ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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How the lawless seas were conquered

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Was this royal family doomed to suffer?

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From prison palace to royal treasury: uncover the surprising history of England's iconic stronghold

CHURCHILL'S SOVIET WAR PLAN
What if Britain had turned the Cold War hot?

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The Tower is one of London's most popular landmarks, attracting three million visitors a year

Welcome

Growing up in London, I'm not sure I appreciated just how much history was on my doorstep. I enjoyed a museum as much as anyone, but when I was young I didn't fully understand the degree to which every corner had a story to share. And no building in England's capital is quite as storied as the Tower of London. A fortress, a vault, sometimes even a zoo of sorts; it's had a lot of roles to play. However, it's most famous for being a prison and the grounds for some of the most famous deaths and executions in British history. If these walls could speak, I'm not sure I would be able to sleep at night having listened to them.

Thankfully, we don't need to conjure any spectres to get the full story this issue as we welcome John Paul Davis to be our guide through the horrors and mysteries of the great Tower. We also go hunting for some of history's greatest missing treasures, learn about the mission to get Jewish children out of Germany before WWII, and find out how the golden age of piracy was brought to an end. Lots to be getting on with then, so I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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Mainimage: © Gettyimages

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From prison palace to royal treasury: uncover the surprising history of England's iconic stronghold

DEVICE WALLPAPERS

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Defining Moments

6 May 1950

TOLLUND MAN DISCOVERED

While cutting peat in the Bjældskovdal bog near Silkeborg in Denmark, two men discovered a body. It had been so well preserved that they initially believed that the body belonged to a recent murder victim and alerted the police. However, upon further examination it was established that the mummified body actually dated from the 5th century BCE. It is believed that the Tollund Man, as the body was later christened, was a victim of human sacrifice who was killed at approximately 40 years old.

© Getty Images

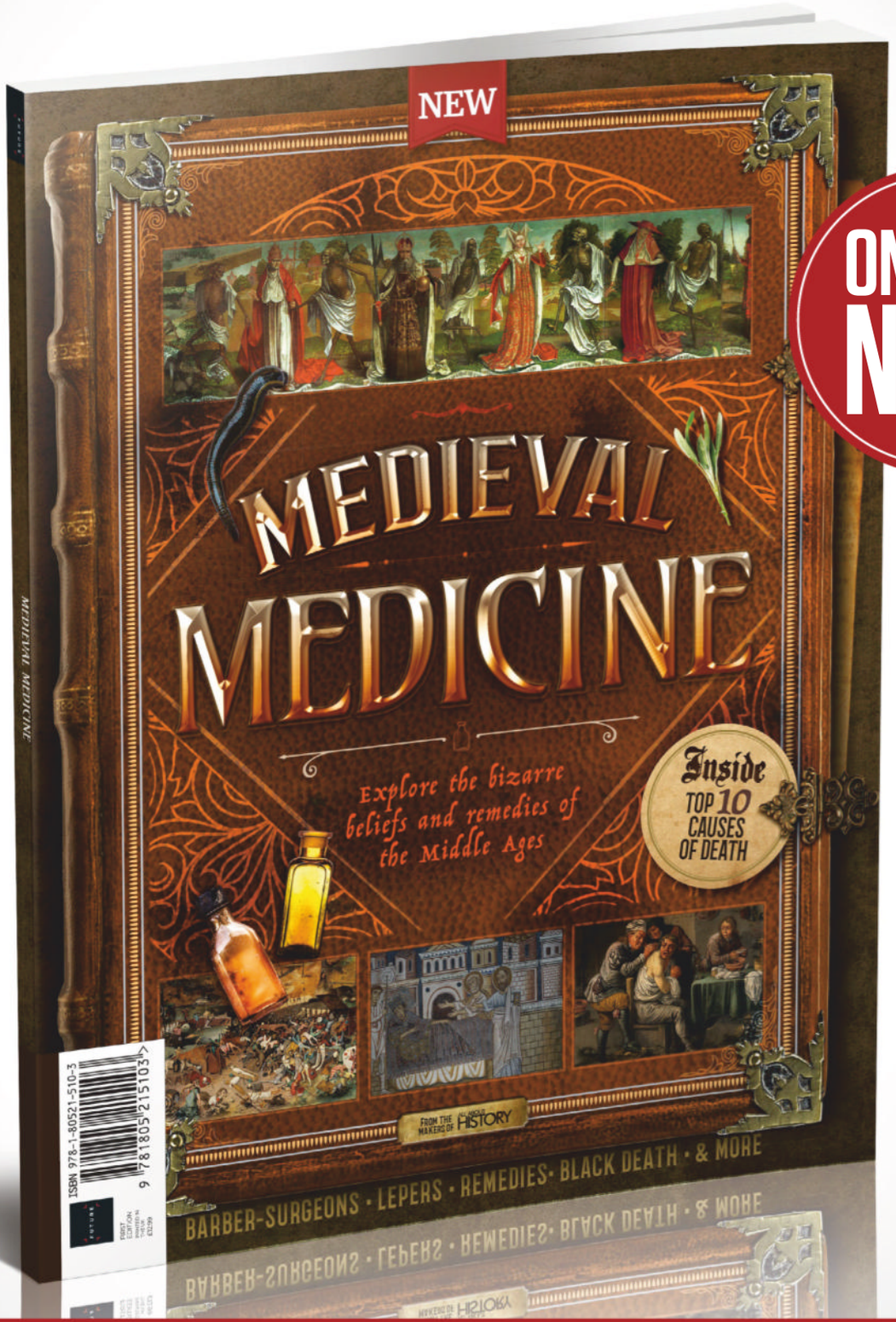
4 April 1949

NATO IS BORN

With concern growing following World War II about the intent and activities of the Soviet Union, the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom founded the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Here, British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin is pictured signing the treaty in Washington DC promising collective security for the member states that if one should be attacked, the others would come to its aid. NATO now has 32 members, with Sweden being the most recent addition to the group.

EXPLORE THE BIZARRE WORLD OF MEDIEVAL MEDICINE

From leeches and blood-letting to myth, magic, mysticism (and chickens), discover the strange science of medieval medicine and how it tried to address everyday illness, injury, and the pandemics of the Middle Ages.



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ALL ABOUT

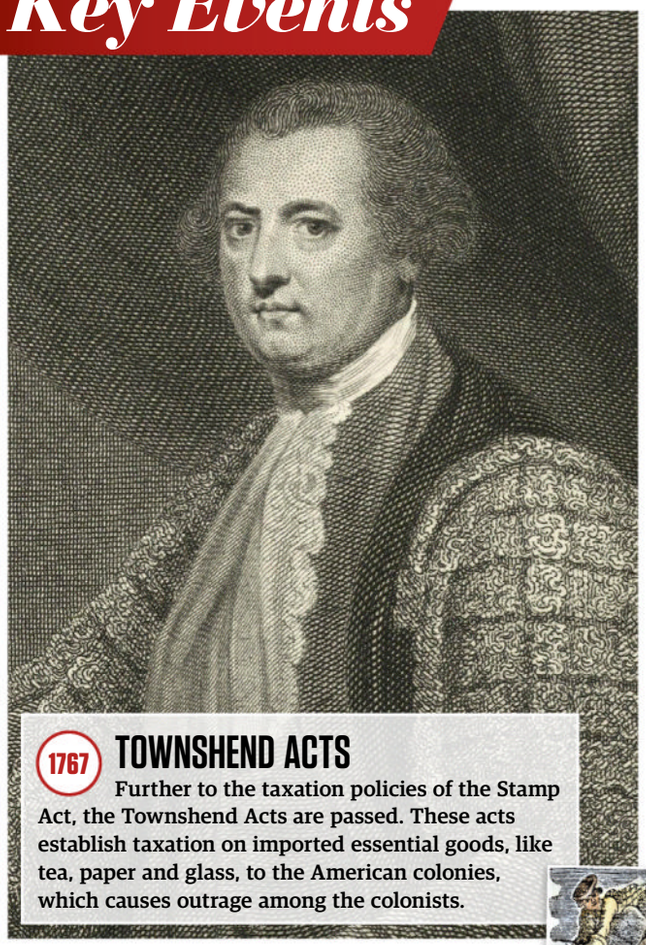
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

From the Stamp Act to the Treaty of Paris, we chart the American independence movement and its battle for freedom

Main image: © Getty Images

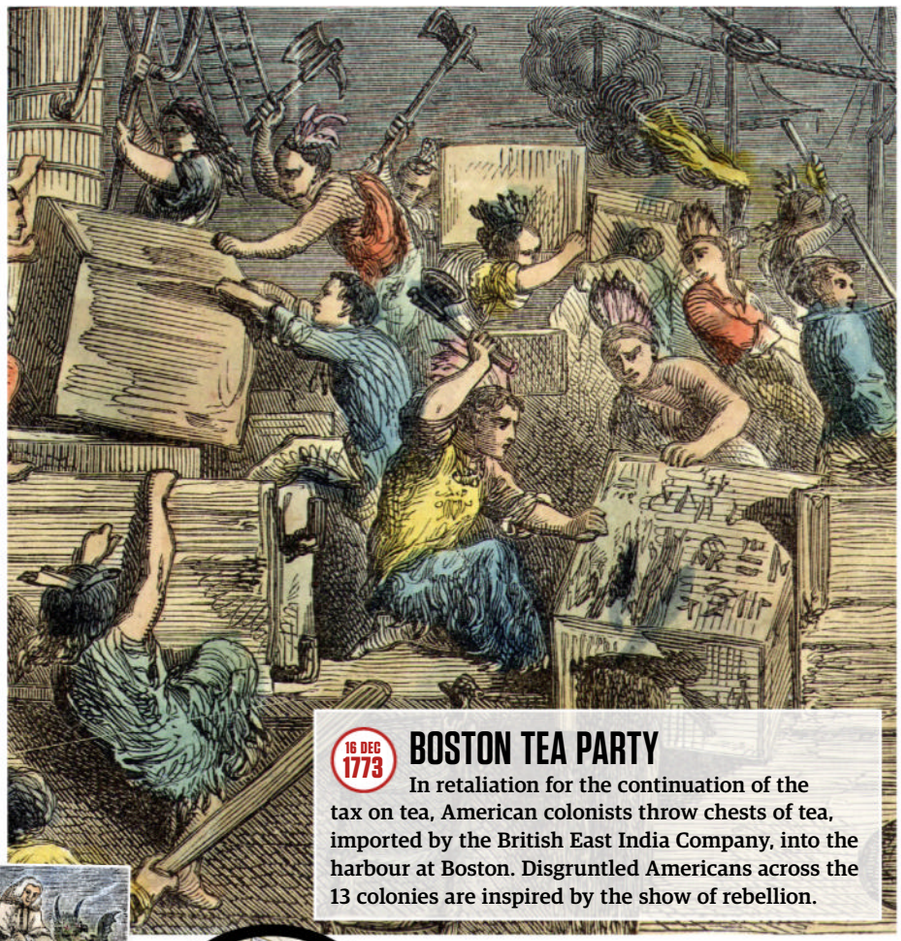
Written by Emily Staniforth, Callum McKelvie, Rowena Cockett

Key Events



1767 TOWNSHEND ACTS

Further to the taxation policies of the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts are passed. These acts establish taxation on imported essential goods, like tea, paper and glass, to the American colonies, which causes outrage among the colonists.



16 DEC 1773 BOSTON TEA PARTY

In retaliation for the continuation of the tax on tea, American colonists throw chests of tea, imported by the British East India Company, into the harbour at Boston. Disgruntled Americans across the 13 colonies are inspired by the show of rebellion.

STAMP ACT CONGRESS OCTOBER 1765

Delegates of the nine of the financially struggling colonies meet in New York to petition the British to repeal the harsh Stamp Act taxations.

INTOLERABLE ACTS 1774

Tension builds between colonists and the British after the British pass four punitive laws in response to the events of the Boston Tea Party.

SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS 10 MAY 1775

The Second Continental Congress acts as a wartime government after the outbreak of the Revolutionary War until 1781 when it is replaced by the Congress of the Confederation.

1767 — 16 DEC 1773 — 19 APR 1775

BOSTON MASSACRE 5 MARCH 1770

British troops guarding Boston's Customs House shoot into the crowd after a fight breaks out between colonists and one soldier. 11 colonists are wounded, five of whom die.

FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS 5 SEPTEMBER 1774

In response to the Intolerable Acts, delegates from the colonies meet in Philadelphia to discuss options of resistance against the British. George Washington attends.

BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL 17 JUNE 1775

British victory at Bunker Hill, despite experiencing a huge casualty count, marks the realisation that war in the colonies will be long and difficult.

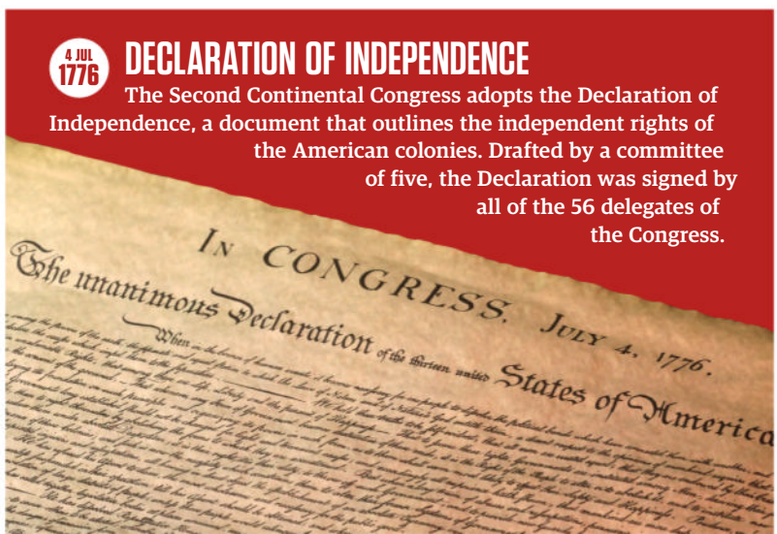
It is not known who fired the first shot, known as "the shot heard round the world".

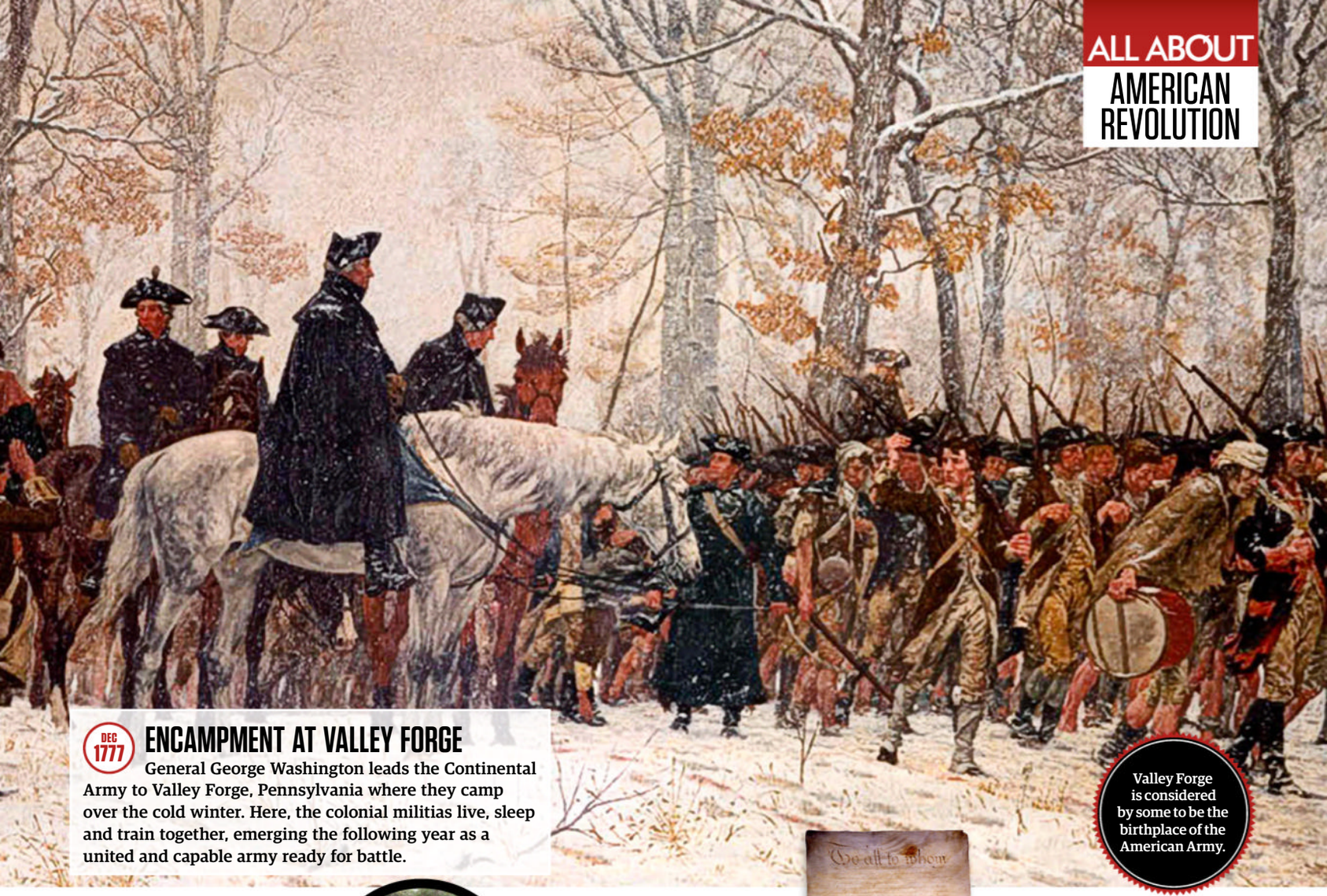
19 APR 1775 FIRST SHOTS FIRED

British general Thomas Gage orders the seizure of colonist weapons supplies in Concord, Massachusetts. The colonists are prepared and when the two sides face each other the first shot of the Revolutionary War is fired and battle ensues.

4 JUL 1776 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The Second Continental Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence, a document that outlines the independent rights of the American colonies. Drafted by a committee of five, the Declaration was signed by all of the 56 delegates of the Congress.





DEC 1777 ENCAMPMENT AT VALLEY FORGE

General George Washington leads the Continental Army to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania where they camp over the cold winter. Here, the colonial militias live, sleep and train together, emerging the following year as a united and capable army ready for battle.

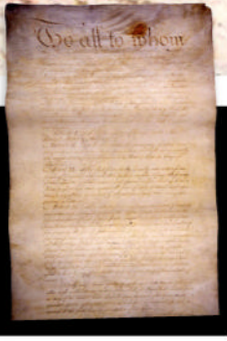
Valley Forge is considered by some to be the birthplace of the American Army.

BRITISH ALLIANCE WITH SLAVES NOVEMBER 1775

Patriot slaves in Virginia are offered their freedom if they fight for the British army. Similar offers of freedom continue to be made across the colonies.

BURGOYNE SURRENDERS 17 OCTOBER 1777

Following the Battle of Saratoga, British general Burgoyne surrenders to General Horatio Gates. American victory inspires a boost in morale and aspirations for independence.



ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION 1 MARCH 1781

After being created in 1777 by the Second Continental Congress, the Articles of Confederation, considered the first version of the US Constitution, come into force.

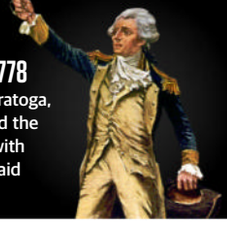
4 JUL 1776 — DEC 1777 — 19 OCT 1781 — 23 DEC 1783

CROSSING THE DELAWARE 25 DECEMBER 1776

George Washington leads 2,400 Continental troops across the icy Delaware River at night to launch a surprise and successful attack at the Battle of Trenton.

FRANCO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE 6 FEBRUARY 1778

Inspired by the outcome at Saratoga, an alliance between France and the American colonies is agreed, with the French promising military aid against the British.



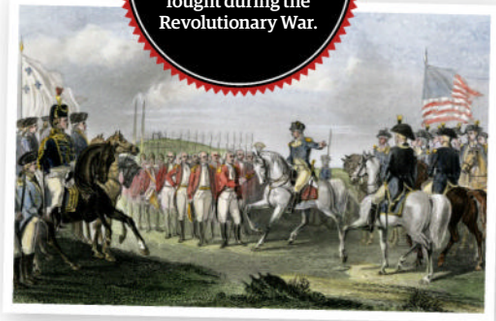
TREATY OF PARIS 3 SEPTEMBER 1783

Ending the war and recognising American independence, the Treaty of Paris is signed by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and a British representative.

19 OCT 1781 BATTLE OF YORKTOWN ENDS

The Continental Army declares victory after the Battle of Yorktown, which had started on 28 September 1781. The British general Charles Cornwallis surrenders to the Americans, paving the way for peace negotiations and the end of the war.

Yorktown was one of the last of around 165 principal engagements fought during the Revolutionary War.



23 DEC 1783 WASHINGTON RESIGNS

Having remained in his post as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army until peace between Britain and the colonies was secured, George Washington resigns his commission. Six years later he is elected as the first US president.

FORT TICONDEROGA

United States
1775

Originally built by the French between 1755 and 1758, Fort Ticonderoga became the site of several important battles during the Revolutionary Wars. Originally named Carillion, it remained under French control until it was captured by the British during a fierce battle in 1759. Following this it was renamed Fort Ticonderoga and became a British outpost, still in operation when the Revolutionary Wars began in 1775. It was undermanned and undervalued, with barely more than 50 British troops stationed there.

However, to the Thirteen Colonies the fort was strategically important. Located on the Hudson River, it guarded the northern route towards Canada. On 10 May 1775 the Green Mountain Boys, a contingent of American troops under the command of Ethan Allen and Colonel Benedict Arnold, launched a surprise attack on the fort. The takeover occurred quickly and without violence, the few British troops stationed there caught unawares. The first victory achieved by the forces of the Thirteen Colonies, it not only granted them control of access to the Northern Canadian passage, it also allowed them to capture much-needed artillery pieces.

In 1777 the fort once more came under attack and between 2 and 6 July was placed under siege by British troops led by General John Burgoyne. Burgoyne captured nearby Mount Defiance and used it to bombard the fort until its commanding officer, Arthur St Clair chose to abandon the site. British forces destroyed much of the fortifications upon retreating to Canada that same year, but rebuilt parts upon their return in 1781. While further skirmishes occurred at the site, it was never again the focus of a major battle.

In 1909 the fort was opened as a tourist attraction and has remained one ever since. Visitors can see historic reenactments and traverse the fort that witnessed the first decisive American victory of the Revolutionary Wars.

MILITARY GARRISON GARDENS

Both the British and French forces stationed grew their own supply of vegetables in gardens outside the main fort walls. French troops who originally occupied the area named the vast garden they had created The King's Garden. This name is currently used to describe the historic gardens at Fort Ticonderoga that can still be visited to this day.

Visitors can explore the six-acre garden and discover its many layers of history

STORE ROOM

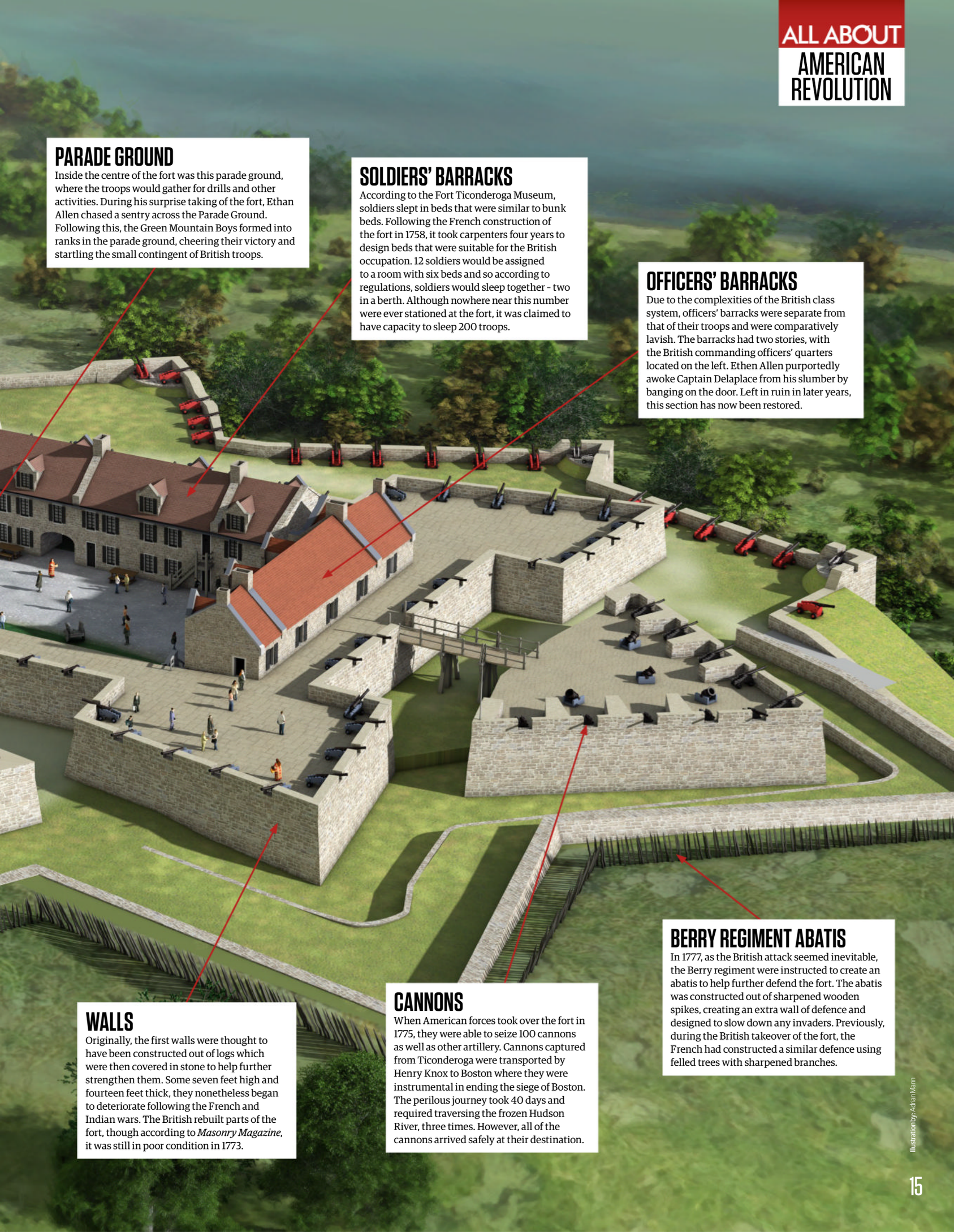
Storage facilities for the fort were located next to the powder magazine. However, upon the initial completion of the fort, the lack of storage space was just one of many perceived problems with the facility, including leakages in the powder magazine and buildings tall enough to be targeted by enemy artillery. Troops had no choice but to store additional items outside the fort's walls.

BAKERY

Located beneath the Northeast Bastion were two underground chambers that contained bakeries constructed by the French. Four bake ovens in total were built, with chutes above ground to allow troops to keep them easily stocked with firewood. While much of this space has since collapsed, the Fort Ticonderoga Museum states that one of the bakeries is still "largely intact" and French baking ovens can still be found within.

POWDER MAGAZINE

The powder magazine was used to store gunpowder for artillery. When abandoning the fort in 1759, French forces rigged an explosive charge which detonated the entire powder store, destroying it. When the powder was being carried ready for use, troops would transport it in a powder horn. This was a hollowed-out animal horn, usually from a buffalo, ox or cow. Since becoming a tourist attraction in 1909 the powder magazine has been recreated.



PARADE GROUND

Inside the centre of the fort was this parade ground, where the troops would gather for drills and other activities. During his surprise taking of the fort, Ethan Allen chased a sentry across the Parade Ground. Following this, the Green Mountain Boys formed into ranks in the parade ground, cheering their victory and startling the small contingent of British troops.

SOLDIERS' BARRACKS

According to the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, soldiers slept in beds that were similar to bunk beds. Following the French construction of the fort in 1758, it took carpenters four years to design beds that were suitable for the British occupation. 12 soldiers would be assigned to a room with six beds and so according to regulations, soldiers would sleep together – two in a berth. Although nowhere near this number were ever stationed at the fort, it was claimed to have capacity to sleep 200 troops.

OFFICERS' BARRACKS

Due to the complexities of the British class system, officers' barracks were separate from that of their troops and were comparatively lavish. The barracks had two stories, with the British commanding officers' quarters located on the left. Ethen Allen purportedly awoke Captain Delaplace from his slumber by banging on the door. Left in ruin in later years, this section has now been restored.

BERRY REGIMENT ABATIS

In 1777, as the British attack seemed inevitable, the Berry regiment were instructed to create an abatis to help further defend the fort. The abatis was constructed out of sharpened wooden spikes, creating an extra wall of defence and designed to slow down any invaders. Previously, during the British takeover of the fort, the French had constructed a similar defence using felled trees with sharpened branches.

CANNONS

When American forces took over the fort in 1775, they were able to seize 100 cannons as well as other artillery. Cannons captured from Ticonderoga were transported by Henry Knox to Boston where they were instrumental in ending the siege of Boston. The perilous journey took 40 days and required traversing the frozen Hudson River, three times. However, all of the cannons arrived safely at their destination.

WALLS

Originally, the first walls were thought to have been constructed out of logs which were then covered in stone to help further strengthen them. Some seven feet high and fourteen feet thick, they nonetheless began to deteriorate following the French and Indian wars. The British rebuilt parts of the fort, though according to *Masonry Magazine*, it was still in poor condition in 1773.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann

Anatomy

CONTINENTAL SOLDIER

United States
1775 – 1783

TRICORN HAT

A particularly popular form of headgear during the 18th century, the tricorn was one type of hat worn by the Continental Army. Rosette-like items known as 'cockades' would be placed upon the hat. Traditionally these were black, but were changed to white in 1780 to show allegiance to France.

BROWN BESS MUSKET

Wildly inaccurate, muskets could not be used in the same manner as our contemporary guns. Instead, troops huddled together when firing so the projectiles barraged the enemy. The Brown Bess musket was the most popular among the Continental Army. However (despite many theories) the origins of its name remain a mystery.

NECK STOCK

Neck stocks were a typical part of 18th century men's fashion, but soldiers' neck stocks were often made out of tougher materials such as horse hair or leather. They were believed to help posture, keeping the head straight. The leather neck stocks, worn by the marines, earned them the nickname 'leathernecks', a term still used today.

REGIMENTAL COAT

To begin with, the Continental troops wore whatever uniforms they could find. However, as the conflict progressed, a standardised blue uniform was created. The trim of the uniform differentiated in colour in order to denote rank, unit or sometimes the state the regiment originated from.

KNAPSACK AND HAVERSACK

Soldiers carried two bags, a haversack and a knapsack. The haversack would be used to transport food as well as items such as eating utensils, a plate and a drinking cup. The soldier's knapsack most likely would have been used to carry clothing and personal items, with very few examples from this period remaining in existence.

FOOTWEAR

Continental Army troops wore buckled leather shoes. However, supply was sometimes an issue. During the long battle at Valley Forge, 1777-1778, many of the troops lacked suitable footwear and despite the harsh winter conditions, remained shoeless. Later, troops would have access to 'ice creepers', which made it easier to traverse the harsh conditions.

THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

In 1775, the 13 colonies established the Continental Army to be its fighting force in the war against the British. Under the overall command of George Washington, troops had to be at least 16 years of age. By the war's end, nearly 30 per cent of the army had been captured, killed or wounded.

Illustration by Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

WASHINGTON'S WAR TENT

Why does this threadbare marquee remain so significant to America's history?

United States, 1778

Described by the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as "one of the nation's most treasured artefacts", this tent used by George Washington during the Revolutionary War has come to symbolise the epic journey taken by Washington to lead America to independence. Currently on display at the Museum of the American Revolution, the original tent stands as one of the central pieces in their collection. It is one of the two tents purchased by Washington: one was a dining tent, while the second (this one) served as his office and accommodation. The significance of this second tent has been recognised for almost 250 years, with some referring to it as the "first Oval Office".

Made in 1778 to replace Washington's first set of tents, the sleeping and office tent symbolised something much more poignant than just the General's accommodation. It was expected for military commanders at this time to have permanent headquarters in a building, but by using the tent as his headquarters, and by sleeping side by side with the other camping soldiers, Washington was emulating what military leadership in a republic should look like, according to R Scott Stephenson, the president of the Museum of the American Revolution. The tent travelled with Washington, acting as a witness to some of the key moments of the war for independence, including the final battle at Yorktown. Furthermore, it hosted meetings where Washington and other figures, like founding father Alexander Hamilton, discussed tactics and strategies that led to their eventual victory over the British.

After the end of the war in 1783, the tent was kept in storage at Mount Vernon, Washington's home and plantation in Virginia where it remained until after his death in 1799. It was preserved as an heirloom by his wife, Martha, who kept it safe and passed it down to her descendants. Union soldiers confiscated the tent from Robert E Lee, Martha's great-granddaughter's husband, during the Civil War, and kept it at the US Patent Office. It was later restored to the care of the Lee family, around 40 years later, when they petitioned the Supreme Court for its return.

A TWO-MAN TENT

As well as providing sleeping quarters for Washington, the tent also served as the bedroom of Washington's enslaved valet, William Lee. Some soldiers described the tent as glowing at night, as Washington stayed up late to read and write his correspondence.

BECOMING AN EXHIBIT

The tent was purchased by Reverend W Herbert Burk from Mary Custis Lee, the daughter of Robert E Lee, in 1909. Selling it for $5,000, Custis Lee donated the money to Confederate war widows, while Burk put the tent on display in museums.

LAFAYETTE'S VISIT

The tent was displayed upon the Marquis de Lafayette's visit to America in 1824. Upon returning to the tent for the first time since the end of the war, Lafayette was said to have cried tears of joy and gratitude.

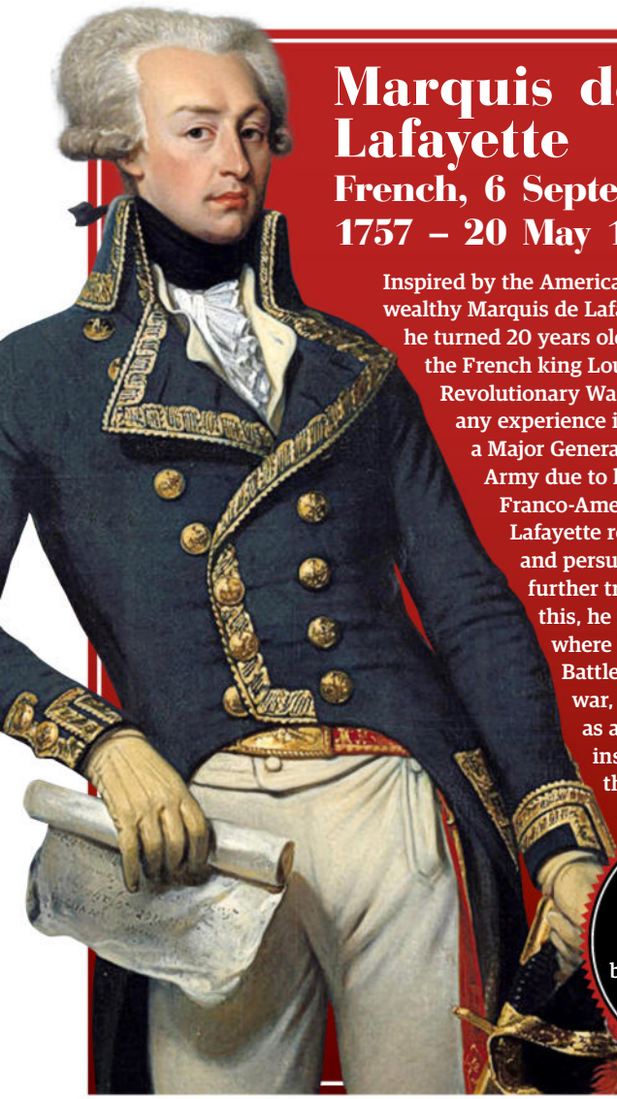
DESIGN

Though it is now an iconic symbol, the tent itself was a typical design for military tents of the time. It measures around 23 feet long and 14 feet wide and is made from flax linen.

LEFT A painting of George Washington and his slave, William Lee, standing outside the tent holding the Declaration of Independence

FIGHTING FOR INDEPENDENCE

A selection of the important players on both sides of the American Revolutionary War



Marquis de Lafayette

French, 6 September 1757 – 20 May 1834

Inspired by the American revolutionaries, the wealthy Marquis de Lafayette left France before he turned 20 years old, against the orders of the French king Louis XVI, to fight in the Revolutionary War. Despite not having any experience in battle, he was made a Major General in the Continental Army due to his status. After the Franco-American alliance of 1778, Lafayette returned to France to try and persuade Louis XVI to send further troops to fight. Securing this, he returned to America where he led forces at the Battle of Yorktown. After the war, he returned to France as a hero and was later instrumental in launching the French Revolution.

Lafayette formed a close bond with Washington that has been compared to that of a father and son.

WILLIAM HOWE

BRITISH, 10 AUGUST 1729 – 12 JULY 1814

In 1775, General William Howe led British troops at Bunker Hill and the following year was appointed as Commander in Chief of the British Army in North America. He captured New York and headed south, winning again at the battles of Brandywine and Germantown in 1777. However, his success was short-lived when he failed to destroy Washington's forces at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777 and was later blamed for Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga.

HENRY CLINTON

BRITISH, 16 APRIL 1730 – 23 DECEMBER 1795

A prominent member of the British army, Henry Clinton went to Boston in 1775 as second in command to General William Howe. Leading troops at Bunker Hill, Clinton also led two victorious campaigns in New York and Long Island. In 1778, Clinton replaced Howe as Commander in Chief of the British Army in North America. His failure to provide support to Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 saw him blamed for the defeat, and he resigned his command.

JOHN ADAMS

AMERICAN, 30 OCTOBER 1735 – 4 JULY 1826

John Adams served as a delegate in both the First and Second Continental Congresses. He quickly became well known for his support for independence and a key figure in making decisions that would have an impact on the success of the revolution. He voted for Washington to be made Commander of the Army, assisted in drafting the Declaration of Independence, and helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris. He went on to become the second US president.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

AMERICAN, 13 APRIL 1743 – 4 JULY 1826

As a talented writer, Thomas Jefferson was made a delegate at the Second Continental Congress and was asked by John Adams to write a draft of the Declaration of Independence. He contributed to the US Constitution, with his Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom a forerunner to the First Amendment. Despite not fighting in the war, Jefferson's gift as a wordsmith and politician saw him become an architect of independent America.

Charles Cornwallis

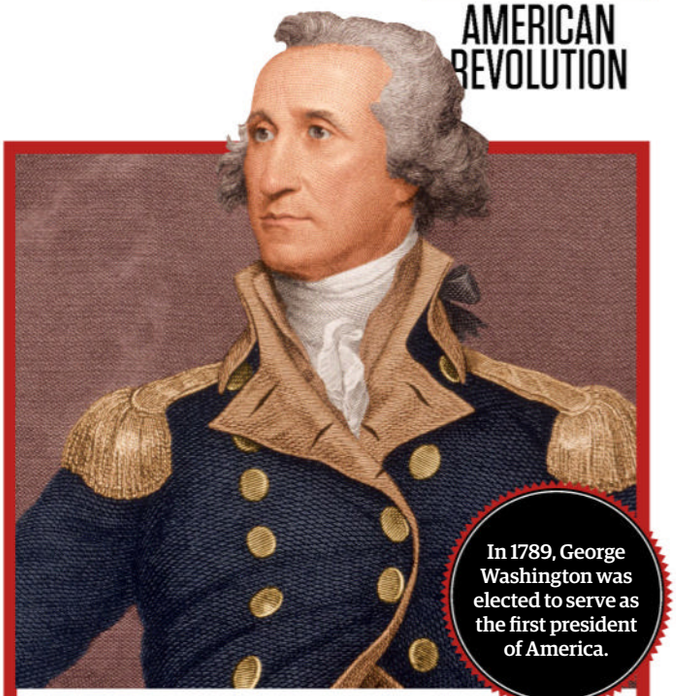
British, 31 December 1738 – 5 October 1805

Although he served as a lieutenant general in the British army during the Revolutionary War, Charles Cornwallis had expressed his sympathies for the American colonists and had voted to repeal the Stamp Act of 1765. He led his troops into battle against Washington's Continental Army on several occasions during the war and from 1780, Cornwallis headed south to help secure British victory after a stalemate in the north. He successfully defeated American soldiers in South Carolina, before facing defeat at the battles of King's Mountain and Cowpens. Eventually, when besieged at the Battle of Yorktown, Cornwallis was forced to surrender to the American victors.

CORNPLANTER

DUTCH-SENECA, C.1752 – 1836

Despite his wish to remain neutral in the conflict between America and Britain, Chief Cornplanter sided with the British after the Iroquois Nation, of which the Seneca were one of six tribes, made the decision to. Leading attacks on American settlements in Pennsylvania and New York, Cornplanter also led reprisals against American forces who invaded Iroquois territories. Though the Iroquois were defeated in battle, Cornplanter managed to delay the subsequent destruction of Iroquois land to save as many people as possible.



In 1789, George Washington was elected to serve as the first president of America.

George Washington

American, 22 February 1732 – 14 December 1799

Brought up in Virginia at the family's plantation at Mount Vernon, George Washington served as a lieutenant colonel at the beginning of the French and Indian War. At the Second Continental Congress in 1775, he was appointed as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. He led his army to victory at a number of battles during the Revolutionary War, as well as appointing a director of military intelligence to organise spying on the British at their headquarters in New York. In 1781 at the Battle of Yorktown, Charles Cornwallis surrendered his British forces to Washington, marking the beginning of the end of the war.

John Burgoyne

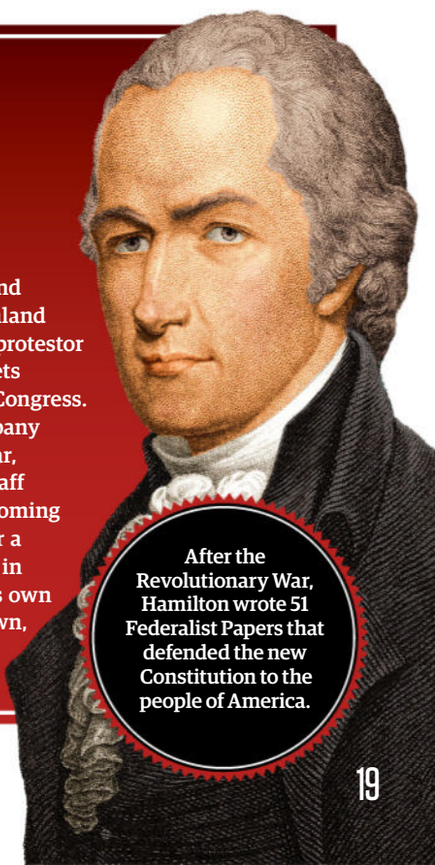
British, 24 February 1722 – 4 August 1792

Previously having fought in the Seven Years' War, John Burgoyne served in the British parliament as a politician prior to the American Revolution. He was promoted to Major General and sent to Boston in 1775 to help with the situation there. While in America, he was a witness to the Battle of Bunker Hill. Having briefly returned to England, Burgoyne was sent back to America where he devised a plan to take New York. However, he was abandoned by a fellow general when executing his plan, and thus Burgoyne was forced to surrender to American General Horatio Gates at Saratoga.

Alexander Hamilton

American, 11 January 1757 – 12 July 1804

Having been born in Charlestown on the island of Nevis, Alexander Hamilton moved to mainland America in 1772. He quickly became an avid protestor against British colonial rule, writing pamphlets defending the ideas of the First Continental Congress. Having served as captain of an artillery company in the opening years of the Revolutionary War, Hamilton was invited to join Washington's staff and was appointed as lieutenant colonel, becoming one of Washington's most trusted aides. After a disagreement with Washington that resulted in him briefly leaving his staff, Hamilton led his own battalion successfully at the Battle of Yorktown, contributing to America's overall victory.



After the Revolutionary War, Hamilton wrote 51 Federalist Papers that defended the new Constitution to the people of America.

Q&A

MRS WASHINGTON'S REVOLUTION

Author Flora Fraser explores the life of Martha Washington and her relationship with one of the key figures of the revolution

Who was Martha Washington?

George Washington's future wife Martha, born in 1731, was the eldest child of John Dandridge, a tobacco planter and courthouse clerk in southern Virginia. Martha and her siblings grew up on the Pamunkey River, where their father farmed 500 acres, in modest surroundings. The fortunes of Washington's future wife changed, however, when she married Daniel Parke Custis in 1750. 20 years Martha's senior, Daniel inherited two great fortunes, including 17,500 acres and almost 300 slaves. He and his bride ordered the latest fashions from London for themselves and for the four children that Martha subsequently bore. The couple enjoyed, however, only a few years of marriage. Two of their children died young and in 1757, at the age of 26, Martha was left a – very rich – widow to bring up her young children Jacky and Patsy Parke Custis.

How did Martha and George Washington meet?

She was soon courted by at least one neighbouring planter, but a tall, young colonial officer, eight months Martha's junior, from Northern Virginia named George Washington won the day. We know from his household accounts that Washington, then engaged in fighting the French and Indian War, visited Martha at her home twice in March 1758. Further details of their courtship are not known, but the following January the couple were married. George resigned his commission and assumed control of Martha's dower third of Daniel's estate and guardianship of her children.

What was their relationship like?

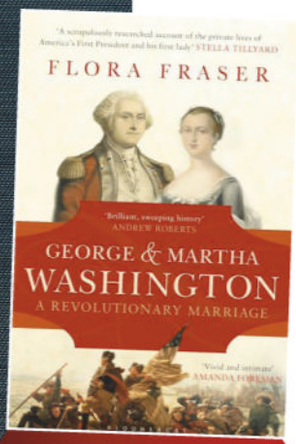
The Washingtons, bride and groom, settled down to marriage and family life at Mount Vernon, the mansion on the Potomac in northern Virginia which George had inherited from an elder half-sibling. Putting Daniel's legacy to good use, they embellished the interior of the house. Washington also attempted to turn a profit from the 2,000 acres planted with tobacco and farmed by enslaved field hands. At first, austere Washington regarded wealthy Martha as a 'worthy partner' for his new life as a planter. Later, admiring her social skills and valuing her support during the war, he became ever more attached to her. Martha loved her husband ardently from the beginning. Although she and Washington never had children, he cared for Jacky and Patsy as if they were his own, and mourned with her when Patsy died young of epilepsy.

Flora Fraser is the author of *George & Martha Washington: A Revolutionary Marriage* (Bloomsbury, 2015), among a number of other historical books including *Pretty Young Rebel: The Life of Flora MacDonald* (Bloomsbury, 2022) and *Venus of Empire: The Life of Pauline Bonaparte* (John Murray, 2009).

How did Martha Washington aid in the Revolutionary War effort?

Martha was as resolute as her husband when he embraced revolution and served throughout the eight years of war as commander-in-chief of the patriot Continental Army. Martha travelled from

Headshot photo courtesy of: © Nicholas Latimer



GEORGE & MARTHA WASHINGTON: A REVOLUTIONARY MARRIAGE IS OUT NOW FROM BLOOMSBURY PRICED £16.99

ABOVE Martha Washington, the original first lady of the United States

LEFT A painting of the Washington family, overlooking the Potomac River

Mount Vernon, at his request, to cheer her husband in every one of the Army's winter encampments. While some wives of George's staff officers did come for a time to headquarters in certain winters, none of them were present at the bidding of the commander-in-chief. Moreover, none of their expenses coming and going to and from camp were submitted to Congress for payment, as George submitted those of Martha. He judged her presence at headquarters necessary to his happiness. Washington, during the war and even afterwards, was known to all as 'the General.' The common soldiers in camp christened Martha 'Lady Washington.' Hungry, cold and ill-clothed, they were conscious that Martha took what measures she could for their welfare, when at headquarters. In addition, Martha endorsed a successful ladies' fundraising effort to raise money for the needs of this ill-equipped rank and file. 'Lady Washington' was popular with the General's staff officers too in the winter encampments. Ready to lend a hand to copying official correspondence to Congress, she sparkled at the dinner table while George was apt to sit in silence, and welcomed other visiting officers' wives, such as Betsy Hamilton. Above all, she did much to lighten her husband's mood when the war was, as so often, going badly.

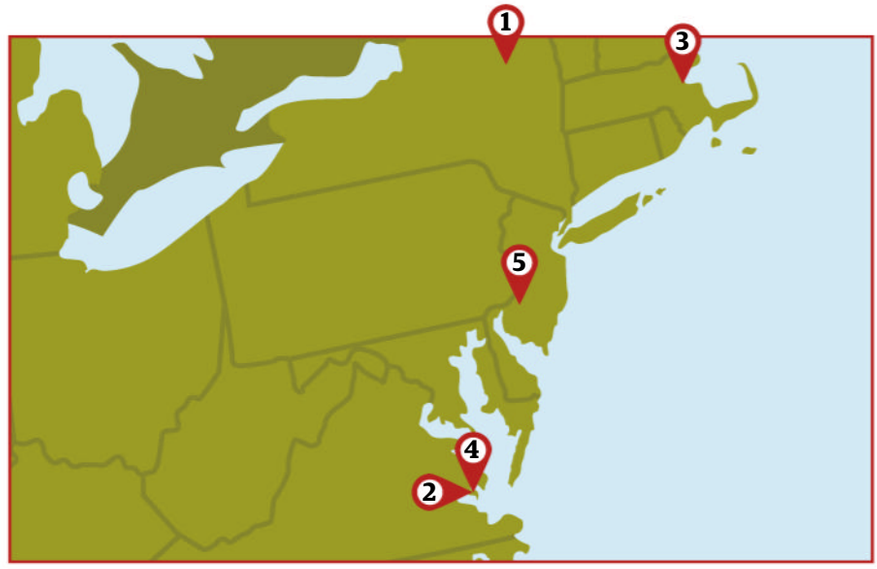
As the first of the first ladies, how did Martha Washington set an example for others to follow?

Martha was reluctant to join Washington when he was inaugurated as President in 1789. She felt, in leading the Continental Army to victory, he had served the new country enough. He should, in her opinion, be free now to live at Mount Vernon, the home he loved so much, and which was in such disrepair after the long years of war. When Martha did join Washington in New York, however, and later in Philadelphia, when that city became the seat of government, she proved a remarkable first First Lady. She and the President were carving out roles which had to satisfy the new republic's hunger for egalitarianism. It was agreed that Washington was to be spoken of as 'the President' rather than as 'His Excellency'. Martha was now no longer the wartime 'Lady Washington', but 'Mrs Washington' and, so as not to show favour to any political group, she never dined out.

It was also important, however, for the American republican court to match in grandeur the European courts and impress ambassadors and envoys from across the Atlantic. The weekly levees and drawing rooms, where the President was resplendent in black velvet and the first First Lady, attired in plain but costly dress, were designed to exhibit at least a passing resemblance to such affairs at St James's in London or at Madrid or Berlin. At these events, Martha's affable manner and abilities as a hostess were a resounding success with most who attended. She and Washington initiated a model of leadership that is still followed, in some respects, by Presidential couples to this day.

HISTORIC SITES OF THE REVOLUTION

Follow in the footsteps of the American Patriots as they battled for independence



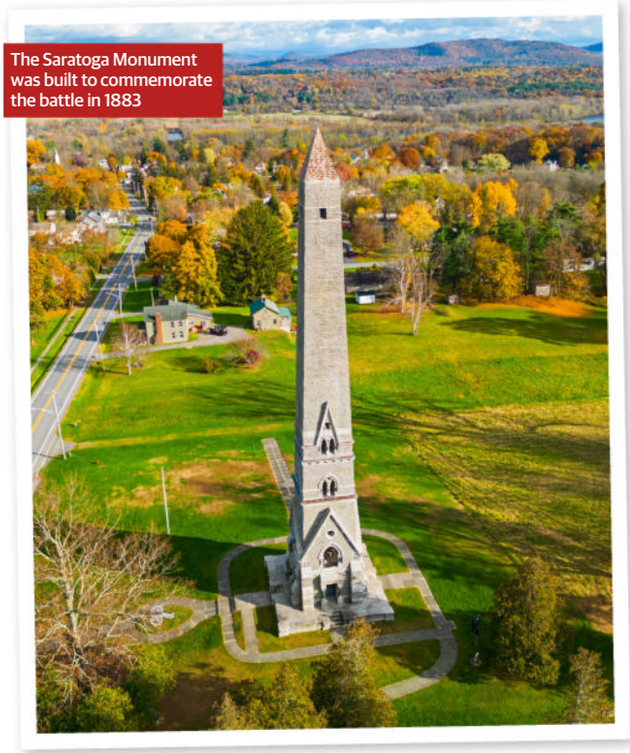
1 SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

STILLWATER, NEW YORK

The two major engagements between the British and the Americans that took place here on 19 September and 7 October 1777 are collectively known as the Battle of Saratoga, and this proved to be a decisive turning point in the progress of the Revolutionary War. The British, under General John Burgoyne, sought to claim control of the Hudson River Valley but were met with the formidable American forces of General Horatio Gates, commander of the Northern Department of the Continental Army. After suffering a gruelling defeat, the British attempted to escape north but were eventually forced to surrender on 17 October. The events at Saratoga convinced King Louis XVI of France to join forces with the Americans, which turned the tide of the entire war.

Today, you can walk through Victory Woods where the British army was encamped, visit the site on which Burgoyne surrendered, and climb the 155-foot Saratoga Monument to get breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape.

Open daily April-November, 9am-5pm. Free entry.


The Saratoga Monument was built to commemorate the battle in 1883

2 YORKTOWN BATTLEFIELD

YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA


Various cannons are displayed around key points of the siege

The Siege of Yorktown was the last major land battle of the American Revolution, and it took place on this spot over three weeks, lasting from 28 September to 19 October 1781. Charles Cornwallis and his army of 9,000 British troops were occupying Yorktown while they waited for supplies and reinforcements to arrive from the Royal Navy. Spying an opportunity, the combined American and French troops led by George Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau, numbering nearly 20,000 men between them, decided to besiege Yorktown. Cornwallis set up a series of defensive redoubts, while the American and French forces built a series of trenches through which they could move large guns close enough to the British line of defence to launch devastating artillery barrages. Outnumbered and suffering severe casualties, the British eventually had to admit defeat and negotiate a surrender agreement. The victory achieved here ultimately led to the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 and the founding of the United States as an independent nation.

There's plenty to see at the Yorktown Battlefield site. The Visitor Centre contains museum exhibits including the campaign table used by Cornwallis during the siege and Washington's war tents. Outside, you can explore the remains of the battlefield, including encampment areas and siege lines, and visit Moore House where the surrender negotiations took place.

Open daily, 9am-5pm. Entry $15.

Dating to the late 17th century, this is one of the oldest buildings in Boston

3 PAUL REVERE HOUSE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Immortalised in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *Paul Revere's Ride*, which was published in 1861, Paul Revere was a silversmith and copperplate engraver who owned this small wooden home in Boston's North End between 1770 and 1800. Through his business ventures, Revere became acquainted with activists such as Dr Joseph Warren, who was a leading figure of the Patriot movement in Boston during the early years of the American Revolution.

Revere became a courier for the Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, and at 10pm on 18 April 1775 he was famously tasked with riding to Lexington to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams that British forces were approaching to capture them. The ensuing Battles of Lexington and Concord would mark the start of the American Revolutionary War.

The Paul Revere House was originally built around 1680 and substantially restored in 1907-1908, meaning that visitors today can experience it as it would have been when the Revere family lived here.

Open daily 10am-5:15pm. Entry $6.

The Continental Army camp lets you immerse yourself in the life of a Revolutionary soldier

4 AMERICAN REVOLUTION MUSEUM AT YORKTOWN
YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

Living history is one of the best ways to experience and learn about any historical event, and that's exactly what you'll find at the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown. A recreated Continental Army encampment populated by costumed interpreters lets you experience what a day in the life of a Revolutionary War soldier was like. As you wander through the rows of tents, you'll be able to see demonstrations of military drills and musket firing, as well as learning about food, surgery, and medicine on the front line.

Past this encampment, you'll find a Revolution-era farm which recreates the life of the 18th-century farming family of Edward Moss and Martha Garrow. You can visit the kitchen to learn about dishes and ingredients, along with a log building which shows how enslaved people who worked on such farms might have lived. There are also museum galleries displaying nearly 500 items from the Revolutionary period, including a Declaration of Independence broadside dated to July 1776.

Open daily, 9am-5pm. Entry $18.

5 INDEPENDENCE HALL
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Independence Hall is one of the most important buildings in American history and is generally held to be the birthplace of the United States. It was here, in the famous Assembly Room, that the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, and also where the Constitution of the United States was drawn up in 1787, setting forth principles of freedom and democracy that endure to the modern day.

The building was begun in 1732 and originally served as the Pennsylvania State House. The tower of the building once held the Liberty Bell, which can also be visited just across the street in the Liberty Bell Center. It was commissioned in 1751 and bears the inscription: "Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof." In 1775, soon after the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress met in the Assembly Room to nominate George Washington as Commander in Chief of the newly formed Continental Army, thus beginning an organised and sustained campaign for independence.

Tours of Independence Hall include the Assembly Room, which is furnished as it might have been in the 18th century right down to the Rising Sun chair in which George Washington sat. The West Wing houses exhibits including the Syng inkstand; the silver inkstand into which 56 men dipped their pens to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Open daily, 9am-5pm. Free entry, but $1 to reserve tickets.

Independence Hall has witnessed some of the biggest moments in American history

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TERROR IN THE TOWER of LONDON

From prison palace to royal treasury: uncover the surprising history of England's iconic stronghold

Written by John Paul Davis

For more than 900 years, the Tower of London has guarded the north bank of the River Thames. At various times a royal palace, menagerie, public record office, mint, arsenal, bank vault and prison, it has played a central role in England's history. Indeed, it has come to symbolise large parts of it. More than three million people visit the Tower yearly, eager to explore a site that has famously held traitors, heretics, and even royalty. Not to mention the Crown Jewels.

When he took London in late 1066, William the Conqueror commissioned the original building to adjoin the southeast corner of Alfred the Great's rebuilt Roman walls "as a defence against the inconstancy of the numerous and hostile inhabitants," wrote William of Poitiers. Within 12 years, the temporary structure had made way for something more permanent, whose iconic shape still casts a foreboding shadow over the local skyline.

Of its creation, legends abound. One tells that the head of the mythical Brân the Blessed was buried below the White Mount to ensure England was never conquered. *Brân* is Celtic for crow, which may concern the legend that the Tower will fall if the ravens depart. A story from around 1675 tells that the first Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, complained to Charles II of their interference with his stargazing, prompting the king to relocate the observatory to Greenwich. A minimum of six ravens are still held at the Tower. ▶

EXPERT BIO

© Jon Bonon

JOHN PAUL DAVIS

John Paul Davis is an associate fellow of the Royal Historical Society and author of a number of historical books, both in fiction and non-fiction. Notable titles include *A Hidden History Of The Tower Of London* (2020), *The Gothic King: A biography of Henry III* (2013), *Castles Of England* (2021) and *Castles Of Wales* (2022).

Illustration by Joe Cummings. Images: © Getty Images (ravens)

The First Tower

The *Annals of Rochester* record that William the Conqueror entrusted the Tower's construction to Gundulf, later Bishop of Rochester. Dubbed the 'Wailing Monk', Gundulf also masterminded Colchester Castle. Later legend tells that JRR Tolkien based Gandalf the Grey and Middle-earth's Two Towers on his exploits. Although Gundulf's Tower lacked dungeons, walls intended to keep enemies out proved equally good at keeping them in. Ironically, the first prisoner was also a bishop. Equally ironic, he was also its first escapee. Ranulf Flambard served as William (Rufus) II's chaplain and treasurer before being appointed to the See of Durham in 1099, where his reputation was blighted by accusations of corruption. Imprisoned following Henry I's accession a year later, the disgraced cleric bided his time for six months, frequently hosting banquets for his gaolers. After organising one such supper in early February 1101, he waited for his captors to become inebriated before using a smuggled-in rope to abseil down the walls. Despite injuring himself, he escaped to Normandy.

Future prisoners would face a more complex prison. The first significant extensions began with the Wardrobe Tower, royal apartments, and the Bell Tower before 1210. The inner wall followed under Henry III. Tradition tells that the Crown Jewels were moved to the Tower in the 1230s. Around this time, Henry founded the menagerie that housed England's first elephant and polar bear. The outer wall followed under the accomplished castle builder Edward I, whose additions included the gatehouse, barbican, the infamous Traitors' Gate, and a permanent home for the royal mint. In 1278, Edward imprisoned 700 Jews in the Tower on accusations of coin clipping, at least half of whom were hanged. Edward also likely moved some royal treasures to the jewel house following their theft from Westminster Abbey in 1303.

It was the challenge of escaping this Tower that awaited the 'greatest traitor' Roger Mortimer, later 1st Earl of March, in 1322. Angered by Hugh Despenser's stranglehold over Edward II, a failed rebellion culminated in his imprisonment. On bribing his gaolers, Mortimer concocted an elaborate escape plan for the feast of St Peter ad Vincula. After the constable's deputy added sleeping drugs to the refreshments, Mortimer was liberated from his cell. On reaching the kitchens, a chimney, rope ladders, and a boat took him to Greenwich. Though Mortimer successfully conspired Edward II's abdication, Edward III ordered his reimprisonment in the Tower in 1330 and execution at Tyburn. Edward II's daughter, Joan, was born at the Tower in July 1321.

Edward III soon left his own mark on the Tower defences. On entering from the Thames one evening in 1340 without being challenged, he reprimanded the garrison and set about constructing the Cradle Tower. The fortunes of war saw David II of Scotland and John II of France reside in the Tower. The reigns of Edward II and III also saw lions, leopards, and a bear join the menagerie.

Ironically, the Tower saw more action in the first four years of Edward III's grandson and successor, Richard II, than in his fifty. In 1378, military veterans John Shakell and Robert Hauley escaped violently after being imprisoned over Hauley's capture of the Count of Denia during the Battle of Nájera in 1367. On seeking sanctuary from the Tower's constable and some 50 men in Westminster Abbey, where a mass was being sung for the festival of St Taurinus, Hauley was hacked to death. Three years later, the Tower faced similar carnage during the Peasants' Revolt, culminating in the Archbishop of Canterbury being dragged out of the White Tower and decapitated on Tower Hill as the king's mother and the future Henry IV narrowly escaped. Conspiracy against Henry IV was a recurring theme. Among those implicated in the Epiphany Rising was Sir Thomas Blount, whose gallows humour is worthy of memory. When offered a drink after being disembowelled, Blount remarked, "No, you have taken away wherein to put it!"

Such plots also plagued Henry V. Sir John Oldcastle, the possible inspiration for William Shakespeare's Falstaff, was imprisoned on charges of heresy for his

RIGHT A depiction of the execution of Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford in 1641, in front of a large crowd

OPPOSITE-RIGHT In 1255, Louis IX of France gifted an elephant to Henry III, which was kept at the Tower menagerie. A reconstruction of the stable exists at the Tower today

BELOW-LEFT William the Conqueror originally commissioned the building after arriving in London in 1066

"William the Conqueror commissioned the original building to adjoin the southeast corner of Alfred the Great's rebuilt Roman walls"

All images: © Getty Images

fondness for Lollardy – a precursor to Protestantism. On escaping the Tower, Oldcastle failed with a planned uprising. Four years of evading recapture followed until he was hung over a burning pyre at St Giles in the Fields.

The Bloody Tower

If Oldcastle's dreadful end wasn't enough to colour the Tower's future infamous reputation, a series of scandals would. Imprisoned in the Bowyer Tower before being found guilty of a rare form of treason, George, Duke of Clarence, the brother of Edward IV and Richard III, was apparently found slumped against a "pipe of Malmsey wine". How the treacherous duke died remains a mystery. Uncertainty also surrounds Henry VI, who was found dead in the Wakefield Tower on 21 May 1471. While one contemporary source explained the king's demise on "pure displeasure and melancholy", Robert Fabyan shared the widespread view that he was "strykked with a dagger, by the handes of the Duke of Gloucester". Gloucester, now Richard III, would have less defence concerning the end of Lord Hastings, whom he charged with treason and had beheaded outside the White Tower, with or without a trial. Hastings's execution was the first to occur on Tower Green. ▶

ABOVE A medieval illumination of the Tower, with London Bridge behind

The WOMAN WHO ESCAPED

Alice Tankerville got out of the Tower, but not for long

When agents of the king and parliament arrived at London docks in October 1531 to receive a shipment of 366 gold crowns, the hoard was missing. Two years of investigation culminated with the finger of blame pointed at controversial sailor John Wolfe, who spent the summer of 1533 in the Tower. A frequent visitor was his wife, Alice Tankerville, who befriended her husband's gaolers, William Denys and John Bawd. Upon being released by February 1534, Wolfe requested Bawd keep an eye on Alice. Ironically, no sooner had Wolfe fled overseas than new evidence saw Alice brought to the Tower. Alice's treatment appears to have been abnormally harsh, including being shackled in a bare room and scarcely fed, eventually resulting in an intercession by the lieutenant's daughter.

Destined to linger in the now-demolished Coldharbour Gate, Alice renewed acquaintances with Bawd, who agreed to help liberate her. After Bawd purchased two long pieces of rope and had a key cut for the tower's outer door, Alice left her cell on the night of the next new moon. On crossing the darkened yard to St Thomas's Tower, where Bawd had secured a rope to an iron hook, a boat took them across the moat. Despite advancing beyond the Iron Gate Steps where Tower Bridge now stands, their posing as young lovers failed to fool the returning night watch. Alice was returned to her cell, and Bawd was imprisoned in the dreaded 'little ease' dungeon.

As fate had it, Wolfe was captured while attempting to return to England and condemned to death. On 31 March 1534, Wolfe and Alice were enchained at low tide to the walls that lined the river's embankment. A short time after suffering the rack, Bawd was left to experience exposure and dehydration before becoming food for the birds.

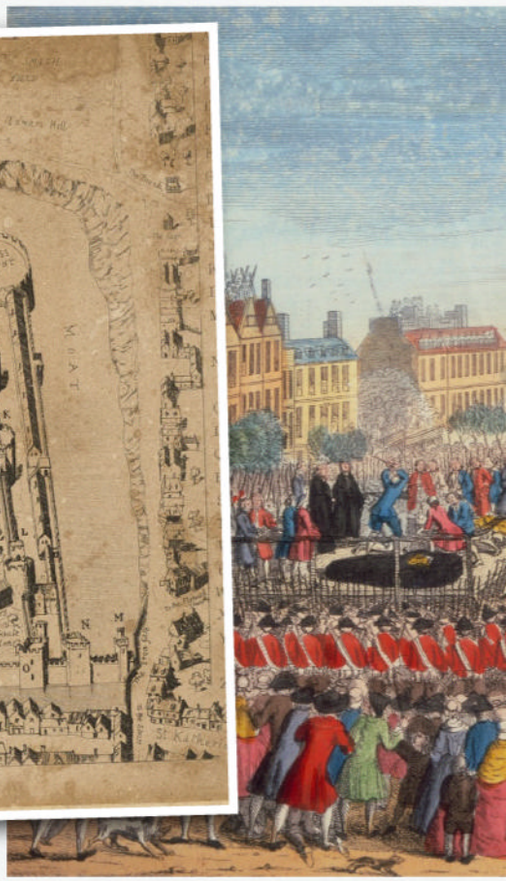
The gold was never found.

ABOVE Thomas More by Hans Holbein the Younger

If Richard's critics are correct, his most heinous crime still awaited. Shortly after his 12-year-old nephew was proclaimed Edward V, Richard, as protector, had the new king moved to the Tower, soon to be joined by his younger brother, Richard of Shrewsbury, Duke of York. The author of the *Great Chronicle* wrote that the boys were "seen shooting and playing in the garden of the Tower sundry times." However, a short time later, they were declared illegitimate because of an alleged marriage agreement between Edward IV and Lady Eleanor Butler before he married Elizabeth Woodville.

What happened to the princes remains one of history's great mysteries. While John Stow highlighted a plan to liberate the boys, leading to four executions on Tower Hill, the visiting Italian friar Dominic Mancini wrote that they were subjected to closer confinement. Mancini, Fabyan, Polydore Vergil and the Croyland Chronicler all attested to their murder. Philippe de Commines, Jean Molinet and a fragment found among the College of Arms pinned the blame on Richard and the Duke of Buckingham. Sir Thomas More bemoaned their being smothered in

ABOVE A 19th century artist's depiction of the view of the Tower of London in 1553



"Although Gundulf's Tower lacked dungeons, walls intended to keep enemies out proved equally good at keeping them in"

their beds. An accurate account or Tudor propaganda, the debate still rages. The "old manuscript book" that the Ricardian apologist Sir George Buck claimed confirmed Margaret Beaufort's role in the princes' murder has never been found. In 1674, a wooden box containing the bones of children of the correct age was found below a staircase in the White Tower and interred in Westminster Abbey.

Headless Queens

Sir Thomas More suffered his own ill fortune in the Tower. Appalled by Henry VIII's split with Rome, the Lord High Chancellor's refusal to acknowledge the spiritual validity of the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn and swear the Oath of Supremacy saw him join fellow martyr Cardinal John Fisher in the Bell Tower, where he wrote *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*. After making one of history's great speeches before the Privy Council, More went to the block, proclaiming himself "the king's good servant, but God's first". His death was memorable for insisting his beard not be struck, as it had committed no treason. On hearing of More's execution at Greenwich, the king reportedly rebuked Anne for bringing the death of the most honest man in the kingdom.

Anne was also on borrowed time. Concerned that a lack of male heirs had ended the House of York, the king sought a replacement. Armed with accusations of adultery and treason, Henry's chief minister Thomas Cromwell found a patsy in the lowly musician Mark Smeaton, whose confessions, most likely under torture, painted an absurd picture that Anne had up to five lovers, including her own brother, all of whom were executed on Tower Hill. After a time in the lieutenant's lodgings, where she had awaited her coronation, Anne went to her death on Tower Green. As requested, an expert swordsman despatched her horizontally, she having such a small neck. When her lifeless lips finally stopped moving, it was discovered no coffin was present. Her remains were placed in an elm arrow chest, her head tucked underneath her arm. Cromwell's execution would be far less swift. A victim of the king's wrath following his role in arranging Henry's marriage to the Anne of Cleves, he died in anguish, his head severed by hacking and sawing.

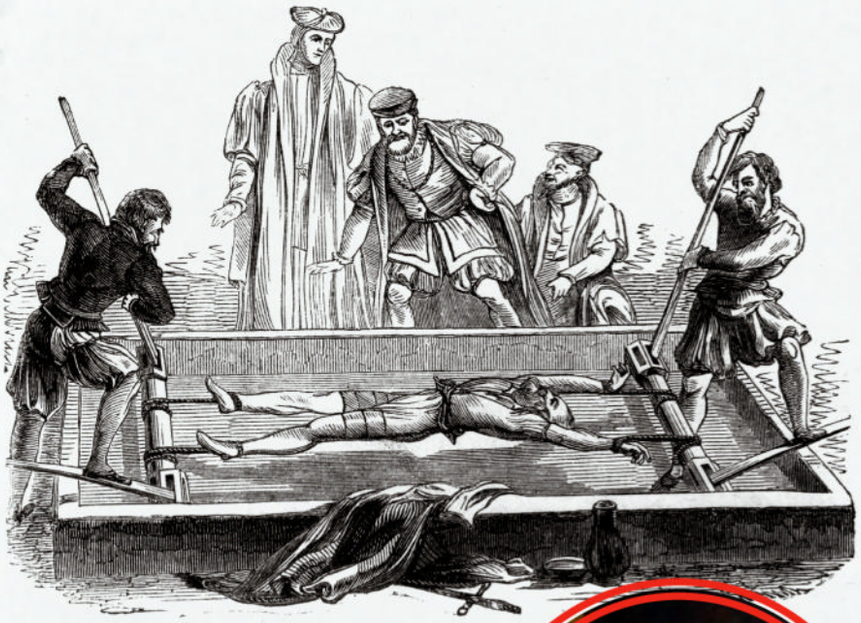
Cromwell's final deed in cementing Henry's annulment from Anne of Cleves was of no little consequence to the Tower's next high-profile victim. While Catherine Howard was different to Anne Boleyn, her cousin, in character, their ends were uncannily similar. Reputed to have had sexual contact with her music teacher before having relations with Francis Dereham, Catherine's downfall swiftly followed accusations of infidelity with Thomas Culpeper. While Dereham and Culpeper were hung at Tyburn, Catherine followed in Anne's footsteps by passing her final night in the lieutenant's lodgings, where she rehearsed placing her head on the block. On a cold February morning, on which an atmospheric mist cloaked the Thames, Catherine was despatched ▶

RIGHT A near contemporary portrait of Anne Boleyn from about 1550

BELOW Portrait miniature of a lady, thought to be Catherine Howard

BELOW After 1746's Battle of Culloden, the Jacobite rebel leaders were captured and executed on Tower Hill

All images: © Getty Images, © Alamy



LEFT An illustration of the rack and how it was used in the Tower

RIGHT The execution of Lady Jane Grey

by the axe. The story that she claimed to die a queen but would rather have been Culpeper's wife is unsubstantiated.

Recurring Recusants

Under the remaining Tudor monarchs, Tower life was dominated by religious turmoil. While Mary I oversaw the incarceration and execution of Lady Jane Grey and her key supporters, under Elizabeth I, it was mostly the domain of recusant Catholics. Among those incarcerated for their faith was the Jesuit priest John Gerard. Forced to endure long stints being manacled to the walls, he convinced his gaoler to obtain extra living funds and oranges from his friends at the nearby Clink Prison. On receiving some paper to wrap a rosary, he wrote to his allies in invisible ink using orange juice. While his friends conspired his escape, Gerard used mime to contact fellow recusant John Arden, whose wife armed them with a length of cord. After one failed escape attempt, on 4 October 1597, the unsuspecting gaoler escorted Gerard to Arden's cell, following which a heavy rope attached to a cannon on the Cradle Tower's roof secured their freedom.

Poorer fortune befell Gerard's friends, Guy Fawkes and his fellow Gunpowder Plotters, who endeavoured to destroy the Houses of Parliament after James I's promises of religious tolerance came to nought. When renting a house near the House of Lords, their attempts to dig a mine were abandoned when a nearby cellar became available. What happened next remains infamous. The area was searched around midnight on 5 November, and Fawkes was caught red-handed with 36 barrels of gunpowder. As his co-conspirators absconded, Fawkes maintained the pretence of a one-man show and suffered the dreaded rack. His weak signature to his confession on 9 November confirms the anguish he

ABOVE *The Two Princes Edward and Richard in the Tower* by Sir John Everett Millais

"What happened to the princes remains one of history's great mysteries"

All images: © Getty Images, © Alamy

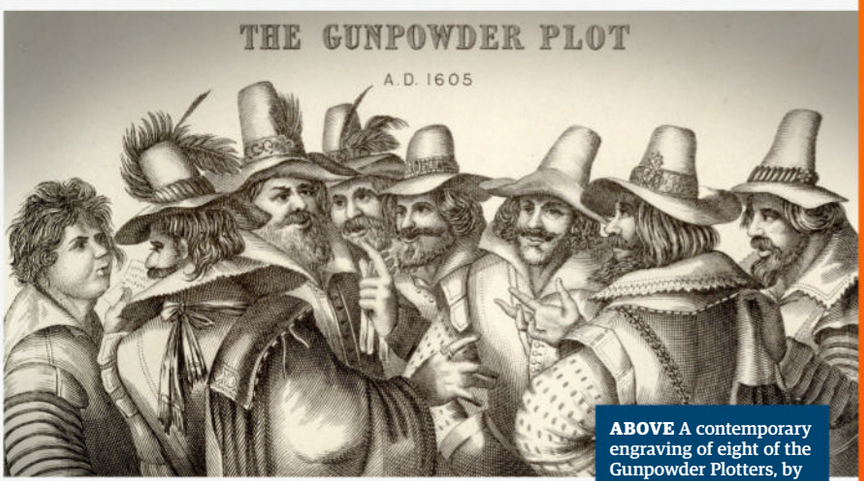
encountered. On 30 and 31 January, Fawkes and seven of his fellow plotters were drawn by horses from the Tower and executed.

Around this time, the Tower hosted one of history's great characters. Famed for his sea voyages and role in combating the Spanish Armada, Sir Walter Raleigh was imprisoned in the Bloody Tower for his alleged involvement in the Main Plot. For much of 1603-17, Raleigh passed his time writing, conducting experiments and greeting the crowds from 'Raleigh's Walk' before a troubled voyage to the New World cemented his execution. His gallows humour must also be celebrated. On joking that he would have enjoyed his last cup of sack more had he been able to take his time and that the axe was "a sharp medicine, but it is a sure cure for all diseases", Raleigh was despatched at the second attempt. When his head was raised, a bystander correctly stated, "We have not another such head to be cut off".

It was an impressive feat to escape the Tower once. Far more impressive to do so twice. Edmund Neville first experienced the Tower in 1584 on suspicion of involvement in the Parry Plot against Elizabeth I. After filing through his barred window, he briefly escaped until a horseman noted his strange appearance. Neville tried again two years later, aided by a rope smuggled in by his wife, only for his splash in the moat to be overheard. He was tracked down trying to blend in with the crowds, even pretending to chase a thief. A third attempt, posing as a blacksmith with fake tools after creating a straw mannequin, failed to come to fruition.

Coins & Conspiracies

Much of the Tower's story in the 1600s concerned the Civil War. While many ▶



ABOVE A contemporary engraving of eight of the Gunpowder Plotters, by Crispijn van de Passe

The TOWER HEIST

The man who almost stole the Crown Jewels

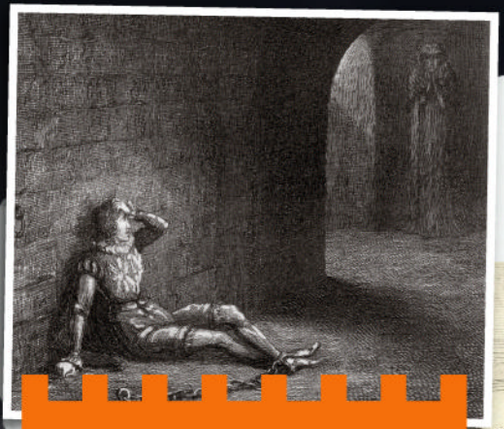
Since the reign of Henry III, the Crown Jewels of England have been kept at the Tower. Only once has anyone come close to liberating them. Unsurprisingly, that attempted theft was steeped in blood. Colonel Thomas Blood.

A Roundhead lieutenant, spy and career criminal, Irish-born Blood set his eyes on the jewels in 1671. Dressed as a clergyman and accompanied by an actress posing as his wife, he received a personal tour of the jewel house from the assistant keeper, Talbot Edwards, who lived in the Martin Tower above. Over the coming weeks, Blood established a friendship with the ageing Edwards and even negotiated a marriage between Edwards's spinster daughter and his 'eligible nephew'.

On bringing his 'nephew' and his motley crew of professional rogues to the Tower, the latest tour of the jewel house culminated in poor Edwards being struck over the head. The official report tells the ridiculous story of Blood flattening the crown with a mallet and knocking out some precious stones; an associate filed the sceptre in half.

Incredibly, the strangest part of this unique episode still awaited. Edwards' son arrived with a comrade to celebrate Edwards' daughter's engagement, only to catch the criminals mid-theft. Ironically, the colleague later married the jilted daughter instead.

Shackled, Blood was questioned in the White Tower before being brought before Charles II. Bizarrely, he was released and well rewarded, prompting some to suspect the robbery was part of a deeper conspiracy. Blood remains the only person who dared steal the jewels. Despite his failure, he remained unrepentant, stating, "It was a gallant deed, even if it failed. It was, after all, to gain the crown".



The HAUNTED TOWER?

Headless Boleyns that go bump in the night

Throughout the day, the Tower is a hive of activity. Yet, the atmosphere can be very different when the Ceremony of the Keys is over. Sudden mists, strange shapes, and shadows have been reported throughout, along with unnerving sounds, from cries of anguish to religious chanting.

Perhaps the most famous of the Tower's ghosts is Anne Boleyn. Witnessed with her "head tucked underneath her arm" and as a "lovely, veiled lady", she was reportedly seen by Henry VIII shortly after her execution. Lady Jane Grey and the Princes in the Tower are reputed to join Anne, often seen as white shapes.

The Tower's first reported ghost was Thomas Becket. Apparently unhappy with Henry III's building work, Becket's appearance supposedly preceded the collapse of the watergate in 1240.

Another famous apparition is Lady Margaret Pole. Sentenced to death by Henry VIII, the Countess of Salisbury achieved legendary status for being hacked to death attempting to outrun her executioner. Reputed to haunt the Wakefield Tower is Henry VI, allegedly stabbed by the future Richard III.

One of the strangest stories concerns John Middleton, 1st Earl of Middleton. Imprisoned for his role in Charles I's regicide, Middleton was reportedly visited by the ghost of his friend, Laird Bocconi, who predicted his escape within three days. He duly did so, dressed in women's clothing.

It is not just humans who are said to haunt the Tower. In 1864, a sentry guarding the Queen's House passed out after charging a bear with his bayonet.

Of the Tower's many ghost stories, one involving guard Arthur Crick takes some beating. On resting on a window ledge to remove his shoe, his blood ran cold when a voice whispered, "There's only you and I here". He absconded with the sharp response, "Let me get this bloody shoe on, and there'll only be you!"

"Under the remaining Tudor monarchs, Tower life was dominated by religious turmoil"

royalist soldiers were quite literally sent to Coventry, others languished in the Tower. Following the Restoration of the Monarchy, a regular visitor was the famed diarist Samuel Pepys. Pepys spent several days there in late 1662 investigating the bizarre claim that the previous lieutenant, John Barkstead, had buried a hoard of coins within the walls. Pepys arrived with a Mr Wade and Captain Evett, who heard the original story from one Mary Barkstead, apparently the late lieutenant's wife. Mary Barkstead's testimony led Pepys to the Bell Tower before concluding that the barrels were buried in the garden outside the Bloody Tower. After four failed attempts, the project was abandoned. Ironically, Barkstead had endured a final return to the Tower before his execution. The hoard remains unfound.

As usual, a new monarch brought a pretender. When James II replaced his elder brother, Charles II, James faced a rebellion from Charles's alleged bastard, James Scott, 1st Duke of Monmouth. Sent to the Tower, Monmouth endured one of the most horrible executions imaginable. Already plagued by a reputation for incompetence from his botched execution of Lord Russell,

ABOVE James Scott, 1st Duke of Monmouth's execution on Tower Hill

ABOVE-RIGHT Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, appointed Constable of the Tower in 1826

Jack Ketch lost his nerve and required no less than five strokes to despatch Monmouth amidst a raucous Tower Hill. Unsubstantiated legend says that after Monmouth's head was severed with a butcher's knife, it was sewn back on for his portrait to be taken. A similarly horrible death awaited Arthur Capel, 1st Earl of Essex, implicated in the Rye House Plot, who practically beheaded himself shaving. In another of the Tower's great ironies, as the century ended with renowned scientist Sir Isaac Newton appointed Master of the Mint after foiling a counterfeiting scheme, the next began with the Tower welcoming future Prime Minister Robert Walpole on corruption charges.

A Woman's Hand

February 1716 saw another of the Tower's great escapes. When William Maxwell, 5th Earl of Nithsdale was imprisoned for his role in the Jacobite rising, a failed appeal and venture inside St James's Palace to see the king inspired his wife to take more drastic action. Aided by Jacobean sympathisers, Lady Nithsdale visited her husband in the

BELOW Guards of the Tower of London, known as the Yeomen Warders

Tower and dressed him up as a woman. After staging a conversation with herself as her husband escaped unnoticed, Lady Nithsdale requested the guards grant him solitude to prepare. The following day, they watched from an attic window as two fellow Jacobean rebels were executed.

Equally innovative was the escape of George Kelly. Imprisoned for his involvement in the Atterbury Plot, Kelly's request to be allowed regular trips to Hampstead for better air developed into daily travels to the city. In October 1736, carrying a recently collected horseman's coat, he left for a regular jaunt with his warder and returned after dark. After the unsuspecting guard wished him good night, the red-coated Kelly departed the Tower unchallenged.

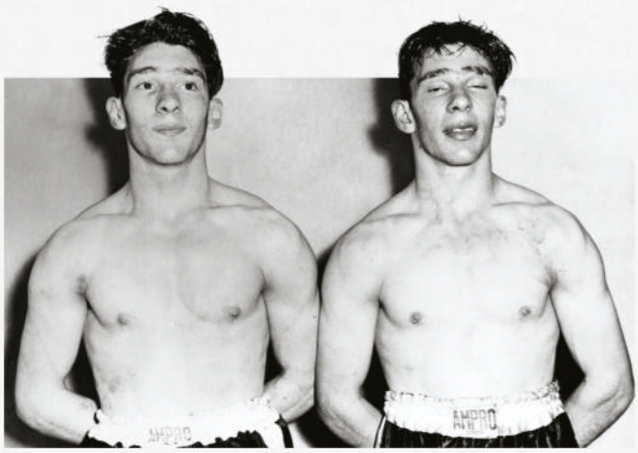
The following 180 years proved far quieter by comparison. William Penn, the future founder of Pennsylvania, and US Founding Father Henry Laurens endured brief stays. The ammunition used in the execution of three soldiers of the Black Watch still marks the walls of St Peter ad Vincula. Fires in 1774 and 1841, the latter sketched by Turner, and the attempted bombing of 1885 were also key challenges. Much to the Duke of Wellington's annoyance, the Tower's role as a military barracks and tourist attraction persisted. He relocated the menagerie to Regent's Park in 1835 following reports that a lion had mauled a soldier. The mint went in 1810, and the public records in 1860.

End Of An Era

Though times had changed, the Tower's time as a prison was not over. In 1916, around the time the Irish revolutionary Roger Casement graced the walls, a young subaltern was brought to the East Casemates after failing to honour his cheques. Undeterred by the guards, the officer nonchalantly marched through the main gate, confidently saluting the unsuspecting personnel. After enjoying a sumptuous dinner in the West End, which he paid for with another bouncing cheque, he returned to the Tower, discovering his actions had caused considerable consternation. Who the young officer was remains a mystery.

ABOVE View westwards along the Thames with the Tower of London on the north bank in 1804

BELOW The Kray twins were the last prisoners of the Tower



Two years before the slippery subaltern, the German prisoner Carl Hans Lody was despatched by firing squad. Lody's conduct clearly impressed the assistant provost-marshal. Assuming he would not shake hands with a spy, the officer replied, "No. But I will shake hands with a brave man". World War II saw its final execution in Josef Jakobs and a sojourn from Rudolf Hess. The last prisoners were the Kray twins for dodging military service. It seems strangely fitting that the story of a prison that began with a crime boss ended with two.

900 years is a long time, especially for buildings. Wood rots. Stone crumbles. Tastes change. When something survives for over a hundred years, it is often earmarked as a national treasure – sometimes an international one. Over the years, there have been many towers. Yet only one will ever be universally regarded as 'The Tower.'

All images: © Getty Images

The Curse of The Grimaldis

Did the spell of a medieval witch doom the royal family of Monaco for centuries to come?

Written by Emily Staniforth

Nestled in the south of France is one of Europe's smallest sovereign states. The Principality of Monaco has a reputation as a luxury tourist destination, with the tiny area being ranked as one of the wealthiest places on Earth. With just under 40,000 inhabitants today, the state is governed by a constitutional monarchy. Since 1297, when the Genoese Francesco Grimaldi captured the castle of Monaco, the royal rulers of the state have all been members of the House of Grimaldi and while the Grimaldis are known as one of the oldest royal houses of Europe, they have also become famous for the notorious curse that is said to haunt the family.

The story of the curse goes something like this: in the 13th century, Rainier I (the cousin of Francesco Grimaldi and the first sovereign ruler of Monaco) captured a Flemish maiden after he and his naval fleet had fought a successful battle against Flanders. The abduction and subsequent rape of the young woman saw her harmed and humiliated and, in retaliation for the attack, she placed a hex on Rainier and his descendants. The curse allegedly stated that no Grimaldi would ever have a happy marriage. Whether or not this story is true, or if the curse is real, can never really be proven. But, in their long and illustrious history, the House of Grimaldi have, in accordance with the legend of the curse, tended to be unlucky in love, and have experienced generations of tragic events. Here are the stories of just a few of the Grimaldis that, after reading, may just convince you of the existence of the curse. ▶

Rainier I, who became the first Grimaldi ruler of Monaco

All images © Alamy, © Getty Images

The Tragic Lady of Monaco

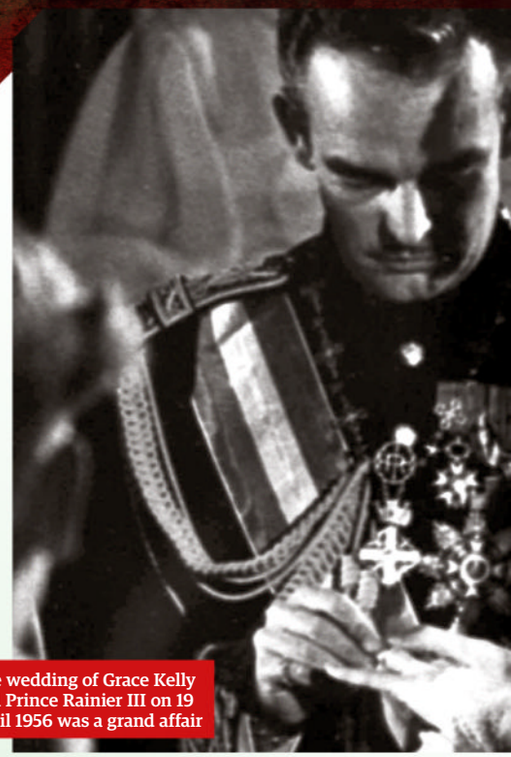
LADY CLAUDINE'S HUSBAND DENIED HER THE TITLE THAT WAS RIGHTFULLY HERS

This image is one of the only depictions of Lady Claudine

Though the marriage of Claudine, Lady of Monaco was described by her contemporaries as a happy one, the relationship between her and her husband, Lambert Grimaldi di Antibes, was certainly contentious. In 1457, at the age of six, Claudine ascended to the throne of Monaco after the deaths of both her parents. As the only child of Catalan Grimaldi and his wife Blanche del Carretto, it was far from ideal that she was a girl. However, the rules of succession, as laid out by Claudine's grandfather Jean I, stated that a female Grimaldi could rule if they kept the Grimaldi name. As a result, the Grimaldi name would be passed down to her children, and her husband would be required to adopt the family name himself. In Claudine's case, this was not a problem with Lambert being her distant cousin and already carrying the Grimaldi title.

As Claudine was six years old when she came to power, a regent was appointed to oversee her duties until she became of age. Claudine's grandmother, Pomellina Fregoso, had been named in Catalan's will as his daughter's regent, which had also named Lambert as his daughter's future husband. Dissatisfied with the regency arrangement, Lambert decided to take matters into his own hands, ousted Pomellina from power and claimed the throne for himself. Though Lambert did not marry Claudine until 1465 when she was older, he had himself declared sovereign Lord of Monaco in 1458 and in the process deposed his soon-to-be wife. Thus, Claudine lost many of her rights as the ruling sovereign and instead, upon her marriage, became consort to her husband.

Claudine may have lost her power due to her husband's coup, but things only got worse for her after his death. When Lambert died in 1494, their eldest son, Jean II, became Lord of Monaco. Jean's 11-year reign ended abruptly when a fight broke out between him and his younger brother Lucien. Claudine allegedly witnessed the altercation in which Jean was stabbed to death by his brother. Despite there being many supposed political motives for Lucien to have murdered Jean, historians have been unable to conclude a definitive reason for the killing. Lucien succeeded his brother as Lord of Monaco, and poor Claudine, having had her title taken from her, had also been subjected to watching one of her own children kill another.



The wedding of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier III on 19 April 1956 was a grand affair

Prince Rainier, his children and the rest of the world were devastated by the sudden death of Princess Grace in 1982

Prince Louis' Wanton Wife

THE WIFE OF LOUIS I OF MONACO CAUSED SHOCK AND SCANDAL THROUGH HER HIGH-PROFILE ROMANTIC LIAISONS

Louis I ruled as Prince of Monaco from 1662-1701

Another member of the House of Grimaldi with an unfortunate love life was the 17th century Prince of Monaco, Louis I. Ruling from 1662 to his death in 1701, Louis' reign saw him develop a close relationship with King Louis XIV through which he strengthened the alliance between Monaco and France. Prince Louis, as well as being Monaco's sovereign, also held the hereditary French title of the Duke of Valentinois – an honour that had first been bestowed upon his grandfather and predecessor Honoré II (the first to call himself Prince of Monaco rather than Lord). With such a close connection to the French, Prince Louis spent much of his time at the French court of Versailles. It was here that he and his wife, Catherine Charlotte de Gramont, whom he married in 1660, spent a lot of their early married life and where they returned after spending a few years back in Monaco upon Louis' succession to the throne.

Unfortunately for Prince Louis, he was not the only Grimaldi to capture

A Doomed Hollywood Romance

THE MOST FAMOUS GRIMALDI MARRIAGE ENDED IN A TRAGIC ACCIDENT

Of all the love stories from the history of the House of Grimaldi, one always springs to mind. In 1955, one of Hollywood's most beloved and glamorous movie stars attended the Cannes Film Festival where she was introduced to the reigning Prince of Monaco. Sparks flew between 26-year-old Grace Kelly and 31-year-old Prince Rainier III, and though they kept their romance secret for a while, they were married within a year of meeting. While the tale of the Prince and the movie star may seem like a perfect fairytale, there have been suggestions that Prince Rainier, who ruled Monaco from 1949 to 2005, had been looking for a celebrity bride to marry in order to boost the reputation and status of Monaco, which was struggling at the time. Furthermore, in order to marry into Monaco's royal family, Kelly had to give up her career as an Oscar-winning actress to take up royal duties and, apparently, pay a wedding dowry of a whopping $2 million. The couple's grand wedding was an incredibly high-profile affair, with celebrations lasting a total of eight days, and the wedding itself happening over a two-day period.

Aside from all the gossip and rumours that inevitably circulated around the high-profile marriage, it seems as though the union between Princess Grace and Prince Rainier was a generally happy one. Together they had three children – Caroline, Albert and Stéphanie – and though it is thought that several attempts were made by Hollywood directors and producers to entice Kelly back to her acting career, Kelly remained committed to her work as Princess of Monaco. It seemed that Kelly and Prince Rainier's marriage would stand the test of time, and that Prince Rainier had escaped the Grimaldi curse. But that all changed when tragedy struck on 13 September 1982.

While driving her youngest daughter, Stéphanie, to the train station, Princess Grace suffered a stroke which caused her to lose control of the car. The car, with Princess Grace and 17-year-old Stéphanie inside, drove off the side of a winding road and down an embankment. Luckily, Stéphanie escaped the accident with minor injuries, but her mother never recovered. The following day, the world went into mourning when Princess Grace died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of just 52. The death of Grace Kelly came as a shock to all, especially her husband who never quite recovered from the loss of his wife, according to their son Prince Albert: "It was pretty obvious that he was deeply affected and he wasn't quite the same man as he was before the accident." After Princess Grace's death, Prince Rainier III never remarried. He died in 2005 at the age of 81 and was buried next to his late wife in the Grimaldi family vault in the Cathedral of Monaco. Stéphanie also struggled to come to terms with her mother's death, having survived the accident that killed her. It was after Princess Grace's sudden and tragic death that the tale of the Grimaldi curse came to the attention of the wider world.

the attention of the Sun King. It became apparent that the beautiful and clever Catherine Charlotte had attracted the notice of Louis XIV, and she eventually became the king's mistress. Prince Louis' wife sleeping with the French King certainly had its political benefits for Monaco and for Louis's own status, but sadly for the Prince, Louis XIV was not the only man who Catherine Charlotte had her eye on. Throughout their marriage, it is believed that Catherine Charlotte engaged in romantic affairs with a number of different French aristocrats, even earning her the nickname "Catherine the Torrent". She is said to have slept with men such as Nicolas de Neufville, the Duke of Villeroy, as well as her own relative Antonin Nompar de Caumont, the Duke of Lauzun, the latter of whom was punished by Louis XIV for his relationship with Catherine Charlotte by a stint locked up in the Bastille.

Described as "greedy for pleasure", Catherine Charlotte could not have been an easy woman for the Prince to live with, especially when she was banished from the French court by Louis XIV on account of her numerous public affairs. Prince Louis' wife died in 1678, having given birth to six children during their marriage. Louis did not remarry after his wife's death despite living for another 23 years.

Catherine Charlotte de Gramont was known for her many affairs, despite her marriage to Prince Louis I

Stuck in the Middle

LOUISE HIPPOLYTE GRIMALDI'S MARRIAGE BECAME THE CENTRE OF A FAMILIAL FIGHT

The question of marriage for Princess Louise Hippolyte became a huge issue that drove a wedge between her and her parents. The oldest surviving daughter of Antonio I and his wife Marie de Lorraine-Armagnac, Louise Hippolyte was the heiress to the throne of Monaco on account of the fact that she did not have any brothers. It was decided that upon her marriage, her husband would take the Grimaldi name and the couple would rule side by side. But, when it came to choosing a husband for Louise Hippolyte, her parents could not agree on a candidate. Antonio's suggestion was disliked by his wife, who had another man in mind for her daughter, and their incapability to concur resulted in a two-year-long argument between the pair. Louise Hippolyte, on her mother's advice, refused to marry her father's choice of man and in retaliation Antonio had his daughter confined to a convent for two years before he released her when he realised his candidate was not favoured by the French court. However, the relationship between Louise Hippolyte and her father had been damaged irreparably after their years of fighting and disagreements.

Eventually, Louise Hippolyte married the candidate originally put forward by her mother, Jacques François Goyon, Count de Matignon. Louise Hippolyte and Matignon lived in France, away from her parents in Monaco, and had nine children together, four of whom survived into adulthood. After both her parents died, Louise Hippolyte took her place as Monaco's ruler in 1731, though in doing so she eschewed Matignon and pushed aside her father's arrangements for her to rule in partnership with her husband. The new Princess of Monaco declared that she would be the state's sole ruler, with many historians suggesting that her marriage was not a happy one and that she therefore did not wish to allow Matignon to have any power. Sadly, having fought against her father and come into her own as Monaco's Princess, Louise Hippolyte died of smallpox just 10 months into her reign.

"THE NEW PRINCESS OF MONACO DECLARED THAT SHE WOULD BE THE STATE'S SOLE RULER"

Louise Hippolyte's love life caused misery and heartache when she found herself trapped between her arguing parents and subsequently unhappily married to her husband

Karma for Lucien

LORD LUCIEN'S MURDEROUS WAYS CAUGHT UP WITH HIM IN THE END, PUTTING HIS WIFE AND CHILD IN DANGER

Having murdered his older brother Jean II, Lucien Grimaldi, son of Claudine and Lambert Grimaldi, assumed the role of Lord of Monaco and ruled for 18 years. During his reign, he married Jeanne de Pontevès-Cabanes with whom he had at least five children, only two of whom

The Short Life of Ercole

AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT CUT SHORT THE LIFE OF MONACO'S HEIR

Another royal Grimaldi romance that ended in tragedy was the marriage of Ercole, Marquis of Baux and his wife Aurelia Spinola. Ercole, sometimes also referred to as Hercule, married Aurelia in 1641 when he was just 17 years old. At the time of the marriage, Ercole was the Grimaldi heir as the only son of Prince

Ercole's death in 1651 meant the title of heir passed to his only son, Louis

survived to adulthood. Lucien proved to be a capable leader of Monaco, fighting fearlessly to defend the state from the Genoese and skilfully negotiating with the French and the Spanish. Lord Lucien was soon internationally recognised as a powerful man, and it has been suggested that he served as some inspiration to Niccolò Machiavelli when he wrote *The Prince*, with the Italian philosopher having visited Monaco and observed the leadership of Lucien.

In spite of all the success Lucien brought to Monaco as its sovereign lord, he still had his enemies. His rule ended with murder, just as it had begun, when he was killed by his own nephew. Bartolomeo Doria, the Genoese son of Lucien's sister, arranged for his men to ambush Lucien in the Prince's Palace of Monaco on 22 August 1523. In assassinating Lucien, Doria hoped to seize the throne of Monaco, but Lucien's brother Augustin ensured the murderers were captured and the throne was secured. Poor widowed Jeanne, Lucien's wife, and his infant son Honoré were taken hostage by the Genoese assassins who intended to exchange them in return for being allowed to leave Monaco unharmed. Augustin had no choice but to agree to their demands, and Doria and his men left the state.

Lucien's son, the nine-month-old Honoré, inherited the title Lord of Monaco, with Augustin serving as his regent until he was old enough to rule himself. Lucien's wife Jeanne, who had been through a traumatic experience, later remarried.

The murderous Lucien, Lord of Monaco reigned from 1505 to 1523 when he met a violent end

Honoré II and his wife Ippolita Trivulzio. Together, Ercole and Aurelia enjoyed ten years of marriage, during which time they had four healthy children, including a son, and the future of the House of Grimaldi was looking rosy.

Unfortunately, Ercole's life came to a dramatic end on 1 August 1651. While on a trip with his young family to visit the convent of Carnoles in Menton on the French Riviera, Ercole went for a walk and came across some soldiers shooting at targets. Ercole joined them and asked one of the soldiers to shoot at a target for him, either to see how capable the soldier was or to see him demonstrate the firing of a new type of gun called an arquebuse. Rushing to obey Ercole, the soldier turned quickly and the gun accidentally fired. Three men were wounded by the gunshots, including Ercole who was hit in the spine. The heir of Monaco died the following day aged just 27. The young family was torn apart and the Grimaldi family were devastated at the loss. The soldier who had caused the accident was put in prison for a period before being released, but not before he had allegedly tried to kill himself. In Ercole's dying hours, he insisted that the young soldier was not to blame and should not be punished. Ercole's son, Louis, became the Grimaldi heir and went on to rule after the death of Honoré II in 1662. Aurelia never remarried and lived a difficult life at the mercy of Ercole's father, whose ever-changing attitude towards her saw her never truly settled.

The Ruling Grimaldis

ARE THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE GRIMALDI FAMILY AFFLICTED BY THE CURSE?

It seems as though the curse on the House of Grimaldi continues to plague the royal family to this day. Prince Albert II, the current ruler of Monaco and son of Prince Rainier III and Grace Kelly, and his wife Princess Charlene were reported in 2023 to be supposedly living in separate countries, him in Monaco and her in Switzerland, despite being the parents of two young children. Upon the couple's marriage in 2011, there was widespread reporting on the appearance that the bride looked upset on her wedding day, with several photographs of a teary-eyed Charlene circulating. However, these reports were dismissed, with the new Princess insisting it was usual for a bride to be emotional on her wedding day.

Prince Albert married South African swimmer Charlene Wittstock in July 2011

Princesses Caroline and Stéphanie have both been unlucky in love

Albert's two sisters have struggled to find lasting love, with both Caroline and Stéphanie having been married multiple times. Caroline's first marriage ended in divorce after just two years and she has been estranged from her third husband since 2009. Her second marriage ended in tragedy when her husband, Stefano Casiraghi, died in a speedboat accident in 1990. Stéphanie, on the other hand, caused a scandal when she fell pregnant by her bodyguard in 1992. The couple went on to have a second child before they married in 1995, but the marriage only lasted a year before they divorced. Stéphanie later gave birth to a third child while she was unmarried, before she made headlines once again when she ran away with the circus - yes, she actually did that. In 2001, the Princess' relationship with a married elephant trainer saw her take her three children to live in his caravan until that relationship deteriorated. Her last marriage was to another circus performer, this time an acrobat called Adans Lopez Perez, in 2003, which also ended in divorce after only a year.

24 MISSING TREASURES

From the Ark of the Covenant to the first feature film, when were these lost artefacts last seen?

Written by Owen Jarus

A huge number of priceless treasures have disappeared from the historical record throughout the ages. These artefacts often go missing due to theft or under mysterious circumstances during times of war or disaster, when they can't be protected or when military forces decide to take those treasures as a trophy. Sometimes treasures are recovered, but many are still missing.

Here are some lost treasures that have never been found. A few of these artefacts are now likely destroyed, but some may still exist and one day be recovered.

STOLEN AZTEC TREASURE

Last seen June 1520

In the face of an Aztec rebellion against their colonial occupation, Hernán Cortes and his forces tried to sneak away from the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in the cover of night on 30 June 1520 with a huge haul of Aztec gold. But one of their vessels sank in a now dried-up canal that fed into Lake Texcoco, resulting in the death of many Spanish and the loss of some of the gold.

The Spanish returned a few months later to retrieve the lost gold, but they recovered only a portion of it. Some of that gold was found in 1981 when a construction worker unearthed a centuries-old gold bar in Mexico City – which stands where the Aztec capital and its surrounding waters once lay – but much of the gold is still missing.

SARCOPHAGUS OF MENKAURE

Last seen October 1838

The pyramid of Egyptian pharaoh Menkaure is the smallest of the three pyramids constructed at Giza around 4,500 years ago. In the 1830s, English military officer Howard Vyse explored the Giza pyramids, at times using destructive techniques (his use of explosives being the most notorious) to make his way through the structures.

Vyse made a number of discoveries at Giza, including an ornate sarcophagus found in Menkaure's pyramid. Vyse tried to ship the sarcophagus to England in 1838 aboard the merchant ship Beatrice, but the ship sank during its journey and took the ornate sarcophagus down with it.

THE AMBER ROOM

Last seen 1944

The Amber Room was constructed in the Catherine Palace in the 18th century in Tsarskoe Selo, near St Petersburg. The room contained gold-gilded mosaics, mirrors and carvings, along with panels constructed out of about 450 kilograms (1,000 pounds) of amber. Tsarskoe Selo was captured by Germany in 1941 during World War II, and the room's panels and artwork were disassembled and taken to Germany where they were displayed at Königsberg Castle. It's unclear if the panels were destroyed by Allied bombing in 1944 or transported elsewhere. Today, the Catherine Palace hosts a re-creation of the Amber Room.

ARK OF THE COVENANT

Last seen Unknown

According to the Hebrew Bible, the Ark of the Covenant was a chest that held tablets engraved with the Ten Commandments. The chest was kept in a temple in Jerusalem in ancient Israel that was said to have been built by King Solomon. This temple, sometimes called the First Temple, was the most sacred site on Earth for the Jewish people, but it was destroyed in 587 BCE when an army from ancient Babylon, led by King Nebuchadnezzar II, conquered Jerusalem and sacked the city. It's unclear what happened to the Ark of the Covenant, and its location has long been a source of speculation.

HONJO MASAMUNE SWORD

Last seen **December 1945**

The Honjo Masamune is a sword that was supposedly created by Gorō Nyūdō Masamune, who lived from 1264 to 1343 and is considered by many to be the greatest sword maker in Japanese history. The sword is named after one of its owners, Honjo Shigenaga. The sword later came into the possession of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who became the first shogun of Japan. The sword passed down through the Tokugawa family until the end of World War II, when the sword was turned over to American authorities. But the sword never reappeared. It's possible that US soldiers destroyed the sword, along with other captured Japanese weapons; or they may have brought the sword to America, meaning it could be recovered.

CROWN JEWELS OF IRELAND

Last seen **July 1907**

Stolen from Dublin Castle, the 'crown jewels' of Ireland, really called the jewels of the Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick consisted of a jewelled star of the Order of St Patrick, a diamond brooch and five gold collars. Britain controlled Ireland at the time these 'crown jewels' were created in the early 19th century. The jewellery was made from 394 stones taken from Queen Charlotte's jewellery and an Order of the Bath badge.

The jewels were kept in a library, and lax security was blamed for making the robbery possible. Who stole the jewels and what happened to them remain a mystery. A wide range of people have been suspected of pulling off the heist, including Francis Shackleton, brother of the famous explorer Ernest Shackleton, although nothing was ever proven.

SAPPHO'S LOST POEMS

Last seen **Unknown**

The Greek lyric poet Sappho, who lived in the 7th century BCE, was the Shakespeare of her day. She was highly regarded by the ancient Greeks, who considered her to be one of their finest poets. Unfortunately, few of her poems still survive. In 2014, however, sections of two never-before-seen poems by Sappho were revealed by University of Oxford papyrologist Dirk Obbink. One poem talks about her brothers, while the other tells of unrequited love. Their provenance is unclear. In 2021, *Brill* retracted an article written by Obbink that detailed its provenance, and right now it is uncertain where exactly they come from.

THE JUST JUDGES

Last seen **April 1934**

The 'Just Judges' panel is part of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, a 15th century work of art painted by Hubert and Jan van Eyck in Saint Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium. The panel shows a number of characters, whose identities are uncertain, on horseback. The panel was stolen in 1934 and has never been found. However, despite the passage of time, new tips continue to come in, and the case file – which is now more than 2,000 pages long – is still active. There had been numerous other attempts to steal the Just Judges panel and other parts of the *Ghent Altarpiece* prior to the 1934 theft.

FLORENTINE DIAMOND

Last seen **1918**

The yellow, 137-carat Florentine Diamond was likely from India before it made its way to Europe by the end of the 15th century. How and when it got to Europe is a matter of debate. After World War I the last emperor of Austria-Hungary, Charles I, fled with it to Switzerland where he put it in a bank vault and entrusted it to an Austrian lawyer named Bruno Steiner. It's unclear what happened next. A news report published in 1924 indicated that Steiner was arrested, charged with fraud and acquitted. It's possible that the Florentine Diamond was recut and is now a series of smaller diamonds.

MENORAH FROM THE SECOND TEMPLE

Last seen 192 CE

In 70 CE, Jewish rebels fighting the Roman Empire suffered a critical blow as Jerusalem was captured by a Roman force led by Titus, later to become a Roman emperor. The Second Temple, at that time the most important religious site for Jewish people, was destroyed, and the Roman army carried its treasures back to ancient Rome, including the temple's menorah – a lamp stand with six branches. The Arch of Titus, located close to the Colosseum in Rome, includes a scene depicting the menorah being carried to Rome; in the scene, the menorah appears as a massive object, almost as big as the soldiers carrying it. It was supposedly seen at the Roman Temple of Peace, but that temple was destroyed in 192 CE and the Menorah's fate is unknown.

NAZI GOLD

Last seen 1945

According to legend, near the end of World War II, a Nazi force led by SS officer Ernst Kaltenbrunner sank a vast amount of gold into Lake Toplitz in Austria to keep it from being captured by the invading Allied forces. Since that time, numerous searches have been undertaken but, so far, no gold has been found. It's possible that the story is just a legend and that in reality no gold was sunk into the lake; however, some researchers have noted that the lake has poor visibility and a vast amount of logs and debris that make attempts to locate any gold both difficult and dangerous. Some divers have been killed trying to find gold in the lake's waters.

Q SOURCE

Last seen Unknown

Q Source is a hypothetical 1st century CE text that contains a number of sayings attributed to Jesus. Belief in the existence of Q Source is based partly on the fact that several passages in Matthew and Luke are identical. While the Gospel of Mark is believed to be a source for both Matthew and Luke, some passages included in both Matthew and Luke are not in Mark. Some scholars believe that those passages are from another source, which they call 'Q Source'. ('Q' stands for 'quelle', which means 'source' in German.) The problem with this theory is that no copy of Q Source, if it really existed, is known to survive.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM STOLEN ART

Last seen March 1990

On 18 March 1990, two thieves dressed as police officers broke into the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts, and stole 13 works of art valued at about $500 million. They included three works by the Dutch painter Rembrandt and five works by the French artist Edgar Degas. The thieves' identity is still unknown, and the artwork has never been recovered. It's possible that the thieves who stole the works of art are now dead and the paintings have been severely damaged or destroyed. Despite the high value of the art, being so well known they would be difficult to sell, and any buyer could easily determine that it was stolen and end up facing criminal charges themselves.

COPPER SCROLL TREASURES

Last seen Unknown

Perhaps the most unusual Dead Sea Scroll discovered in the Qumran caves in the West Bank, is a text engraved on a sheet of copper that discusses the location of a vast amount of hidden treasure. This Copper Scroll, as it is called, is in a museum in Jordan. Whether the ancient writer of the scroll was describing a real or legendary treasure is a source of debate among scholars.

Some have speculated that the treasures referred to in the Copper Scroll could be real treasures that were hidden before the Roman army destroyed the Second Temple. Other scholars have argued that the amount of treasure discussed in the Copper Scroll is so vast that it must be the stuff of legend.

LOST RAPHAEL PAINTING

Last seen January 1945

The Italian painter Raphael Sanzio, often simply called "Raphael", who lived from 1483 to 1520, painted this striking *Portrait of a Young Man*. Nazi officials stole the painting from the Czartoryski Museum in Krakow and intended to put it in the planned Führermuseum in Linz (the Linz Art Gallery), Austria. The Führermuseum was never built, and the painting was last seen in Hans Frank's chalet in Neuhaus on Lake Schliersee, Germany, in January 1945. Frank was a Nazi official who was put in charge of occupied Poland, where he oversaw numerous war crimes and the murder of Poland's Jews. After World War II, he was put on trial, sentenced to death and executed, but Raphael's painting has never been found.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON

Last seen 1603

William Shakespeare is known to have written the play *Love's Labour's Won*, though no copies survive today. It may be a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost*, a comedy that Shakespeare penned in the 1590s. Documents in the 1590s and 1600s indicate that *Love's Labour's Won* had been published by 1598 and was still being sold in 1603, although no surviving copies have been found. Some scholars believe that records of *Love's Labour's Won* may actually refer to another play by Shakespeare called *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is well known and is still performed today.

CARAVAGGIO'S NATIVITY

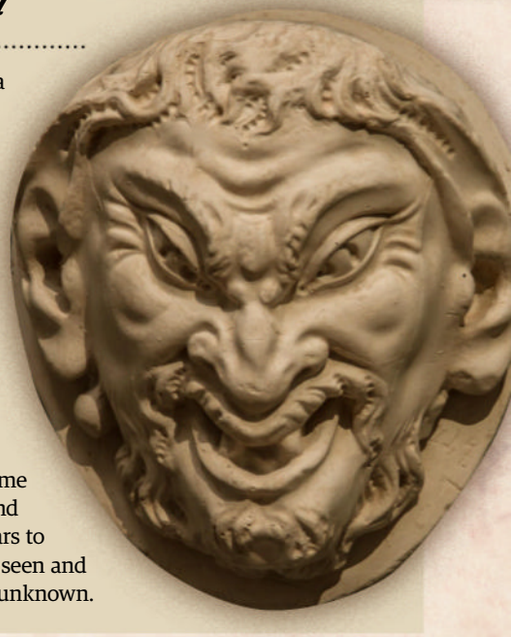
Last seen October 1969

The *Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence* was created in 1609 by the Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. It shows the birth of Christ, with the infant Jesus lying on a haystack – a scene that highlights the poverty of his birth. The painting was stolen in 1969 when it was in a chapel in Palermo, in Sicily, Italy. The painting was never found, and it remains unclear who stole it. It's long been suspected that members of the Sicilian mafia carried out the heist. In 2015, a replica of the painting was unveiled in the chapel where the original was stolen.

MICHELANGELO'S MASK OF A FAUN

Last seen August 1944

This marble *Mask of a Faun* – a faun being a half-human, half-goat mythological creature – has been attributed to the Italian artist Michelangelo. The Bargello Museum in Florence, Italy owned the mask, but it was stolen in 1944 from Castello di Poppi, a castle in Tuscany. The thieves? Soldiers from the German army's 305th division that was attached to the German 10th Army. The soldiers stole the mask sometime between 22-23 August 1944, and placed it in a truck. This appears to have been the last time it was seen and the mask's present location is unknown.



MISSING ROMANOV EASTER EGGS

Last seen November 1917

Between 1885 and 1916, the jewellery company Fabergé made ornately decorated Easter eggs for the Russian imperial family. Ten eggs were produced from 1885 to 1893 under Emperor Alexander III with a further 40 created during the reign of his son, Nicholas II. The Russian Revolution in 1917 led to the execution of Nicholas II, along with much of the Romanov family. In the aftermath of their deaths, some of the eggs went missing and are still unaccounted for; rumours claim that some of them are in private collections around the world. Documents have come to light showing that shipments of antiques and artefacts worth an estimated $164 million were shipped from the Soviet Union to the US at the end of the Cold War.

JULES RIMET TROPHY

Last seen **December 1983**

The Jules Rimet trophy was the original prize awarded to the winning national team of the FIFA World Cup. The trophy – named for Jules Rimet, founder of the tournament – was sculpted by Abel Lafleur and depicted the goddess of victory in gold. The trophy was first awarded in 1930 and passed from winner to winner every four years; but in 1970 Brazil won the competition for the third time. According to FIFA rules, the first team to win the World Cup three times would gain permanent possession of the Jules Rimet trophy. In 1983, the cup was stolen in Rio de Janeiro and hasn't been seen since. The thieves may have melted down the cup, which was made largely of gold and weighed about 6.1 kilograms (13 pounds).

TREASURES OF NIMRUD

Last seen **June 2014**

The ancient city of Nimrud is located in modern-day Iraq and was the capital of the Assyrian empire during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. Recent history has not been so kind to Nimrud. The terrorist group known as Islamic State or ISIL captured the ancient city in June 2014 during a military offensive; it wasn't recaptured until November 2016. By then, ISIL had blown up part of the city and used bulldozers to destroy and dig up other portions. Looting also took place after the ancient city was retaken, when little security could be provided. While many treasures at Nimrud have been destroyed, others are damaged and can be reconstructed, and others may be rediscovered on the black market.

GEORGE MALLORY'S LOST CAMERA

Last seen **June 1924**

British explorers George Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappeared on 8 June 1924, while nearing the top of Mount Everest. A storm may have doomed their final push to climb the mountain, but they may also have reached the summit, only to perish in the descent. Mallory's body was discovered in 1999; evidence suggests he was killed by a fall. Irvine's body has never been found. If Irvine's body is discovered, it's possible that the camera Mallory and Irvine took with them will also be found. If the film in the camera is still preserved then it's possible it could be developed, and the question of whether Mallory and Irvine made it to the top of Everest before dying can finally be solved.

MICHELANGELO'S LEDA AND THE SWAN

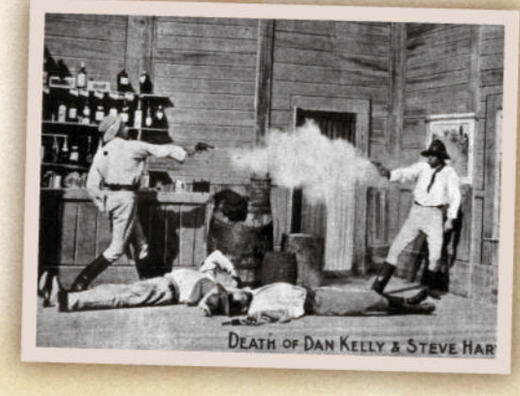
Last seen **1691**

Michelangelo's painting *Leda and the Swan* depicts a scene from ancient mythology where the god Jupiter, taking on the appearance of a swan, seduces Leda, the queen of Sparta. Michelangelo's original painting is now lost, and only a small number of copies made by other people survive. It's not known how exactly Michelangelo's painting became lost, but one possibility is that, over the past 500 years, some viewers found its erotic nature to be too much and it was destroyed at some point. One theory is that it was destroyed at the orders of Queen Anne of Austria who found it offensive.

WORLD'S FIRST FEATURE-LENGTH FILM

Last seen **Unknown**

The Story of the Kelly Gang, released in Australia in 1906, is regarded by many as the world's first feature-length film. Running at over an hour long, the movie depicted the story of the 19th-century outlaw Ned Kelly and his gang, and caused some controversy. Its screening in Victoria in 1907 was linked to a robbery by a gang of children, after which the film was banned. The film was never properly preserved, and by the 1970s, only a few publicity photos survived. Discoveries of bits of the film, along with restoration work, have allowed for about a quarter of the film to be restored, but much of it remains lost.



Pirate Hunters

For a time the Caribbean was ruled by lawless seafarers, but then it all came crashing down

Written by Angus Konstam

Piracy in the Caribbean began on a small scale, with a small but growing number of attacks being recorded from 1714 on. One of these early pirates was Benjamin Hornigold, who quit Jamaica to base himself in the Bahamas. It was a struggling backwater of a colony, its settlers eking out a threadbare existence through farming and salvage. By the time Hornigold arrived in Nassau in 1714, there wasn't any real authority in the islands, so he was able to establish himself in the small port. Then, when Henry Jennings and his treasure-laden followers arrived in Nassau in early 1716, the scale of the problem grew exponentially. In all, it was reckoned as many as 2,000 pirates were operating between 1714 and 1725.

For the most part, pirates were largely unknown seamen, and only really appeared on this historical radar when they began committing crimes. These left a trail of evidence, the most useful being the depositions - witness statements if you will - filed by their victims, the merchant ship captains whose ships were attacked. In 1715 there were around 30-40 such attacks recorded in Caribbean waters. By the following year, this had more than doubled to just over 100. By 1718, more than 550 attacks were recorded, from Newfoundland down to the West Indies. For the most part, the majority of these attacks can be linked to the pirates who based themselves in Nassau.

Today, many of the names of these pirates are still well known. The exploits of pirates like Blackbeard (Edward Thatch or Teach), Bartholomew Roberts, 'Black Sam' Bellamy, 'Calico Jack' Rackham or Charles Vane became the stuff of legend, which explained why the first book about them, Captain Charles Johnson's *A General History of Pirates* became such a runaway bestseller in 1724. It's still in print today. For the British government though, as well as the whole maritime community, from financial backers and shipping magnates to maritime insurers and sailors, this was a real nightmare. In mid 1718, it was reckoned that some 20 per cent of vessels operating in the Caribbean were being attacked by pirates.

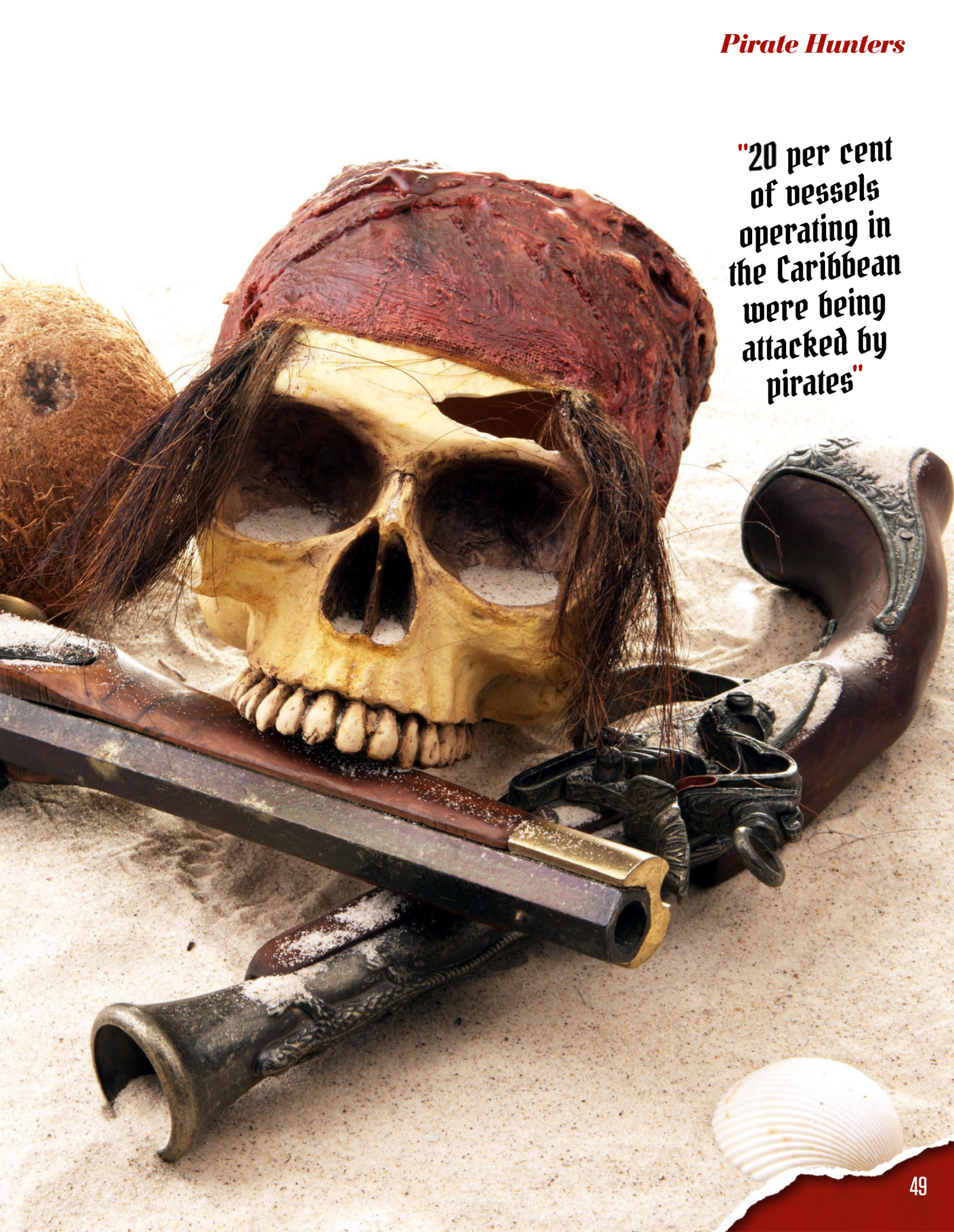
Tipping Point

While the damage to maritime trade was bad enough, what really tipped things over the edge was Blackbeard's blockade of Charles Town (now Charleston, South Carolina) in April 1718. He appeared with a small flotilla of pirate vessels, and lay off the port, capturing any ships trying to come in or out. For the authorities in British Colonial America, this was intolerable. Trade in one of the largest American ports had ground to a halt, thanks to the actions of one notorious pirate.

By then the complaints from colonial governors had been piling up in Whitehall, and it was clear something drastic had to be done. In particular, Governor Spotswood of the Virginia colony was adamant that trade was suffering, and something had to be done. Conveniently for the government, a solution was at hand. In 1717 a former privateer, Woodes Rogers, had been lobbying them, offering a way forward. So, in 1718, everything came to a climax, and the government finally unveiled its plan to deal with the pirate menace.

Carrot & Stick

When it came, the British solution was simple but effective. It was a 'carrot and stick' policy. The carrot was the offer of ▶



"20 per cent of vessels operating in the Caribbean were being attacked by pirates"

The Pirate Menace

UNCOVERING THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIRACY BY ANGUS KONSTAM IS AVAILABLE FROM 9 MAY 2024

a pardon to pirates, so long as they'd stopped their attacks, and were willing to pledge loyalty to the British crown. This proved highly effective. When word of the deal reached Nassau, more than half of the 300 or so pirates there decided to accept the deal. They realised that the life of a pirate meant they'd had to cut ties with their roots, their country and their family. There was no way back for them. Now, they'd been offered a lifeline, as long as they mended their ways.

Inevitably though, there were some like Blackbeard or Charles Vane who weren't prepared to accept this royal pardon. That's where the 'stick' came in. The stick, essentially, was the Royal Navy. With the number of active pirates reduced by the pardon, the Admiralty's resources could be concentrated on the hunting down of the 'die-hard' pirates who remained at large.

Actually, there was a second part to the 'stick'. Colonial governors were encouraged to make an example of any pirates brought in. So, very public trials and executions were used to discourage other seamen to go down the piratical path. The public trial and execution of Blackbeard's crew, of Charles Vane, Jack Rackham and others all helped underline the message that piracy didn't pay.

ABOVE Blackbeard in combat with Robert Maynard of the Royal Navy at Ocracoke, North Carolina, in 1718

BELOW Prior to his mission in the Caribbean, Woodes Rogers had circumnavigated the world, landing in California along the way

Pirate Hunters

Effectively, the job of ending the pirate menace was shared between the British Admiralty and the British government. So, individual naval captains were given the task of hunting down pirates. For instance, the death of the infamous Blackbeard in November 1718 was orchestrated by two naval commanders, Captains Ellis Brand and George Gordon, who commanded two British frigates stationed in Virginia waters. Similarly, Bartholomew Roberts was brought to battle by Captain Ogle of HMS Swallow, and the Welsh pirate died during a ferocious sea battle that eventually ended with the capture of what remained of his pirate crew.

The colonial government part of the stick was also extended to the Bahamas. In July 1718 Woodes Rogers arrived off Nassau, at the head of a British squadron. After establishing himself as the Bahamian governor, he set about re-establishing proper rule in the archipelago, a point underlined by the trial and execution of several pirates who fell into his clutches.

"The British solution was simple but effective. It was a 'carrot and stick' policy"

Wanted Men

At the start, the most wanted pirate in American waters was Benjamin Hornigold, the former privateer who still clung to his privateering rules of engagement, and only hunted French or Spanish ships. He was soon joined in Nassau by Henry Jennings, and soon many others swarmed to Nassau. These included Edward Thatch, who sailed in consort with Hornigold from late 1717. Within a year Blackbeard would become one of the most notorious pirates in the Americas, and the most wanted. Then there was Sam Bellamy, whose cruise in the powerful pirate ship Whydah ended abruptly in 1717 when the ship was wrecked off Cape Cod.

Others, like Charles Vane, who led the 'die-hard' resistance to the pardon then assumed the 'most wanted'. In the end though, the most successful of them, and probably the most wanted, was Bartholomew Roberts. He captured more ships than anyone else, but his death in battle in early 1722, and the subsequent mass hanging of his crew, effectively brought the pirate menace to a close.

ABOVE Anne Bonny and Mary Read were captured alongside 'Calico Jack' Rackham having refused the pardon

TOP RIGHT George I promised a pardon for any pirate who ceased their criminal activities in the Caribbean

ABOVE RIGHT Statue of Woodes Rogers, the first Royal Governor of the Bahamas who prosecuted unrepentant pirates

Calm Seas

In 1718 the pirate menace was at its height, with over a thousand pirates operating out of Nassau. Then the British government made their move. After Woodes Rogers' arrival in the Bahamas in July 1718, the pirate haven was effectively closed down. For a while, attacks in the Caribbean continued, with pirates operating from remote islands. The increased naval presence, though, made this increasingly dangerous. Then, high-profile executions, and the death of Edward Thatch, Charles Vane and others helped end the threat.

By then, most remaining pirates had headed further afield, to West Africa, or even the Indian Ocean. The numbers though were dwindling fast, and by 1720, with the hanging of Roberts' crew in Cape Coast Castle in West Africa, the pirate threat was all but over. Still, a few remained, and these were hunted down, one by one. By 1725 the threat had dissipated, and maritime trade flourished again. However, there was always the chance of another European war, and with the use of privateers, the whole cycle could begin all over again.

200 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Nazi bombs, gentlemen thieves, enigmatic art lovers and a guard dog called Rex – just a handful of the strange tales associated with this historical institution

Written by Callum McKelvie

© Alamy

Founded in 1824, the National Gallery houses some 2,300 paintings and contains one of the finest art collections in the world. Since first opening its doors, the gallery has become one of London's top tourist attractions, receiving 3 million visitors in 2023 alone, while the groundbreaking research and conservation carried out under its roof has resulted in many important contributions to the arts. Yet, with 200 years of history, the gallery also has a number of bizarre stories and mysterious happenings connected to the many paintings contained within. To celebrate the National Gallery's 200th anniversary, we recently took a trip into their archives to discover some of the secrets and mysteries of this national institution's long history.

THE FOUNDING OF A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

In April 1824, the art collection of John Julius Angerstein was placed on sale. The collector had died the previous year and had amassed works by William Hogarth, Rubens, Rembrandt and Raphael. The British Government, for once flush with cash thanks to Austria's repayment of a war loan, gave £57,000 for a choice selection of 38 works. The intention was that this small group would form the basis of a national collection, an idea that some artists had been eagerly championing.

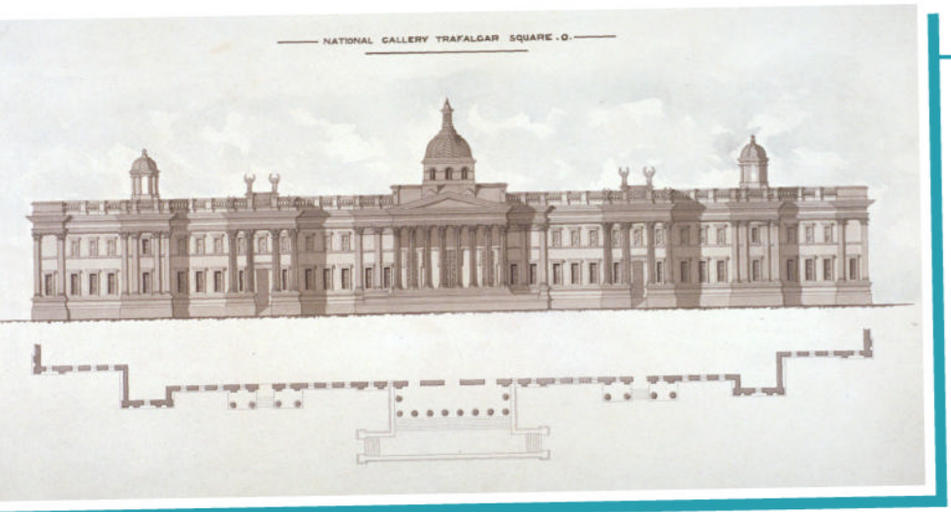
"A vociferous campaigner for a public gallery was landscape painter and collector George Beaumont," explains Dr Susanna Avery-Quash, the senior research curator at the National Gallery. "He promised a collection if Angerstein's pictures were purchased and gave 16 works, becoming the gallery's first donor." In 1831, the gallery received the first of many bequests throughout its history, receiving 35 paintings from the Revd William Holwell Carr. Throughout the decades the gallery continued to grow, moving to its permanent home in 1838.

THE NAPOLEON OF CRIME

One oddity hidden among the collections of the gallery is a framed strip of canvas. Those unfamiliar with this unassuming artefact's bizarre history might be forgiven for not giving it a second glance. Yet this item is evidence of perhaps the most notorious theft committed by Adam Worth, a 19th-century master criminal said to have inspired Sherlock Holmes's arch-nemesis, Professor Moriarty. Worth's escapades were legendary, stealing anywhere between $2,000,000 and $3,000,000, he (according to a 1904 obituary) "ruled the shrewdest criminals and planned deeds for them with a craft that bade defiance to the best detective talent in the world."

In 1876, Worth's criminal instincts were piqued when the previously thought-lost painting of the Duchess of Devonshire by Thomas Gainsborough was auctioned. The full-length portrait had disappeared from Chatsworth House only to be discovered years later, cut in half in the home of an elderly schoolmistress. According to the *New York Times*, following its 1876 sale to fine arts dealer Agnew & Sons, American financier Junius Morgan arranged to purchase the portrait for his son ▶

The renowned National Gallery is located at London's Trafalgar Square, and is free to visit



John Pierpont Morgan, for a colossal $50,000. But before the transaction could be completed, on the night of 25 May, Worth and his associates broke into Agnew's showroom and spirited the Duchess away.

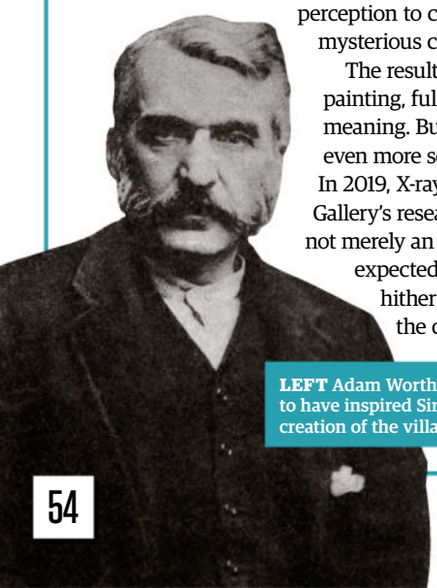
Initially intending to use the ransom to pay his brother's bail, Worth was surprised to discover that his freedom had already been arranged thanks to a shrewd lawyer. Nonetheless, negotiations commenced. Worth proved his ownership of the portrait by attaching several strips of canvas to ransom notes. After each instance he instructed advertisements to be placed in *The Times* signalling acceptance of the terms. One such example in the Gallery's archive reads: "Letter received, with the enclosure, is the subject of our correspondence in America. Conditions will be observed."

But before negotiations could be completed, Worth ceased communicating. Having apparently grown fond of the Duchess, he kept it in his possession and took the portrait wherever he went. In 1901 Worth was finally tracked down by William Pinkerton of Pinkteron's detective agency and returned the painting. When it was once again auctioned, JP Morgan supposedly paid $150,000 to finally possess the portrait. A remarkable story of a real-life art heist, largely forgotten save for the lone strip of canvas and ransom note now in the archive of the National Gallery.

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

In 1880 the gallery procured arguably one of the most famous paintings in its collections, *The Virgin of the Rocks* by Leonardo da Vinci. One of two almost identical paintings by the artist, it was created to celebrate the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception. "Leonardo's painting was commissioned in the early 1490s, shortly after the pope had officially sanctioned the celebration of this feast in 1477," Avery-Quash informs us. "The subject was still so new that there was no standard way of showing it, leaving Leonardo free to employ his pioneering experiments into vision and perception to create a new and appropriately mysterious composition."

The result was a wholly unusual painting, full of symbolism and deeper meaning. But *The Virgin of the Rocks* held even more secrets than initially thought. In 2019, X-ray analysis carried out by the Gallery's research department revealed not merely an underdrawing, as initially expected, but an entirely new and hitherto unknown sketch featuring the characters in different poses.



LEFT Adam Worth, the notorious criminal thought to have inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his creation of the villainous Professor Moriarty

ABOVE The plans for the National Gallery's current home; building was completed in 1838

BELOW Leonardo da Vinci's mysterious *Virgin of the Rocks* is among the most famous paintings in the gallery's collection

BELOW-RIGHT Hans Holbein's 1538 portrait of Christina of Denmark became part of the gallery's permanent collection after a £40,000 gift from a mysterious donor

THE DISAPPEARING OX

"Sir Charles Eastlake, the gallery's first director (1855-65) occasionally allowed certain changes or 'improvements' to be made to newly acquired paintings before they were put on display, something that would not be countenanced today," Avery-Quash told us. "For instance, certain pictures were quite heavily repainted in places by Milanese restorer Giuseppe Molteni. Perhaps the most audacious was his transformation of the ox in Girolamo Romanino's *The Nativity* into a piece of rock, and his addition of a snout of another ox in a completely different place."

AN ENIGMATIC ART LOVER

Throughout its history the gallery has been the benefactor of a number of gifts, but perhaps none more astounding than one made to the National Arts Collections Fund in 1909. Since 1880, Hans Holbein's famous 1538 portrait of Christina of Denmark had been loaned to the gallery for display. When it was suddenly announced that its owner, the Duke of Norfolk, intended to sell the painting, the National Arts Collections Fund desperately launched a campaign to raise the money necessary to purchase the portrait and prevent it from leaving the country. As time grew short the Fund was unable to secure the final £40,000 needed when an anonymous lady came to their rescue. The Fund purchased the portrait and it can still be seen in the National Gallery to this day. But just who was the mysterious donor? Her identity remains a secret, contained in a sealed envelope, never to be opened, in the care of the Art Funds chairman.

"JEREMY HUTCHINSON QC SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED BUNTON, ARGUING THAT AS THE PAINTING WAS PUBLIC PROPERTY, BUNTON HAD MERELY 'BORROWED' IT"

ABOVE Girolamo Romanino's *The Nativity,* which had parts repainted by Giuseppe Molteni

THE GALLERY AT WAR

In 1914, the assassination of the archduke Franz Ferdinand ignited a conflict the likes of which had never been seen – the First World War. During the four years of carnage London's museums and galleries, such as The Natural History Museum and The Tate Gallery, were closed. For a short time plans were even being mounted for the British Museum to be transformed into the Air Ministry headquarters, until an impressive public campaign persuaded the government to place them elsewhere. However, remaining open during the conflict was The National Gallery. "Unlike most other London museums," states Avery-Quash, "the gallery remained open throughout this war as an important outlet for recreation, although part of the building was requisitioned ▶

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CURATOR

© The National Gallery, London

Dr Susanna Avery-Quash, the gallery's chief research curator, tells us what it's like working at one of the world's most famous art collections

What are some of the most enjoyable aspects of being senior curator at the National Gallery?

Among the joys of being a curator are getting to know intimately great works of art; working alongside and learning from expert colleagues in different departments; and feeling that one's work, whether that concerns new acquisitions, displays and exhibitions, lectures or publications, can help shed important new light on our paintings, which, in turn, offers new ways for visitors to engage with them.

What are some of the challenges of your role?

A particular challenge is simply finding the time, amidst a busy workload of daily museum tasks and an intensive shorter-term exhibition schedule, to undertake longer-term research projects, involving meticulous investigation of the pictures themselves, secondary research conducted in libraries and archives, and conversations with peers worldwide. Another challenge is having to accept the frustrating reality that although the gallery is there to connect people with pictures, it sadly doesn't have the capacity or resources to reach everyone all the time.

Do you have a favourite oddity among the gallery's works of art?

I certainly have a favourite oddity from among the sculptures on the façade of the National Gallery. The architect, William Wilkins (1778–1839), had to accept a lot of compromises, to save money. For instance, for the exterior of his new building on Trafalgar Square (opened in 1838), he had to repurpose sculptures left over from the Marble Arch, a monument intended to commemorate the Duke of Wellington's military victory in the Napoleonic Wars. This explains why in the niches over the Getty and West entrances there are two allegorical female figures who were originally personifications of victory. Wilkins changed them, replacing the weapons and warlike attributes, including spears, with symbols of peace and art, including paint brushes, to make them appropriate to adorn the nation's new art gallery.

Another oddity that first greets visitors inside the building is the content of one of the mosaic pavements in the vestibule, commissioned in the late 1920s/early 1930s from Russian-born artist Boris Anrep (1885-1969). It represents 'The Pleasures of Life' and among its unusual iconography for an art gallery of historic paintings are jokey vignettes of everyday life including a mudpie and a Christmas pudding, and scenes of popular new pastimes of the day like sea bathing and dancing the Charleston. Among the sporting scenes is one representing tennis, which recalls Anrep's own sporting prowess: he was a very talented tennis player, even playing at Wimbledon in 1920 in the Men's Doubles competition.

Have you personally had any unusual experiences during your work for the National Gallery?

I have had plenty of memorable and exciting experiences, such as ascending scaffolding to see Bridget Riley's *Messengers* in progress or looking at technical images to detect fascinating underdrawing lying beneath the visible painted surface of a painting.

A particularly happy moment for me occurred when an album of 200 drawings came to light, the work by Elizabeth, Lady Eastlake (1809–1893), wife of the gallery's first director, Sir Charles Eastlake. They included her sketches of places she visited abroad with her husband, as well as her pencil copies of paintings they inspected during his search to find eligible masterpieces for the national collection. I had imagined that Lady Eastlake's sketches were lost or destroyed, so it was an extraordinary moment when I realised they were staring me in the face – and were so well preserved! The generous owner soon donated the precious album to the National Gallery so that her drawings might be reunited with her husband's working notebooks and so that they might be accessible for others to enjoy.

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MUST-SEE AT THE GALLERY

Five masterpieces well worth seeking out during any visit to the gallery

VASE WITH FIFTEEN SUNFLOWERS

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Van Gogh's sunflowers are among his most famous works. One of seven paintings in a series, a total of five can be found in museums and galleries across the world. The National Gallery acquired its painting in 1924.

TOILET OF VENUS

DIEGO VELAZQUEZ

Also known as *The Rokeby Venus*, this is the only surviving painting by Velázquez depicting the nude female form. In 1914 the painting was attacked by suffragette Mary Richardson who slashed it five times with a meat cleaver.

TIGER IN A TROPICAL STORM

HENRI ROUSSEAU

One of 20 jungle paintings, Rousseau claimed they were based on actual events – though the truth of this is often disputed. The painting was purchased by the National Gallery in 1972.

BATHERS AT ASNIÈRES

GEORGES-PIERRE SEURAT

Georges-Pierre Seurat was only 24 when he painted this masterpiece. Rejected for exhibition at the 1884 Salon, Seurat found a place for it at the Société des Artistes Indépendants exhibition – in the bar.

THE ARNOLFINI PORTRAIT

JAN VAN EYCK

Without doubt one of the most enigmatic works within the gallery, the Arnolfini portrait is known for its odd symbolism and the mystery of its subject.

for government purposes and staff numbers reduced."

However, 'The Great War' was an unprecedented global conflict that saw terrifying advances in warfare. One was the creation of the air raid, the idea that Britain's enemy Germany would use inventions such as the Zeppelin to drop bombs and devastate the country from afar. These fears led many museums to safeguard their works. "After the first Zeppelin raid on London in May 1915," Avery-Quash explains, "Room 46 was adapted for storage of the largest works and other pictures were evacuated to Cheltenham Art Gallery, Gloucestershire. With further Zeppelin raids, director Charles Holmes arranged for smaller pictures to be housed at a disused platform at Aldwych tube station. Others were sent elsewhere and in total 675 pictures were removed from the gallery but not one was damaged or destroyed."

FAKERY AND CHICANERY

One of the gallery's key departments is its research division, which seeks to fully investigate the history of the paintings within its collection. However, occasionally they can uncover some unpleasant surprises – namely the existence of hitherto unknown fakes within the gallery's walls, an unfortunate fact of art collecting.

"In 1924 the gallery was bequeathed *The Virgin and Child with an Angel*, thought to be by the late 15th-century painter Francesco Francia," Avery-Quash told us. "30 years later, another version appeared on the art market and subsequent scientific examination proved that our picture was a clever 19th-century forgery. Scientific examination demonstrated that several elements were wrong: chrome yellow and Prussian blue were used, but these pigments only became available in the 18th or 19th century, and the age cracks on the paint surface turned out to be painted imitations."

THE GALLERY AT WAR ONCE MORE

On 3 September 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced that Britain was once more at war with Germany. Since the rise of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party, Germany had slowly begun marching across Europe and when Czechoslovakia was invaded in March 1939, violating the Munich Agreement, the world was destined for conflict. With the further development of military aircraft since World War I, the aerial bombardment of London now seemed an inevitability. Once again, those at the gallery were forced to consider the safety of their art treasures and ten days before Chamberlain's announcement, all paintings were removed, "the vast majority went to Wales and a few to a site in Gloucestershire," says Avery-Quash.

But following the fall of France in June 1940, fears began to rise of a German invasion of the British Isles. Perhaps knowing the German army's reputation for pillaging art treasures, the gallery's director, Kenneth Clark, requested a meeting with Prime Minister Winston Churchill to discuss the possibility of evacuating the collection to Canada. "Hide them in caves and cellars," Churchill stated, "but not one picture shall leave this island." Clark, who feared possible losses during the long sea voyage, was delighted and set about finding the paintings a secure location on British soil.

"A disused slate mine near Blaenau Ffestiniog at Manod was chosen as the temporary home for the entire collection," Avery-Quash reveals. "Small brick 'bungalows' were built within the caverns to protect the paintings from


Lloyd George Takes Up Daily Sketch Campaign.

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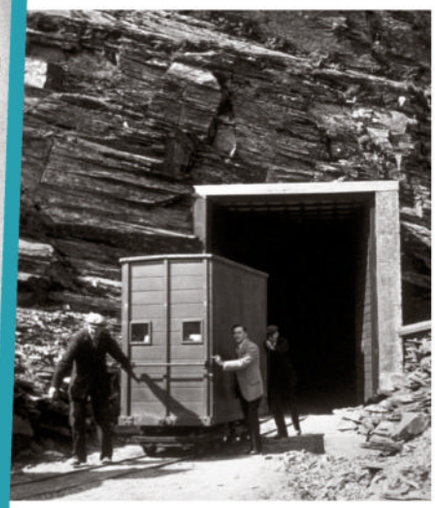
ANOTHER ZEPPELIN OVER LONDON



"IT'S A MOMENTOUS OCCASION, SURE TO BE CELEBRATED IN STYLE, AND YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT THE NEXT 200 YEARS WILL ALSO HAVE THEIR FAIR SHARE OF SECRETS JUST WAITING TO BE UNCOVERED"

variations in humidity and temperature and by summer 1941, the whole collection had been reunited in this temporary subterranean home." As fears of invasion and bombing dwindled, 'Picture of the Month' exhibitions were held to help boost public morale.

"Once again," Dr Avery-Quash states proudly, "not one painting was destroyed in the war."

STEALING THE DUKE

With such a valuable collection, one might suspect that the National Gallery quickly became a target for thieves, but it was not until 1961, 137 years after opening, that the gallery witnessed its first successful heist. However, this was no ordinary smash and grab and the story behind the robbery was beyond bizarre. The target of this unusual act of thievery was Francisco Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington. In 1961 this national treasure became front-page news when the government provided the final £40,000 in a £140,000 payment that purchased the painting on behalf of the gallery and prevented its sale to American collector Charles Wrightsman. But 19 days after being placed on display, it vanished without a trace.

The ease with which the thief had claimed his prize, leaving a lavatory window unlatched before returning in the early hours of the morning, was the cause of some embarrassment. Philip Hendy, the gallery's longest-serving director, offered his resignation though it was not accepted. Meanwhile, the police received communications from the mysterious thief who stated he would return the painting in return for £140,000. Unusually, the thief claimed this was to set up a charity intended to buy television licences for the elderly. Finally, in 1965 retired bus driver Kempton Bunton returned the Duke and handed himself in. Jeremy Hutchinson QC successfully defended Bunton, arguing that as the painting was public property, Bunton had merely 'borrowed' it. Found guilty only of the theft of the frame, Bunton was sentenced to three months in prison.

Despite his confession, however, it later emerged that Bunton had not been the thief at all. In 1969, his son John confessed to being the true perpetrator of the theft but the authorities, perhaps wishing to avoid further embarrassment, simply ignored the matter and the event was quietly forgotten about. In the aftermath of the robbery, the gallery introduced a number of security measures to dissuade anyone else from 'borrowing' their paintings. A document in their archive dated from 1964, shows Benjamin Thackaberry of 'Uni-Met Security Services Ltd' standing proudly with a formidable-looking German shepherd called Rex. This patrolling pooch was on nightly duty at the gallery until 1971 when it was decided he was "no longer serving a useful purpose."

FUTURE SECRETS

On 10 May 2024 the National Gallery will begin celebrating its bicentenary in earnest. A number of new displays are planned for this momentous event, including a virtual gallery, special commissions, and exhibitions. One of these will focus on the history of a selection of 200 of the gallery's treasures and another will see 12 of the most famous paintings distributed across the United Kingdom. It's a momentous occasion, sure to be celebrated in style, and you can be certain that the next 200 years will also have their fair share of secrets just waiting to be uncovered.

ABOVE-LEFT German Zeppelin raids, beginning in 1915, convinced those at the Gallery to evacuate a portion of their precious paintings

ABOVE A cache of Gallery paintings being removed from the cave in which they were secreted during World War II

RIGHT British police inspectors search the gentlemen's toilet of the National Gallery following the 1961 theft

MIDDLE Kempton Bunton, who confessed to having stolen Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington - but did he?

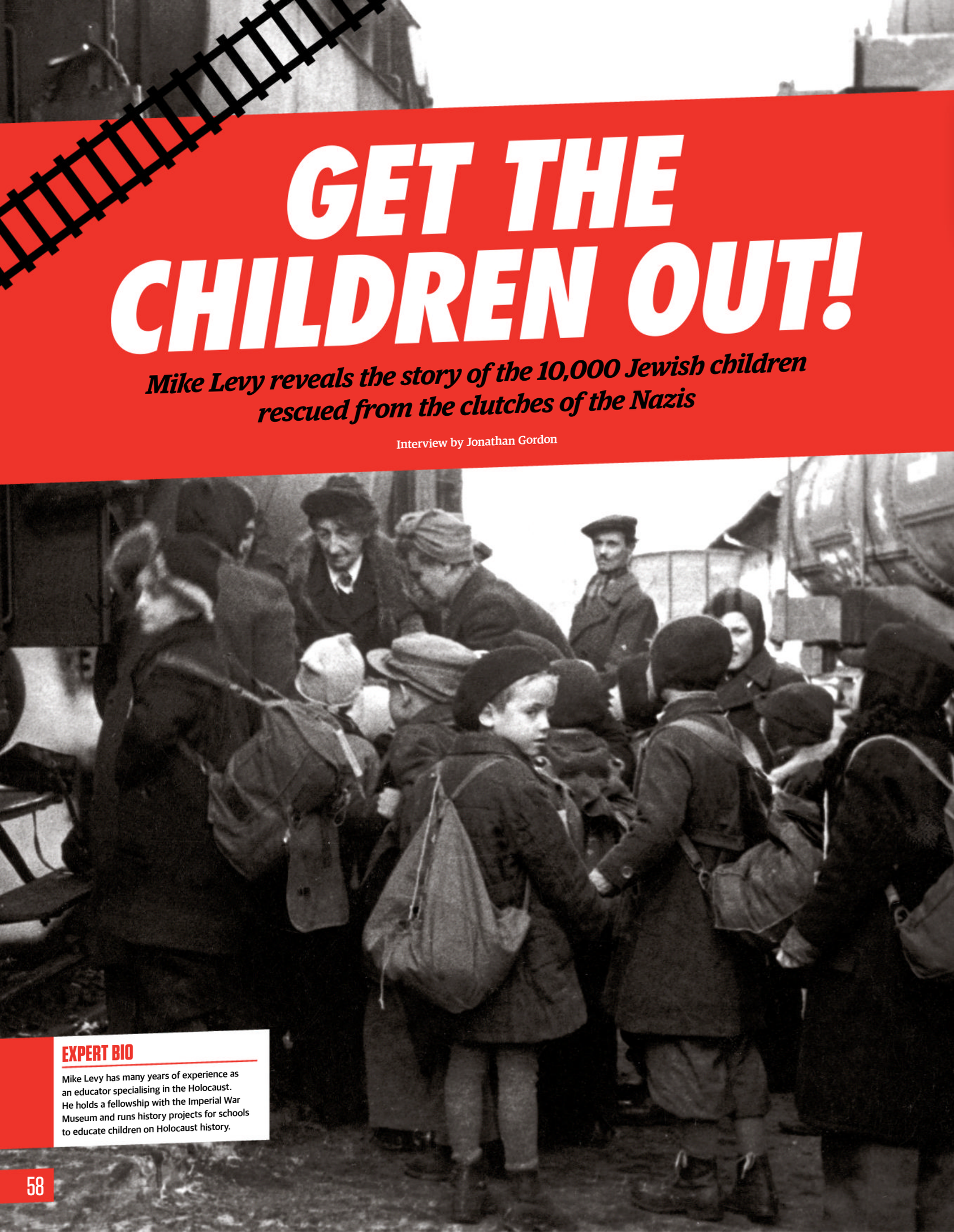
FAR-RIGHT Francisco Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington, stolen from the gallery in 1961

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

GET THE CHILDREN OUT!

Mike Levy reveals the story of the 10,000 Jewish children rescued from the clutches of the Nazis

Interview by Jonathan Gordon



EXPERT BIO

Mike Levy has many years of experience as an educator specialising in the Holocaust. He holds a fellowship with the Imperial War Museum and runs history projects for schools to educate children on Holocaust history.

Get the children out!

© Jewish Chronicle/Heritage Images/Getty Images

ABOVE Documents for three children who were brought from Austria to Britain to escape the Nazis

Starting in 1938 after the November pogroms, known as Kristallnacht, and going right up to the invasion of Poland in September 1939, a concerted and organised effort was made to get children of persecuted families, mostly Jewish, out of Germany. Their rescue from Nazi-controlled areas likely saved them from even worse actions to come from Hitler's regime. But who were the men and women who helped to shepherd these children out of Germany, and who took them in? That's what Mike Levy explores in his book, *Get the Children Out!: Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport*. We caught up with him to learn more about this story.

How did the Kindertransport rescue effort to beginin 1938 and how involved was the British government in setting it up?

First of all, the government didn't fund the Kindertransport in any shape or form. It was completely aloof from the fundraising part of the rescue and made it very clear from the word go that no taxpayer's money would be used to support these children. For the Kindertransport, we're talking about around 10,000 children, 90 per cent of whom were Jewish. These children came between the beginning of December 1938 and the end of August to the very, very beginning of September 1939. And in those eight months about 10,000 children came over unaccompanied. They were not allowed to bring their family or their parents with them. Initially, they were up to the age of 17, but then that was lowered a little bit into the spring of 1939 down to 16. What the government did was provide visa-free travel, a visa waiver scheme, you might call it, to allow the children to come without formal documents to enter the country. They had documents, but they were much easier to obtain without going through the lengthy and laborious process of receiving a visa. But the caveats were very much that the scheme had to be run by volunteers, it had to be financed by them, homes and hostels and all the means of welfare had to be provided by voluntary efforts and not by the government.

What were the backgrounds of the people involved in this mission? Did they have any history in activism or political movements?

There was a wide spectrum. At one end there were people who had been politically aware and involved in anti-fascist, anti-Nazi rallies and peace campaigns. There were certainly some parliamentarians who I mention in the book, who had been lobbying the government to allow at least the children to escape, if not to Britain to at least the British Empire, which was a very large swathe of the world. It then went down across the board from people who heard about the terrible things going on in Germany, being asked by their priests and vicars or their rabbis, 'can something be done to provide homes or help these children?' down to people who simply thought that it was the right thing to do. They were the grocer, the housewife, the next door neighbour, the teacher. I would say probably there was a very wide spectrum right across the social classes with probably a bit of bias towards the middle class. This was not because the working-class people in Britain didn't want to help, but because very significant financial barriers were put in the way of those wanting to take in the children. So, if you wanted to take an average of who they were, the people who took in or wanted to help, they would probably be British families, lower-middle-class families probably, who had a spare room or a spare bed in a room and felt the need to do something to help these children. I think there was also the sense among people like the Quakers - and remember in the late 1930s, there was a very strong pacifist movement - that although they didn't advocate war against Hitler and against the fascists, they could alleviate the suffering of those who were having to live in those countries. So, I think there's quite an interestingly broad spectrum, from political to apolitical, and from relatively well off to really quite humble in income.

How connected and organised were the different stages of the escape process?

Well, if you think the pogroms took place on 9 and 10 November 1938 and the first 200 children of the Kindertransport, the vanguard if you like, arrived three weeks later, on 2 December, that is remarkable. Really in December 1938, which is the first month of the Kindertransport, there was something like 1,500-2,000 of those 10,000 children that arrived. So, as you can imagine, a lot of the organisation ▶

BELOW Otto Busch sits for breakfast with his carers, Mr and Mrs Guest. Mr Guest was a lorry driver

All images: © Getty Images

was ad hoc. People were very much learning by experience and trial and error about how to do this. Having said that, it's not totally right to say that there was no expertise whatsoever, because there was. On the German end of the organisations, particularly the Jewish, Quaker, and to a certain extent Protestant church, they already had organisations and processes in place to help get people out of Germany; people who might be pursued by the Gestapo or Jews who wanted to get out and start a new life somewhere else like possibly Palestine or America or wherever it might be. So, there were processes in place to put these children on trains and get them out, but it was a lot of seat-of-pants thinking, a lot of bleary-eyed, 24-hour, almost panic-driven work going on both at the Berlin, Vienna, Hamburg, Frankfurt end, and also at the London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Manchester end as well. It was very large and slightly chaotic at the beginning, but things started to settle in the early months of 1939 especially when money got much, much tighter to help support these children. I think there was much more professionalisation of the organisation, certainly at the London end.

What opposition did these rescue efforts face from Nazi authorities?

Well, interestingly, at this point in what we might call the Holocaust era, the Nazi attitude to its Jewish population had three elements to it; isolation, impoverishment, and expulsion. So, we're very much still in the expulsion stage in 1938 where they didn't want to stand in the way of Jews leaving the country, providing they didn't leave with any money and left the Nazi authorities with as much wealth as they could get their hands on. So, the only thing that stood in the way of the children leaving was there was an awful lot of German Nazi paperwork and bureaucracy, because they had to have the right documents, the right health certificates. I even read somewhere that in some places they had to show the authorities the bit of paper that said that they were exempt from joining the Hitler Youth, which would be ironic if it wasn't so tragic. There were all sorts of bits of paperwork that were put into place quickly to satisfy the German bureaucracy and of course, similarly, there was lots of paperwork in London because it wasn't a completely open door for any child who wants to leave and come to Britain.

"PEOPLE WERE VERY MUCH LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE AND TRIAL AND ERROR ABOUT HOW TO DO THIS"

TOP 250 refugees arrived in Southampton on 24 March 1939, 88 of whom were unaccompanied children

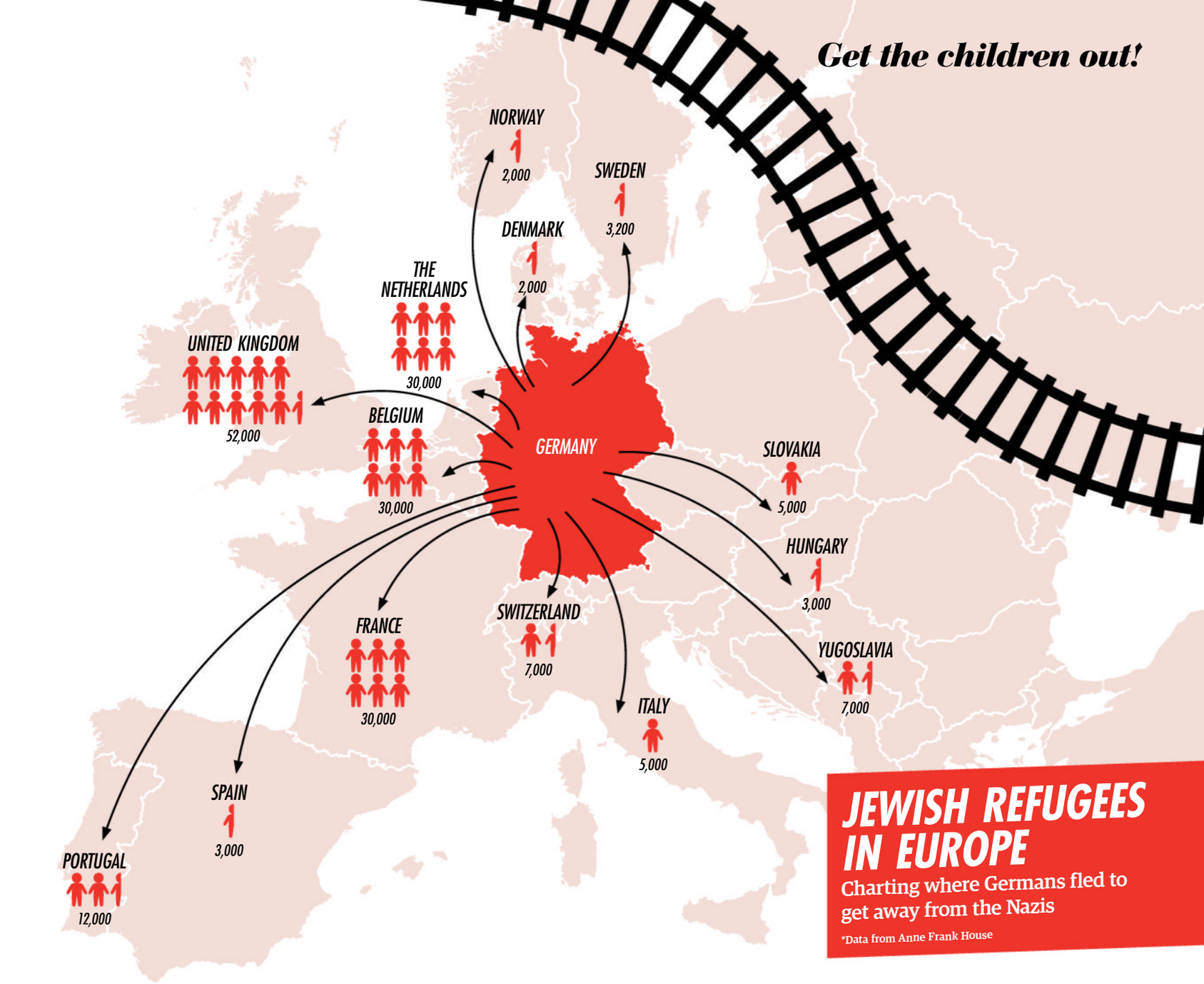
ABOVE Dovercourt Bay camp was set up to receive refugee children when they arrived at Harwich, Essex

ABOVE-RIGHT Children were given identity tags, but didn't need extensive papers to gain entry to Britain

LEFT Three children settling down for the evening at the Dovercourt Bay camp

The beginning of hostilities from September 1939 brought the Kindertransport programme to an end. Did those on the ground continue their activities though?

The last train leaving Germany arrived in England on 1 September. On that day Germany declared war on Poland and all borders were closed. There were no further train Kindertransports coming out of Germany. There was a small, unofficial Kindertransport of about 70 children leaving the Netherlands in May 1940. I tell the story in the book (*Get the Children Out!: Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport*) of how that happened and how the ship left the docks in the ports in the Netherlands on the very day that the Germans were invading the country. It was a desperate act to get the children out while they could. During the war itself, it was not possible to get children out of continental Europe.



JEWISH REFUGEES IN EUROPE

Charting where Germans fled to get away from the Nazis

*Data from Anne Frank House

BELOW A German-Jewish girl who arrived at Dovercourt Bay camp, near Harwich in Essex, in 1938

Are there any of these volunteers whose story you would want to highlight in terms of what they did post-war?

I call them unsung heroes in my book, and I think that they're all my unsung heroes, but there were certainly some that did have a post-war life. For instance, a lady called Bertha Bracey who was the de facto head of the Society of Friends, the Quakers, in Britain since the 1930s. She was very active in getting the whole Kindertransport scheme off the ground in 1938 and helping find foster homes, schools, training camps and so on for the children and then looking after them as much as they could through the war. The Quakers had a very fine reputation in terms of Kindertransport aid. After the war, Bertha Bracey joined an effort to provide relief and sustenance to Germans in Germany who were displaced, lost their homes through Allied bombing, were starving, and were in desperate straits. Interestingly, even during the war, Bertha was one of the very few people who received an OBE or any kind of recognition for her work for refugees in 1942.

Another interesting post-war figure was the rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, who was a very larger than life character who brought out many hundreds of Orthodox boys and girls from Vienna before the war, campaigned during the war to try and rescue more, and it's quite remarkable the schemes he came up with. But after the war, like Bertha Bracey, he set up a relief organisation with mobile synagogues, which were essentially vans that had been converted into part synagogue and part relief ambulances. They were sent out to try and find Jewish boys and girls, particularly young people who had survived the camps, were in Displaced Persons (DP) camps or, in his way of thinking, languishing in unfriendly foster homes, maybe people who didn't share their religious backgrounds and so on. So he's a remarkable figure.

What do we know about the experience of the children who escaped, and how many of them were able to return home, reunite with their families or build new lives for themselves elsewhere?

We don't really have firm research figures on how many stayed and how many left. However, there was a survey done in 2007 by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), which had about 1,400-1,500 respondents. So, it was quite a solid piece of research. First of all, there were very, very few, possibly only a handful, who went back to Germany. I know of very few who went back to East Germany because of their political sympathies with the newly arrived communist government in East Berlin, but that was pretty rare. ▶

All images: ©Getty Images

I would say probably the vast majority, 70-80 per cent of the children who came, stayed in Britain and naturalised under the 1947 naturalisation act.

In terms of their experience when they were here, again it's hard to say, but the research I've done shows, as you might expect, a lot depended on the families that they were fostered by. In some cases, they were incredibly lucky and the foster families were warm, sympathetic, and cared for them as their own children. Again, in the book, I've got many examples of that. There were other cases where the children, particularly older children, were exploited as unpaid servants. And there were definitely cases where children had been abused, both physically and sexually. So again, there's a range I think, depending very much on where the children ended up.

Frequently we see polling and data that suggests falling understanding or knowledge of the Holocaust among young people as we get further away from the event. What do you think we can and should be doing to remedy that?

In my time I've done quite a lot of teaching and educating in schools on Holocaust subjects and you can bring the subject to life first, through a very strong personal story and second, a story that has some local connection. So, for instance, if you think of the 10,000 children who came in without their parents and had to live a life away from their home because of Nazi persecution, those 10,000 children were scattered across the country. Probably anywhere where a reader, a child or a school is situated will have someone that had some link to the Holocaust living nearby; a Kindertransportee, a Jewish refugee, or a rescuer or someone who fought in the army that liberated Belsen, or was a political activist in that period and trying to do more to help refugees, and so on. It's been 80 years now; it's both something that happened a long way away in imagination and a long time ago. If you can bring that closer in, through personal stories and personal stories that have a local resonance, I think that's the way forward. There's a lot of thinking being done by Holocaust Education Trust, which I'm an educator with, and the Association of Jewish Refugees and others to focus on local history that can also take in global history. What impact does global history have on local history? I think that has potential.

"THE QUAKERS HAD A VERY FINE REPUTATION IN TERMS OF KINDERTRANSPORT AID"

ABOVE Dovercourt Bay camp belonged to the Butlins Company and was originally a holiday camp. It was the clearing station before the children were found more permanent homes

RIGHT A bronze statue outside Liverpool Street Station in London titled *Kindertransport - The Arrival* by Israeli sculptor Frank Meisler

ABOVE 8-year-old Josepha Salmon who arrived at Harwich from Germany on 2 December 1938

All images: © Getty Images

© Daniel Leal/AFP via Getty Images

German troops await the arrival of the Allies at Leopold Canal. On 13 September, the Algonquin Regiment would face their full wrath

Greatest Battles

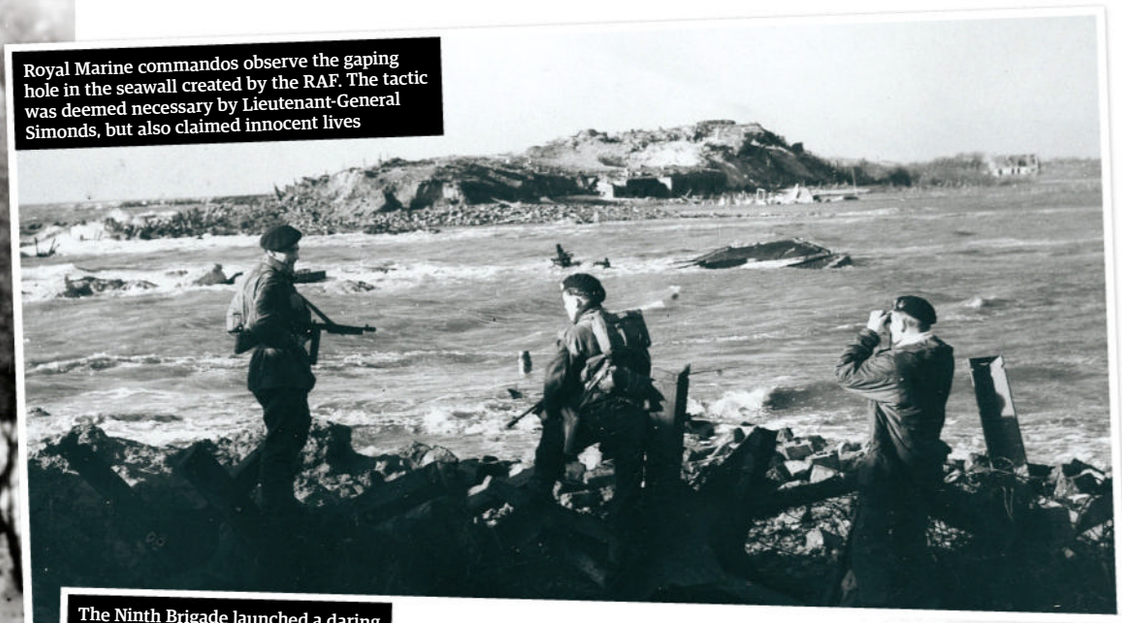
BATTLE OF THE SCHELDT

THE SCHELDT ESTUARY, BELGIUM & THE NETHERLANDS, 13 SEPTEMBER – 8 NOVEMBER 1944

Written by Alex Bowers

The success of the 1944 Normandy Campaign had come at a heavy cost. Having sustained over 200,000 casualties, the battered and bruised Allies faced new logistical challenges as their advance took them further and further away from the beachhead secured months earlier. While Germany's decisive defeat in the Falaise Gap had enabled sizable gains in France and across the Belgian border, the enemy had retained control of several channel ports, preventing the Allies from shipping supplies into these facilities. A crisis threatened if war materiel could not be brought to the continent and then transported to the liberating forces on a far larger scale.

Located on the left flank closest to the French coastline, the First Canadian Army was allocated the unenviable task of besieging the channel ports. Unfortunately, the German defenders would fight with stubborn tenacity to hold Boulogne, Calais



Royal Marine commandos observe the gaping hole in the seawall created by the RAF. The tactic was deemed necessary by Lieutenant-General Simonds, but also claimed innocent lives

The Ninth Brigade launched a daring amphibious assault from behind the Breskens Pocket that took the German 64th Division by surprise

and other seabound fortresses (Dunkirk would not fall until 9 May 1945), leaving their much-needed harbours either out of reach or otherwise extensively damaged when the Canadians broke through to them. Hope appeared to rest on Antwerp, situated in Belgium near the border with the Netherlands and boasting the largest port facilities in Europe.

The Belgian resistance captured Antwerp almost entirely intact before the British 11th Armoured Division rolled in on 4 September. Despite the initial victory, the port was by no means safe until the region surrounding it could be cleared of a considerable enemy presence. Beyond Antwerp was the Scheldt estuary, which remained in the hands of the German 15th Army, commanded by General Gustav-Adolf von Zangen. This area needed to be captured if Allied vessels were to enter the harbour unmolested by German coastal batteries and mines. Belgian fighters had attempted to seize strategic bridges over the Albert Canal around the outer reaches of the city, but had been unable to save two of the crossings from German demolition when the 11th Armoured Division halted in Antwerp instead of pushing forwards. XXX Corps commander Lieutenant-General Brian Horrocks later expressed regret at not seizing the opportunity, believing in hindsight that he could have caught 15th Army on the back foot. The critical pause allowed the Germans to reorganise as they took up positions on both sides of the Scheldt River, ordered by Hitler to fight to the last man.

PLUNGED INTO THE QUAGMIRE

The landscape surrounding the Scheldt estuary was almost as formidable as the enemy forces now firmly entrenched there. Much of the terrain had been reclaimed from the sea but was nevertheless below sea level – ground called polders. Rainy conditions made these polders virtually impossible to navigate in wheeled vehicles, and there was a risk that artillery pieces could be plunged into the quagmire by their recoil. The ground was little better for tanks, as some unfortunate crews learnt to their cost – as the men slept beneath their Shermans to protect themselves against German artillery, their armoured beasts sank on top of them.

The alternative method of movement was atop dykes that served as raised roads through the flats, although the Canadian, British and Polish units that constituted the First Canadian Army were vulnerable to bombardment if caught out in the open. There would be little choice once the Germans deliberately flooded the polders to funnel attackers onto the dykes, leaving the advancing Allies with nowhere to hide when the guns let rip. Worse still was the series of canals crisscrossing the Scheldt area that the Germans could utilise as a

British soldiers stormed the well-defended town of Vlissingen in early November. Meanwhile, the Canadians faced the causeway that led onto Walcheren Island

© Getty Images

forbidding barrier against their opponents. This was a defender's ideal battlefield.

Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds, acting commander of the First Canadian Army, had a daunting task ahead. On the south shore, a short distance from Antwerp, a concentration of German positions in a 35km (22 mile) by 16km (10 mile) rectangle had been dubbed the Breskens Pocket. On the right flank were the enemy-held approaches to the South Beveland Peninsula. From there, elements of II Canadian Corps would have to push westwards onto the peninsula itself that comprised part of the Scheldt's north shore. South Beveland in turn formed an isthmus leading to the islands of North Beveland and Walcheren. Simonds expected the latter island to be a tough nut to crack.

CLEARING THE BRESKENS POCKET

Isolated engagements took place throughout the Scheldt region during September 1944, with mixed results. On 13 September, the Algonquin Regiment of Fourth Canadian Armoured Division had attempted to establish a bridgehead over the Dérivation de la Lys and Leopold Canal only to be repulsed. However, an offensive carried out by the First Polish Armoured Division had been a resounding success when its troops clawed their way to the banks of the West Scheldt River. Yet the Breskens Pocket remained a fearsome obstacle.

Operation Switchback began in earnest on 6 October, spearheaded by the Third Canadian Infantry Division under Major-General Dan Spry, with another thrust over the Leopold Canal. Facing them on the far side was the battle-hardened 64th German Division, a 14,000-strong force dug into the south shore. 27 Wasps – universal carriers equipped with flamethrowers – drenched the enemy-held bank in fire, lighting up the dawn with a horrific spectacle that burned alive anyone in its path. Two companies from Seventh Infantry Brigade's Canadian Scottish Regiment and one from each of the Regina Rifles and the Royal Montreal Regiment were then ferried over the water in a maelstrom of machine gun bullets.

The Canadian Scottish on the right managed to advance a few hundred metres, but the Regina Rifles on the left initially struggled to gain a meaningful foothold. It took the arrival of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles the following day to establish a firm bridgehead that eventually linked the two forces together by 9 October. Death rained down from above in the form of artillery and fighters of No 84 Group, a sorely needed morale booster when little progress was made thereafter. To pile on the pressure and break the stalemate, the lead elements of two battalions in Ninth Infantry Brigade – the North Nova Scotia Highlanders and the Highland Light Infantry of Canada – launched an amphibious assault intended to crash through the Germans' rear. The contingent embarked on 97 Buffalos – tracked amphibious troop carriers – and manoeuvred behind the enemy at Hoofdplaat. Now cut off from their escape route to Walcheren Island over the Scheldt estuary, the 64th Division fought even more ferociously, employing tenacious tactics that took subsequent Canadian reinforcements by surprise. Concrete pillboxes disguised as small houses, machine guns hidden in haystacks, and even fake trees with German forward observers capable of orchestrating artillery fire all had a devastating impact on the Allied attackers trudging through the flooded hellscape. From 18 October, support from the British 157th Brigade of 52nd (Lowland) Division helped shift the odds in II Canadian Corps' favour, but it wouldn't be until 2 November that the remnants of 64th Division surrendered and 12,700 prisoners were taken.

ACCESS TO SOUTH BEVELAND

The fiery push over the Leopold Canal to begin clearing the Breskens Pocket occurred within days of the Second Infantry Division's drive north towards the South Beveland Peninsula. During much of September, Allied troops had probed enemy positions around the outskirts of Antwerp, known as the 'streetcar war' due to soldiers riding streetcars back

The controversial RAF bombing of Walcheren's dykes sent German soldiers and Dutch civilians scrambling for the high ground

© Alamy

On a rare sunny day, a carrier platoon of the Royal Regiment of Canada moves along the South Beveland Peninsula past Dutch civilians

Library and Archives Canada/Department of National Defence. Wiki/PD/Gov. The Museum of the Royal Regiment of Canada

This iconic photograph shows sniper Harold Marshall of the Calgary Highlanders of Canada. His unit would play a key role in the Battle of the Scheldt

© Alamy

and forth from the city to the battlefield. Once the region had been freed from German resistance, the northward march could commence on 2 October.

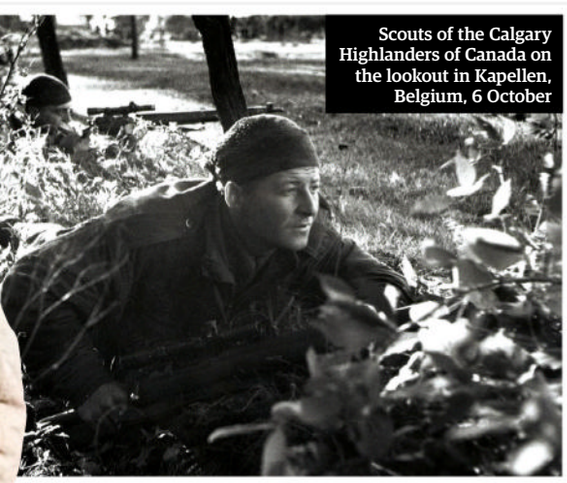
Second Division, having recently come under the command of Brigadier Holley Keefler, traipsed over dykes through waterlogged farmland en route to its objective: the village of Woensdrecht close to the isthmus. When not subjected to intermittent artillery barrages, the Canadians squared up against fanatical young parachutists mustered together as Kampfgruppe Chill (Battle Group Chill) – named after their leader Generalleutnant Kurt Chill.

From 7 October, chaotic skirmishes near Woensdrecht culminated in a valiant yet disastrous assault by the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada on 13 October, a dark moment in the unit's history that would come to be called Black Friday. The bloody affair cost almost 150 casualties by nightfall, including 56 Black Watch troops killed. The war-torn Dutch community would be liberated by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry on 16 October.

Meanwhile, Major-General Harry Foster's Fourth Canadian Armoured Division had been sent alongside Second Infantry Division's right flank as part of its attachment to I British Corps. Liberating several Belgian towns in the process, their next mission was to venture north beyond Woensdrecht to capture the city of Bergen op Zoom. Doing so was expected to assist in denying the Germans bottled up on the South Beveland Peninsula from escaping via the isthmus in full. What's more, and perhaps most crucially, Second Division's westward movements would be guarded against enemy counter-attacks stemming from the north if Fourth Canadian Armoured Division eliminated that threat. The difficult feat was achieved on 27 October with significant Canadian casualties, but the fight enabled grateful Dutch civilians to fly their flags for the first time since the occupation.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PENINSULA

The Second Canadian Infantry Division launched Operation Vitality, the westward push onto the South Beveland isthmus, on 24 October – placing



Scouts of the Calgary Highlanders of Canada on the lookout in Kapellen, Belgium, 6 October

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images, Library and Archives Canada/Department of National Defence, Wiki / PD / Gov, The Museum of the Royal Regiment of Canada

FIRST CANADIAN ARMY

© Getty Images

BERNARD MONTGOMERY

With his mind on Operation Market Garden, Montgomery hadn't prioritised the Scheldt estuary, seeing other theatres as more urgent for his attention. In hindsight this has been seen as a missed opportunity to open shipping to Antwerp earlier and defeat the German 15th Army.

© Getty Images

GUY SIMONDS

The First Canadian Army, tasked with clearing the Scheldt by Montgomery, was put under the command of Lieutenant-General Simonds. He was later recognised by many as one of the best generals of the war. He was appointed Chief of the General Staff in Canada in 1951.

© Getty Images

BERTRAM RAMSAY

It was Ramsay who had advised Montgomery that he should clear the Scheldt on 5 September, hoping to open up the port of Antwerp to British ships. When this was eventually prioritised, Ramsay helped plan the assault. He was killed in a plane crash on 2 January 1945.

GERMAN 15TH ARMY

© Getty Images

GUSTAV-ADOLF VON ZANGEN

Von Zangen served in World War I and received the Iron Cross for his efforts. During WWII he was made commander of the 17th Infantry Division who fought on the Eastern Front, he led a Corps in France in 1943 and a detachment in Italy before being made commander of the 15th Army on the Western Front. He surrendered to the Allies in April 1945.

© Getty Images

GERD VON RUNDSTEDT

Field Marshal Rundstedt was the one who ordered Von Zangen to hold the Scheldt, recognising that the Allies were in great need of the port of Antwerp and that denying them it was of the utmost importance. As the Allies advanced he also deployed the Sixth Parachute Regiment to assist. He was relieved of command in March 1945 and captured in Bad Tölz by US troops.

it squarely in the mouth of the lion. The first sharpened tooth of the German defence was the Beveland Canal running north-south just past the peninsula's base, blocking the advance. Thousands of enemy troops from the German 70th Division awaited a frontal assault. Though considered by the Allies to be a relatively poor fighting force due to its ranks consisting of men with gastric ailments, the punishing terrain would make up for their weaknesses as the Canadians waded through waist-deep water and trudged through incessant mud to reach their destination. Simonds, recognising the likely hurdle, decided to replicate the amphibious landing in the Breskens Pocket by ordering a similar landing behind the peninsula's canal. The British 52nd (Lowland) Division's 156th and 157th Brigades – a flotilla consisting of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, Sixth Cameronians and the Fifth Highland Light Infantry, as well as a squadron of tanks from the Staffordshire Yeomanry in support – crossed from Terneuzen on the south shore to South Beveland on the night of 25-26 October, thereby outflanking the Germans. The opening of the new front allowed for Sixth Brigade's South Saskatchewan Regiment and Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal to board assault boats, row over the watery obstacle, and establish a bridgehead on the canal's far banks. Faced with little choice, the Germans retreated to Walcheren Island shortly after, intent on a final stand.

There was, however, an Achilles' heel to 'Fortress Walcheren' on which Simonds had already capitalised. Lancaster bombers had breached the island's dykes that protected it from the North Sea. The fight-water-with-water tactics once employed by the enemy had now been used against them. Despite dropping leaflets warning Dutch civilians to evacuate, countless residents had remained when the flood swept through and submerged enemy strongholds and local communities alike. Along with Simonds, the naval commander-in-chief sent the battleship HMS Warspite and two 15in gun monitors. In tandem, a waterborne assault by Royal Marine commandos landed on Walcheren.

THE FINAL STAND ON WALCHEREN

The battle of the causeway would become a bloodbath. Both ends of the road and railway track had been choked up with concrete bunkers and barbed wire, its expanse within range of enemy artillery and mortar fire. Beneath it was the shallow, silted and treacherous Sloe Channel that was bound to be a slog should it be chosen as a route forward. Fourth Infantry Brigade's Royal Regiment of Canada claimed the South Beveland side of the causeway in a successful night operation.

It was down to Fifth Brigade to take the rest of the bridge on 31 October. Thrusting ahead into uncertain territory, the ever-jinxed Black Watch was caught in a deadly shower of bombs and bullets that checked it almost instantly, leaving a trail of bodies in the wake of well-positioned machine-gun nests and anti-tank guns, including the feared 3.5in (88mm) bearing straight at them.

The Calgary Highlanders of Canada attempted to outmanoeuvre the Germans by sailing across the flats, but the men were dismayed to realise that the low water was unnavigable. The Canadians instead carried out a second attack over the causeway that night with the Calgary Highlanders in the lead. This too failed, with tragic consequences as terrified soldiers huddled in craters for scant protection against the onslaught. Finally, a pre-dawn storming on 1 November afforded Fifth Brigade a tentative bridgehead over the western end of the causeway, yet even that lodging was impeded by determined German counter-attacks that hampered efforts to consolidate gains. Only over 2-3 November did the foothold become permanent when 52nd (Lowland) Division's 157th Brigade outflanked the enemy via a recently found pass in the mud flats.

Elsewhere, the British amphibious landings from the liberated ports of Breskens and Ostend to the beaches of Walcheren were coming to a head. No 4 Commando, accompanied by 52nd (Lowland) Division's 155th Infantry Brigade, had crossed over to attack Vlissingen – known as Flushing to British authorities – for Operation Infatuate I. Simultaneously, Operation Infatuate II had brought other Royal Marines to the area around Westkapelle. The troops came under fire from numerous enemy batteries before taking on the island's estimated 9,000-strong German forces. Fierce street fighting in Vlissingen sent some British soldiers into buildings where they began 'mouse-holing' – the process of blowing holes through walls to enter the next structure without having to go out in the open.

At Westkapelle the commandos encountered stiff resistance, but with the support of the First Lothian Regiment's tanks they seized the village in due course. By the night of 3-4 November, opposition between the two primary objectives ceased. Little more than a portion of Walcheren had been grasped by the First Canadian Army, yet the island no longer posed the same challenges it once did to Allied shipping in proximity to the Scheldt.

On 6 November, the provincial capital of Middelburg, which was surrounded by water, fell to the Seventh/Ninth Royal Scots without bloodshed. On 8 November, the Battle of the Scheldt concluded with the complete surrender of German forces.

From when the formal campaign had kicked off at the beginning of October to when the last shots were fired on 8 November, some 12,800 casualties had been sustained – almost half of them Canadian. The Germans likewise suffered tremendous losses, although no known record exists of the precise numbers. It is thought at least 4,000 were killed in the battle. Belgian and Dutch civilians were all too often caught up in the engagements, leading to about 3,000 innocent deaths. And the worst was still to come when the Nazi war machine unleashed a swift retaliation of around 1,600 V2 rocket attacks against Antwerp over the coming months, close to half of all V2 rockets launched during the war.

Map by: Rocio Espin Inset: © Alamy

05 Securing access to the peninsula

Battling their way north some 20 miles (32km), the Canadians of Second Infantry Division arrive at the outskirts of Woensdrecht and start fighting for the town on 7 October. Spitfires and Typhoons of No 84 Group offer air support over the coming days, but it isn't until 16 October that access to the South Beveland Peninsula is tentatively secured.

07 Closing the Breskens Pocket

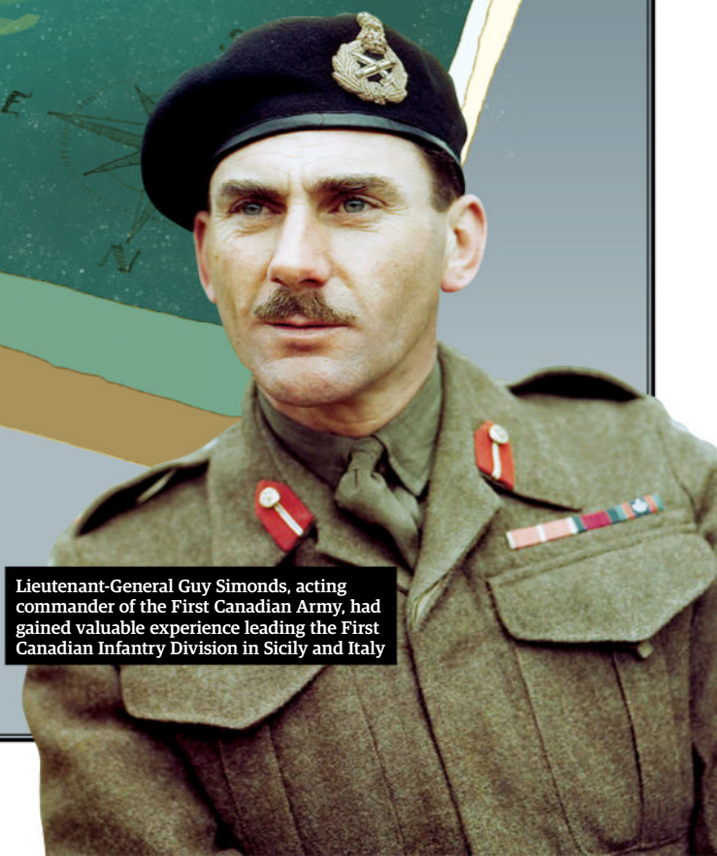
Despite the Canadians liberating the port of Breskens itself in October, the German 64th Division continues defending the perimeter that constitutes the Breskens Pocket for several more days. Allied forces push the enemy west towards the sea. Finally, with the capture of Knokke and Zeebrugge and nearby strongholds, the pocket is closed by 3 November.

06 The causeway death trap

Walcheren is teeming with pillboxes, gun positions, batteries and geographical obstacles, not least around the causeway that links the island to the peninsula. Units from the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada, Calgary Highlanders of Canada and Le Régiment de Maisonneuve are nevertheless instructed to storm it in what becomes a devastating bloodbath.

08 Royal Marines & infantry seize Vlissingen

The former British tourist destination and German stronghold of Flushing – or Vlissingen – comes under attack from Royal Marines and infantrymen on 1 November. The amphibious landings are a success, prompting the beginning of the end of enemy resistance on Walcheren. The town's opposition ceases in the early hours of 4 November.



Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds, acting commander of the First Canadian Army, had gained valuable experience leading the First Canadian Infantry Division in Sicily and Italy

What If...

OPERATION UNTHINKABLE HAD BECOME REALITY?

In 1945, Churchill secretly planned war with the Soviet Union. But could 'Operation Unthinkable' have resulted in a third world war?

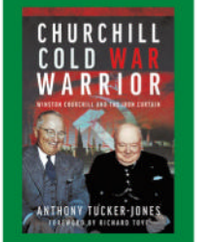
Interview by Callum McKelvie

INTERVIEW WITH

© Mick Kavanagh

ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES

Anthony is a former defence intelligence officer and the author of numerous books on the military history of World War II. His first biography of Churchill, entitled *Churchill, Master and Commander*, was published by Osprey in 2021.



Churchill: Cold War Warrior by Anthony Tucker-Jones will be released on 30 July 2024 by Frontline Books.

RIGHT Winston Churchill, preparing to make his VE Day broadcast on 8 May 1945, but was he secretly planning another conflict?

In 1945, with Nazi Germany defeated, Britain was already planning World War III. Well not exactly, but Prime Minister Winston Churchill had become disturbed by the Soviet Union's occupation of much of Eastern Europe. On his orders a plan was drawn up to explore the potential of a military push to force the Soviet Union out of Eastern Europe, specifically East Germany and Poland. Of course, such a plan was never put into operation, but what if Britain had launched a military strike against the Soviet Union? Would it have been a swift, decisive victory? Or would it have ended in a third world war?

What exactly was Churchill's Operation Unthinkable?

I don't think there's been a military operation more aptly named, because essentially Operation Unthinkable amounted to Churchill contemplating starting World War III. By the end of World War II, he was extremely alarmed by the Soviet Union's expansion into Eastern Europe, particularly about what was happening in Poland. In early May of 1945, he instructed the British chiefs of staff to do a sort of feasibility study, exploring the possibility of Britain forcibly driving the Red Army out of eastern Germany and Poland – codenamed Operation Unthinkable.

What were the plan's key points?

Well, the plan was only put together in a few weeks. There was a British general election looming in July 1945 and Churchill was insistent it be completed quickly. It was secretly drafted by a small group of joint planners, because obviously what was being proposed was enormously contentious. When they examined Churchill's proposal, they realised that to ensure a lasting security buffer for Eastern Europe, should the Allies be successful in driving the Red Army out of it, they would probably need to occupy the same sort of area that Hitler had at the height of his invasion of the Soviet Union. Effectively what Churchill and the joint planners were proposing was rolling the Red Army out of eastern Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria and then essentially repeating Hitler's Operation Barbarossa, across the Soviet border to within reach of the Ural Mountains, which originally had been Hitler's plan.

How feasible was the idea?

Well, Churchill was coming from a position where Britain's armed forces were at the height of their power. At the back of his mind was probably the idea that if he was going to act, now would be the time to do it. Field Marshal Alanbrooke, the British chief of the imperial general staff, was absolutely horrified by the plan and thought it was ridiculous. Churchill would also have required the cooperation of the Americans and President Truman certainly would not have agreed to such an operation. He, like most Americans, was keen on sending their boys back home to the States as soon as possible. Equally controversially, Churchill proposed that part of the force to drive the Red Army out of Eastern Europe would include recently defeated

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Main image source: © Getty Images, © Alamy

"Operation Unthinkable amounted to Churchill contemplating starting World War III"

THE PAST

1945

DISPLACED PERSONS

Following the end of World War II, the Allied forces found themselves facing the problem of how to deal with thousands of German refugees. Among these were a large number of German POWs, who remained prisoners for several months. Partly, Anthony Tucker-Jones suggests, this was due to the heightening of tensions between the Allied powers and the possibility that, should another war break out, these prisoners may have been required to pick up arms and fight on the Allied side.

1945

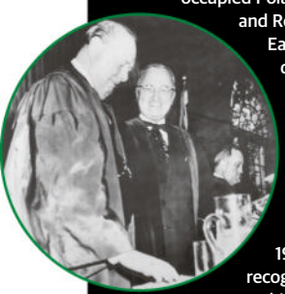
A DIVIDED GERMANY

In July of 1945, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Harry Truman met at the Potsdam Conference to further discuss the shape of the post-war world, following on from their earlier discussions at the Yalta Conference in February. Here it was decided that Germany would be disarmed, demilitarised and then split into four zones of occupation, each controlled by one of the Allied powers (Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and France).

1946

THE IRON CURTAIN

Following the end of the war, the Red Army occupied Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, in addition to Eastern Germany. Stalin desired a 'buffer zone', separating Russia from the capitalist powers of Western Europe by establishing 'friendly' governments in neighbouring countries. On 5 March 1946, Winston Churchill recognised this aim when he gave his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech in Missouri.



ABOVE The ruins of Warsaw at the end of World War II. The Soviet Union gained Polish territory and a communist dictatorship was set up

German troops. But the chances of Britain springing this on the Soviet Union were fairly slim because both Stalin (the Soviet premier) and Marshal Zhukov (head of the armed forces) were somewhat suspicious of the Allies' intentions. Indeed, Zhukov ended up complaining to General Montgomery about the slowness with which Britain was dispersing its German prisoners. So tensions were already beginning to arise. Germany, a defeated nation, hoped it might end up siding with Britain and America, and Stalin evidently began to worry that this would happen. So in a way, Operation Unthinkable was on the verge of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy if you like, but the practicalities of it were completely impossible. At the end of May, the British wartime coalition government was wound up and in July 1945, Churchill famously lost the general election. So Churchill, even if he had come close, never had the ability to implement Unthinkable.

If the operation had occurred, how aware of the plan would the Soviets have been?

The Soviets didn't really need specifics of the Unthinkable plan, as they were already alert to the fact that there was friction with the Allies. A major bone of contention had been the capture of Berlin. Partly why the Red Army shed so much blood taking it was because Stalin was determined it should be his prize for the terrible losses suffered by the Soviet Union throughout the war. Also, Stalin really made sure his forces pushed hard to capture the city, as he desperately wanted to ensure that the Soviet Union would never be threatened by Germany again. He was determined to create a huge security buffer in Eastern Europe and hopefully avoid another war, which I think he probably would have been prepared to fight to keep it. Now, following the Battle of Berlin, the Red Army obviously was in a pretty sorry state. They had suffered 300,000 casualties and were not in a hurry to renew hostilities. But the Soviets still had the manpower to resist any Allied incursions into their occupation zone. And as I say, in terms of them being suspicious, they were well aware of the large numbers of German troops in the Allied occupied zones of Germany, which the Allies seemed reluctant to disperse. They were probably aware of talk among German prisoners that they hoped both Britain and America might help free them from Soviet occupation. So there were a lot of indicators that tension was ramping up.

How do you believe the conflict would have played out?

Had it taken place, and Churchill had a definite date in mind, he wanted Unthinkable to be launched on 1 July 1945, before the British general election, before the Potsdam Conference and before America dropped the atomic bomb on Japan. So he wanted to act pretty quickly. And I believe he was thinking that if Unthinkable occurred, the crisis might leave him in office while it played out. The planners had decided that they would need to push deep into the Soviet Union, and if that had happened then it definitely would have sparked World War III. Perhaps it would have even accelerated the Soviet Union's own nuclear programme? With the Soviet Union caught up in a new war, it's quite conceivable that places like Indochina, China, and Korea would not

have fallen to communism, because the Soviets would have been too preoccupied to help the local communist forces in those countries.

Would Operation Unthinkable have fundamentally altered the nature of the Cold War?

Most certainly! There would have been no Cold War because it would have resulted in a shooting match, which would have sparked a third world war. It's hard to conceive of Unthinkable being a limited operation confined to Europe. The Soviets would not have taken that lying down. If, by a stretch of the imagination, America had been involved, or perhaps the Soviet Union attacked America across the Arctic Circle in retaliation, that would have really escalated matters.

If a new war had broken out in Europe, the Allies were still at war with Japan at that point – Japan didn't surrender until mid-August 1945. So it would have slowed down the defeat of the Japanese. Once Germany was defeated, the Soviet Union was committed to joining the war against Japan, which came in the form of the Red Army invading Japanese-occupied Manchuria and defeating all their troops there. Well, that wouldn't have happened if there was a war between the Western Allies and Soviet Union. So the war in the Pacific would have also dragged on. The Red Army would not have overrun Manchuria and would not have been in a position to help Mao Zedong's Chinese communists or those in Korea and Indochina.

Is there any scenario where Operation Unthinkable wouldn't have caused World War III?

As I said, I cannot conceive of Unthinkable being a limited security operation in Europe, the Soviet Union simply would not have put up with it. That's assuming the Allies even had the ability to push the Red Army all the way out of Eastern Europe. I think Churchill imagined a sort of Blitzkrieg, a highly mobile war that would kick the Red Army out swiftly. But keeping in mind how competent the Red Army was by that stage, how much combat experience it had, Stalin would have put up a stiff fight. If the British Army had pushed into the Soviet occupation zone, most likely it would have been spearheaded by the famous 'Desert Rats' (the 7th Armoured Division at Hamburg), the 51st Highland Division at Bremerhaven, and the 3rd Infantry Division who were in Bremen. The equally famous 'Hell on Wheels', the American 2nd Armored Division, were in Münchberg, so if the Americans did take part, they probably would have been in the forefront as well.

But Churchill would never have got agreement from America to conduct a pre-emptive war. He wouldn't have got it in Britain either. As I said, Field Marshall Alanbrooke was horrified at the very idea. He thought Churchill had lost his marbles even contemplating such madness. Never has a plan been so well codenamed as Unthinkable. Certainly the outcome of such a course of action is definitely unthinkable. Not surprisingly, it was kept top secret until 1998.

BELOW Soviet sailors during the invasion of Manchuria in 1945. Had Britain attacked the Red Army, it's likely the USSR would not have provided assistance in the Pacific War

THE POSSIBILITY

1945 ONWARDS

MORE WAR FOR WINSTON?

British prime minister Winston Churchill found himself ousted from 10 Downing Street following the British general election on the 5 July 1945 but would once again become prime minister in 1951 at age 76. However, if he had launched Operation Unthinkable on his chosen date of 1 July, prior to the election, would the emergency have forced him to stay in the position? If so, who would have won the next election? Would we ever have seen the reforms, such as the creation of the NHS, introduced by Clement Attlee?

1945

AN EXTENDED PACIFIC WAR?

Despite the end of the war in Europe, Soviet forces pledged to assist in the ongoing war in the Pacific. Known as Operation August Storm, on 8 August 1945 (just two days after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima), over 1 million Red Army troops invaded Manchuria and Sakhalin Island. The invasion was influential in contributing to the Japanese surrender on 2 September 1945. Any American involvement in Operation Unthinkable would have put an end to Soviet assistance in the Pacific War, meaning it potentially could have dragged on for months longer.

1945 ONWARDS

NO COLD WAR?

From 1945 until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the West and the East were in a Cold War. Berlin and indeed Germany as a whole remained divided, with the former separated by a vast concrete wall, which became an enduring symbol of the Cold conflict as a whole. Throughout these 46 years, at several points the tensions between the two powers threatened to escalate.

In 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis saw the world poised for all-out nuclear conflict. Had Operation Unthinkable occurred, it's likely the Cold War would not. But what would the international situation look like today?

ZIMINGZHONG MADE IN CHINA AND BRITAIN

◀ The office of self-ringing bells, or the Zimingzhongchu, made elements of zimingzhong in the Forbidden City that had to be approved by the Emperor. This clock, though British-made, is adorned with decorations that are believed to have been made by the Zimingzhongchu.
Zimingzhong with parts from China and Britain
© The Palace Museum

Through History

CLOCKWORK TREASURES

A new exhibition showcases a selection of elaborate timepieces from China's Forbidden City

From as early as the 1580s, the commodity of clocks began to make their way from the Western world into China. These objects of both beauty and functionality, made in Europe, were given the name zimingzhong meaning "self-sounding bells" or "bells that ring themselves" by China's emperors. Used to tell the time, as well as mechanically moving and playing music, British merchants referred to these magnificent timepieces as "sing-songs".

Now in a new exhibition at the Science Museum in London, visitors can trace the journey of zimingzhong in the 18th century from the port of Guangzhou right into the heart of the Forbidden City.

Of the 23 zimingzhong clocks on display at the Science Museum, all are on loan from the Palace Museum in Beijing and have never been displayed together before in the UK. Throughout the exhibition, visitors can learn about the earliest of these clockwork treasures, taken to China as imperial gifts by missionaries, and the collection of the Kangxi Emperor (1662-1722) who saw them as a representation of the emperor's mastery of time and the heavens. The importance in the utility of these beautifully designed timepieces is also explored, as are themes such as international trade, cultural exchange and the actual mechanics of the clocks themselves.

ZIMINGZHONG WITH ARMILLARY SPHERE

▼ Approximately dating from between 1760 and 1795, this small zimingzhong is accompanied by its original case. The zimingzhong itself is topped with a little armillary sphere, an ancient mathematical device used to study the movement of the stars and planets.
Zimingzhong with Armillary Sphere and Original Case © The Palace Museum

MOVING PAGODA

▶ Made in London during the era of the Qing Dynasty in the 1700s, this pagoda-style zimingzhong measures at over a metre tall. Each of the nine tiers mechanically rise and fall, as showcased in an accompanying video in the exhibition.
Moving Pagoda Zimingzhong
© The Palace Museum

TWO CULTURES

◀ Dating from the early 1800s, this zimingzhong features mechanisms made in both Europe and Guangzhou. The Chinese mechanism powers the moving parts like the opening lotus flowers and swimming birds, while the European mechanism allows the timepiece to play music.
Zimingzhong with British and Chinese mechanisms
© The Palace Museum

ELEPHANT ZIMINGZHONG

One of the 1,500 zimingzhong cared for by the Palace Museum Conservation Hospital in the Forbidden City, this elephant zimingzhong moves when it is wound. The elephant's eyes roll, while its tail and trunk sway from side to side.

Elephant Zimingzhong
© The Palace Museum

LOUIS XIV CORONATION ZIMINGZHONG

Showing a scene from the coronation of Louis XIV, the displaying of an object with such a Western aesthetic in the Forbidden City signalled the international reach of the emperor. Clocks like this also served to keep time when organising imperial life.

Zimingzhong with print of the coronation of Louis XIV
© The Palace Museum

FOR AN EMPEROR

Chosen as a tribute for the Qianlong Emperor when it arrived at the port of Guangzhou, this zimingzhong was made by Robert Ward in around 1770. After its selection by the Hoppo, the Chinese customs official, the timepiece travelled approximately 2,000km to the Forbidden City.

Zimingzhong for an Emperor © The Palace Museum

A MOVING COUNTRYSIDE SCENE

This impressive zimingzhong, designed to show a typical countryside scene, is powered by two mechanisms: one mechanism for the pendulum clock, and another to control every other aspect of its design, which includes animating scenery and 13 animals, and playing music.

Zimingzhong with moving countryside scene © The Palace Museum

Zimingzhong: Clockwork Treasures from China's Forbidden City is open at the Science Museum in London until 2 June 2024.

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

© Mark Douet

THE MOTIVE AND THE CUE

A profound exploration of the battle between art and ego, focusing on the fraught production of Richard Burton's *Hamlet*

Cert: 15 **Director:** Sam Mendes **Cast:** Johnny Flynn, Mark Gatiss, Tuppence Middleton **Released:** Out now

In 1963 and 1964, two new productions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* combined theatre royalty with the hottest stars on the planet. In Britain, Peter O'Toole took the role of the titular prince in a production directed by the legendary Laurence Olivier. Broadway's response to this was to cast Richard Burton, fresh from the landmark release of *Cleopatra*, and to give Sir John Gielgud the task of bringing it to the stage. The play would be plagued by an infamous rehearsal period, which saw clashes between star and director as both struggled to find a concept strong enough to truly justify the new production.

This is the subject of *The Motive and the Cue*, a new play written by Jack Thorne and directed by Sam Mendes, now in cinemas across the UK thanks to the National Theatre Live. A far more epic production than its premise might suggest, the play explores the battles between art and ego, age and youth, and questions just why the actor chooses to act. At the centre of this dilemma are Johnny Flynn's Richard Burton and Mark Gatiss's Sir John Gielgud. Flynn makes a fine Burton, successfully capturing the man's larger-than-life persona and rich voice. Like much of the cast, Flynn also has the formidable task of performing Hamlet in-character but proves himself to be more than capable, and the brief Shakespearean interludes are one of the play's highlights.

But without a doubt the star of the show is Mark Gatiss, imbuing the ageing theatrical giant with a palpable sense of sadness. One particular sequence, perhaps the most moving in the entire play, sees an interaction between the homosexual Gielgud and a young male sex worker. Admittedly, it feels a little superfluous to the rest of the proceedings, but it's a wonderful glimpse into Gielgud's feelings regarding his sexuality and gives Gatiss the opportunity to dazzle.

However, while this scene impresses, it is an example of *The Motive and The Cue*'s main problem. While the rehearsals are the key focus and take up the majority of the play's first act, the second act broadens the story out and features more scene changes and additional characters. While these interactions help give extra dimension to Burton and Gielgud, they do leave the production feeling a little bloated and overstuffed. Additionally, few of these other roles are given room to develop. Characters enter, discuss the problems plaguing the leads, and then vanish again. Unfortunately, in the case of some more well-known personalities, the result is they feel more like impersonations, as opposed to fully rounded characters.

Nonetheless, it remains a powerful story of two men, from different personal as well as theatrical backgrounds, each with their own demons to face, who combined to create one of the most celebrated Shakespearean productions of all time. Far gentler than might be expected, *The Motive and The Cue* is not an intense battle of wills but instead takes a more considered and meditative approach to its subject matter. The questions the show raises will doubtless linger in the mind of the viewer long after the stage has gone dark. ***CM***

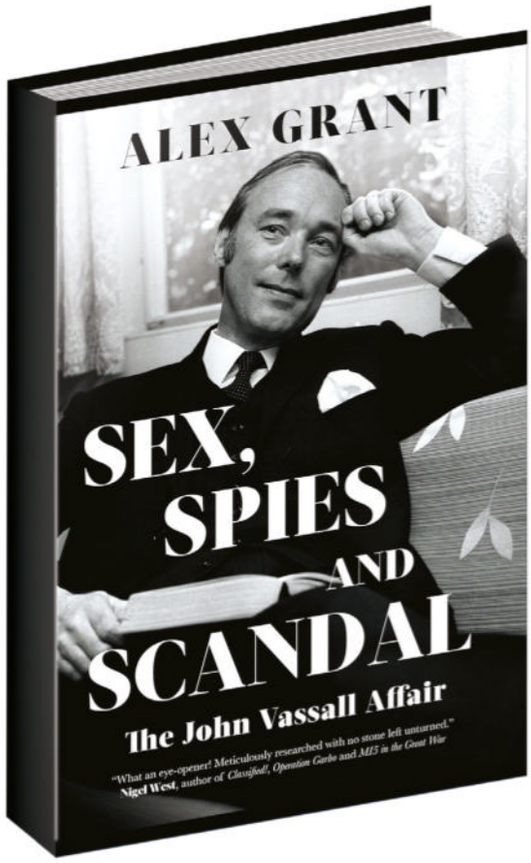
★★★★☆

Reviews by
Jonathan Gordon, Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth

SEX, SPIES AND SCANDAL: THE JOHN VASSALL AFFAIR

A moving account of a young gay man blackmailed into spying for the KGB

Author: Alex Grant **Publisher:** Biteback Publishing
Price: £20 **Released:** Out now



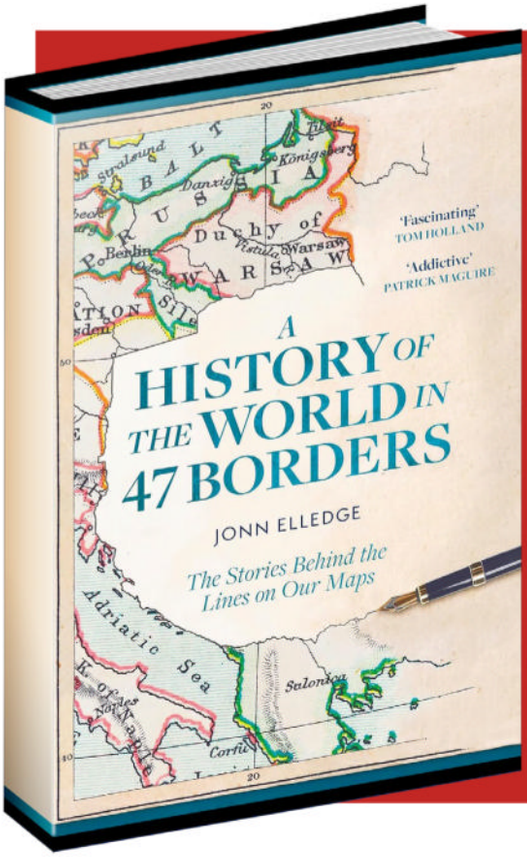
From the Cambridge Five to Klaus Fuchs, Cold War Britain was littered with spy scandals, but one name readers might not be familiar with is that of John Vassall. It was only a year after Vassall's arrest that Britain was shaken by the implications of the politically damaging Profumo affair, which took over headlines. But now, author Alex Grant has dusted off the secret files for a well due retelling of this forgotten tale of the sad and sordid world of espionage.

John Vassall was a civil servant and a gay man. A victim of a KGB plot that saw him raped and compromising photos taken, he was subsequently blackmailed into becoming a Soviet agent. One of the most pleasing aspects of Grant's retelling is his reframing of Vassall as a victim rather than villain. After all, had homosexuality not been criminalised, then would the KGB even have implemented such a disgusting plot in the first place?

This sympathetic approach makes *Sex, Spies and Scandal* a moving read. The sequence where Grant details Vassall's rape is devastating. Grant also doesn't refrain from looking at events through a modern lens, though always takes pains to provide wider historical context. This includes mentioning everything from the scandal surrounding Sir John Gielgud to detailing the plot of the 1961 queer-thriller, *Victim*.

It is Grant's decision to focus on the young man at the centre of the story that makes his work so refreshing. This a powerful read, highly recommended to all lovers of Cold War and LGBTQ+ history. ***CM***

★★★★★



A HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN 47 BORDERS

A book that breaks down old barriers and poses interesting questions

Author: Jonn Elledge **Publisher:** Wildfire
Price: £25 **Released:** 24 April 2024

Have you ever said a word so many times in a row that it begins to lose meaning? As Jonn Elledge illustrates in his new book, borders have a similar quality to them; if you look at them for long enough over a period of time, the logic of their placement can become fuzzy. Is a border there because it divides two very different groups of people, or did the people become different because they placed a border? This study of borders through history shows it's a little of both.

From the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt to Google Maps, this book takes us through the evolving understanding of how firm borders were and how the very concept of a nation state came to be the de facto structure of the world. We see how 'nations' were often fuzzy things that traded territory frequently and rarely had firm boundaries, until relatively recently. Elledge draws from a wide array of histories and sources, but always presents them in a light and accessible form. His enquiry into this topic feels open and inviting, bringing a little bounce to what could have instead merely been a dry history of geographies.

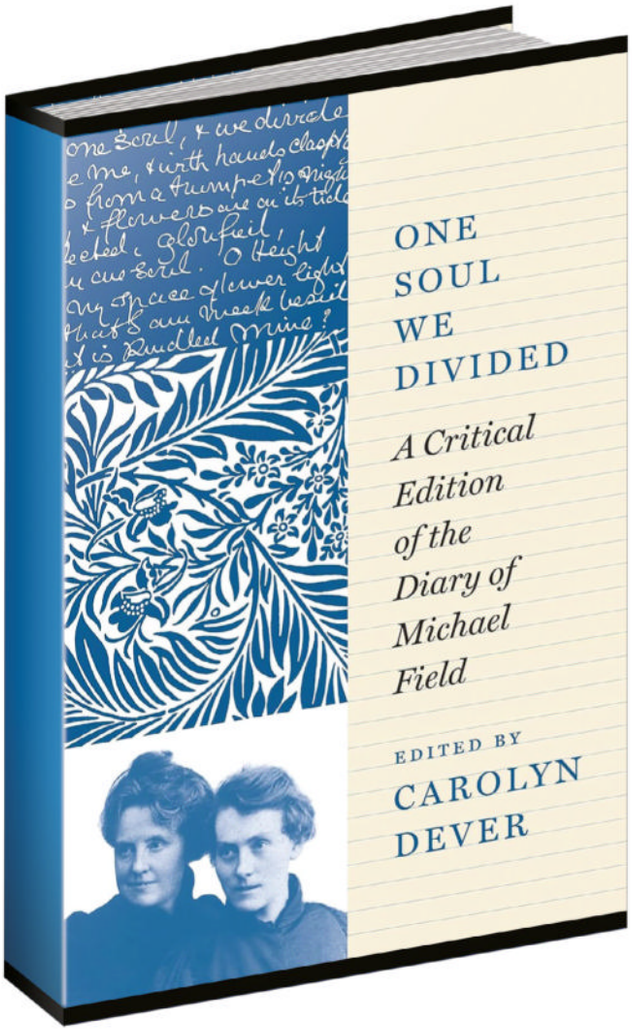
It can be fun to break down core concepts like this and reexamine them from a distance. Challenging preconceptions can reveal a great deal, and considering borders in this way poses a lot of interesting questions. This is a book well worth exploring for yourself to see what boundaries in our own thinking it can realign. ***JG***

★★★★½

ONE SOUL WE DIVIDED

A fascinating look into the personal lives of two queer female Victorian authors

Author: Carolyn Dever **Publisher:** Princeton University Press **Price:** £25 **Released:** Out now



"Dever's extensive and meticulous work makes the journals highly accessible"

When picking up a copy of *One Soul We Divided: A Critical Edition of the Diary of Michael Field*, one would presume that they are about to delve into the life of some gentleman called Michael Field. But how wrong you would be. In this momentous text, readers are able to explore the personal thoughts, feelings and ideas of two extraordinary Victorian women: Katharine Harris Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Emma Cooper (1862-1913). Together they shared the pseudonym of Michael Field, a nom de plume under which they published a number of plays and poems that were met favourably by Victorian society. The pair managed to maintain their anonymity using the name Michael Field, until fellow poet Robert Browning let slip the truth about the pair's identities.

The relationship between Bradley and Cooper was unconventional to say the least. The pair were joined by their literary endeavours, their shared pen name, and the fact that they were lovers for over 40 years. However, the two women were also aunt and niece, a shocking factor in the couple's relationship, particularly to a modern reader. Bradley was 16 years Cooper's senior and was the sister of Cooper's mother, Emma. In this critical edition of their shared diaries, editor Carolyn Dever highlights early on that there are few insights into how and/or if the couple managed to reconcile the reality of their romantic relationship with their familial ties. But, this is what makes the diary of Michael Field so astounding, as Dever points out. Within the pages of the diary, both Bradley and Cooper write about their lives together with very little comment that would suggest that any of their family or friends raised concerns about a pairing that we, as 21st century readers, would absolutely categorise as incestuous. Rather, the words written by this unusual couple reflect a 'normative' dynamic between the two and the rest of the world.

The diaries of Michael Field, which were written between 1867 and 1914 and originally entitled 'Works and Days', were always intended by their authors to be read by future generations. In Carolyn Dever's effort to bring the diaries to a wider audience, she helpfully provides a family tree, an explanation of the wide array of characters mentioned by Bradley and Cooper, and further explanatory notes to help readers make sense of the 10,000 diary pages left behind by the authors. Though reading the diary can still feel confusing at times, Dever's extensive and meticulous work makes the journals highly accessible.

The insight these texts provide into Victorian life at the turn of the century is astounding, particularly from the female perspective. But it is perhaps the distinct voices of Bradley and Cooper, and their separately captivating prose that makes these diaries such a joy to become engrossed in. An impressive feat by Carolyn Dever and a fascinating journal of queer female life and the literary circles of Victorian England, this critical edition is a must-read for those intrigued by LGBTQ+ and women's history. ***ES***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

WICKED LITTLE LETTERS

Director: Thea Sharrock **Starring:** Olivia Colman, Jessie Buckley, Anjana Vasan **Country:** UK **Year:** 2023

Is the accuracy of this true story as poisonous as the letters penned in this riotous new comedy?

VERDICT: While the film's structure roughly follows the true events, many of the details are changed and the result has a number of 'wicked little' deviations from the truth.

01 The film tells the story of the Littlehampton Letters, a true tale of a series of poison pen letters that scandalised the small coastal town of Littlehampton, West Sussex, England during the early 20th century.

02 In the film, Jessie Buckley's character Rose Gooding is an Irish immigrant who moves to Littlehampton. While the film highlights the treatment of such immigrants, the real Rose was in fact born in Lewes, East Sussex.

03 Olivia Colman's character, Edith Swan, is portrayed as an ageing woman with a failed engagement in her past. However, the real Edith's engagement to Bert Boxall ended when he received a letter claiming Edith had become pregnant in his absence.

04 While the film focuses on the letters' profanity, many also involved other libellous accusations. One letter concerning Edith Swan's brother (unseen in the film) was sent to his employer and accused him of theft.

05 One key character missing from the film is Inspector George Nicholls. He first became doubtful of Rose Gooding's guilt, when he noticed her misspelling of the word 'prison' despite this same word having been spelt correctly in one of the letters.

Allimages © Alamy

Did you know?

Author Abby Fisher, who was born enslaved, included a recipe for hoe cakes in her book *What Mrs Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking.*

HOE CAKES

NORTH AMERICA, 1600s – PRESENT

As one of the wealthiest landowners in North America at the time, George Washington had access to all manner of meals and delicacies on his Mount Vernon estate. However, due to his famous dentures and perhaps his frequent time spent campaigning on battlefields, he preferred simple and soft foods. Among them were cornmeal pancakes known as hoe cakes or Johnny cakes.

The pancake originated with America's indigenous population and was then taken up by the settlers who made their home on the continent as well as enslaved people they brought with them. They were made from a simple cornmeal mush, like an unleavened version of cornbread, and typically served with honey.

How they got their English name is less clear. One story has them being made on field hoes by enslaved farm workers. More likely is that 'hoe' was also a term for a griddle, on which the pancakes are typically cooked. The name 'Johnny' may have been a mispronunciation of the Pawtuxet name for them, Shawnee cakes.

Ingredients

- 1 cup of cornmeal
- 1 cup of all-purpose flour
- 2½ tsp baking powder
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- ¾ cup of buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- ⅓ cup of water
- ⅓ cup of melted butter, cooled slightly
- Vegetable oil or bacon grease
- Honey or syrup and butter to serve

Main image: © Shutterstock
Inset image: © Alamy

METHOD

01 Mix together the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, sugar and salt in a large bowl until fully combined.

02 Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients and add the eggs, buttermilk, water and melted butter to the mixture. Mix the ingredients together until well combined.

03 In a skillet pan on medium-high heat, add two tablespoons of vegetable oil or bacon grease.

04 Once the pan is well heated, add two to three tablespoons of the batter to the pan to form your pancakes. In a 12-inch skillet you should be able to cook four pancakes at a time, but one to get you started is a good idea.

05 Once the edges of the hoe cake begin to bubble you know it's time to flip them. Flip them over with a spatula and allow to cook for another couple of minutes until they are golden brown on both sides.

06 Once done, remove from the pan and serve straight away with butter and your preference of honey or syrup.

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