversary of the English king and his plans for the Church. He was struck down at the altar of Canterbury Cathedral following a misunderstanding of the king's wishes. Henry was shocked by the brutal and sacrilegious death of

These journeys could be hard on the body and soul

Becket, as was much of Christian Europe, and many Christians visited Canterbury to pay homage to the martyred archbishop, who would later be canonised by the Catholic Church. Henry II sent the knights responsible for his death to Rome to seek forgiveness from the pope. As part of their penance, they were dispatched on their own pilgrimage to serve as knights in the Holy Land. Henry II himself undertook a pilgrimage to pay penance for the death of Becket, for which he took responsibility. Walking barefoot to Canterbury Cathedral, the king kissed the newly erected shrine for Becket and submitted to being flogged.

WOMEN ON PILGRIMAGE

Though women in the Middle Ages were excluded from many things, pilgrimage

was not one of them. The earliest surviving record of a pilgrimage was actually written by Egeria, a noblewoman from the Galicia region of Spain in the 4th century. She recorded her lengthy pilgrimage that saw her travel across the world to visit places with biblical significance, and her account tells of her journeys to Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Jerusalem among other destinations between 381 and 384 CE.

Another early female pilgrim was Bona de Pisa, an Augustinian nun whose devotion saw her make her first pilgrimage to Jerusalem in around 1170 when she was only a teenager. More remarkably, she did not travel with other pilgrims but instead undertook the journey alone. Throughout her life, Bona completed a further pilgrimage to Rome and nine pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, during which she guided other pilgrims on their journeys. Her association with pilgrimages has made her own burial

place in Pisa, Italy, a site of pilgrimage for many Christians.

There are also a number of medieval queens who journeyed to holy sites, including Isabella of Portugal, who followed the Portuguese Way to Santiago de Compostela in 1325 and 1335. However, ordinary women also went on pilgrimages to far flung sites and local shrines. Historians have studied 'miracle collections' (records written by monks that charted the miraculous events associated with each holy site) that give indications of both male and female pilgrims attending the sacred places across Europe.

JOURNEYING TO THE HOLY LAND

Arguably the most holy of destinations was Jerusalem in the Middle East. From the 4th century, Jerusalem was part of the Byzantine Empire, until it came under Islamic control in the 7th century. It was Jerusalem's strong connection to the Christian religion that enticed so many pilgrims to visit the ancient city. According to the *New Testament*, the last days of Jesus Christ, including the crucifixion and resurrection, played out at sites across the city, making it one of the most important locations for Christians around the world.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, consecrated in 335 CE after being established by Roman Emperor Constantine, was one of the most-visited places in Jerusalem for pilgrims wanting to follow in the footsteps of

LEFT Henry II travelled to Canterbury for penance at the shrine of Thomas Becket

BELOW The Knights Templar was established to protect pilgrims on their journey to the Holy Land



Europe's Medieval Pilgrimage Routes

Some of the most-travelled roads to Santiago de Compostela, Jerusalem and Rome



- FROM IRELAND
- FROM SPAIN
- FROM SCANDINAVIA
- FROM BELGIUM
- FROM ITALY

RIGHT In the Middle Ages many people from all walks of life went on pilgrimage to various destinations

Jesus. The church was built around two major religious sites: the site of Christ's crucifixion and the tomb that was found empty after his resurrection. The church has been restored and rebuilt many times since the 4th century and it remains an important pilgrimage site to this day.

Pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem in the Middle Ages would walk the Way of the Cross (also known as the Way of Suffering) towards the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This route is said to be the path walked by Jesus as he carried the cross to his crucifixion. Since the 4th century, this route has transformed through a number of iterations, each of which have taken pilgrims past other significant sites from the last days of Christ's life, such as the



Healing Sites

Pilgrims made journeys to some places to be treated and cured

While not a medieval pilgrimage site, Lourdes in France is one of the most popular modern pilgrimage destinations due to its association with miracles from the 19th century. In 1858, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared on 18 occasions to a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous in a cave called the Massabielle Grotto. During one of these apparitions, Mary directed Bernadette to a spring. People who later drank the water from the spring reported instances of miraculous healing.

Today, around six million Christians from around the world travel to Lourdes every year to visit the grotto and benefit from the alleged effects of the 'healing water'. Taps are available at the Massabielle Grotto and within the Lourdes sanctuary that allow pilgrims to drink the water from the spring. Pilgrims to the site are also given the opportunity to bathe in the spring waters by using the specially created baths that are operated by volunteers of the Hospitality of Our Lady of Lourdes.



Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives, before ending at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A definitive route was eventually designated as Via Dolorosa, a processional path through Jerusalem to the church that was marked by stations of the cross (14 images that depict moments from the crucifixion). Pilgrims to this day travel down Via Dolorosa.

It's important to note that Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, and today, was not only a site of religious significance to Christians, it was also a sacred city to followers of Judaism and Islam. In the Jewish religion, Jerusalem is considered important and holy as the spiritual home of the Jews. For Muslims, Jerusalem is the third most holy site after Mecca and Medina. Alongside Christians, Jews and Muslims also made pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

Though there is no way to determine the exact numbers of Christians who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, it is estimated that tens of thousands of European pilgrims may have visited the Holy Land during the medieval period. Given the physical distance and hardships of such a journey, it is impressive that so many people dedicated their time and money to making the trip and highlights its importance.

DEFENDING THE PILGRIMS

Jerusalem was not an easy destination to reach for medieval Europeans. The journey was a long one and dangerous, with the threat of bandits and pirates lurking on the route. Moreover, in 638, Jerusalem

was conquered by the Islamic Rashidun Caliphate, which made the destination more difficult to reach for Christians. However, these dangers and difficulties did not dissuade them.

One of the greatest indicators of the number of pilgrims travelling across Europe to the Holy Land, and their vulnerability on the journey, was the establishment in 1118 of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon, more commonly known as the Knights Templar. This Catholic organisation was originally set up to protect the vast number of religious pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem, and its influence, prominence and responsibilities expanded over time. Other orders were also established across Europe to protect pilgrims on their journeys, including the Knights of Saint James, also known as the Order of Santiago, which monitored pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela.

PILGRIMAGES TO ITALY AND SPAIN

Aside from Jerusalem, Rome was an incredibly popular pilgrimage destination in the Middle Ages. Easier and safer to get to, the city was significant to Christians as the burial place of both Saint Peter, the leader of Christ's disciples, and Saint Paul, who spread the word of Christ. Peter and Paul were executed in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero and were said to be buried in the city. The tomb of Saint Peter, who is traditionally remembered as the first bishop of Rome

(in other words the first pope) appointed by Jesus, was buried close to the site of his execution on Vatican Hill. In the 4th century, Constantine oversaw the building of Saint Peter's Basilica at the site and during the medieval period it was this church that welcomed Christian pilgrims. The basilica was later rebuilt in the 16th century. Some historians have posited that millions of European pilgrims visited sites in Rome connected with Peter and Paul during the Middle Ages.

In Galicia, Spain, the city of Santiago de Compostela was another major site of Christian medieval pilgrimage. Traditionally recognised as the burial place of Saint James, one of Christ's 12 apostles, the town was frequented by an estimated 250,000 pilgrims every year in the 12th and 13th centuries. Saint James had been beheaded in Jerusalem in 44 CE, after which it's said his body was carried by boat to Galicia, where he was buried. The first church was built over Saint James' tomb in 829, though the Santiago

de Compostela Archcathedral Basilica that still stands today was built between 1075 and 1211. Pilgrims reached the final destination of the cathedral by walking the routes known collectively as Saint James' Way or the Camino de Santiago, a web of roads that brought pilgrims from their local parishes across Europe to Santiago de Compostela.

"Jerusalem's strong connection to the Christian religion enticed many pilgrims to visit the ancient city"

MORE HOLY SITES OF EUROPE

Though Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela were the three most popular sites of medieval pilgrimage in Europe, there were many other destinations travelled to by those wishing to embark on a spiritual journey. Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey), was one such site that attracted some European pilgrims due to the number

of notable Christian relics located in the city. For example, the relic of the Crown of Thorns that was worn by Jesus during his crucifixion was transferred from Jerusalem to Constantinople some time during the 11th century. It is also believed that the sacred Shroud of Turin was located in Constantinople until the 12th century.

It is important to note that not all pilgrimages were huge international journeys. Many ordinary people sought spiritual succour from smaller trips to local places of religious significance, of which there were many across Europe.

In England, the shrine of martyred Archbishop Thomas Becket attracted many medieval pilgrims. Other saintly shrines across the country also saw high numbers of visitors seeking absolution, healing, spiritual enlightenment and miracles. The shrine of Saint Swithun in Winchester, Saint Alban's Cathedral, Glastonbury (due to its association with the Holy Grail) and the Shrine of Our Lady in Walsingham, Norfolk, were all popular English sites of pilgrimage.

France's Mont-Saint Michel was also a much-frequented pilgrimage site due to its association with the Archangel Michael. Medieval pilgrims made the journey to the sacred island in Normandy to find an 'assurance of eternal life' from the patron angel. In Scandinavia, the foremost pilgrim destination was the tomb of Saint Olav, Norway's patron saint, in Trondheim.

MODERN PILGRIMAGE

While Christian pilgrimages in Europe were at their height during the medieval period, they never ceased. Pilgrims have continued to travel to Christian holy sites across Europe and the wider world and the practice is still going strong today, with Christian pilgrims numbering in the millions every year. For example, in 2024 over 400,000 people completed the Camino de Santiago. For the Catholic Church's 2025 Jubilee Year, the Holy Door at Saint Peter's in Rome was opened for the first time in 10 years and saw over 1.3 million pilgrims process through it within the first month.

As Christian pilgrims travel to Europe's sacred sites today they, perhaps unknowingly, follow in the footsteps of thousands of people who have been travelling the same roads ever since the Middle Ages. ○

LEFT Saint Ursula announces her intention to go on a pilgrimage





Mao's



毛主席革命路

DISASTER PLAN

How a lethal mixture of arrogance, fear and blind faith condemned millions of Chinese to death

Written by **Chris Fenton**



线胜利万

In 1940 China was in a state of utter turmoil. The country was overrun with foreign invaders, the government was powerless, and the workers fought among themselves for the scraps falling from the tables of petty warlords. How had the celestial kingdom come to this? The communists knew the answer - through the arrogance and pomposity of China's noble emperors. Communism changed all that and chased away the 'foreign devils', pushed aside their rightist puppets and by 1949 had established a people's China. The self-styled driving force behind this revolution was Mao Zedong, the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and a man of the people.

Rising from proletariat beginnings in rural Hunan, Mao had grown up with revolutionary fervour in his veins. Having witnessed the destruction of Chinese power and heritage during the early 20th century, he had become a committed nationalist and later a communist, dedicating himself to the restoration of Chinese power through collective struggle. He had seen the Chinese people's spirit when properly motivated during the Communist Party's retreat into the mountains (the Long March), and the triumph of communist ideals after the destruction of the fascists led by Chiang Kai-shek, his greatest rival. Now, under his leadership, China would be great again.

Mao's plan was to instigate a radical industrialisation of the Chinese countryside, creating mass communes to produce grain, rice and steel to turn the country into a superpower. The population was to be organised on a mass scale. This was no time to think small: China's strength was in its vast population and the entire country had to be put to work. These reforms would combine to form the Great Leap Forward. Mao ignored economists who argued for a gradual industrialisation process rather than a single quick bound and those who said that the post-feudal Chinese society couldn't handle so much change so quickly. Anyone who got in the way of his vision was deemed to be against Mao and therefore an obstacle to China recognising its true potential. So, in May 1958, the Communist Party agreed to Mao's proposals. China braced itself for its transformation into a workers' paradise. What followed was one of the worst humanitarian disasters in history.

The mobilisation and ideological conditioning of the Chinese people was absolutely key. Under Mao's plans, all private property and private action was to be banned. Every Chinese rural worker was forced into communes thousands strong to create a mass land army to produce grain that would pay for new equipment from abroad and lead to the production of steel. Under the commune system workers would sleep in dormitories, eat in huge communal kitchens and work an "18-hour working day, with six hours for rest", as the *People's Daily*, Mao's propaganda newspaper, proudly proclaimed. There no room for traditional Chinese family roles in the new collectivist utopia - children were sent to mass crèches and women into the fields to work.

Party officials would herd villagers in the fields to sleep and to work intolerable hours, forcing them to walk to distant additional projects. Some villagers wept as they watched their homes being destroyed to make way for the mass communes. One villager cried: "Destroying my home is even worse than digging up my ancestor's gravestone!" ▶

"Mao's ideology had shackled a grim existence of absolute poverty to the provinces and killed millions"

Mao was delighted and commented: "The notion of utopia mentioned by our predecessors will be realised and surpassed."

Initial results sent back to Beijing were better than he could possibly have hoped for. The harvest was so good that workers were encouraged to eat five meals a day in the communal food halls. As one commune worker put it: "It was real communism... we got to eat things made from wheat flour every day and they were always slaughtering pigs for us. For a while it seemed that they were telling the truth and we were going to enter heaven."

Mao saw no need to wait for grain production to start rendering export capital and commanded steel production to start immediately. He instigated a cottage industry for the steel programme - Chinese urban dwellers and rural workers were told to make steel in their backyards with primitive furnaces. Foreign visitors were impressed when they visited Beijing and saw the city lit up with the contained fires of Mao's mini steel plants in the back gardens of his comrades. As one commune member recalled: "The more metal you collected, the more revolutionary you were."

Mao instructed grain harvesting to be switched to cash crops such as cotton and for steel production to be given the highest priority. The figures for the 1958 harvest showed there was more than enough food to go around so, as far as Mao was concerned, China should continue to bound forward. In August, he raised the target for steel production from six to nine million tons. Provincial leaders spoke of unleashing surprise attacks into the fields with shock armies of mobilised labour to gather in cotton and begin collecting metal for steel production. War was also declared on flies, rats, mosquitoes and grain-eating sparrows. As the weather closed in and Chinese workers began to feel the grind of their 48-hour days, loudspeakers in every commune boomed out Party propaganda: "Our workers are strong, the people's communes are good!" By now grain was being left out in the field as workers frantically scrambled through their communes trying to find raw material for their backyard steel plants.

Party ideology was relentless and the eradication of sparrows became fanatical, but by killing them there were no longer any predators to kill the insects that were now destroying crops. Other such contradictory policies emerged: Mao's obsession with steel production meant there were no longer enough workers to bring in crops, and they rotted in the fields as food reserves diminished.

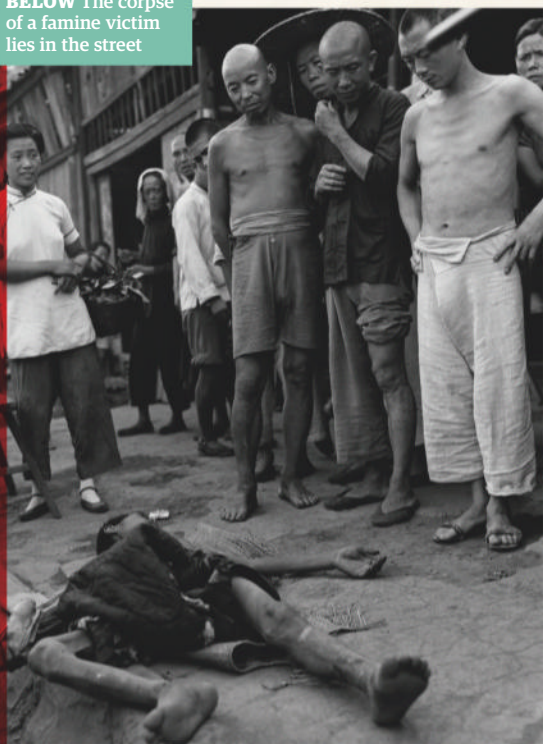
The ideological pressure worked so well that no one really knew China was marching headlong into a disaster until it was too late. The 1958 harvest was modestly successful, but no one wanted to be the one to tell Mao that it wasn't a resounding success. A poor harvest followed but the workers were encouraged to "fill their bellies until they burst", and as a result the food supplies were quickly consumed. Since the commune system had not envisaged transporting large amounts of food to other locations, food could not be moved to the areas that were now suffering from famine. In a Guangdong commune a six-month supply of rice was eaten in 20 days. The old and weak soon started to die of starvation.

The violent hysteria Maoism had created was now directed against the people, as starving Chinese workers began to weaken through malnutrition and the nightmare poverty of the commune system. Special criticism sessions were established by Party officials within rural villages and miscreants who were not meeting the required working standards were paraded in front of the village as Communist Party members forced other villagers to beat and humiliate the accused. The good harvests indicated by the official statistics meant Mao continued to insist that steel was brought in to build his great utopia.

Thousands of rural peasants were forced through beatings and intimidation to abandon food production and concentrate on making steel from their furnaces despite the hunger they were now experiencing. One communist inspector noted on the punishments: "Commune members too sick to work are deprived of food. It hastens their deaths."

The persecution in rural areas was terrible, but things were even worse for urban dwellers. Constant Party propaganda, mixed with the terrifying prospect of being selected for criticism meant they had to toe the line and endure the endless working hours. Industrial accidents in factories were commonplace due to

BELOW The corpse of a famine victim lies in the street



The Little Red Book



毛泽东思想万岁!

Mao's *Little Red Book*, more formally known as *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*, details the deepest aspects of his world view. It was first compiled during the Great Leap Forward by committed Maoist Lin Biao in 1960. While the original text is a tedious diatribe collecting over 400 quotes about the 'evils' of capitalism and the need for continuous revolution against the bourgeoisie, its condensed version, the *Little Red Book*, was used extensively during the Cultural Revolution by Maoists after the failure of the Great Leap Forward.

The book preached non-violence to solve internal disputes and democracy among the instruments of the Communist Party but also highlighted unity and continuous revolution as key to a successful communist state. These contradictory lines resulted in violence among fanatical Maoist supporters and the supposed enemies of the state during the Cultural Revolution. Critics have argued that the book's publication was little more than an attempt to raise the profile of Mao after the failure of the Great Leap, even though he insisted it represented his inner thoughts about Marxism. Despite Mao's disapproval of profit-making enterprises in the book, he wasn't above claiming millions in royalties when it became a bestseller - only the Bible has more copies in circulation.



ABOVE Mao announces the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949

BELOW The Kuhsien steel mill in Changchi city added about 220 small furnaces in seven days, increasing the daily steel output from 90 to 2,150 tons



exhaustion and Soviet advisors teaching the industrial techniques left after abuse and molestation by Mao's officials, taking with them their expert knowledge. When asked about production figures, a typical response from one foreman was: "Day in, day out, they telephone for figures... who cares if they are true or false? Everyone is just going through the motions." One man had his ears chopped off, was tied up with wire and branded with a white-hot tool after he stole a potato from a communal plot near a factory. The workers' utopia had become a proletarian nightmare.

As the summer of 1958 turned into the harsh winter of early 1959, the supposedly glorious Great Leap had turned into a cold drop into the abyss. The decision to carry on regardless rested with the workers' paradise itself - China and its rotten communist system. There was no doubt in the mind of Mao that the Great Leap was working at the end of 1958, but this was because the system had fostered diehard communist rhetoric and by 1959 that's all that Mao was hearing.

Part of the great Maoist vision was to enable communes to organise themselves - subject to strict Party controls - and give them centrally dictated grain and produce quotas that the provisional leaders had to meet. Of course, it would take a brave man (or a suicidal one) to return to the communist leadership anything other than glowing reports of fabulous harvests and

content workers. Local leaders from Sichuan province were often compelled to revise their grain figures upwards if the original amount was felt to be not what the Party wanted to hear. Doctored photos were taken for the *People's Daily* of children lying on tightly packed wheat 1.8 metres high. It was a delusion; the people were starving but the Party swallowed the lie and Mao insisted on bigger targets, which created a culture of deceit. If one area had a high grain production, whether falsified or not, its neighbouring area would double their figures. Even the Mao-endorsed furnace was a fabrication. The high-quality steel he saw from the prototype was probably imported from one of the Soviet-model factories outside of Beijing.

This was Mao's fantasy world, and it was lethal. By the end of 1959, as the full force of the disaster unfolded, the time China would need to overtake Britain economically was slashed from 15 years to five and then down to two by the Party. One of the first communes in Henan was named 'Let us overtake England'. Its inhabitants starved after their farmers were sent to produce steel and their fields flooded due to poor irrigation control. Locusts ate what was left of their crops. Terrified provisional leaders carefully managed tours by Party leaders.

At the beginning of 1959, Marshal Peng Dehuai, a ranking People's Liberation Army soldier who was deeply committed

"The Great Leap was no longer about grain, communism or even China. It was about Mao and his unquenchable ambition"

to the wellbeing of the peasant farmers, visited the communes and was appalled. He was convinced that the Leap had been a disaster. He talked to the emaciated peasants trying desperately to manufacture steel even though they were starving and asked: "Hasn't any one of you given a thought to what you will eat next year if you don't bring in the crops? You're never going to be able to eat steel." The response was typical: "True enough, but who would stand up against this wind [command]?" Even Peng himself thought better of saying anything to the Chairman.

Then in the summer of 1959, after seeing the latest fabricated figures from the communes, Peng could restrain himself no longer. He wrote to Mao describing the Great Leap as a "wind of exaggeration". Mao's response was to throw a tantrum and in a speech to the Party describe Peng as a "bourgeois rightist". Peng was forced out of Mao's inner circle to live among the peasants. The standard line from the Party was spoken by a Mao favourite, Shanghai leader Ke Qingshi: "We should obey the Chairman to the extent of total abandon, in every respect - thinking, perspective, foresight and method - we are way behind [Mao]."

The beginning of 1960 brought with it grim statistics. Average available grain per head had dropped from 311kg in 1958 to 191kg in 1960. Mao's ideology, coupled with the corrupt, sycophantic communist system, had killed millions. People were eating tree bark and gnawing at corpses lying in the streets in a country that was supposedly producing 596 million tons of grain a year.

Mao was convinced it was everyone else's fault. He blamed the provincial officials for not following his reforms closely enough, then for following them too rigidly. He blamed the Party in 1959 when he sensed that the officials were starting to move away from him, which after the Leap's failure was becoming glaringly obvious. His rants became more drawn out, claiming the revolution was "under a combined attack from within and outside the Party." He purged anyone who wasn't feeding him the lies he wanted to hear. In the end, he blamed communism itself. In a

heated speech to the Party after reports that peasants were dying of exhaustion, he said: "If you don't follow me, I'll do it myself... even to the lengths of abandoning my Party membership and even to the extent of bringing a suit against Marx himself." The Great Leap was no longer about grain, communism or even China. It was about Mao and his unquenchable ambition.

As the months rolled by in 1960 and the population became weaker and weaker, he began to realise the country was in turmoil. The USA offered humanitarian aid and, in a final act of humiliation, so did Japan. The Party members became more vocal in their dissent, but he used his usual form of intimidation. He threatened to purge dissenters, even going so far as saying: "I will go into the countryside to lead the peasants to overthrow the government." The intensity of these tantrums was only matched by the gulf between his delusions and reality. The famine had crippled large parts of the country's infrastructure; the only official organ that was working was the Communist Party and its lackeys. Even if Mao's supporters were willing to follow him through another civil war, the population was no longer physically capable of fighting one.

Finally, in 1960, Mao approved some roll-back on the Great Leap. He allowed the economic planner Chen Yun to cut back on steel production and concentrate on farming grain. The farcical quota system was made more attainable and thousands of industrialisation projects were cancelled. It was all far too late. Over 30 million Chinese citizens lay dead, mostly due to starvation but a good portion due to the savage punishments imposed by Party officials. Some official Communist Party figures put the figure at 40 million dead.

By the end of 1960 China was in hell once again, but this new hell was called Maoism. His ideology and propaganda had convinced the people to starve themselves and forced the communist system to hasten their fates.

On Mao's birthday that year Party officials dined on bird's nest soup, baby doves, shark's fin and the finest wine. The event was noted for the vast amounts of alcohol consumed, with at least one top-ranking official falling down drunk.

Around the same time a peasant recalled the death she'd witnessed due to the famine: "The people were numb, you just carried on as usual - no fear of death, no emotion for the living." ○

MAO'S VISION

May 1958

The Great Leap Forward begins. Millions of Chinese workers are inspired and motivated by Maoist communism, striving to shake off their feudal existence and become happy, productive state workers.

Harvest 1958

The harvest in 1958 is so bountiful and the commune system is working so well that Mao insists workers eat five meals a day in the communal kitchens, fulfilling the ideal of the workers' paradise.

April 1959

The timetable for overtaking Britain is shrunk from 15 to two years. The workers are producing grain, cotton and steel in such large quantities that export capital is building huge industrial cities.

June 1959

Mao addresses the Lushan Party conference in triumph. He has stared down the capitalists in America and the class traitors in the Soviet Union that told him he couldn't make China into a world power.

1960

China has become so powerful that the Western imperialists are forced to treat with Mao on his terms. American bases in Japan are forced to close and a cowed Soviet Union now takes its lead from a dominant Beijing.

CHINA'S REALITY

The Great Leap Forward begins. Millions of Chinese workers are displaced and forced to relinquish all private property, leave their ancestral homes and begin grinding 18-hour work days.

The 1958 harvest succeeds, but the Party overestimates its success to please Mao. In reality there is not enough food in the country for the workers and reserves are depleted by the communal kitchens.

Fifteen provinces are now suffering from drought and 25 million people need urgent food relief. There is no help forthcoming from the government as the Party had not planned for such an eventuality. The workers are suppressed.

Mao is forced to fight for his position at the Lushan conference. Loud voices in the Party are now saying that the country is in chaos. As a final act of humiliation, China is offered food aid by America and the old enemy Japan.

With the country in chaos and over 30 million people dead, Mao's power within the Party weakens. He is forced to accept partial blame for the Great Leap and allows Party officials to roll back his plans.



Mao visits farmers in 1958 to congratulate them on high yields

Failures

COMMUNAL EATING

Maoist communism commanded the people to live side by side in communes and eat together in communal kitchens. When the Great Leap started workers were encouraged to eat as much as they wanted in the communal kitchens. What followed was severe food shortages as the harvests could not support such demand for food and the communist system wasn't strong enough to provide food aid to all parts of the country. This led to famine.

STEEL FURNACES

Mao's backyard steel industry was a disaster from the beginning and the prototype he saw probably did not produce the high-quality steel he was shown. Feeding low-quality metal into the furnaces only served to create low-quality produce, meaning the workers were wasting their time. After millions of starving workers tried to produce steel rather than food, Mao was convinced to leave steel production to proper industrial facilities and skilled workers.

IRRIGATION

Thousands of starving peasants died creating ill-conceived and poorly planned irrigation projects throughout China. Mao knew the importance of irrigation to a country that had a vast amount of land and an unpredictable climate, but he had expelled the Soviet engineers sent to help China establish such large projects. The irrigation projects that were built created droughts in some areas and flooding in others as poorly trained Chinese agriculture engineers were ordered to set about irrigating Chinese fields without expert guidance.



A prisoner is subjected to public criticism

Production 1958-61

GRAIN

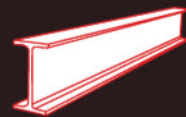


Years



Million metric tons

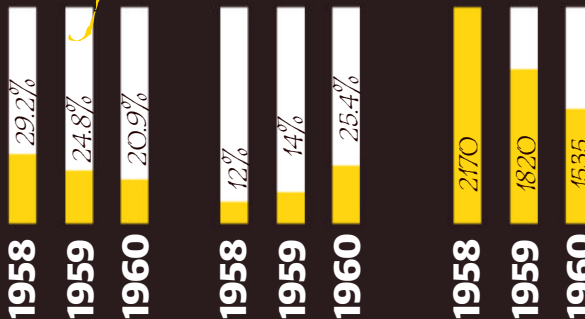
STEEL



RICE



Population 1958-61



BIRTH RATE

DEATH RATE

CALORIES PER DAY

OVERALL FIGURES

38,000,000

estimated deaths due to starvation

10,729,000

estimated deaths due to punishment/internment

Specific events

HENAN

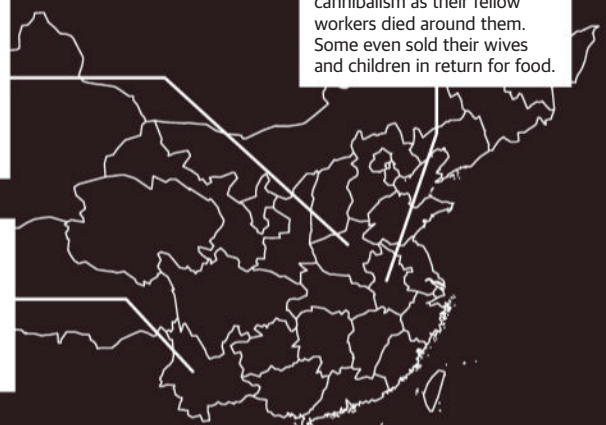
Party militias fanned out across the country and brutalised the population to force them to work. According to one researcher in Daoxian county, 10 per cent of those who died during the Leap were "buried alive, clubbed to death or otherwise killed by Party members."

YUNNAN

As a high-profile Mao supporter, the leader of Yunnan instructed his workers to work day and night for two weeks to increase steel and rice production. Thousands died from exhaustion as a result.

ANHUI

In one of the areas worst affected by the famine, workers resorted to cannibalism as their fellow workers died around them. Some even sold their wives and children in return for food.





BEWARE BABA YAGA

Folklore expert Willow Winsham explains the history behind the mystery of this fearsome witch from Slavic legend

Written by Callum McKelvie

Tales of witches have existed throughout history and across many different cultures. At one point considered a very real and serious threat, these alleged enchantresses have also permeated popular culture through folklore, myths and fairytales. One of the most fearsome witches originates in the legends of the Slavic peoples: Baba Yaga. This terrifying sorceress with a monstrous visage travels in a flying mortar with a pestle and lives in a house that stands on huge chicken-like legs. Here, folklore expert Willow Winsham tells us all about the history of this mythical - and certainly unique - witch.

Who, or what, is Baba Yaga?

Baba Yaga is an iconic witch-like figure from Slavic folk and fairytales. She has become one of the most prominent and well-recognised characters in Slavic mythology, and is also a familiar figure across folklore as a whole.

EXPERT BIO



WILLOW WINSHAM

Winsham is an author and historian specialising in the history of folklore and myth, which she regularly writes about in her blog *The Weird, The Witch and The Wonderful*. Among her numerous books are *England's Witchcraft Trials* and *The Treasury of Folklore* series, which she co-authored with Dee Dee Chainey.

An old, wizened hag of the forest, at first glance Baba Yaga appears to be the stereotypical 'evil witch figure' that is found in many stories. A closer examination of her character, however, reveals quite the opposite: she is in fact a highly nuanced and multifaceted character, a fact that explains her popularity.

Although generally portrayed as a single figure, in some stories, such as *The Maiden Tsar*, there are actually three Baba Yagas, an intriguing trio in the vein of the three Fates, or Norns, of mythology.

What are some of Baba Yaga's appearance and main characteristics?

In appearance, Baba Yaga is the stereotypical hag-like witch figure. Old and hunched, she has long straggly hair, sharp, uneven teeth, and is dirty and dishevelled. Repulsive and wicked, Baba Yaga is often presented as the personification of evil. There is another side to her character, however, and in such tales Baba Yaga is actually seen to help the hero or heroine in their quest.

“ONE MAJOR WAY IN WHICH BABA YAGA DIFFERS FROM MANY OTHER WITCH FIGURES IS THAT SHE’S OFTEN PORTRAYED AS NOT BEING ENTIRELY EVIL”

Like many fairytale hags, Baba Yaga is said to live deep in the forest. Her house is a magical hut that rests on chicken legs, giving the impression of being on stilts. In some stories, the house can move or spin around, either through some sentience of its own or through Baba Yaga’s magic. Surrounding the hut is a fence made from human skeletons: topped with skulls, it also has a gate made from bones with locks made from human jaws and teeth. As if not already terrifying enough, the skulls glow with fire at night, either to lure travellers close or as a warning to stay well away.

Another well-known and distinctive characteristic of Baba Yaga is her chosen mode of transportation. Although she can sometimes be seen flying on a broom like the average witch, her preferred method of getting from place to place is to ride in a massive iron mortar that hovers just above the ground and which she steers with an equally huge pestle. In order to cover up her tracks as she goes, she sweeps behind her with a broom as she speeds through the forest.

Again, like many a fairytale witch, Baba Yaga is said to have a keen sense of smell, which she often uses to hunt the protagonist during a story. This comes in handy in relation to another particularly terrifying trait: Baba Yaga is said to have cannibalistic tendencies and to eat those who stray too close to her forest home. The fear of being eaten by Baba Yaga is often used as a threat to those who wander, while in some tales the protagonist is sent out by an evil relative in the express hope that they will be eaten by the witch.

Known for her cunning and intelligence, Baba Yaga is said to appreciate these same qualities in others, and it is demonstrated on numerous occasions that she is more likely to help a protagonist who proves themselves as worthy of her aid. But beware: Baba Yaga has an unpredictable temper and will turn on the hero or heroine in a moment.

What makes her different from other witch figures in folklore?

Although there are lots of similarities between Baba Yaga and other witch



ABOVE In many folk tales, Baba Yaga is said to travel in a mortar

BELOW Alexander Afanasyev retold *Vasilisa the Beautiful*, which features Baba Yaga’s most famous incarnation

LEFT At one point during *Vasilisa the Beautiful*, Vasilisa is given a magical skull that guides her out of the forest



figures in folklore, there are many ways in which she stands out. It is these differences that largely contribute to the fascination and popularity that she commands.

One major way in which Baba Yaga differs from many other witch figures is that she is often portrayed as not being entirely evil. Neither wholly bad nor good, Baba Yaga straddles the two poles of the morality scale, inhabiting a liminal grey space between the two that allows her to both advance the story and provide a foil to other characters within it. In both her actions and her morals, Baba Yaga is therefore intriguingly unpredictable and refreshingly ambiguous, as it is not always possible to tell exactly whose side she is on from tale to tale – or even within the same story.

Baba Yaga’s uniqueness as a character dates back to the first known written mention of her. In a mid-18th century source, she is listed with many other figures from Slavic folklore: beside each of the others is written the name of the deity or figure they are believed to correspond to from Roman mythology – Baba Yaga is conspicuous as the only one not to have a Roman counterpart listed, highlighting her unique nature right from the outset.

WORLDWIDE WITCHES

Five supernatural sorceresses from across global legend and history

CIRCE GREECE

Originating in Greek mythology, this legendary sorceress is thought to have been the child of Helios, the god of the sun, and Perse, an ocean-dwelling daughter of the Titans. She is depicted in Homer's *The Odyssey* when Odysseus and his crew land on the island of Aeaea, where Circe is said to reside. She uses a magic potion to transform his crew into swine. Circe remains a popular figure from mythology and in 2018 author Madeline Miller retold the story in her novel named after the sorceress.



FRAU HOLLE GERMANY

A figure from Germanic folklore, Frau Holle was said not only to have been the queen of the witches, but was also responsible for making it snow. She is thought to have her origins in pre-Christian Germanic paganism, however she is now best remembered for appearing in one of the many tales collected by the Brothers Grimm. The story tells of two sisters, one hardworking and the other lazy, who both encounter Frau Holle in the woods. Similar to many of the tales involving Baba Yaga, the moral is that hard work will be rewarded and laziness punished.



YAMA-UBA JAPAN

This Japanese mountain witch is a form of Yōkai, the name given to a host of spooky creatures in Japanese mythology. Yama-Uba is most often said to resemble an elderly woman but with a terrible secret. Hidden at the back of her head, beneath her hair, are razor sharp teeth that she uses to indulge in cannibalism. As with other witch figures, Yama-Uba is almost always depicted as female. It is possible these stories are connected to the mythical practice of ubasute, where elderly or sick relatives were abandoned in the mountains.



MOTHER SHIPTON ENGLAND

Mother Shipton was known to have actually existed, but what is true and what is folklore concerning her is unclear. She was said to have been born in a cave near Knaresborough in North Yorkshire in 1488. As well as being a herbal healer, she purportedly made a number of prophecies, including predicting The Great Fire of London. Admittedly, however, some of these prophecies are hard to directly attribute to her. She also features in the folklore tale of The Rollright Stones, real-life standing stones in Oxfordshire that are said to be a king and his men whom she transformed into stone.



What is it about her that makes Baba Yaga a quintessentially Slavic piece of folklore?

Like several other characters and creatures in Slavic folklore, in some tales Baba Yaga is said to live "beyond the thrice nine kingdoms, in the 30th realm," or the "Far Away Tsardom." This magical though non-specific location is a vast distance away from the everyday world that the protagonist inhabits and it is often the destination for a quest or journey in a story. Baba Yaga's association with this places her firmly in the main canon of Slavic folk and fairytales and highlights her importance within it.

Her very name also reflects Baba Yaga's essentially Slavic nature and origins. In some Slavic languages, 'baba' means 'old woman' or 'grandmother', and in modern Russian and Polish today it is also a derogatory term for an old, foolish, dishevelled woman, further reflecting the connotations and negative stereotypes of the witch and women in general.

What are some particularly famous tales concerning her?

Out of all the tales featuring Baba Yaga, *Vasilisa the Beautiful* is probably the most famous and well known. Retold in the 19th century



declined the invitation to join the Three Wise Men on their journey to visit Jesus Christ. Immediately regretting her decision, she now roams the skies searching for the infant Christ.



by Alexander Afanasyev, Vasilisa, a beautiful, kind-hearted and intelligent girl is mistreated and overworked by her stepmother and stepsisters, but is helped by a magical doll given to her by her mother on her deathbed. One night, they send Vasilisa out into the forest to get a light for the fire, and the girl comes across Baba Yaga, who promises her a light in exchange for completing a series of tasks. With the help of her doll, Vasilisa is successful and is given a magical skull in return, which ultimately burns her wicked relations to ashes.

What is the main moral or 'message' in stories featuring Baba Yaga?

As her role or place varies from story to story, there is not one main moral or

message in tales that feature her. General trends, however, can be identified, although the emphasis on each can vary from tale to tale.

In stories involving Baba Yaga, hard work is often rewarded, as is intelligence, so the moral of 'work hard' is a common one within such tales. Cautionary messages are also common in a variety of guises. The obvious message is to avoid straying too far from the path or societal rules, either literally or metaphorically, otherwise a dangerous witch will be your downfall. However, this seemingly clear-cut message is, on closer examination, perhaps something else entirely: instead a message that those living outside of society and don't conform to or embrace societal norms should be heeded is

"BABA YAGA IS SEEN AS SOMETHING OF A FEMINIST ICON, REJECTING THE CONVENTIONAL TROPES ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN"

often the ultimate takeaway from a tale featuring Baba Yaga.

The true nature of a person is another common theme within such tales. Although fierce and at times intolerant, Baba Yaga is shown to lend aid to a protagonist who is kind and has a pure heart, highlighting that a good nature and moral compass bring with them more rewards than a selfish, self-centred attitude.

Could you tell us about some other folkloric figures that are related to Baba Yaga?

Within Slavic folklore, there are several other characters that are connected to Baba Yaga. One of these is the multi-headed dragon known as Chudo-Yudo, found in some Slavic wonder tales. Some say that the dragon is actually the witch herself in dragon form, while others suggest he may actually be the witch's offspring. Baba Yaga is also sometimes linked with the malevolent and immortal sorcerer Koschei the Deathless, and is said to be the parallel female figure to Koschei. Due to this, it is not common to find them both in the same story, but when they are portrayed together it's usually either as siblings or as a married couple.

What is Baba Yaga's relevance today?

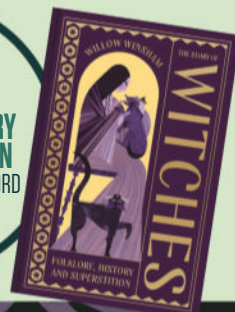
The figure of Baba Yaga continues to intrigue and inspire, and her timeless nature is clearly reflected in the way she has been embraced by a modern



ABOVE Today Baba Yaga remains an iconic figure from Slavic folklore

audience, both in appreciation of the old tales and the introduction of the new. *Into the Forest: Tales of the Baba Yaga*, an anthology of stories published in 2022 offering reinterpreted imaginings of Baba Yaga across history is just one illustration of the timeless and adaptable nature of this figure. She is also seen as something of a feminist icon, rejecting the conventional tropes associated with women such as nurturing motherhood or wifely obedience, acting instead as an independent, capable and influential figure in her own right. ○

THE STORY OF WITCHES: FOLKLORE, HISTORY AND SUPERSTITION
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LEFT Baba Yaga is said to live inside a hut on chicken legs



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GREATEST BATTLES

MUKDEN 1905

MUKDEN, MANCHURIA, CHINA 23 FEBRUARY – 10 MARCH 1905

Written by Alex Zakrzewski



In 1904, the long-simmering tensions between the Russian and Japanese Empires over control of the Chinese region of Manchuria finally boiled over into a full-blown conflict. Following Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, the European powers, led by Russia, had pressured the victorious Japanese into relinquishing their territorial gains in the region. This included giving up control of the Liaodong Peninsula and the strategic naval base of Port Arthur, which the Russians coveted as an ice-free alternative to their main Pacific base at Vladivostok.

For resource-poor Japan, control over the bustling markets and vast raw materials of Manchuria was both a matter of national pride and a strategic imperative. In 1899, US Secretary of State John Hay proposed an 'Open Door' trade policy in China that seemed to offer a diplomatic solution. However, Russia largely ignored the policy and used the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 as an opportunity to strengthen its economic and military presence in Manchuria, much to the anger of the Japanese.

In February 1904, after a long series of failed negotiations and worsening relations, Japan launched a surprise attack on the Russian fleet in Port Arthur. They quickly secured control of the Yellow Sea and began landing troops. Port Arthur was placed under siege, and from their bases in Korea, Japanese forces moved to cut off the entire Liaodong Peninsula, preventing Russian forces from relieving the town.

Although the Russians were caught off-guard by Japan's bold attack, they saw it as a temporary setback in what would ultimately be a crushing victory. Some in St Petersburg even welcomed the outbreak of hostilities, believing that a short, victorious war would restore faith in the tsarist regime. Most foreign observers shared this perspective, reasoning that a poor Asian nation stood little chance against the limitless resources of the world's largest country.

But while Russia was indeed large and resource-rich, it was also backward, poorly governed and riven by unrest. This was reflected in its military, which suffered from inexperience, inefficiency and widespread corruption. The prevailing doctrines, virtually unchanged since the Crimean War 50 years earlier, revolved around attacks en masse with large, tightly packed columns of infantry. The average peasant conscript, while brave and remarkably resilient, was often illiterate, poorly trained and despised by his upper-class officers - who were themselves undertrained.

The Japanese military, on the other hand, had benefited from the country's rapid modernisation over the previous



ABOVE Russia's defeat at Mukden contributed to growing social unrest at home

LEFT Victory for Japan established its dominance in East Asia for the next four decades

few decades. It was a relatively new force, trained and organised on a German model, with attack doctrines that emphasised firepower, accuracy and concealment. Its officers - particularly senior officers - were much better educated, and it had its recent experience in the Sino-Japanese War to learn from. The Japanese could also call on reinforcements from the nearby mother country, while the Russians were dependent on the sprawling and still unfinished Trans-Siberian Railway.

Although both sides were armed with the latest modern weapons, including artillery, grenades, mortars and machine guns, the Japanese employed them far more effectively. While Russian artillery was actually more advanced, any advantage was negated by improper training and outdated tactics. The same was true of the Russian superiority in cavalry, with the Japanese horsemen proving much more adept at scouting, screening and raiding than the celebrated Cossacks.

During the first year of the war, while the bloody siege of Port Arthur dragged on, Japanese commander Marshal Iwao Oyama won a series of battles that pushed the Russians out of the Liaodong Peninsula into northern Manchuria. His Russian counterpart, General Alexei Kuropatkin, was a cautious and indecisive commander who sought to avoid a major confrontation until the Trans-Siberian Railroad was completed. But with the fall of Port Arthur in January 1905, he came under increasing pressure from St Petersburg to act.

In late January, Kuropatkin launched an offensive against the left flank of the Japanese 2nd Army, focusing on the fortified

village of Sandepu. The Russian attacks, poorly coordinated and hampered by a raging blizzard, failed with heavy casualties. Kuropatkin was forced to withdraw 50km further north to the town of Mukden, where he planned another offensive for mid-February. But it was Oyama who seized the initiative, launching his own attack before the Russians could make their move.

THE BATTLE PLAN

Kuropatkin's forces were spread across a 145km front, from the Hun River in the west to the mountains in the east. He deployed the 2nd, 3rd and 1st Manchurian Armies, commanded by Generals Kaulbars, Bilderling and Linevich respectively. On his far left, high in the mountains, he stationed two-thirds of his cavalry under General Paul von Rennenkampf.

Facing him were four Japanese armies: the 2nd, 4th, 1st and 5th Armies, commanded by Generals Oku, Nozu, Kuroki and Kawamura. Japanese armies were smaller than Russian formations, and Kuropatkin held a significant numerical advantage overall. But unbeknown to the Russian commander, hidden 15km behind Oku's 2nd Army on the Japanese left, was the 3rd Army under General Nogi, recently freed from the siege of Port Arthur.

On 19 February, Kuropatkin began issuing orders for an attack on the Japanese left, spearheaded by Kaulbars' 2nd Manchurian Army. But before his plan could be set in motion, on 23 February, Oyama took to the offensive with an attack by General Kawamura's 5th Army against the Russian positions in the mountains on Kuropatkin's left flank.

GREATEST BATTLES

01 23 FEBRUARY FIRST MOVES

The Japanese 5th Army attacks the left of the Russian line. The presence of the 11th Division, recently transferred from the 3rd Army, convinces Kuropatkin that the main Japanese thrust will come from the east, and he begins shifting reinforcements.

02 26 FEBRUARY PINNING DOWN

The Japanese 2nd, 4th and 1st Armies attack the Russian centre, aiming to pin the Russians in place. Huge Krupp howitzers, brought from Port Arthur, are used to pound the strong Russian positions on the Putilov and Novgorod Hills.

03 27 FEBRUARY FLANKING MANOEUVRE

General Nogi's 3rd Army advances toward the Liao River to flank Kuropatkin's right. Russian patrols spot the Japanese movements, but Kuropatkin, still focused on his left flank, takes no action.

Liao River

SIN-MIN TING

BAITABAO

MATOULANG

Hun River

03

05

06

08

2nd MANCHURIAN ARMY

3rd MANCHURIAN ARMY

3rd ARMY

4th ARMY

02

04 28 FEBRUARY FIERCE RESISTANCE

After several days of steady progress, freezing temperatures and a determined defence halts the 5th Army's advance. Von Rennenkampf, the cavalry commander, throws every available man into the fight, including clerks, cooks and bandmen.

LIAO-YANG

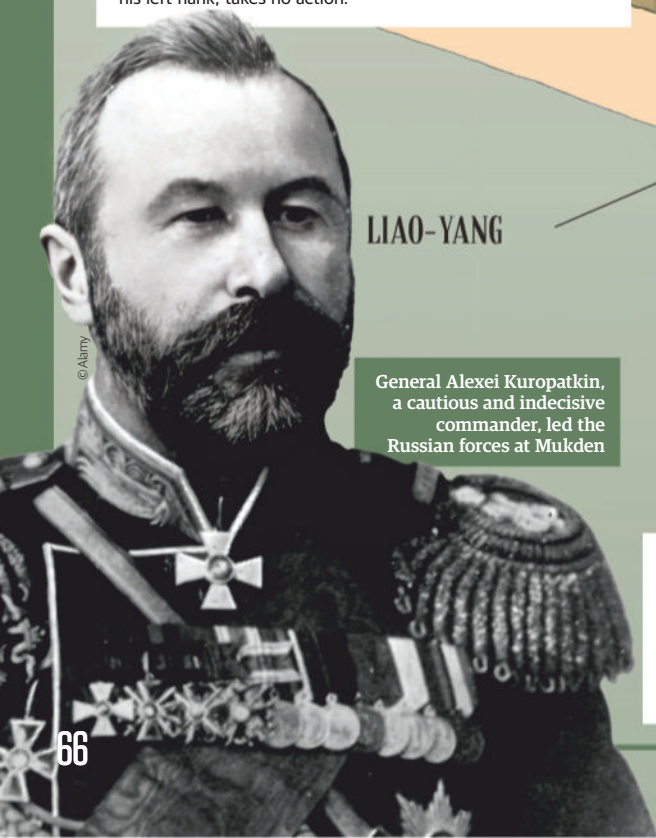
General Alexei Kuropatkin, a cautious and indecisive commander, led the Russian forces at Mukden

Sha River

YANTAI

BENXI

Taitzu River





MUKDEN

TIEHLING

FUSHUN

08 10 MARCH BATTLE ENDS

The Japanese occupy Mukden, though fighting with isolated Russian units continues for another day. Two-thirds of the Russian Army manages to escape the encirclement, denying Oyama a decisive victory.

07 9 MARCH CHAOTIC RETREAT

With the Japanese approaching from all sides, Kuropatkin orders his forces to retreat north to Tieh-ling. Discipline quickly breaks down, made worse by a blinding dust storm and Japanese artillery fire.

COMBAT BEGINS

Kawamura's troops threw themselves into the attack, surging up the mountain passes supported by machine guns and mountain artillery. The Japanese had fully embraced German methods of indirect fire - firing from concealed positions at the direction of artillery observers. These tactics frustrated their Russian opponents, who continued to place their guns on open or high ground, making easy targets for the Japanese gunners. The 5th Army's objective was the Fushun mines east of Mukden.

The Japanese troops were trained to dig shallow trenches as they advanced, moving in extended linear formations rather than tightly packed columns. The frozen ground made this tactic difficult, so they instead employed the novel solution of carrying sandbags on their backs to throw down as cover. The soldiers of the 11th Division were instructed to make their presence known by shouting at the Russians that they had come from Port Arthur to defeat them.

The reports of 3rd Army elements in the east quickly reached Kuropatkin. Even before the fighting began, the Russian commander suspected a major attack from the east based on the Japanese preference for fighting in rough terrain. He began shifting reinforcements from the 2nd Army in the west, including the 1st Siberian Corps, completely unaware that he was playing right into Oyama's plan.

By 28 February, the 5th Army had advanced almost 25km in extremely difficult terrain before -20°C weather and a stiffening Russian defence brought it to a halt. On the extreme left of the Russian line, cavalry commander General Paul von Rennenkampf threw every available man into the fight, including cooks, clerks and bandsmen. Though 5th Army had suffered heavy casualties and would find itself stalled for the next week, it succeeded in diverting Kuropatkin's focus from Oyama's real intention.

On 26 February, the Japanese 2nd, 1st and 4th Armies had begun limited attacks against

05 5 MARCH COUNTERATTACK

Finally realising the threat posed by 3rd Army, Kuropatkin orders a counterattack by General Kaulbars' 2nd Army. The assault is half-hearted and uncoordinated and easily beaten back by the Japanese, who have stronger artillery support.

06 8 MARCH ENEMY APPROACHING

A 3rd Army patrol briefly cuts the rail line north of Mukden, prompting a panicked Kuropatkin to order a general withdrawal to the Hun River. The smoke from burning supply depots alerts Oyama, who orders all his forces to pursue.

● Japanese
● Russian

Map illustration: Rodio Espin Phiar

MANY OF THE RUSSIAN UNITS WERE SHOCKED TO RECEIVE THE WITHDRAWAL ORDER

the centre of the Russian line, supported by massed artillery bombardments that included some of the Krupp 280mm howitzers used to smash the concrete fortifications at Port Arthur. What they lacked in accuracy they made up for in psychological impact. The mere presence of these weapons instilled fear in the Russians, who hugged the frozen ground in terror at the sound of the incoming shells.

These too were just diversionary strikes to distract from the decisive blow. On the morning of 27 February, General Nogi led his 3rd Army across the frozen Hun River on a northwesterly route around the right flank of General Kaulbars' 2nd Manchurian Army. The movement was spotted almost immediately by Cossack patrols, who reported it to headquarters. However, Kuropatkin was still too focused on events in the east to respond. As a result of this inaction, the 3rd Army managed to advance 75km in three days, with only one of its divisions encountering any major contact.

Meanwhile, in the centre, the Japanese attacks intensified, with the 1st and 4th Armies concentrating their assaults on the Novgorod and Putilov Hills, some of the strongest positions in the Russian line. These included multiple lines of trenches, machine gun nests and supporting artillery. The Japanese managed to take the first line of trenches only to be driven back by fierce Russian counterattacks.

The Japanese 2nd Army was given the difficult assignment of maintaining contact

with the 3rd Army as it advanced. General Oku's troops proved up to the task, slowly driving back Kaulbars' 2nd Manchurian Army in a series of fierce encounters. In five days they advanced 25km through the skilful concentration of artillery, mortar and machine gun fire, but at great cost. At the village of Yu-Haun-Tun, the two sides battled relentlessly for 12 straight hours, fighting house-to-house with grenades and bayonets. In this clash alone the Japanese suffered 4,200 casualties and the Russians 5,400.

By 2 March, Kuropatkin realised he had been duped and the real threat was from the west, and he scrambled to redeploy his forces. Days earlier, plagued by confusion and indecision, he had ordered the 1st Siberian Corps back to its starting position on the western flank. In just seven days, the Siberians marched 150km without firing a shot, arriving exhausted and demoralised.

Adding to the Russians' confusion were difficulties in communication. While both sides were equipped with telephones, the Japanese made far better use of them. As Oyama's forces advanced, signals troops closely followed, laying hundreds of kilometres of wire, enabling their commanders to follow their troops' progress

in real time. The Russian generals, on the other hand, relied on messengers, leading to delayed and often inaccurate reports.

CLOSING THE TRAP

On 4 March, Nogi reported to headquarters that the 3rd Army was due west of Mukden. Oyama ordered him to avoid getting bogged down in the city and continue advancing north to sever the Russian escape route. Though Kuropatkin did not know the extent of the 3rd Army's advance, he could tell that he was being encircled, and he made one last attempt to seize the initiative by ordering General Kaulbars to smash Nogi's flank.

At first glance, it seemed like an ideal moment to strike. The 3rd Army was overstretched and awaiting reinforcements. Kuropatkin had also provided Kaulbars with a haphazardly assembled force made up of elements from various units, increasing his strength to 110 battalions and 200 guns - significantly outnumbering the Japanese units he faced. However, the plans quickly began to unravel as disorder and bad luck once again nullified these advantages.

A fierce snowstorm delayed the initial attack, and when the assault finally began, Kaulbars failed to concentrate his forces. Instead, he fed his battalions into the fighting piecemeal. He also unnecessarily shuffled troops between commanders, causing further chaos. As a result, units misinterpreted orders and were unable to coordinate effectively, preventing them from supporting one another.

BELOW Both sides were equipped with the latest artillery, grenades, mortars and machine guns

BELOW-INSET General Baron T Kuroki was commander of the Japanese 1st Army





By the time Kaulbars called off his counterattack on the afternoon of 6 March, the Russian position was bad but not yet disastrous. Across the front, particularly in the centre and east, the defenders fought stubbornly, inflicting heavy casualties on the Japanese. But on 8 March, shortly after the failure of Kaulbars' counterattack, Kuropatkin received even more distressing news: elements of Nogi's 3rd Army had seized a railway station north of Mukden.

In truth, those elements were just a cavalry raid. The station was quickly retaken and communication restored. Regardless, the news sent shockwaves through Russian HQ, prompting a panicked Kuropatkin to send an exaggerated message to St Petersburg: "I am surrounded." He ordered a general withdrawal back to Mukden, hoping to establish a new line of defence across the Hun River.

Many of the Russian units were shocked to receive the withdrawal order. They had successfully beaten back Japanese attacks for over a week at great cost, and they were devastated to learn that their comrades' sacrifices had been in vain. Kuropatkin also ordered that all supply and munitions depots in the path of the Japanese be burned. Many Russian soldiers took the opportunity to loot the vodka stores, leading to drunkenness and indiscipline.

The smoke from the burning stores alerted Oyama to the Russian withdrawal. He immediately issued a new order to all his armies: "I intend to pursue in earnest and to turn the enemy's retreat into a rout." Across the front, the Japanese attacked. They were aided by the weather, which kept the Hun frozen, enabling them to maintain contact with the withdrawing Russian units.

General Kuroki's 1st Army was the first across the river, exploiting a gap between the Russian 1st and 3rd Manchurian Armies. He began threatening Mukden from the east at the same time that Nogi's 3rd Army was closing in from the west. Kuropatkin redeployed what units he could to meet the closing pincers, but soon realised the perilousness of his situation. On the evening of 9 March, he ordered a general retreat from Mukden to Tieh-ling, 65km to the north.

Some Russian officers managed to organise a rearguard and retreat in relatively

good order. Others lost complete contact with their men, leaving them to wander around the frozen countryside like lost sheep. To make matters worse, a blinding dust storm erupted and mixed with the smoke from the burning stores to create an otherworldly atmosphere that added to the fear and panic. The Japanese artillery also managed to close range with the fleeing columns of Russians, unleashing a deadly barrage that caused many casualties.

At 10am on 10 March, the Japanese entered Mukden and Oyama messaged Tokyo that the battle was won. Eager to maintain the support - or at least placidness - of the local Chinese population, he issued strict orders that the city and its inhabitants be treated respectfully. Despite the resounding success, Oyama's army was battered and exhausted after more than two weeks of continuous combat and in no position to pursue Kuropatkin's fleeing forces, let alone deal with local unrest.

AFTERMATH

At the time, the Battle of Mukden was the largest land battle ever fought. Yet although it was a tremendous Japanese victory, it was not the decisive encounter Oyama had hoped for. Two-thirds of the Russian Army managed to evade his trap and escape to fight another day.

The scale of the battle is reflected in the casualties suffered by both sides. The Russians lost almost 100,000 men killed, wounded and taken prisoner. They also lost vast amounts of material, though only about 60 artillery pieces. Japanese losses numbered around 70,000, or about one-third of Oyama's force. The vast majority were the result of rifle and machine gun fire, demonstrating the lethality of the latter.

While the Japanese people celebrated, the strategists in Tokyo knew that such

losses were irreplaceable. The Russians, on the other hand, recovered their strength with each passing day. The Trans-Siberian Railroad was finally complete, bringing the yet untapped manpower and material resources of European Russia into play. It was only a matter of time before they made good their losses and resumed the offensive with numbers the Japanese could not hope to match.

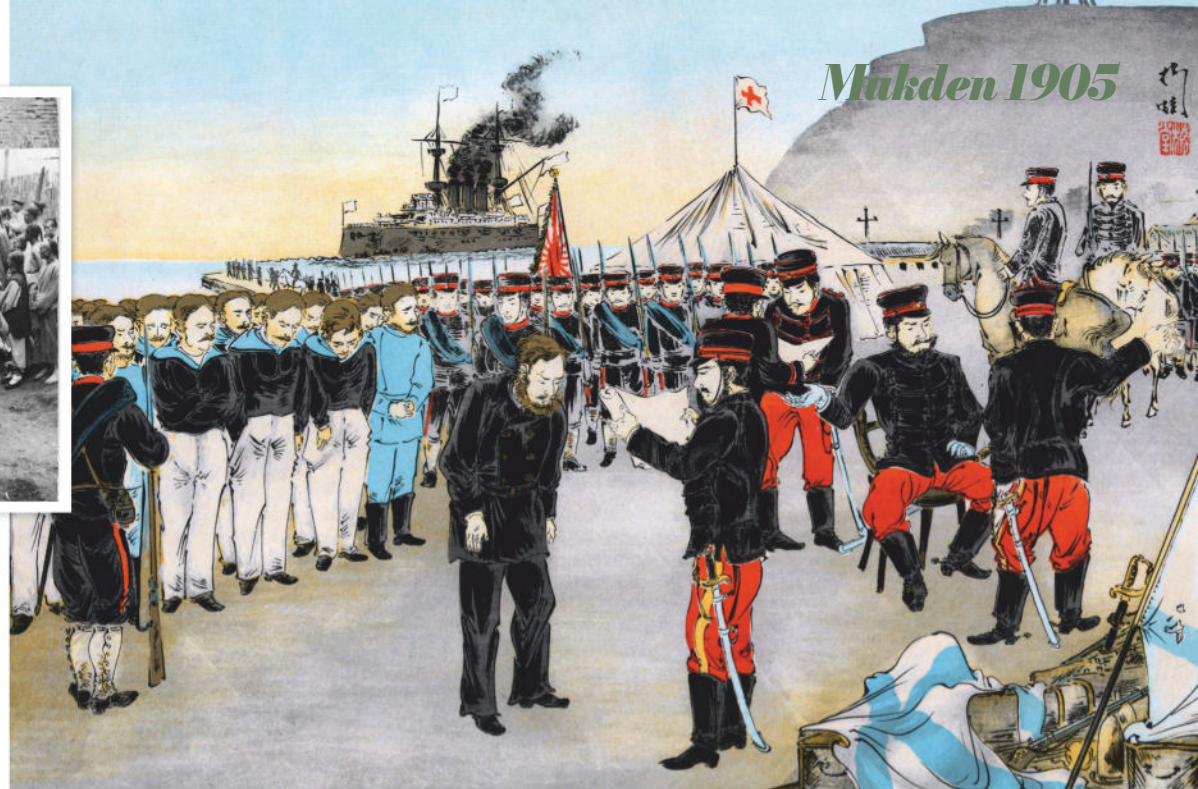
The true impact of Mukden proved to be political. "It is painful and distressing," Tsar Nicholas II wrote upon hearing of the defeat. He dismissed Kuropatkin and replaced him with General Nikolai Linevich, the commander of the 1st Manchurian Army. This did nothing to restore the Russian people's enthusiasm for the war, which had been rapidly evaporating, contributing to the growing social unrest. While Nicholas' generals assured him that the war could still be won, he could feel the anger towards his regime mounting with each defeat, and he too began to lose hope of victory.

The Battle of Mukden would be the last major land battle of the war. The decisive encounter Oyama had hoped for occurred instead at sea. Two months after Mukden, the Russian Baltic Fleet was destroyed by Japanese Admiral Heihachiro Togo in the Straits of Tsushima. With it sank Russia's last hope of a face-saving victory.

It was the exhausted Japanese who ended up initiating negotiations by approaching American President Theodore Roosevelt to act as mediator. The resulting Treaty of Portsmouth, signed in September 1905, affirmed Japanese control over Korea and southern Manchuria. More importantly, it established Japan as the dominant power in East Asia, setting the stage for four decades of increasing militarism and territorial expansion. ○

ABOVE A depiction of Russian soldiers captured by the Japanese at Chemulpo

ABOVE-LEFT Russian soldiers pass through the gates of Mukden as local civilians look on



WHAT IF...



WHAT IF... HENRY VIII HAD DIED YOUNG?

Without England's most notorious Tudor king, the country's religious and political history would've looked very different

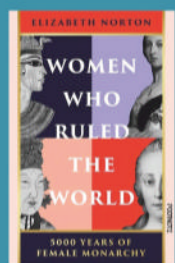
Interview by Emily Staniforth

INTERVIEW WITH



ELIZABETH NORTON

Norton is an historian who specialises in the Tudors, particularly Tudor queens. She is the author of a number of books, including biographies of some of Henry VIII's wives. Her new book *Women Who Ruled the World: 5000 Years of Female Monarchy* (Footnote Press, 2025) is out on 4 September 2025.



In 1502, tragedy struck the English royal household when Prince Arthur Tudor, the son and heir of King Henry VII, died of a mystery illness. He left behind his young wife, Catherine of Aragon, and a void in the line of succession. That void was filled by Arthur's younger brother who would later become Henry VIII. But if Henry, too, had died before his father, who passed away in 1509, England would've been thrown into turmoil. Having consolidated his reign after a lengthy and brutal fight for the throne during the Wars of the Roses, Henry VII would've been left with no clear heir and Tudor rule would have been in jeopardy.

How would Henry VII have reacted to the premature death of his son, Henry?

The death of Prince Henry, after the death of Prince Arthur, would have been an absolute disaster for Henry VII. You can't really overstate it. He's the only male heir to the dynasty, and we know that Henry VII kept Prince Henry very close. He wouldn't let him take part in dangerous sports in case something happened to him. He's not only his only surviving son, he's also an important political figure. It would've wrecked the Tudor dynasty and been a disaster to try and work out what was going to happen to the succession.

Who could have succeeded Henry VII as king of England?

The obvious answer is Margaret, Henry VIII's older sister, who's married to James IV of Scotland. It was considered when they were going to send her to Scotland that she only had one brother, meaning

she was second in line to the throne, and Henry VII believed it would be fine. He said "the smaller kingdom will follow the large", meaning it doesn't matter if we have a Scottish king (because in those days, effectively the husband of a queen became the king) because Scotland will join England, rather than England joining Scotland. That's pretty much what happened in 1603 when James VI came south as England's king... It's a pragmatic option that would've worked quite well.

However, in 1509 England had never had an effective reigning queen. The closest they'd come had been Empress

Matilda in 1141 and that was a bit of a disaster. So there's not any real sense that a woman can wear the crown. They can certainly transmit a claim: the House of York claimed through a woman, the Tudors claimed through a woman. But there's never any inclination to put a woman on the throne so I think it'd be very difficult to put Margaret on the throne. Also, the English don't like the Scots in the 16th century and it's mutual. They both dislike each other. Trying to sell the king of Scotland as king of England effectively would be really difficult in 1509, but if Margaret were discounted as heir I think she would make a claim anyway. There would certainly be an invasion from Scotland and she would definitely have some supporters, but I don't think she would be a foregone conclusion.

If we discount Margaret, there's lots of different contenders and the Duke of Buckingham would be a very strong contender. He is related to the Beauforts, so after the Tudors on the Lancastrian line, he is arguably next in line anyway. He also has very good royal blood all the way back to Edward III. He ultimately gets executed by Henry VIII, really because of his royal blood. And also there are [Yorkist] descendants of Edward IV: Elizabeth York's younger sister's descendants and their claimants too. And also the Pole family, who are descendants of George, Duke of Clarence, Edward IV's younger brother. The problem is there's no obvious contender. I would suggest there would be an invasion from Scotland, ▶



RIGHT The death of Henry VII's oldest son Prince Arthur (pictured) rocked the Tudor monarchy and left his brother, Prince Henry, as heir

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images



SIX WOMEN WOULD'VE LED MUCH HAPPIER LIVES IF HENRY HADN'T LIVED – HIS WIVES!

and I would suggest that the Duke of Buckingham would probably put himself forward as a candidate. But it would be a real mess. We're effectively looking at the Wars of the Roses Mark II.

Would Henry VII's youngest daughter, Mary, have been a possible successor?

Mary would potentially make a bid for the throne as well. She's not married at this point and her marriage would be very

interesting to a lot of the English nobility and also foreign royalty. If you could get your hands on Mary and marry her, then you could potentially put forward a bid for the crown. Again, the chances of her being crowned as queen while unmarried are pretty negligible because her older sister clearly stands before her in the line of succession, but with a strong husband I think she could have made quite a strong bid for the crown.

What might have happened to Catherine of Aragon if Henry VIII had died young, and could she have been in a position to claim the throne?

Poor old Catherine had been left on the shelf a bit as she waited for Henry VIII to grow up. In the case of his death, an unmarried king might consider marrying her but they would probably be looking for an English dynastic marriage. I think she would eventually get sent home to Spain and her father would probably marry her off to a foreign prince. There were a few around that could have been suggested for her.

How would history view Henry VII if he had been the only Tudor king?

In many respects I think we'd almost look at Henry VII as a sort of Oliver Cromwell figure, a bit of an anomaly in the royal record. Henry takes the crown after the Wars of the Roses, but he doesn't succeed in establishing a dynasty because he doesn't have any sons. He doesn't have any brothers. He doesn't have any nephews. He's the last of the Tudors if Prince Henry had died. I think most people would look at him as a bit of an upstart, someone with very limited claim to the throne who took advantage of the chaos of the late 15th century and was able to win the throne, but actually not someone who would be viewed as a particularly legitimate ruler. I think he does need the Tudor dynasty behind him.

What might England today look like if Henry VIII had never been king?

It would look very different indeed. Fundamentally, we wouldn't have had the Reformation in the same form that we did and that's obviously Henry VIII's greatest legacy. Henry didn't bring in the Protestant Reformation and remained largely a Catholic, albeit one that tinkered with the Church by the end of his reign. But he does certainly bring in major changes: the break with Rome, getting rid of the pope as head of the Church in England, questioning some of the sacraments, allowing the Bible to be printed in English. I think we wouldn't necessarily get a top-down Reformation without Henry VIII, because he used parliament to pass it through, but we would still have had the Reformation in some form. Incidentally, he also increased the power of parliament through the Reformation.

Henry VIII was also the father of the English navy, and whenever I have to think of a good point about him, I always



LEFT
A portrait of Henry VIII as a young man

ABOVE
With no clear heir in place, Henry VII's death could've sparked another civil war



suggest that. In many respects, Henry was quite a medieval ruler. But there was a great deal of change in his reign, and he was fully thinking about what he wanted to do and what he wanted his legacy to be. There would also have been six women who would've led happier lives if Henry hadn't lived - his wives, of course!

Without Henry VIII, England would have a very different landscape. In the 16th century, we might well have had a series of shorter-lived kings who were sort of fighting for the throne, rather than the relatively stable Tudor dynasty. It was difficult for Henry VIII to produce a living heir, but the throne does pass relatively securely through his three children, albeit with Jane Grey in the middle. I think it could likely have been a much less stable 16th century English royal house and English royal dynasty without Henry VIII.

Why is Henry VIII one of England's most famous kings?

If you show people pictures of English male rulers, it's probably only Henry VIII that would be recognisable to most people. People know his name and his story. I think it's partly because he's so unconventional in many respects. And

six wives is mad! No post-[Norman] Conquest English king had more than two wives so I think that draws the attention of people. It's really quite significant having six wives, and I know people say you shouldn't just bring him down to the level of his wives, but actually that is quite a weird thing to have done. The Reformation, of course, was absolutely huge and is still impactful today. Also, you can still see Henry VIII's treatment of Ireland resonating in modern Irish history. He did a lot in his reign and changed a lot of things, so I think that's one of the reasons.

But primarily it's because he's such a big personality and a big character. If Henry VIII had died young, after 1509 but in the 1520s for example, he'd be unmemorable. It's all the things he does in the final decade or two of his life that are remarkable. The six wives, beheading two of them, disinheriting his children, making himself head of the Church. He's a big character and I think that's really the reason why we know Henry to some extent. He's not very popular, and I don't think most people would say he was their favourite person in history, but he's certainly an interesting one. ○

ALTERNATE REALITIES

SPECIFICS

1502

UNTIMELY DEATH

Prince Arthur Tudor died from an unknown illness. King Henry VII mourned his son's death greatly and Prince Henry, his younger brother, became the next heir to the throne. Henry was protected by his cautious father as he began his preparations for kingship and was betrothed to Catherine of Aragon.



1509

HENRY VIII CROWNED

On 21 April, Henry VII died at Richmond Palace from tuberculosis and was later buried in Westminster Abbey. Prince Henry succeeded his father and became Henry VIII, the second Tudor monarch. He married Catherine of Aragon on 11 June 1509 and their coronation as king and queen took place on 23 June.

1509-47

MOMENTOUS REIGN

Henry VIII ruled for nearly 38 years. During his time on the throne he became notorious for his political, religious and personal decisions. His religious policies laid the ground for the Protestant Reformation, he established the Church of England, and ordered the Dissolution of the Monasteries. He also invaded France and married six times.



SPECULATION

1502-09

A SECOND TRAGEDY

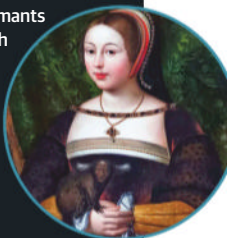
In a devastating blow to the Tudor dynasty, Prince Henry dies shortly after his brother. There is no clear heir to the throne and difficult decisions have to be made. Henry VII's two daughters stand as potential candidates to inherit the throne following their father's death, but England has never before had a queen regnant.



1509

BLOODY TURMOIL

Henry VII dies with no clear heir and England is plunged into chaos. Margaret Tudor and James IV invade England with their Scottish forces as they try to claim the throne. At the same time, other potential claimants to the throne, such as the Duke of Buckingham and Mary Tudor, begin their campaigns for the crown.



1509 ONWARDS

SECOND CIVIL WAR

The English crown is once again unstable as various factions fight for authority in another civil war, similar to the recent Wars of the Roses. Claimants from the previously defeated Yorkist faction raise arms to fight as Henry VII's relations continue to vie for power.



THE THREE DANCERS (1925)

◀ With Theatre Picasso celebrating 100 years of this painting, *The Three Dancers* is one of the central artworks of the exhibition. Painted in 1925, the violent abstract representation of ballet dancers drew praise from other surrealists.

THE THEATRICAL WORLD OF PICASSO

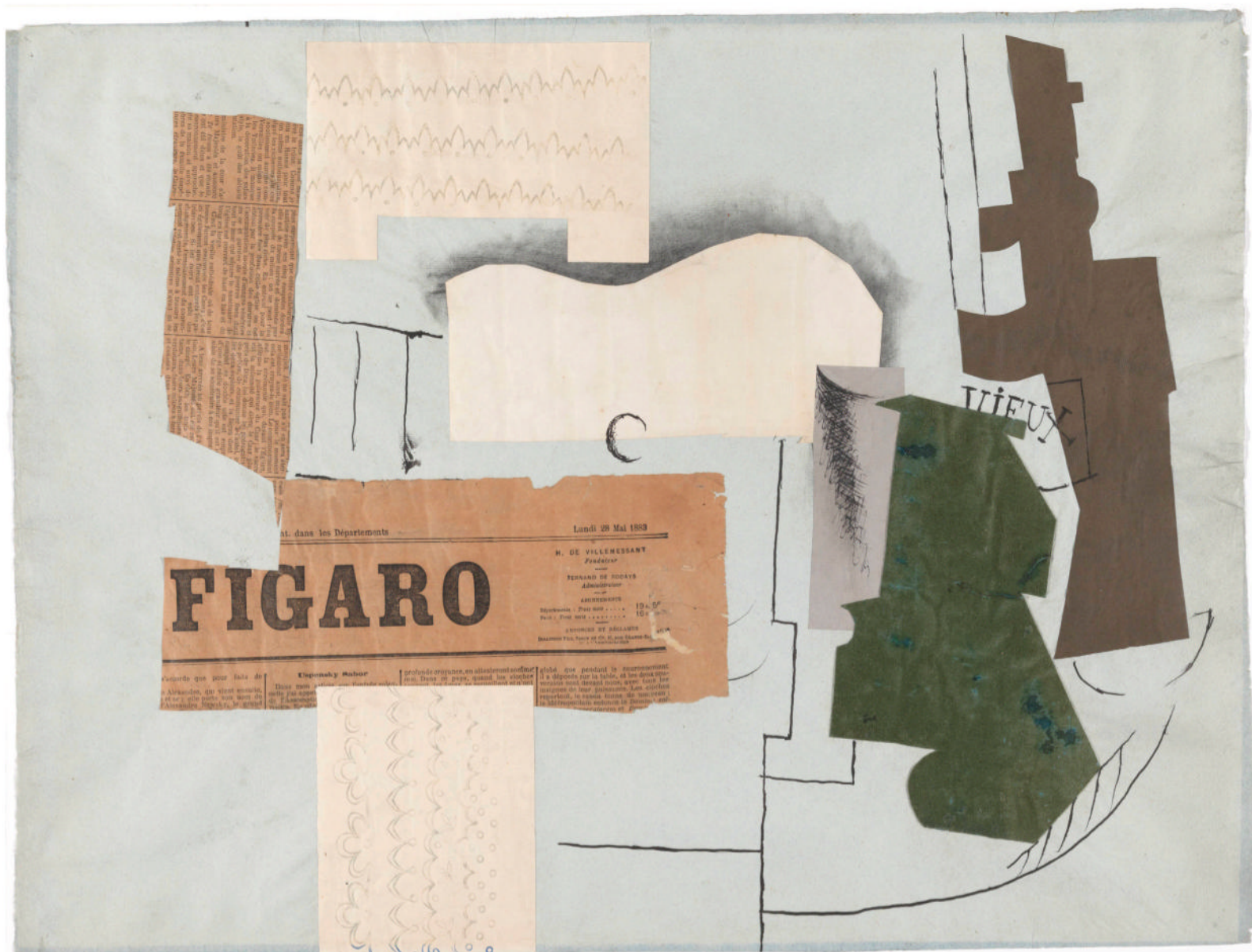
A new exhibition at Tate Modern explores the use of drama and performance in the works of the famous Spanish artist

Pablo Picasso, who died in 1973 at the age of 91, is one of the most renowned artists of the 20th century. Born in 1881 in Spain, he enjoyed a long and distinguished career, creating around 50,000 works. He tackled a wide range of subjects and his work evolved through different styles, from Cubism to Surrealism to Neoclassicism. He was a painter and sculptor, and also worked with

ceramics, making him a truly versatile artist. Picasso's dramatic and thought-provoking art is admired across the world and his influence, both during his life and after his death, cannot be understated.

Now, a new exhibition at Tate Modern is celebrating the theatrical nature of Picasso's art in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of one of his most celebrated works: *The Three*

Dancers. Curated by contemporary artist Wu Tsang and writer and curator Enrique Fuenteblanca, Theatre Picasso will explore the artist's use of performance, showcasing 50 examples of his work. Tate Modern says its exhibition will also "recognise both the continued relevance of Picasso and the fascinating contradictions that run throughout his life and work."



BOTTLE OF VIEUX MARC, GLASS, GUITAR AND NEWSPAPER (1913)

▲ One of Picasso's early collage works, this piece "sought to construct a unified composition from abstracted fragments of the objects depicted." The artist's earlier work with stencilled lettering may have been an influence on his use of cut-out paper in collage.

Tate. Purchased 1961.

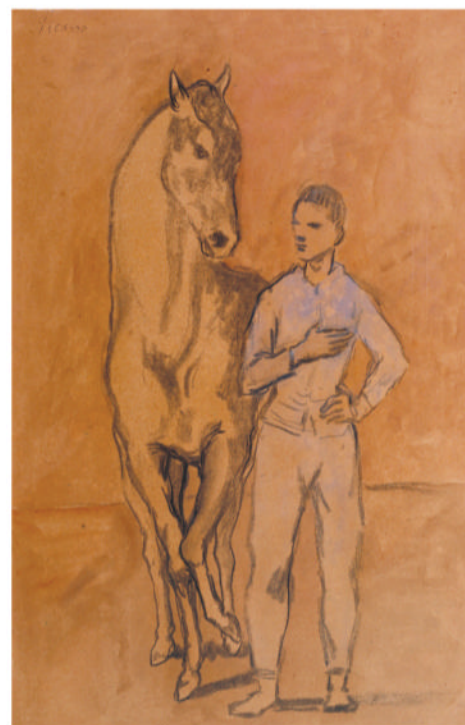
WEEPING WOMAN (1937)

◀ Depicting photographer Dora Maar, Picasso's *Weeping Woman* is a highly evocative work painted during the Spanish Civil War. The anti-war piece, similarly to Picasso's famous *Guernica*, was created in response to the lethal bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in April 1937.

HORSE WITH A YOUTH IN BLUE (1905-06)

▶ The painting *Horse with a Youth in Blue* is just one of several equine subjects depicted by Picasso throughout his career. In this work, a young man stands next to a tall, majestic horse. Some have suggested the piece is a commentary on the connection between humans and the natural world.

Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933.





THE STUDIO (1955)

▲ In 1955, Picasso and his partner Jacqueline Roque moved to a villa near Cannes in southeastern France. The Art Nouveau villa, called La Californie, contained an art studio that Picasso painted 12 times in the year he moved there. This painting is just one of the depictions of the studio.

GIRL IN A CHEMISE (C.1905)

► Believed to depict a regular muse of Picasso's, Madeleine, this painting was one of his first works after he moved to Paris from Barcelona in 1904. The style of *Girl in a Chemise* is typical of Picasso's 'rose period', which consisted of lighter and warmer subjects and colours.

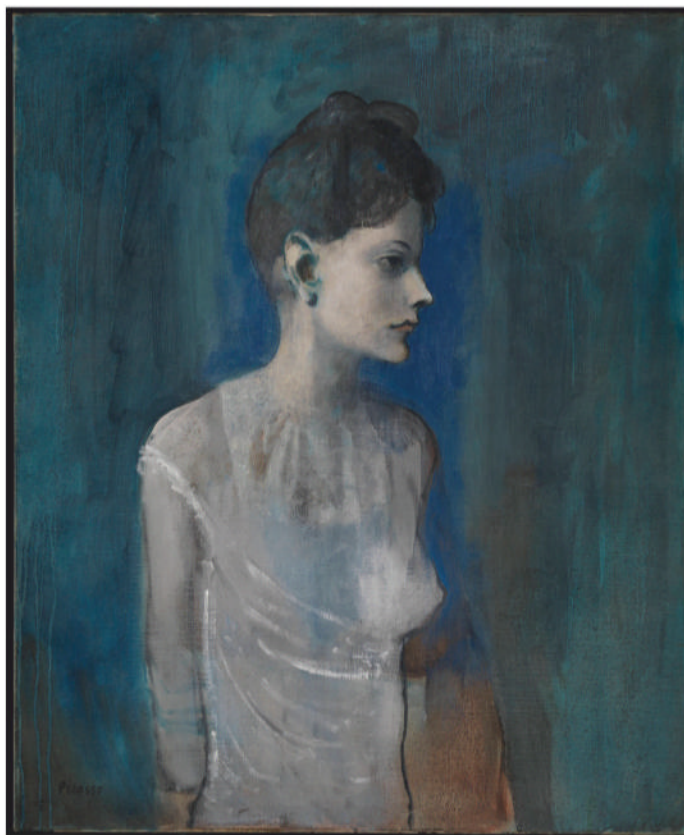
Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933.



THE ACROBAT (1930)

▲ An oil painting on canvas, *The Acrobat* is indicative of the artist's work in Surrealism. Depicting an elaborately contorted human figure, the piece showcases his individual take on form and is simple yet engaging in its colour palette.

Paris, Musée National Picasso-Paris. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Adrien Diderjean



NUDE WOMAN IN A RED ARMCHAIR (1932)

► This painting highlights the curves of model Marie-Thérèse Walter, of whom Picasso painted a series of portraits. The face is a double image, with the left half depicting the model and the right half showing another figure kissing her.

Theatre Picasso
will run from 17
September 2025 until
12 April 2026 at Tate
Modern, London.



DEATH TO ORDER

A MODERN HISTORY OF ASSASSINATION

A fascinating study of the sharp edge of international diplomacy



Author: Simon Ball

Publisher: Yale University Press

Price: £25

Released: Out now

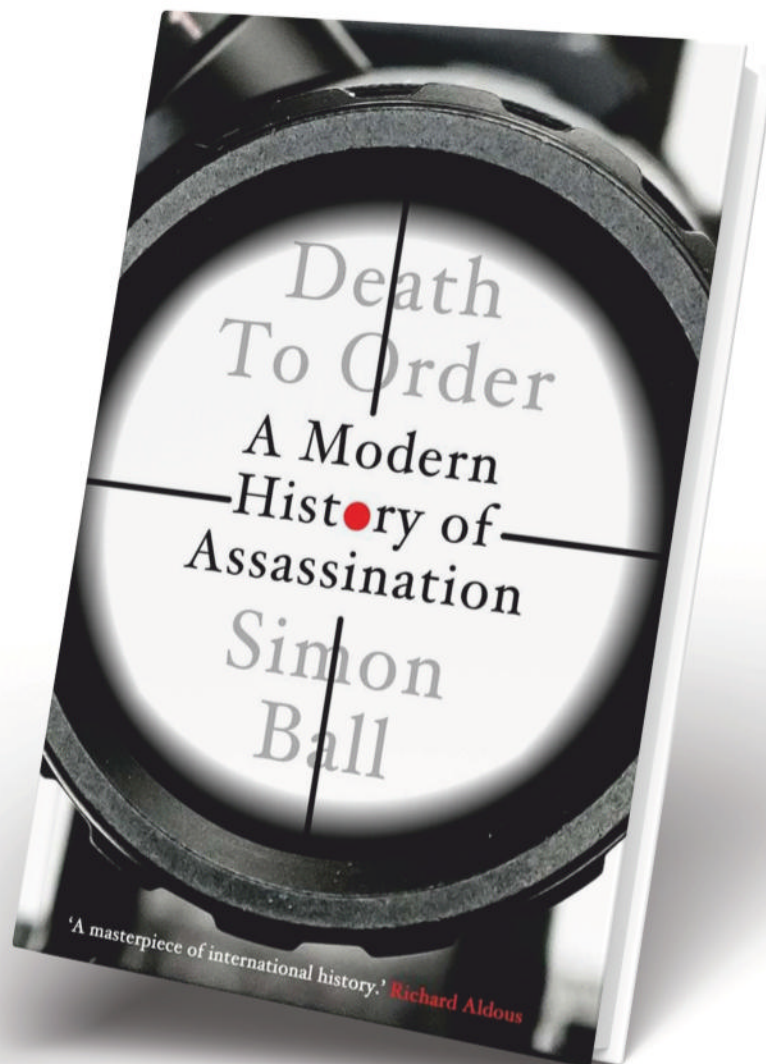
The term assassination in a historical context immediately brings to mind high-profile, sometimes still hotly debated, cases. Today, assassination, being the premeditated killing of an individual for ideological or political reasons, is prohibited under international law. Even so, as Simon Ball's new examination of assassination through the 20th century makes clear, that doesn't appear to have stopped it from being important. From Archduke Ferdinand to John F Kennedy, the killing of prominent political figures had a massive impact on the shaping of the 20th century.

Ball is a professor at the University of Leeds specialising in the history of international politics, secret intelligence, the Cold War and the use of assassination. He brings all of that knowledge to bear here. If war is the failure of diplomacy, what does assassination represent and what does it tell us about the assassins and their targets? Ball's in-depth analysis

of different periods and segments of history offers masses of insight into these sorts of questions. Each chapter covers a different era in various regions of the world, revealing overlapping trends and temperaments along the way.

While breaking down the specifics of some of the century's most impactful political killings from across different regions of the world, *Death To Order* also widens the focus a little. Rather than being solely concerned with the spectacle and intrigue of these murders, Ball takes a longer view and reviews their individual impacts as well as the broader changes that longer-term use and expectation of assassination can have on a political sphere of influence.

Ball does make a distinction between political killings carried out at the behest or in the interests of a state versus those taken on by individuals or unelected groups. Even so, those events, such as the murder of Martin Luther King Jr in 1968, are still examined in terms of



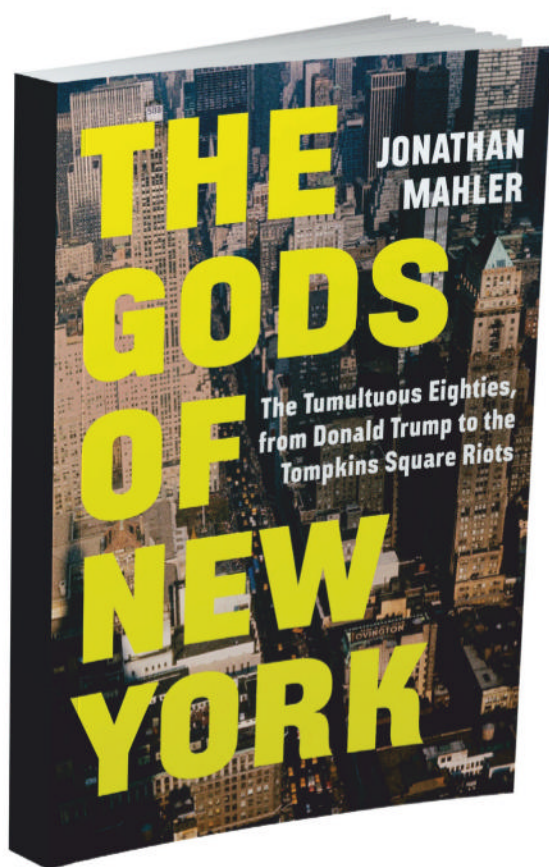
© Getty Images

US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated in April 1968

the reverberations that they had, in that case in the United States.

Assassinations are a very narrow lens through which to view the 20th century, but that is greatly to this book's benefit as it brings immense clarity to the narrative of a complex and fast-moving century. Ball's extensive research and archival access means that this is every bit as comprehensive and exhaustive as you could wish. Thankfully, he writes in an accessible way while also deftly filling in any historical knowledge

gaps that readers might have. The distances travelled and methodologies used across the decades are not the only things that changed. The use, impact and reaction to assassinations through the century shifted too as the world adjusted to its more interconnected state. A concluding chapter on the 21st century and the use of assassination in the War on Terror and its offshoots brings everything into focus for the modern world too and poses some important questions for us today. **JG**



THE GODS OF NEW YORK

How a decade of turmoil shaped the Big Apple



Author: Jonathan Mahler

Publisher: Hutchinson Heinemann

Price: £25

Released: 14 August

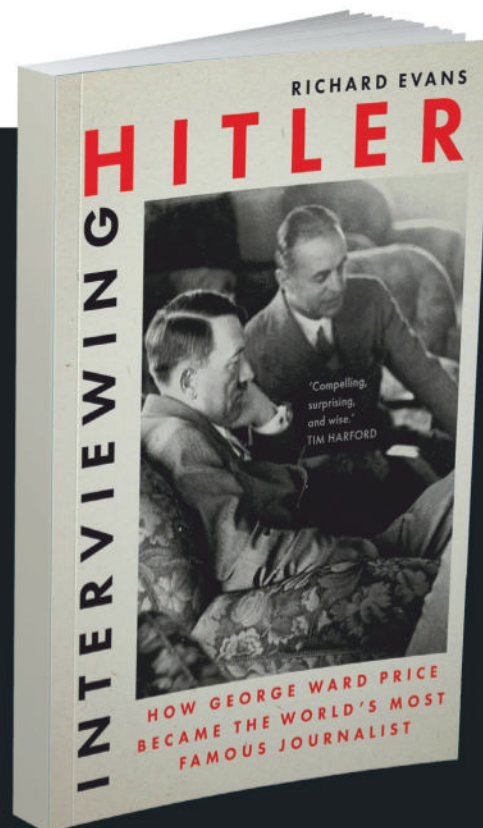
New York has been many things throughout its history: the playground of the rich, a hotbed of sex and crime and a haven for refugees seeking sanctuary and a new life in the New World. But as Jonathan Mahler recounts in his latest book, *The Gods of New York*, during the 1980s the city underwent something of an identity crisis. In his quest to explore this pivotal chapter in the Big Apple's history, Mahler has crafted a detailed portrait of the City, its denizens and the 'gods' who attempted to reshape it.

What results is a sprawling work totalling over 400 pages. As perhaps should be expected for such a seasoned journalist, Mahler's prose is brimming with life. Historical figures leap off the page, the author taking time to establish their background and personality. Occasionally this can

result in whiplash for the reader, as Mahler indulges in lengthy diversions, only to suddenly return to the main narrative. But the resultant detours are so enjoyable that it would be churlish to complain.

For a modern audience, the most striking name among the many included is of course Donald Trump. At the time an ambitious real estate developer in New York, he looms large over the story and it's easy to see how he came to occupy the most powerful position on the planet – for better or worse. But wider events as well as individuals are key to Mahler's story, with the AIDS crisis, rampant homelessness and racial issues dominating the pages as well.

Mahler's fascinating account is colourful and engaging, creating a living, breathing portrait of 1980s New York. **CM**



INTERVIEWING HITLER

Was the *Daily Mail*'s star reporter a dupe, a cynic or a Nazi sympathiser?



Author: Richard Evans

Publisher: The History Press

Price: £22

Released: 28 August

Tall, well-educated and distinctive-looking, for much of the first half of the 20th century, George Ward Price was the world's best-known journalist – the writer Ernest Hemingway described him as “the monocled prince of the press.” For many he was not just a reporter for the *Daily Mail*, he was the *Daily Mail*. If there was an exclusive to be had anywhere in the world, Ward Price was the man on the spot to report it.

He wasn't afraid to put himself in harm's way, reporting on the First Balkan War, surviving the crash of a German airship, taking part in an Italian bombing raid against Austrian forces, and leaving on the last boat from Gallipoli at the end of the Dardanelles Campaign in the First World War. This was the man who was there “whenever history was in the making.”

But his fame turned to notoriety because of his unparalleled access to the right-wing dictators of the 1930s, and his uncritical reporting saw him later labelled a Nazi and fascist apologist at best, and a sympathiser at worst.

Interviewing Hitler charts how Ward Price fostered relationships with Adolf Hitler and the Nazi leadership to maintain access, not just report a single ‘scoop’, as the world careered towards another conflict. Author Richard Evans exposes the lie of Ward Price's post-war claims to have reported impartially, and presents us with damning evidence of his political sympathies. This book is a timely reminder of the danger of journalists prioritising access to those in power over holding them to account. **JB**



© Alamy

SALLY

This moving documentary explores the troubled life of America's first female astronaut



Recommended audience: 14+

Director: Cristina Costantini

Streaming: Disney+/Hulu

Released: Out now

On 16 June 1963, Russian Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to travel into outer space. Almost exactly 20 years later on 8 June 1983, Sally Ride made headlines as the first American woman to take a rocket to the heavens. However, Ride's journey was not an easy one, having to overcome sexism, misogyny and homophobia. A closeted queer woman, she kept her relationship with female tennis-pro and scientist Tam O'Shaughnessy secret for 27 years.

Now, Ride is the focus of a new documentary produced and directed by Cristina Constantini, who has previously directed episodes of the documentary series *The Stanford Prison Experiment* and *Science Fair* and a number of feature-length projects. At the heart of the film are two themes: Ride's journey to becoming the first American female astronaut and her tumultuous personal life and relationships.

Through these themes, Costantini explores the sexism Ride personally faced, the wider misogyny within NASA itself and how American society during the latter half of the 20th century as a whole perceived female astronauts. Alongside this, Costantini also examines another prejudice Ride was subject to - homophobia. At times this can be distressing, such as one moment of archive footage featuring two young boys who, while laughing, suggest homosexuals should be shot.

The true heart of the documentary is the deep dive it takes into Ride's personal life, in particular her relationship with O'Shaughnessy. Throughout their relationship, Ride remained closeted for fear of what the consequences would be for both her and her loved ones. This is of little surprise, particularly when the documentary showcases the vile treatment she had previously received at the hands of the media.

The documentary includes a large number of contributors, among them Ride's fellow astronaut Mike Mullane, ex-husband Steve Hawley and former tennis champion Billie Jean King, a friend who faced difficulties of her own when publicly outed as being in a lesbian relationship.

O'Shaughnessy is one of the major figures in the documentary and the sections in which she discusses her love for, and life with, Ride are incredibly moving. A surprising interviewee is Ride's 100-year-old mother, who seems uncomfortable and is featured very little.

Alongside the interviews there is also a fascinating collection of archive footage, including a clip where Ride diligently handles a series of increasingly impertinent questions during a press conference. To illustrate more abstract concepts, Constantini and her team draw from a wide range of sources. For example, when demonstrating the perceived attitudes towards female astronauts they showcase clips of fainting, screaming women in outer space from a number of 1950s B-Movies.

Sally is a powerful and emotional biographical documentary that never outstays its welcome, which with a runtime of 105 minutes is no easy feat. It presents a rich portrait of the late astronaut and physicist's life, never shying away from tackling difficult subject matter. It's perfect for viewers unfamiliar with her story and those already aware of her legacy, *Sally* comes highly recommended. **CM**

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD BLITZ

Director: Steve McQueen Starring: Saoirse Ronan, Elliott Heffernan, Harris Dickinson Country: UK Year: 2024

The director of *12 Years A Slave* attempts to show the good and bad of 1940s London

B

HISTORY

A deft use of fiction to weave together real events and stories

C

HOLLYWOOD

Split focus between mother and son makes things a little disjointed

OVERALL

B

VERDICT



01 *Blitz* follows Rita (Ronan) and her son George (Heffernan) as children are being evacuated from London. Rita is an amalgam of the factory-worker women of this time and George was inspired by a photograph from 1940 of a boy with a suitcase.



02 Having sent her son away, Rita volunteers at a bomb shelter. It's run by Mickey Davies (Leigh Gill), a real figure who was voted to be chief shelter marshal for his area. He ran a free medical service from the shelter, considered a precursor to the NHS.



03 George escapes the train and walks back to London. He is aided by a Nigerian Air Raid Warden named Ife (Benjamin Clémentine). This character is inspired by Ita Ekpenyon, who volunteered as a warden during the Blitz having come to Britain to study law.



04 George falls in with a criminal gang who loot the bodies of dead patrons of the Café de Paris. This club really was bombed during the Blitz and the song being sung in the film - *Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh!* - was the last performed before the attack.



05 In a harrowing scene, an Underground station being used as a shelter begins to flood. This is inspired by the real Balham Station disaster in which up to 68 people were killed. As in the film, a young boy helped unlock the gates to free survivors.



RECIPE

CHICKEN À LA MARYLAND

MARYLAND, USA, 19-20TH CENTURY

Serves: 3-4
Prep time: 15 mins
Cooking time: 35 mins

- 120g flour
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp water
- 60g breadcrumbs
- 1/2 tsp celery seed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 chicken quartered, or equivalent weight of breast, thigh and wings
- 60ml cooking oil
- 8 pieces of streaky bacon

BÉCHAMEL SAUCE

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp flour
- 120ml milk
- 120ml stock (vegetable, chicken or mushroom)

BANANA

- 3 tbsp butter
- 3 medium ripe bananas



Surviving menus from the Titanic give us a glimpse at what the passengers ate. There are notable differences between the different ticket classes (oysters for first class, smoked herring for third, for example). Among the luncheon options on 14 April 1912, the day before the ship sank, was chicken à la Maryland.

The options in first class were largely staples of French cuisine and well-prepared, upscale dishes. Chicken à la Maryland was a gentrified name for Maryland fried chicken, which was a relatively homely dish. Recipes for the meal can be found from the late 19th century, although its roots, and those of fried chicken more broadly, can be traced back to enslaved communities across America.

It was served with a cream gravy, bacon and fried banana. The addition of banana appears to have been popularised by French chef Auguste Escoffier in his book *Ma Cuisine*.

- 01 Place the 120g of flour in one bowl, mix the egg and water in another and the breadcrumbs, celery seed, salt and pepper in a third.
- 02 Dredge the pieces of chicken first in the flour, then in the egg and finally in the bread crumbs, coating them well from each bowl.
- 03 Heat the oil in a pan until hot enough that the batter sizzles as it's dropped in. Begin frying the chicken until it reaches an internal temperature of 80°C (180°F) or until the juices run clear and the breadcrumbs are golden brown.
- 04 Add the bacon partway through and cook until crispy, then remove to some paper towels.
- 05 Remove from the oil and allow to drain on some paper towels.
- 06 For the béchamel white sauce/gravy, melt the tablespoon of butter over medium heat in a saucepan. Whisk in the flour until it forms a smooth paste and the flour smell has cooked off.
- 07 Slowly add the milk and stock, whisking all the time until a thick, smooth sauce comes together. Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 08 For the fried banana, melt the remaining butter in a pan on medium heat and sauté the slices, flipping until they are golden brown on both sides.
- 09 Serve the chicken with the sauce on top with a side of the fried banana and bacon.

NEXT ISSUE



THE BLACK DEATH ON SALE 4 SEPT

All images © Getty Images

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair and glasses, looking surprised while reading an open book. She is surrounded by bookshelves filled with various books. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the woman and her book.

THE

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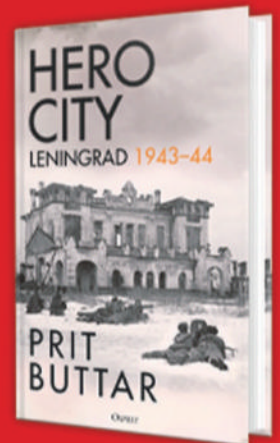
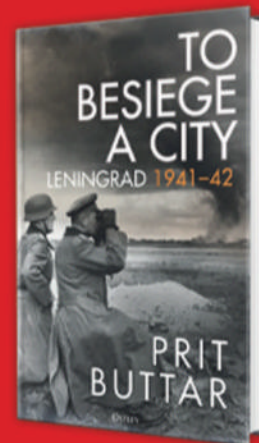
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