

# Nil Desperandum

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club

ISSUE 17

August 2021

Isolated but not alone



Picture Credit: "Senior couple having fun" by Be-Younger.com is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

## Index:

1. King Richard III's bones reveal fatal blows and injuries
1. The Lost Princes – what happened?
2. What happened to your Bayco?
3. Why and how did the Aztecs practise human sacrifice?
3. The Fuente Magna bowl
4. The father of Algebra
4. Battle of the Thames
5. Tales of food shortages and rationing in WW2
6. Miss Unsinkable
6. Most stolen work of art...
7. Till Time's Last Sand: A History of the Bank of England 1694-2013
8. What is Codex Sinaiticus?
8. History's First Serial Killer?
8. Who was Ayn Rand?
9. What happened to RAF Squadron 617 after the Dambusters Raid?

## Continued:

10. There's something about old cars
11. A home of your own
12. Where Father Christmas really comes from
13. Family life in the war years
14. 'Artemis, the most dangerous of all Allied spies...'
14. Enigma unplugged
15. Sidney Reilly, Ace of Spies
16. 'British Restaurants' to meet the needs of wartime
17. Memories from the Mid-Sussex Times, 13th December 1938
18. History of the toilet
19. Who owns England?
20. Operation FORTITUDE - designed to mislead the Germans
21. You could have heard a pin drop... but don't be unkind to the French
22. Finish with a Smile



## King Richard III's bones reveal fatal blows and injuries

Source: Ancient History, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016, <https://historydaily.org/king-richard-iii-injuries>

Although he only ruled for two years – from 1483 to 1485 – Richard III stands out among his peers as one of the most famous (or infamous) Kings of England. He was the last Yorkist king of England, whose death at the Battle of Bosworth effectively ended the Wars of the Roses.

He has become infamous because of the disappearance of his young nephews - the Princes in the Tower - and through William Shakespeare's play 'Richard III'.

In 2012, archaeologists and researchers began excavating beneath a car park in Leicester, looking for Richard's final resting place. The search captured the public's imagination, and the human remains subsequently found were confirmed as those of Richard.

A study of King Richard III's bones uncovered 11 injuries inflicted near the time of death by commonplace Late Medieval weapons. There's a picture online at: <https://historydaily.org/king-richard-iii-injuries>

## The Lost Princes – what happened?

Sources for this excerpt  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princes\\_in\\_the\\_Tower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princes_in_the_Tower)  
<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/The-Princes-in-the-Tower/>



Picture Credit: "Middle Ages - Princes in the Tower" by History Maps is marked with CC PDM 1.0

On 9th April 1483, Edward IV of England died unexpectedly after an illness lasting around three weeks. Later that year, two young princes vanished without a trace from the Tower of London. Since then, the prime suspect in their disappearance has long been their uncle, Richard III who came to a sticky end in the Battle of Bosworth.

### Who did it?

Despite centuries of fierce debate, Richard's guilt has proven impossible to pin down with certainty. Is it possible that someone else could be the culprit, or might the princes even have survived, spirited away by someone who wanted to save their necks?

The *Princes in the Tower* is an expression frequently used to refer to Edward V, King of England and Richard of Shrewsbury, Duke of York. The two brothers were the only sons of Edward IV, King of England and Elizabeth Woodville surviving at the time of their father's death in 1483.

When they were 12 and 9 years old, respectively, they were lodged in the Tower of London by the man appointed to look after them, their uncle, the Lord Protector: Richard, Duke of Gloucester. This was supposedly in preparation for Edward's forthcoming coronation as king. However, before the young king could be crowned, he and his brother were declared illegitimate. Their uncle, Richard, ascended to the throne.

### Confusion and Uncertainty

It is unclear what happened to the boys after the last recorded sighting of them in the tower. It is generally assumed that they were murdered; a common hypothesis is that Richard killed them in his attempt to secure his hold on the throne.

Their deaths may have occurred sometime in 1483, but the only evidence is circumstantial apart from their disappearance. As a result, several other hypotheses about their fates have been proposed, including the suggestion that Henry Stafford murdered them, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Buckingham or Henry VII, among others. It has also been suggested that one or both princes may have escaped assassination. In 1487, Lambert Simnel initially claimed to be Richard, Duke of York, but later claimed to be Edward Plantagenet, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick. From 1491 until his capture in 1497, Perkin Warbeck claimed to be Richard, Duke of York, having escaped to Flanders.

Warbeck's claim was supported by some contemporaries (including the aunt of the disappeared princes, Margaret of York).

In 1674, workers at the tower dug up a wooden box containing two small human skeletons. The bones were found in a box under the staircase in the Tower of London. The bones were widely accepted at the time as those of the princes, but this has not been proven and is far from certain. King Charles II had the bones buried in Westminster Abbey, where they remain to this day.

### The Disappearance

Dominic Mancini was an Italian friar who visited England in the 1480s and was in London in the spring and summer of 1483. He recorded that after Richard III seized the throne, Edward and his younger brother Richard were taken into the "inner apartments of the Tower" and then were seen less and less until they disappeared altogether. Mancini said that during this period, Edward was regularly visited by a doctor, who reported that Edward was "like a victim prepared for sacrifice, sought remission of his sins by daily confession and penance, because he believed that death was facing him."

There are reports of the two princes being seen playing in the tower grounds shortly after Richard joined his brother, but there are no recorded sightings of either of them after the summer of 1483. An attempt to rescue them in late July failed. Their fate remains an enduring mystery.

### The Bones

In 1933 the skeletons of two young boys, one aged about ten and the other 13, were disinterred from Westminster Abbey and examined by L.E. Tannery and W. Wright. These bones had been re-buried in an urn in 1674 and placed in the Henry VII Chapel in the Abbey. The skeletons aroused much interest and debate as many historians believed them to be the bones of the two princes who were reputedly murdered in the Tower of London in the 15th century.

### Flimsy Evidence

Other than their disappearance, there is no direct evidence that the princes were murdered, and "no reliable, well-informed, independent or impartial sources" for the associated events. Nevertheless, following their disappearance, rumours quickly spread that they had been murdered. Only one contemporary narrative account of the boys' time in the tower exists: that of Dominic Mancini. Mancini's account was not discovered until 1934, in the Municipal Library in Lille. Later accounts written after the accession of Henry Tudor are often claimed to be biased or influenced by Tudor propaganda.

LISTEN TO THE BBC HISTORY EXTRA PODCAST:

The 8 episodes are available at:

<https://www.historyextra.com/princes-tower-exclusive-history-podcast-series/>

## What happened to your Bayco?

Sources:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayko>

<https://www.baykoshop.com/>



Picture Credit: "Bayco Building Set" by MySkyGarden is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Bayco was a British building model construction toy, based on plastic and metal components. It was used by children to build toy houses, churches and railway buildings for train layouts. Although originally intended as a child's toy, it now has a worldwide group of grown-up enthusiasts.

Bayco was invented by Charles Plimpton, an early plastics engineer and entrepreneur in Liverpool. First being marketed in Britain, it was soon exported throughout the British Commonwealth and became a worldwide brand between 1934 and 1967.

The name comes from Bakelite, one of the world's first commercial plastics that was originally used to make many of the parts and Bayco was one of the world's earliest plastic toys to come to the market.

### Description

The rectangular Bakelite bases had a square grid of holes, spaced at 3/8-inch centres, into which thin metal rods, 1.905 mm in diameter, in various lengths, could be placed vertically. To make larger models, two or more bases could be joined by means of metal links secured by screws through holes in the bases. Bakelite bricks, windows and other parts could then be slotted between pairs of rods to create the walls of the building. Other commonly used parts included floors (thin sheets of resin bonded paper with the same square pattern grid of holes as bases), and roofs of various types. There were also many other more specialised parts. In the original sets, the bases were large, and coloured brown; walls were brown/maroon and cream; roofs were deep maroon; and windows were a very dark green, but by 1937 the 'true' colours of red or white walls, green windows and red roofs were established, though bases were still large and brown.

A period of radical change was heralded in 1938 with the introduction of what is now, sought after 20s series, through which several new parts were introduced.

Then, in 1939, the 'New Series' retooling programme added to the range of new parts and changed the bases to the more familiar, smaller version, initially in a mottled green. After World War II, the standard colours were red and white walls, red roofs, green windows and green bases, and, despite some experiments with 'rogue' colours in the years immediately after the war, these remained in play until 1959 when Meccano took over, changing the colours to orange red and cream bricks with yellow windows and grey bases.

### Acquisition by Meccano

Plimpton died in 1948. Attempts at modernisation came in 1960, after Meccano had purchased the Plimpton Engineering Co. business the year before. Meccano moved production to its factory in Speke, Liverpool and, to rationalise and simplify the system, all the Bayco sets were redesigned. Most of the decorative parts were dropped and the cumbersome one-piece roofs were replaced by flat-roof pieces. The colour scheme was changed to grey bases, light green roofs, yellow windows and doors, and orange-red and beige bricks. To reduce production costs, polystyrene was used for all the plastic parts instead of Bakelite.

After an unfortunately long gestation period, four Meccano Bayco sets went on sale from the end of 1960 into 1961, numbered 11 to 14 to avoid being confused with the Plimpton sets. The Bayco adverts continued in *Meccano Magazine*, and — due to the success of the cost-cutting measures — the new sets were sold at a significantly lower price than the Plimpton sets. In 1962, Meccano introduced its own decorative pieces, including opening French windows, large shop windows and pantile roofs, together with a new "Set 15" which included them all.

By 1963, Meccano Ltd began feeling the pressure of competing toys, even though the models Bayco produced were more realistic architectural constructions, and advertising was increasingly scarce, even in *Meccano Magazine*, their own publication. By 1964, now under the Tri-ang ownership, all advertising for Bayco was stopped, although Meccano continued manufacturing Bayco sets and spares until 1967.

Over its lifespan, both Plimpton and Meccano Bayco were exported across the world, and, besides being a toy, it attracted a modest adult following that still exists today. A healthy trade in original Bayco sets and parts also exists today, with some enthusiasts even casting their own Bayco pieces.

### FURTHER READING:

- The Bayco man website: <http://www.bayko.org.uk/index.html?http://www.bayko.org.uk/>
- Rediscover Bayko Toys: <https://www.baykoshop.com/>

## Why and how did the Aztecs practise human sacrifice?

You can read the full article at:  
<https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/human-sacrifice-aztecs-why-how-ritual-common/>  
 The following is a short excerpt



Picture Credit: "Aztecs - A Human Sacrifice" by History Maps is licensed under CC BY 2.0

On the BBC's History Magazine website, Historian Caroline Dodds Pennock - Lecturer in international history at the University of Sheffield, and author of *Bonds of Blood: Gender, Lifecycle and Sacrifice in Aztec Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, paperback edition, 2008) - asks whether human-sacrifice was really practised in the Aztec empire and if so, what was its purpose and who were the victims?

Although it's pretty hard to tell how much sacrifice there was, it's safe to say that there was prominent and regular human sacrifice taking place. As far as can be seen, this is to do with a reciprocal relationship between the gods and humans. The Aztecs believed that you had to give back to the gods because they gave to you.

If you go to <https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/real-aztecs-sacrifice-reputation-who-were-they/>, you'll discover that human sacrifice was intended to pay back the debt that was formed when the gods let blood from themselves to create the world. The Aztecs believed that if they didn't sustain the sun with blood, the world would end. Essentially, it was an altruistic act – human sacrifice was necessary for all of humanity – a sort of communal response to a collective debt.

### READ MORE:

Read more by Caroline Dodds Pennock:

- *Mass murder or religious homicide? Rethinking human sacrifice and interpersonal violence in Aztec society* at: <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/37888>
- Podcast at: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/everthing-you-wanted-know-about-aztecs-caroline-dodds-pennock-podcast/>

## The Fuente Magna bowl

Sources:

<https://www.quora.com/q/worldhistory/What-is-a-100-historical-fact-that-will-leave-you-baffled-2>  
[http://www.fakearchaeology.wiki/index.php/Fuente\\_Magna\\_Bowl](http://www.fakearchaeology.wiki/index.php/Fuente_Magna_Bowl)  
<https://faculty.ucr.edu/~legneref/archeol/fuentema.htm>

If you visit the Precious Metals Museum in La Paz, Bolivia, you will come across a bowl. But this is no ordinary bowl, or that is what we are led to believe. This bowl goes by the name of the *Fuente Magna* bowl, a supposedly unique piece of ceramic (although even that is disputed and more likely, it is made of stone) that contains what some people believe is one of the biggest secrets of ancient mankind.

The bowl was discovered near Tiahuanaco (or Tiwanaku), a ruined ancient city near Lake Titicaca in western Bolivia. Dominating the ruins, once the seat of the pre-Columbian Tiwanaku culture, are the Akapana pyramid and a semi-subterranean temple with carved images of human heads. Nearby Kalasasaya is an open temple with stone monoliths and the huge Gate of the Sun arch.

Quora ([here](#)) explains that:

*The Tiahuanaco is probably the greatest Native American civilization that is unknown to many people. In 1549, while searching for the capital of the Inca Empire, Spanish conquistadors, led by Pedro Cieza de León crossed into Bolivia and discovered the ruins of Tiahuanaco. Less than a quarter mile northeast of Puma Punku, scientists believe Tiahuanaco was once the centre of a civilization with more than 40,000 inhabitants.*

Whilst the bowl is important, it is the writings on it that have been somewhat controversial with different researchers providing different explanations. Dr. Alberto Marini translated the writings carved onto the Fuente Magna Bowl and reported that they were Sumerian. But others disagree.

The University of California, Riverside (see link above) says:

*The Fuente Magna bowl was found accidentally by a worker from the CHUA Hacienda, property of the Manjon family located near Lake Titicaca. The site where it was found had not been studied for artifacts previously. The Fuente Magna is beautifully engraved in earthen-brown both inside and out and bears zoological motifs and anthropomorphic characters within (Please see [Bernardo Bados](#) for further detail).*

*The Bolivian archeologist, don Max Portugal-Zamora, learned of the Fuente Magna's existence around 1958-1960 from his friend Pastor Manjon. Both gave the site the name it bears today, "Fuente Magna".*

*A controversy arose about the cuneiform script on the Fuente Magna. Dr. Alberto Marini translated it and reported that it was Sumerian. After a careful examination of the Fuente Magna, linear script a Dr. Clyde A. Winters determined that it was probably Proto-Sumerian, which is found on many artifacts from Mesopotamia. An identical script was used by the Elamites called Proto-Elamite.*

### Controversy and Conclusion

The site where the bowl was found had not previously been studied for artefacts. A possible translation of the writing on the bowl indicates that it was used for fertility libation by young women to the goddess Nia. But, much remains unknown about the bowl. Some estimates place the origin of the bowl in either Sumer or Akkad sometime around 2500 BCE. Others claim it is a hoax. Unlike other ancient artefacts, the provenance of which is known, the origin of this bowl has not been certified, and there seems to be no academic or archaeological group that has declared it to be genuine. Its provenance is almost entirely hazy. We don't know exactly where it was discovered, the precise circumstances of the discovery, or the date when it was made.

The bowl is intriguing, but at present, it seems most likely to be a hoax.

## The father of Algebra

Excerpted from:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad\\_ibn\\_Musa\\_al-Khwarizmi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Musa_al-Khwarizmi)  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Khwarizmi>  
<https://www.famousscientists.org/muhammad-ibn-musa-al-khwarizmi/>



Picture Credit: "Chiwa UZ - Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi 01" by Daniel Mennerich is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi was a 9<sup>th</sup> century Muslim mathematician and astronomer. He is known as the "father of algebra". The word *Algebra* is derived from the title of his book, *Kitab al-Jabr*.

His pioneering work offered practical answers for land distribution, rules on inheritance and distributing salaries. He lived in Baghdad, where he worked at the "House of Wisdom" (Dār al-Hikma) under the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn.

The House of Wisdom acquired and translated scientific and philosophic treatises, particularly Greek, as well as publishing original research. Elements within the work can be traced from Babylonian mathematics of the early 2nd millennium BCE through Hellenistic, Hebrew, and Hindu treatises.

In addition to his work in mathematics, Al-Khwarizmi made important contributions to astronomy, also largely based on methods from India. He developed the first quadrant (an instrument used to determine time by observations of the Sun or stars), the second most widely used astronomical instrument during the Middle Ages after the astrolabe. His contributions to trigonometry were important too - producing accurate sine and cosine tables, and the first table of tangents.

Around 820 CE, he was appointed as the astronomer and head of the library of the *House of Wisdom* in Baghdad.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Latin translations of his textbook on arithmetic (*Algoritmo de Numero Indorum*) which codified the various Indian numerals, introduced the decimal positional number system to the Western world. *The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing*, translated into Latin by Robert of Chester in 1145, was used until the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the principal mathematical textbook of European universities.

## Battle of the Thames

Excerpted from:

<https://www.britannica.com/event/War-of-1812>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Thames](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Thames)  
[https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Thames](https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Battle_of_the_Thames)



Picture Credit: "Battle of the Thames, Upper Canada, 1813" by RDECOM Showcase is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

To put things straight, the *Battle of the Thames* (also known as the *Battle of Moraviantown*, on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1813, took place a long way from London.

### A pivotal American victory (Excerpt from Ohio History Central)

The Battle of the Thames was a pivotal American victory during the War of 1812. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 1813, General William Henry Harrison, who also was the governor of the Indiana Territory and a future president of the United States of America, led an army of 3,500 American troops against a combined force of 800 British soldiers and 500 American Indian warriors at Moraviantown, along the Thames River in Ontario, Canada. The British troops were under the command of Colonel Henry Procter. Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief, commanded many of the American Indian warriors. The British army was retreating from Fort Malden, Ontario after Oliver Hazard Perry's victory in the Battle of Lake Erie in the previous month. Tecumseh convinced Colonel Procter to make a stand at Moraviantown.

It happened during the War of 1812, when a British army with Indian allies, was defeated by U.S. troops in what is now Ontario, Canada. The dispute was over British violations of U.S. maritime rights.

On losing the battle, the British lost control of South-Western Ontario. Tecumseh and war chief Roundhead were killed, and Tecumseh's Confederacy largely fell apart.

The battle ended with the exchange of ratifications of the Treaty of Ghent.

## Tales of food shortages and rationing in WW2



Britain relied on imported foodstuffs at the outbreak of WW2. It meant that rationing was imperative to ensure the nation suffered no food shortages caused by the threat of German warships.

When a shopper purchased their ration of food, the shopkeeper cut the coupons out of their ration book to show that they had received their allowance. People had to buy their food at the shops where they were registered. Later on, more food became rationed including cheese and tea. Some foods - such as bread, potatoes, fruit and fish - were not rationed.

### Setting the Scene

The Ministry of Food was set up in 1939 to deal with the problem of providing a nutritionally adequate diet for people in Great Britain during the Second World War. It played an important role, being the first organisation responsible for a nutrition policy in the UK. The Ministry controlled all food supplies, food reserve stocks and distribution, and had local and regional committees to give expert information and organise the use of gardens, waste land and allotments for producing food locally.

Source:

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/nutritioninthenews/wartimefood/warnutrition.html>

### Rationing Timeline

- January 1940 Food rationing begins: butter, bacon, ham and sugar rationed
- March 1940 Meat rationed
- July 1940 Tea and margarine rationed
- May 1941 Cheese rationed
- June 1941 Clothes rationed
- December 1941 Points rationing introduced for canned and processed foods
- February 1942 Soap rationed
- July 1942 Chocolate and sweets rationed
- May 1949 Clothes rationing abolished
- May 1950 Points rationing abolished
- September 1950 Soap derationed
- October 1952 Tea derationed
- February 1953 Sweets rationing abolished
- May 1954 Cheese and fats derationed
- July 1954 Meat, bacon and ham derationed...
- ... end of food rationing (4<sup>th</sup> July 1954)

In 1946, when food was just as short as during the war years, bread was added to the ration, and the sweet ration was halved.

Source: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/when-food-rationing-begin-end-ww2/>

### The Points System

A points system gave shoppers a choice of foods such as breakfast cereals, condensed milk, biscuits, canned fruit or fish. Each food product had a value, and you could buy up to the points ration for the family. The points system was introduced on 1st December 1941 on a range of goods. Everyone was given 16 points a month, but later this was raised to 20 points.

The points system gave people a degree of choice; for example, a tin of soup was 6 points, a tin of fruit 24 points, condensed milk 10 points.

Source: <http://cookit.e2bn.org/historycookbook/20-97-world-war-2-Food-facts.html>

### Stories of Transgressions

In December 1940, a lady called Isabella Tompsett was employed in Stepney to visit butchers' shops and attempt to buy meat without coupons. As a result, three butchers in one road were heavily fined for this offence. These undercover officials acting as agents provocateurs, were severely criticised in the press.

The Food Control Officer in Brighton discovered that 80,000 ration books had been stolen from the Royal Pavilion (Brighton Food Office). An undercover policeman eventually agreed to buy the missing ration books. When the gang was arrested, it was discovered that the ring-leader was the Woman Enforcement Officer at the Brighton office who had reported the theft. She was later sent to prison for three years.

Source: <https://spartacus-educational.com/2VWWrationing.htm>

### Story of Lamentation

Food, or rather the lack of it, was undoubtedly a big concern for women in wartime, but this did not mean that they weren't interested in the wider war effort. Clara Milburn, a middle-aged, middle-class housewife who lived in a village a few miles from Coventry, commented on the progress of the war in considerable detail in her diary. Anxious about her son who was a German prisoner of war, she accepted wartime sacrifice and considered the extension of food rationing in the summer of 1940 as "all to the good". Nevertheless, Milburn lamented rising prices and growing shortages of unrationed foods and other goods. Following the introduction of clothes rationing in 1941, she commented that, "Life is certainly queer now, with coupons for clothes (margarine coupons at that) and very ordinary commodities like potatoes kept in the shops for regular customers only!"

Source: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/when-food-rationing-begin-end-ww2/>

### Stories of Reflection

"The rations were very strict. We were encouraged by the Government to dig up our lawns and grow vegetables. It was called Dig for Victory. We used to go to the Council offices to get our ration books. When you bought things in the shop, they would mark off what you had had. Some things like sugar were in very short supply. My family had a choice of going without sugar in tea or without puddings. We decided to go without sugar in tea. Ever since then I do not have sugar in my tea."

Source: [Constance Blackaby]

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/83/a4385883.shtml>

On New Year's Day 1940, stationery salesman Christopher Tomlin listened to a nutritionist on the radio recommend porridge rather than bacon for breakfast. "I don't like to suggest it," Tomlin commented to his parents, "but it looks as if the government's scared ... we won't be able to get enough food across with all these boats sunk."

Source: <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/second-world-war-rationing-british-diet-essay-lizzie-collingham/>

### Key nutrition dates

- 1940 National Food Survey established
- 1941 Nutritional standards for school meals introduced
- 1942 Mandatory fortification of margarine with vitamins A and D began
- 1944 First Food Labelling Order
- 1944 First Proceedings of the Nutrition Society published

Source:

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/nutritioninthenews/wartimefood/warnutrition.html>

### WATCH A VIDEO:

Imperial War Museum video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9wNj78S2GY>

Picture Credit (top left): Screenshot from IWM video, as above.

## Miss Unsinkable

Excerpted from:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violet\\_Jessop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violet_Jessop)
- <https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/violet-constance-jessop.html>
- <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/titanic/stories/violet-constance-jessop.htm>
- [https://titanicdatabase.fandom.com/wiki/Violet\\_Jessop](https://titanicdatabase.fandom.com/wiki/Violet_Jessop)
- <http://www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/2014/01/woman-survived-sinking-titanic-britannic-collision-olympic/>
- <https://www.thevintagenews.com/2017/04/13/violet-jessop-the-nurse-who-survived-all-three-disasters-aboard-the-sister-ships-the-titanic-britannic-and-olympic/>
- <https://medium.com/history-of-yesterday/miss-unsinkable-the-lady-who-survived-the-titanic-and-two-other-shipwrecks-b334a21a49ee>



What would you call the stewardess who survived the disastrous sinking of RMS *Titanic* in 1912 and her sister ship *HMHS Britannic* just 4 years later? In addition, she had been onboard RMS *Olympic*, the eldest of the three sister ships, when it collided with the British warship, *HMS Hawke*, in 1911. Was she very lucky to have survived or very unlucky to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time? Or did she simply carry a jinx?

Picture Credit: "Violet Jessop in color" by javi.priv.134 is marked with CC0 1.0

Born in Argentina in 1887 to Irish parents, Violet Constance Jessop was the first of nine children, only six of whom survived. She spent much of her childhood caring for her younger siblings but became ill herself with what is presumed to have been tuberculosis and was expected to die, but she survived. On her father's death, in 1903, her family moved to England, where she attended a convent school and cared for her youngest sister while her mother was at sea working as a stewardess. When her mother became ill, Jessop left school and applied to be a stewardess - following her mother's footsteps. In 1908, at age 21, her first stewardess role was with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company aboard the *Orinoco*.

### RMS Olympic

In 1911, Jessop began working as a stewardess for the White Star vessel *RMS Olympic*. At the time, White Star Line (founded in 1845) was a prominent British shipping company famous for its luxurious liners, the first of which was the '*Olympic*', built in 1870. *Olympic* was a luxury ship that was the largest civilian liner at that time. Jessop was on board on 20th September 1911, when the ship left Southampton and collided with the British warship, *HMS Hawke*. There were no fatalities and, despite the damage, the ship was able to make it back to port without sinking.

### RMS Titanic

Jessop joined the ill-fated *RMS Titanic* as a stewardess on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1912. Four days later, it struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic, where *Titanic* sank about two hours and forty minutes after the collision. In her memoirs, Jessop described how she was ordered up on deck, because she was to function as an example of how to behave for the non-English speakers who could not follow the instructions given to them. She watched as the crew loaded the lifeboats. She was later ordered into lifeboat 16.

### HMHS Britannic

During the First World War, Jessop served as a stewardess for the British Red Cross. On the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> November 1916, she was on board *HMHS Britannic*, a White Star Liner converted into a hospital ship, when it sank in the Aegean Sea due to, at the time, an unexplained explosion.

A major diving expedition on the wreck in 2016, determined that the ship had struck a deep-sea mine put there by a German submarine in the First World War. A documentary film of that dive, *The Mystery of the Britannic*, is mentioned at the end of this story.

*Britannic* sank within 55 minutes, killing 30 of the 1,066 people on board. British authorities hypothesised that the ship was either struck by a torpedo or hit a mine planted by German forces.

While *Britannic* was sinking, Jessop and other passengers were nearly killed by the boat's propellers that were sucking lifeboats under the stern. Jessop had to jump out of her lifeboat, resulting in a traumatic head injury from which she survived. In her memoirs, she described the scene she witnessed as *Britannic* went under: "The white pride of the ocean's medical world ... dipped her head a little, then a little lower and still lower. All the deck machinery fell into the sea like a child's toys. Then she took a fearful plunge, her stern rearing hundreds of feet into the air until with a final roar, she disappeared into the depths."

Jessop returned to work for the White Star Line in 1920.

### Later life

After the war, Jessop continued to work for the White Star Line, before joining the Red Star Line and then the Royal Mail Line again. During her tenure with Red Star, Jessop went on two around-the-world cruises on the company's largest ship, *Belgenland*. In her late thirties, Jessop had a brief marriage. In 1950 she retired to Great Ashfield, Suffolk. Jessop, who was often called "Miss Unsinkable", died of congestive heart failure in 1971 at the age of 83.

### WATCH THE VIDEO:

- Trailer at: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/themysteryofbritannic>

### READ HER MEMOIRS:

- *Titanic Survivor: The Memoirs of Violet Jessop, Stewardess* – available at Amazon: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Titanic-Survivor-Memoirs-Violet-Stewardess/dp/0750946636/>

## Most stolen work of art...



Picture Credit: "The Ghent Altarpiece (open)" by Juuribasmateu1969 is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

In 1432 the Flemish painter **Jan van Eyck** - with help from his brother Hubert - completed his masterpiece, *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, which was later displayed in St. Bavo's Cathedral **Ghent**, Belgium.

The enormous work - measuring approximately 14.5 by 11.5 feet (4.4 by 3.5 metres) and weighing more than two tons - features 12 interior panels that depict, in brilliant colour, various biblical figures and events in great detail. Considered one of the most important artworks in history, the *Ghent Altarpiece* (as it became commonly known) was "the first major oil painting," marking the transition from Middle Age to Renaissance art.

According to historians, it also has the unfortunate distinction of being the most stolen artwork, having been taken a reported seven times.

You can read **Amy Tikkanen's** full article at:

<https://www.britannica.com/story/the-most-stolen-work-of-art>

## Till Time's Last Sand: A History of the Bank of England 1694-2013

Extracted from a book of that title (page(s): 196-198), by David Kynaston ©, published by Bloomsbury Publishing 2017



Picture Credit: "The Old Lady" by Urban Biker Marc is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

In the Victorian era, the venerable Bank of England took a number of steps to relieve the drudgery of work for its employees and to improve their lives. In broader terms, it is fair to depict the Victorian Bank as an increasingly paternalistic organisation, seeking to create for its staff a secure, stable and morally improving environment in which to spend their working lives. Take three emblematic developments, the first of them described by the *Illustrated London News* in May 1850:

"On Wednesday afternoon, a handsome reading-room, which has just been formed for the Bank of England Library and Literary Association, instituted by the directors for the use of the clerks, was opened by Thomson Hankey, junior Esq., Deputy-Governor of the Bank. At one of the very numerous meetings of the members; when the Chief Cashier, as President, and the Chief Accountant, the Treasurer of the Institution, moved and seconded a vote of thanks to the Court of Directors for the handsome manner in which they had fitted up the Library, and for the liberal support which had been accorded the Association.

"Several hundred of the staff were soon members of the library, paying an annual subscription of 10 shillings, at a time when the concept of the public library was still only slowly taking hold; and members were allowed to borrow two books, with an especially strict time limit (eight days) for novels. The second development followed shortly, with the founding in 1854 of the Bank Provident Society – essentially a savings society that also undertook life assurance business, and whose 4 per cent interest on premiums paid was guaranteed by the directors. Finally, there was the whole stomach-rumbling question of the inner man. In 1881 a detailed memo (probably written by Chubb) on lunch arrangements found that, of the 650 clerks in the Bank, some 110 to 130 managed to knock up a scratch meal within the building, about 100 stayed in their offices and got porters to fetch something from outside, and the rest went out for lunch.

"The memo continued:

That the present arrangements are unsatisfactory in every way is admitted on all sides. They are unsatisfactory to the Clerks, many of whom earnestly desire some means by which their wants can be simply but decently met. The underground Drawing Office kitchen is a most uninviting room – it is close to the cooking place, lavatories, etc; the food may be good, but it is roughly served, and the surroundings are so disagreeable that it is repugnant to men of any refinement.

"In the case of those who remain in the Offices, the meal furtively eaten behind a desk cover cannot be desirable; and though many no doubt will always desire to go outside The Bank during the 1 1/2 hour, it is known that the places where a cheap good meal can be obtained are becoming fewer each year and it is felt, especially as regards the younger clerks, that the alternative of obtaining what they require within the walls would be better for their health and keep them from the temptations of the Bars and Wine rooms.

As regards the Porters, the present practice is equally unsatisfactory.

During much of the morning they are engaged on duties, which though, in a measure, recognised, are wholly undefined and cannot be supervised: it leads them to go out of The Bank to buy what is required, and it gives rise to the very objectionable practice of their making money out of the Clerks, with whom it begets a certain undue familiarity. The time occupied by the porters in this way cannot be estimated, but it is undoubtedly very great: and indeed it is a question whether if these duties were taken from them, the number might not be reduced.

"Altogether, concluded the memo, if 'a General Luncheon Room' were introduced, and 'if the room were bright and the service well conducted', this 'might lead, in many cases, to a higher tone amongst the Clerks'. Chubb then circulated a notice, eliciting strong support for the concept of 'fitting up Dining Rooms within the Bank, in which, at a cost to cover actual expenses only, gentlemen could have lunch or light dinner'; and by 1884 a fully fledged staff canteen was in existence, though known by the more dignified title of the Luncheon Club."

### Comment from Martin Pollins

**Delanceyplace** is a FREE brief daily email with an excerpt or quote they view as interesting or noteworthy, offered with commentary to provide context. There is no theme, except that most excerpts will come from a non-fiction work, mainly works of history, and they hope will have a more universal relevance than simply the subject of the book from which they came. And there is not necessarily an endorsement, and in some cases an excerpt may be particularly controversial, and Delanceyplace may disagree with some or all of it, but nevertheless deem it worth noting.

Eclectic excerpts delivered to your email every day

 Delanceyplace.com

## What is Codex Sinaiticus?

Text from various sources:

<https://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/apo/index.htm>

<https://codexsinaiticus.org/en/>

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/codex-sinaiticus>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex\\_Sinaiticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sinaiticus)



Picture Credit: "File:CodexSinaiticusFacsimile.jpg" by NOBTS PR is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

*Codex Sinaiticus*, a manuscript of the Christian Bible written in the middle of the fourth century, contains the earliest complete copy of the Christian New Testament. The hand-written text is in Greek. The New Testament appears in the original vernacular language (koine) and the Old Testament in the version (known as the *Septuagint*) adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians. The *Septuagint* has four books: law, history, poetry, and prophets. The books of the *Apocrypha* were inserted at appropriate locations.

In the *Codex*, the Greek Old Testament and the New Testament text has been heavily annotated by a series of early correctors.

The significance of *Codex Sinaiticus* for the reconstruction of the Christian Bible's original text, the history of the Bible and the history of Western book-making is immense.

*Codex Sinaiticus* is one of the most important books in the world:

- It was handwritten well over 1600 years ago;
- The manuscript contains the Christian Bible in Greek, including the oldest complete copy of the New Testament;
- Its heavily corrected text is of outstanding importance for the history of the Bible and the manuscript – the oldest substantial book to survive Antiquity.

Along with the *Codex Vaticanus*, the *Codex Sinaiticus* is considered the oldest known Bible in the world. The *Codex Sinaiticus* was more than 1,460 pages long and measured 16in by 14in. It was written by a number of people around the time of Constantine the Great in the 4th Century. The manuscript contains the Christian Bible in Greek, including the oldest complete copy of the New Testament. The hand-written text is in Greek.

### The Codex Sinaiticus Project

The *Codex Sinaiticus Project* is an international collaboration\* to reunite the entire manuscript in digital form and make it accessible to a global audience for the first time. Drawing on the expertise of leading scholars, conservators and curators, the Project gives everyone the opportunity to connect directly with this famous manuscript.

\* The Partner Institutions are: The British Library, National Library of Russia, St. Catherine's Monastery and Leipzig University Library

### READ MORE:

- *The Bible: who wrote it and why?* March 2021 edition of Nil Desperandum: <https://www.hugofox.com/community/haywards-heath-and-district-probus-club-13542/nil-desperandum/>
- *Glossary - Timeline of the Bible*, published by OneSmartPlace, at: <http://onesmartplace.com/resources/glossaries/> from where you can obtain a free digital copy.
- You can see more of the *Codex Sinaiticus* at the British Library *Turning the Pages™* site and view the parts of the manuscript housed at the British Library on the *Digitised Manuscripts website*, where you will also find a detailed bibliography for further reading.

### WATCH VIDEOS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgY6jPf4Xkc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4Xkv2gjzZw>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0jpjLhA-hE>

## History's First Serial Killer?

Even if there had been nothing else unusual about the Breton nobleman Gilles de Rais (1405–1440), his outstanding career as a soldier in the Hundred Years' War and as a comrade in arms of Joan of Arc would have been enough to guarantee his place in history. But today, those achievements can only be seen in the shadow of the secret life he led as the perpetrator of more than a hundred gruesome child murders. This rampage made him arguably the first serial killer in recorded history.

You can read the full story about Gilles de Rais at:

<https://www.britannica.com/story/gilles-de-rais-historys-first-serial-killer>

## Who was Ayn Rand?

Picture Credit: "File: Russian-American writer and philosopher Ayn Rand 1905-1982. (46301477574).jpg" by Julius Jäskeläinen is licensed under CC BY 2.0



Ayn Rand was a Russian-American writer and philosopher. Born in 1905, as Alisa Zinovyevna Rosenbaum to a Russian-Jewish bourgeois family living in Saint Petersburg, she is known for her two best-selling novels, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, and for developing a philosophical system, she named Objectivism. She moved to the United States in 1926.

Her best-known work is the novel *Atlas Shrugged*. Despite many negative reviews, that book became an international bestseller. Rand was

discouraged and depressed by the reaction of intellectuals to the novel, and it was Rand's last completed work of fiction; it marked the end of her career as a novelist and the beginning of her role as a popular philosopher.

### WATCH A TRAILER OF THE FOUNTAINHEAD

The film was made in 1949 and starred Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, Raymond Massey, Robert Douglas, Kent Smith, Ray Collins and Jerome Cowan. The trailer is available at:

<https://ok.ru/video/276008929955>

You can find out more about this extraordinary lady at:

<https://aynrand.org/>

## What happened to RAF Squadron 617 after the Dambusters Raid?

Excerpted from:

- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-happened-to-raf-617-squadron-after-the-dambusters-raid>
- <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/squadrons/617-squadron/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No.\\_617\\_Squadron\\_RAF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._617_Squadron_RAF)
- <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/617-squadron-and-the-dams-raid.aspx> <http://www.dambusters.org.uk/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-23356646>



Picture Credit: "1943 05 17 Dambusters raid - Mark Postlethwaite" by aeroman3 is marked with CC PDM 1.0

617 Squadron, RAF, "The Dambusters" was a single squadron formed during the Second World War to carry out a single special and dangerous task.

The operation, codenamed "Chastise", has since become a legend in the annals of military history and possesses all the traditionally admired military attributes of originality, surprise and heroism coupled with a very dramatic outcome.

After the success of the **Ruhr dams raid in May 1943**, 617 Squadron was retained by RAF Bomber Command for specialist precision bombing operations. It experimented with new bomb sights, target marking techniques, and colossal new 'earthquake' bombs developed by Barnes Wallis, the 'bouncing bomb' inventor. An unsuccessful attempt to bomb the **Dortmund-Ems Canal** from a low level in September 1943 resulted in the loss of five aircraft and the death of the Squadron's new commanding officer. Such missions were not repeated, and so 617 Squadron concentrated on high-altitude precision bombing.

Wing Commander Guy Penrose Gibson, VC, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar (12 August 1918 – 19 September 1944) was the first Commanding Officer of 617 Squadron, which he led in the "Dam Busters" raid in 1943, resulting in the breaching of two large dams in the Ruhr area of Germany. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces, in the aftermath of the raid in May 1943. He became the most highly decorated British serviceman at that time. He completed over 170 war operations before dying in action at the age of 26.

In the last months of the **Second World War**, 617 Squadron made further successful strikes against the German rail and canal network, coastal defences and previously invulnerable U-boat pens, using 'Tallboys' and the monstrous new 22,000 lb 'Grand Slam' bomb. Right to the end, 617 Squadron maintained its position as Bomber Command's ultimate precision bombing specialists.

The squadron was disbanded in 2014 and reformed in 2016 to fly the new F-35B Lightning II joint strike fighter. The Squadron now has both RAF and Royal Navy personnel.

HISTORY (from: <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/squadrons/617-squadron/>)

- 1943 - Formed at RAF Scampton, specifically for an attack on dams in the Ruhr Valley using the Barnes Wallis-designed Upkeep 'bouncing bomb'. Flown on 16/17 May 1943, the raid destroyed the Eder and Möhne dams. The unit returned to combat in July 1943.
- 1944 - Flying from RAF Woodhall Spa, 617 Squadron began dropping the 12,000lb Tallboy and, later, 22,000lb Grand Slam bombs. As well as bombing, the unit supported the D-Day assault with Operation TAXABLE, a radar-spoofing mission. IX and 617 Squadrons, both employing Tallboys, sank the German battleship Tirpitz in November 1944.
- 1946 - Toured India, before returning to the UK and re-equipping with Lincolns. A North America tour followed in 1947. The piston-engined bombers gave way to Canberra jets in 1952.
- 1955 - After flying combat missions over Malaya, 617 Squadron returned to the UK and was disbanded.
- 1958 - Squadron re-formed at RAF Scampton on the Vulcan B1, taking the Vulcan B2 from 1961. Introduced the Blue Steel stand-off missile into service in 1963, then switched to low-level missions from 1968. Disbanded in 1981.
- 1982 - Stood up as a Tornado GR1 unit at RAF Marham, declaring operational capability on 16 May 1982.
- 1990 - Deployed to the Gulf, under Operation GRANBY, and fought in the campaign to free Kuwait from Iraqi invasion in early 1991.
- 1994 - Transferred to RAF Lossiemouth and the Tornado GR1B, operating in the anti-shipping role alongside 12 Squadron.
- 2003 - Contributed to the RAF Tornado GR4 force deployed for Operation TELIC, flying missions against Iraqi targets from Kuwait. Flew the first operational Storm Shadow mission, on 21 March. The squadron continued rotating into theatre until 2009, when regular rotations to Afghanistan, under Operation HERRICK, began.
- 2011 - 617 Squadron crews flew Storm Shadow attacks during Operation ELLAMY over Libya, while the unit also continued deploying to Afghanistan.
- 2014 - Disbanded on 28 February 2014, after returning from a final HERRICK deployment on 30 January. Began re-forming in 2016, in preparation to become the UK's first frontline Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning unit.
- 2018 - Four 617 Squadron Lightnings landed at RAF Marham, the unit's new home.
- 2019 - Lightning Dawn saw 617 Squadron deploy to RAF Akrotiri for Operation SHADER sorties and subsequent training alongside Israeli and Italian F-35s
- 2020 - In June, 617 Squadron embarked operational Lightnings aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time. In September, the unit returned to the ship, alongside visiting US Marine Corps F-35Bs, in preparation for the vessel's Carrier Strike Group 21 first operational sailing in 2021.

WATCH THE FILM:



You can see a video ([here](#)) taken from the 1955 classic war movie 'The Dambusters'. Wing Commander Guy Gibson's Lancaster crew attacked the Möhne dam while under fire from the dam's defences. The late actor Richard Todd, who portrayed Wing Commander Gibson in this movie, was himself a veteran of WW2, having taken part in the capture of Pegasus Bridge in the early hours of D-Day as a member of the Parachute Regiment.

The picture (above) is a screenshot from the film.

## There's something about old cars

Excerpted from:

- <https://nationalmotormuseum.org.uk/story-of-motoring/motoring-firsts/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_automobile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_automobile)
- <https://www.titlemax.com/articles/a-timeline-of-car-history/>
- <https://www.idrivesafely.com/defensive-driving/trending/evolution-automobile>
- <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/the-history-of-cars--9>
- <https://www.britannica.com/technology/automobile/History-of-the-automobile>



Picture Credit: "Speyer - Technikmuseum Speyer - Jaguar S.S.100 1937" by Daniel Mennerich is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

In 1478, Leonardo da Vinci "invented" the self-propelled car. It happened many years before anyone else had even begun thinking about cars. However, it remained only a sketch on paper and was never actually made. This self-propelled car was not a car like the ones we see today. It was more similar to a cart and did not even have a seat. In 2004, a replica of da Vinci's car was finally crafted. It can be seen on display at the Institute and Museum of the History of Science in Florence, Italy.

While some of the very first cars were powered by steam engines, dating back to the 1700s, it was Karl Benz in 1885 who invented the first fuel-powered car, for which he later received a patent in 1886. Benz's first car had three wheels, looked much like an elongated tricycle and sat two people. Four-wheeled fuel-powered cars were later introduced in 1891.

Over time, inventors considered the possibilities of clockwork. Probably in 1748, a carriage propelled by a large clockwork engine was demonstrated in Paris by the inventor Jacques de Vaucanson. In the 17th century, a Dutch inventor, Christiaan Huygens, produced an engine that worked by air pressure developed by explosion of a powder charge. Denis Papin of France built a model engine on the vacuum principle, using the condensation of steam to produce the vacuum. An air engine was patented in England in 1799, and a grid of compressor stations was proposed to service vehicles. An air-powered vehicle is said to have been produced in 1832.

There are several claims and counterclaims for the first motor car to appear on the road in Britain. The national motor museum website says that it is now generally accepted that the Hon. Evelyn Ellis was the first when he imported a *Panhard et Levassor* into Britain in June 1895 and undertook his famous journey from Micheldever in Hampshire to his home at Datchet in Berkshire. It was claimed that a *2hp Benz Velo* imported by Henry Hewetson in November 1894 was the first in Britain, although it is now believed this did not take place until later in 1895.

### Early Timeline

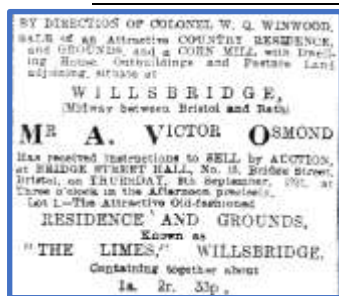
- 1769 - the first steam-powered automobile capable of carrying humans was built by Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot. This vehicle is a tractor for the French army. It has three wheels and moves at about 2.5 miles per hour.
- 1789 - Oliver Evans receives the first US patent for a steam-powered land vehicle.

- 1801 - in Great Britain, inventor Richard Trevithick builds a steam-powered road carriage. It is considered the first tramway locomotive but was designed for use on the road, not rails.
- 1803 - Hayden Wischett designed the first car powered by the de Rivaz engine, which was fuelled by hydrogen.
- 1807 - an internal combustion engine using a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen is invented by Francois Isaac de Rivaz in Switzerland. He also designs a car for the engine, the first automobile powered by internal combustion, but his design is unsuccessful.
- 1823 - British engineer Samuel Brown invented the first industrially applied internal combustion engine.
- 1832 - Robert Anderson invents the first crude electric carriage in Scotland. It is powered by non-rechargeable primary power cells.
- 1861 - the four-stroke petrol internal combustion engine that still constitutes the most prevalent form of modern automotive propulsion was patented by the German, Nicolaus Otto. Rudolf Diesel invented a similar four-stroke diesel engine. The hydrogen fuel cell, one of the technologies hailed as a replacement for gasoline as an energy source for cars, was discovered in principle by Christian Friedrich Schönbein in 1838. The battery-electric car owes its beginnings to Ányos Jedlik, one of the inventors of the electric motor, and Gaston Planté, who invented the lead-acid battery in 1859.
- 1863 - Belgian engineer Jean-Joseph-Etienne Lenoir invents the "horseless carriage." This is the first commercially successful internal combustion engine. It uses an internal combustion engine and can move at about 3 miles per hour (faster than Cugnot's 1769 tractor).
- 1867 - German, Nikolaus August Otto, improves on the internal combustion engine. His engine is the first to efficiently burn fuel directly in a piston chamber.
- 1870 - Julius Hock, of Vienna, builds the first internal combustion engine running on gasoline. In the same year, Siegfried Marcus built his first combustion engine powered pushcart, followed by four progressively more sophisticated combustion-engine cars over a 10-to-15-year span that influenced later cars.
- 1882 - Italian Enrico Bernardi created the first petrol-powered vehicle.
- 1879 - American inventor George Baldwin files the first U.S. Patent for a car. This invention is more like a wagon but had an internal combustion engine.
- 1885 - Karl Benz developed a petrol or gasoline-powered car. This is also considered to be the first "production" vehicle as Benz made several identical copies. A single-cylinder four-stroke engine powered the car.
- 1886 - In Michigan USA, Henry Ford builds his first car. In Germany, Gottlieb Wilhelm Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach invent the first four-wheeled, four-stroke engine in Germany. It is known as the "Cannstatt-Daimler."
- 1892 - the first four-wheeled petrol-driven car in Britain was built in Walthamstow by Frederick Bremer in 1892.
- 1893 - Brothers Frank and Charles Edgar Duryea invent the first successful gas-powered car in the United States.
- 1893 - Margaret A. Wilcox introduced the car heater in the US.
- 1895 - Frederick William Lanchester patented the disc brake.
- 1896 - The Duryea brothers start the first US car manufacturing company in Springfield, Massachusetts. It is called Motor Wagons
- 1908 - the Ford Model T, created by the Ford Motor Company, began production and would become the first car to be mass-produced on a moving assembly line (from 1913 to 1927, Ford produced over 15 million Model T cars). By 1913 - Ford's Model T production rockets from 7.5 cars per hour to 146 cars per hour, thanks to the assembly line system.
- 1916 - around this time, windscreen wipers were fitted to cars.
- 1921 - the cigarette lighter is introduced in cars.
- 1924 - The car radio is introduced.
- 1940 - The first four-wheel drive, all-purpose vehicle is designed for the U.S. Military. It becomes known as the Jeep.
- 1951 - power steering is introduced.
- 1960s - electric windows are introduced.
- 1995 - the car Global Positioning System, or GPS, or Sat Nav is introduced.
- 1996 - Due to the rising cost of petrol/diesel fuel and impact of global climate change, zero-emission electric vehicles come back to auto showrooms. The first electric vehicles had been designed in the early 1800s.
- 2002 - reversing cameras are introduced.

### A home of your own

Researched from the sources shown below and, in some cases, excerpted from text at those sources. They are also recommended for reading if you are interested in this subject:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/may/24/history-british-housing-decade>
- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/modern/a-brief-history-of-home-ownership-in-britain/>
- <https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/15814/housing/uk-housing-history/>
- <https://www.sunlife.co.uk/articles-guides/your-money/the-price-of-a-home-in-britain-then-and-now/>
- <https://www.schroders.com/en/uk/private-investor/insights/markets/what-174-years-of-data-tell-us-about-house-price-affordability-in-the-uk/>



Picture Credit: "1921 sale of 'The Limes' Willsbridge" by brizzle born and bred is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

In Britain, house-buying has gone through many peaks and troughs. Over the years, house prices have rocketed. There was a time when buying a new home cost less than £3,000 and a garage would cost only £250 more. If you

could afford to buy a home after the 1939-1945 war, it was likely to be a newly built one costing under £1,900. By the early 1960s, the average home cost was £2,530 with mod cons galore: most homes in the UK now had electricity, a fridge and cooker (and a point for TV). Move on to the early 1970s, and the average house price had risen to £4,057. But by 1975, the average house price had rocketed to £19,925.

Before we move on, let us go back in time, starting with the Industrial Revolution, which brought a spurt in inner-city living as people flocked from the countryside for new factory jobs. Housing was often hurriedly and badly built by private enterprise and was often squalid, with large factory populations squeezed into small areas, leading to the classical slums of 'Dickensian' Britain. Typically, houses could just be two rooms – one up, one down. Few houses had a bathroom, water was from a communal cast-iron pump, and lavatories were outside.

Moving on to the period before the First World War, people saved up for their homes in some areas of the country by paying into building societies that thrived in areas of full employment and a static population. In the 1920s, after the end of the war, almost 80% of Britons rented their homes from private landlords and most new property was bought by private landlords. It was only in the 1970s that homeowners came to outnumber those who rented.

Concern about the poor standards of the housing stock led the prime minister, David Lloyd George, to promise a "land fit for heroes" for the homecoming *Tommies*. The 1919 Housing Act provided subsidies for local authorities to build council houses.

During the interwar years, house prices generally fell, incomes rose, and the increased availability of building society mortgages enabled more workers to buy their own homes. By the late 1930s, a third of us in Britain were homeowners. During World War II, home-ownership went into a time-warp mode, although it picked up again in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The Second World War caused a double whammy: German bombing inflicted widespread damage to urban areas while housebuilding came to a halt. The Beveridge report (1942) identified "squalor" as one of the five "giants" blocking the road to progress, but with money tight and construction materials in short supply, the pick-up in activity was slow. Aneurin Bevan, jointly health and housing minister, insisted council homes had to be built to high standards.

Whether Labour or Tory, all British governments have seen home-ownership to foster greater equality, particularly in the 1980s when the Thatcher government gave council tenants the right to buy their homes at a discount – and nearly 2 million households took up the offer. Those who took advantage of the offer quickly saw the value of their assets surge in Britain's second big housing bubble – the Lawson boom. House prices rose by 16% in 1987 and a further 25% in 1988.

The bust that followed the Lawson boom was long and painful. Interest rates were raised to 15% for a year to control inflation. Unemployment doubled to hit 3 million for the second time in a decade, and many of those who had taken out big mortgages could no longer afford the repayments. Record numbers of people had their homes repossessed as house prices fell for four successive years. It was not until the end of the 1990s that the market started to recover.

By 2001, roughly 70 per cent of the homes in England and Wales were privately owned, although it has fallen to the just over 60% accompanied with a rise in private renting.

The average house price more than doubled from £100,000 in 2000 to just under £225,000 in 2007, before the financial crash brought the boom to an end. Housebuilding fell during the recession to its lowest peacetime level since the early 1930s. It has more than picked up again in the 2020s.

#### House price link to earnings

Interestingly, Shroders ([here](#)) say that they reviewed the Bank of England's [Millennium of data resource](#) to analyse the history of house prices and found:

- the average house in the UK currently costs more than eight-times average earnings, based on data as at 30 September 2019.
- this eight-times-earnings level has only been breached twice previously in the past 120 years – once just prior to the start of the financial crisis and once around the start of the 20th century.

It may only be of historical curiosity, but, interestingly, house prices were even higher in the latter half of the 19th century. They then went on a multi-decade downtrend relative to earnings. This trend only bottomed out after the First World War: there are three critical drivers: more houses, smaller houses, and rising incomes.

## Where Father Christmas really comes from

Story composed from excerpts derived from:

<https://www.history.co.uk/article/history-of-santa-claus-father-christmas>

<https://www.abbeypolythene.co.uk/where-did-father-christmas-come-from/>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/history-origins-christmas-traditions-santa-11737177>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/1963302/christmas-term-meaning-why-shorten-xmas/>



Picture Credit: "When will Santa's list be digital?" by Kevin Dooley is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Of course, no one really knows what Father Christmas looks like apart from his elves, but American cartoonists from the Victorian era imagined the characteristic white beard and red clothing. As depicted in the 17th century, the original British Father Christmas

sported a beard, but it wasn't white, and his clothing colour was not red but green. And we can thank Scandinavian myths for his reindeer-pulled sledge or sleigh. However, the reindeer leader, you know – the one with the shiny red nose who raced about when his name ('Rudolph') was mentioned, was thought to be another American advertising creation. Anyway, his elves have a Germanic and distinctly devilish background, but the mince pies, milk and sherry we leave out for *Father Christmas* have an even more ancient origin. Such offerings are reminiscent of sacrifices to pagan gods that long pre-date Christianity.

Oh, whilst we're looking for origins, where does the term *Christmas* come from, and what does it mean? Most of us would assume it originates from the word Christ, as the whole idea of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and it's not just about the presents for family and friends. Well, to a point, that is the case – the word is a shortened form of *Christ's mass*, as it was first recorded in 1038. This was followed by the term *Cristes-messe* in 1131, according to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. And the word "Christ" – or *Crist* as it originally read – comes from the Greek word *Khristos*, itself a translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah*, which means "anointed".

Today, most people consider *Father Christmas* and *Santa Claus* to be different names for the same person, except that *Father Christmas* tends to be used in the UK and *Santa Claus* is more commonly used in the US. But these two have very different histories, which have only recently converged.

There are some gaps to be filled in. To start with, where did this jolly fellow, in red robes, sporting a white beard, and displaying waist-slapping jollity and booming ho-ho-hos, come from? He has been around forever – hasn't he? Well, no, he hasn't – actually only since 1935. That's when Haddon Sundbloom, a Madison Avenue advertising man, created *Santa Claus* for a Coca-Cola campaign.

Those who have doubts about his actual existence need to know that Santa was thinner and paler in previous times, a character based on the 4th century Bishop called *St Nicholas*, who became the patron saint of children in most of Europe.

The Bishop lived in the 4th century in Myra (now called Demre) in Asia Minor, which is now Turkey. It was said that when his mother and father died, he inherited a lot of money from them, and he was very rich. He travelled around the place with pomp in his ceremonial red bishop's robes and soon had a reputation for being very kind and helping the poor.

But he was shy. Then, one day, wanting to give money to a poor family for the eldest daughter's dowry but not wanting anyone to know he was involved, he dropped some gold coins down the chimney. These landed in a stocking hung up to dry by the fireplace. It belonged to one of the daughters. He repeated the same generous act for the second daughter. The father discovered *Saint Nicholas* doing the same for his third daughter. The Bishop asked him to keep his existence secret as he didn't want to draw attention to himself, but rumours let the cat out of the bag, and he became widely known for his gifts to children and the poor. To this day, nobody exactly knows how he climbed onto the icy roof in the middle of winter.

In Holland, they called him *Sinterklaas*, and Santa Claus earned his reputation for giving stuff away. A small pair of wooden shoes would be left by the fireplace, and he would fill them with sweets. In 1847, London sweetshop owner Tom Smith came up with the idea of wrapping French bonbons in decorative paper with a twist at each end, and he started selling similar sweets with a "love motto" inside – these were refined and, with a loud bang, the Christmas cracker was born.

*Father Christmas* was initially just a pagan figure representing the coming of Spring and wore a long hooded green cloak and a wreath of ivy, mistletoe or holly. In the 5th and 6th centuries, when Britain fell under Saxon rule, he took on the attributes of the Saxons' *Father Time* (also called *King Winter*). It became traditional for someone to dress up as *King Winter* and be invited into people's homes to sit and eat and drink by the fireside. People believed that if they were kind to *King Winter*, they'd get a milder winter, and so the association between *Father Christmas* and receiving good things was born. The legend of *St Nicholas* came to Britain after the Norman invasion, when it was absorbed into our own *Father Christmas* legend.

The Vikings added to the traditions with their own ideas. During Yuletide, the Norse god Odin was believed to take on the character of Jul, a stout old man with a white beard and long blue hooded cloak. He dealt out gifts to the good and punishments to the bad.

When the Normans arrived in 1066, the story of *St Nicholas* came along too and was absorbed into the legend of *Father Christmas*. From the 15th century onwards, *Father Christmas* was seen as the representative of the spirit of Christmas – good cheer, generosity and kindness.

Unfortunately, there was a blip in 1644. That's when the Puritans banned both Christmas and *Father Christmas* himself, as they were offended by his pagan roots and the revelry associated with him. But by the mid-20th century, the American influence had taken hold, and the characteristics of *St Nicholas* were incorporated with our own *Father Christmas*, including the idea that he lives in the North Pole, has a list of naughty and nice children, and wears a red coat. Well, we all know where he lives, don't we?

And so, every year, on 25th December, with the help of *Rudolf* and many others, he manages to do what he has to do and never complains about the cold weather at that time of year, although he didn't like the mask he had to wear last year.

## Family life in the war years

Researched from the sources shown below and excerpted from text at those sources:

- <http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/war/changessince.htm>
- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/the-1940s-house>
- <https://metro.co.uk/2017/03/15/the-halcyon-5-surprising-facts-you-never-knew-about-luxury-hotels-in-the-1940s-6511328/>
- <https://allthatsinteresting.com/london-in-the-1940s>
- <https://www.thesun.co.uk/living/3461167/1950s-photos-british-home-life-second-world-war/>
- <https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/shelter-at-home-in-the-second-world-war/>
- <https://letterpile.com/memoirs/Life-in-the-1940s--50s>



Picture Credit: Screenshot of 1940 Kitchen from IWM video at: <https://youtu.be/HPVvta-tHC8>

### READ WHAT IT WAS LIKE:

The family home in early 1940 in Britain was an important aspect of lifestyle. How it was decorated and furnished showed what type of person you were and how well off you appeared to be. Apart from the absence of young children during periods of evacuation\*, fit and able men of the house were away, fighting the enemy in Europe or the Far East. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1940, 2 million 19 to 27-year-old men were called up for military service.

\* Altogether 827,000 schoolchildren with 103,000 teachers and helpers left the big cities and a further 524,000 children below school age and their mothers left their homes for safety in the countryside.

Homes were spartan: many did not have indoor toilets or a telephone or even radios. And the furniture and decorative furnishing generally looked as if it had seen better days. There was no central heating to keep warm which was hard to bear as the winters in the years of the Second World War were very cold. Homes were kept warm from the heat of a fire in the fireplace, sometimes with a boiler to provide hot water. In the 1940s, most homes had a coal or coke bunker. Coal was king as most homes then had coal fires. Even the larger homes in the posher areas had coal fires. Some people used gas for heating. Gas at that time was made from coal. But gas was not usually the main source of heat in most homes.

Few homes had fitted carpets - most had wooden or stone floors. There were no fridges or freezers, no washing machines or tumble dryers. Most homes did not have hot water on tap.

In the 1940 home, gas cookers were by far the most popular form of cooking. But the old-fashioned coal-fired ranges were still ubiquitous. Electricity was beginning to be used as a form of heating, but it was more expensive than gas. Garages were very few and far between, which was just as well as there were very few cars about or men to drive them.

Life in London was particularly difficult and hard to bear. More than 20,000 Londoners lost their lives, and over a million buildings were destroyed or seriously damaged in the ensuing German aerial attacks. The bombings took place from September 1940 to May 1941, with 57 consecutive days and nights of bombings. People found shelter wherever they could find it, with underground stations becoming a 'safe' popular destination. Four million homes in Britain were destroyed by enemy bombing in the war, particularly in the major cities.

There was no television to watch even if you were lucky to own a TV as broadcasting had been suspended for the entire duration of the Second World War amid fears the signals would help German bombers. TV broadcasting resumed on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1946 and the first words heard were "Good afternoon everybody. How are you? Do you remember me, Jasmine Bligh?". The Mickey Mouse cartoon (Mickey's Gala Premier) that had been the last programme transmitted seven years earlier at the start of the war, was reshowed after Bligh's introduction.

### WATCH WHAT IT WAS LIKE:

The Imperial War Museum 1940 House:

- The Living Room: <https://youtu.be/bhdxmKcmVzw>
- The Kitchen: <https://youtu.be/HPVvta-tHC8>
- The Dining Room: [https://youtu.be/ltDxY\\_7TMQw](https://youtu.be/ltDxY_7TMQw)
- A Boy's Bedroom: <https://youtu.be/--xjXzY-L6s>
- The Master Bedroom: <https://youtu.be/3vt5NnUYWA4>
- The Front Bedroom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP-Dc5gBhP0>
- The Bathroom: <https://youtu.be/Nox5Fwz29Ac>

### BOOKS:

All available at Amazon:

- Christmas at War - True Stories of How Britain Came Together on the Home Front, by Caroline Taggart 2018
- A 1950s Childhood: From Tin Baths to Bread and Dripping, by Paul Feeney 2009
- Air Raids and Ration Books: Life on the Home Front in Wartime Britain, by Mike Brown and Carol Harris 2010
- The Home Front in Britain Then and Now, by Winston and Gail Ramsey 2019

## 'Artemis, the most dangerous of all Allied spies...'

Researched from the sources shown below and, in some cases, excerpted from text at those sources. They are also recommended for reading if you are interested in this subject:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia\\_Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Hall)
- <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2015-featured-story-archive/virginia-hall-the-courage-and-daring-of-the-limping-lady.html>
- <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/18/711356336/a-woman-of-no-importance-finally-gets-her-due>



Virginia Hall is one of the most important American spies most people have never heard of.

Hall (married name Goillot), (April 6, 1906 – July 8, 1982), Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), Croix de Guerre, MBE, code-named *Marie* and *Diane*, was an American who worked with the British clandestine Special Operations

Executive (SOE) and the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in France during World War II.

The purpose of SOE and OSS was to conduct espionage, sabotage, and reconnaissance in occupied Europe against the Axis powers, especially Nazi Germany. SOE and OSS agents in France allied themselves with resistance groups and supplied them with weapons and equipment parachuted in from England. After World War II Hall worked for the Special Activities Division of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), starting there in December 1951.

A native of Baltimore, Maryland USA, Virginia Hall Goillot is perhaps best known for her heroic service in the BSOE and the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, but she actually spent more time in CIA - for 15 years, she used her covert action expertise in a wide range of Agency activities, chiefly in support of resistance groups in Iron Curtain countries.

She was one of a handful of relatively senior women in the clandestine service, she worked in various elements of CIA until her mandatory retirement in 1966 at the age of 60. And she did it all despite having a prosthetic leg, which she named Cuthbert.

Hall was a pioneering agent for the SOE, arriving in France in August 1941, the first female agent to take up residence in France. She created the Heckler network in Lyon. Over the next 15 months, she became an expert at support operations – organising resistance movements; supplying agents with money, weapons, and supplies; helping downed airmen to escape; offering safe houses and medical assistance to wounded agents and pilots. She fled France in November 1942 to avoid capture by the Germans.

She returned to France as a wireless operator for the OSS in March 1944 as a member of the Saint network. Working in territory still occupied by the German army and mostly without the assistance of other OSS agents, she supplied arms, training, and direction to French resistance groups, called *maquis*, especially in Haute-Loire where the *maquis* cleared the department of German soldiers before the arrival of the US army in September 1944.

Virginia Hall was born into a wealthy Baltimore family in 1906. She was raised to marry into her privileged class but wanted a life of adventure. Despite a hunting accident that cost her left leg, she became one of the most successful spies in World War II, first for the British and then for the Americans. Her story was long hidden but is now being told in full.

Courtesy of CIA

The Germans gave Hall the nickname *Artemis*, and the Gestapo reportedly considered her "*the most dangerous of all Allied spies*." Hall had an artificial foot she named "*Cuthbert*." She was also known as "*the limping lady*" by the Germans and as "*Marie of Lyon*" by many of the SOE agents she assisted. Or Brigitte. Or any of a half dozen other names. Some saw her as a middle-aged newspaper reporter. To others, she was a doddering old woman. To the Nazis, she was an elusive enemy.

### READ MORE:

- **A Climb to Freedom: A Personal Journey in the Footsteps of Virginia Hall**, by Craig R. Gralley in the March 2017 issue of *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 61 No. 1.
- **L'espionne: Virginia Hall, une Américaine dans la guerre**, by Vincent Nouzille in French; Paris: Fayard, 2007.
- **The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy**, by Judith L. Pearson, Guilford, CT: The Lyon Press, 2005.
- **A Woman of No Importance - The Untold Story of Virginia Hall, WWII's Most Dangerous Spy**, by Sonia Purnell, Virago 2020.
- **Hall of Mirrors**, a novel by Craig Gralley, Chrysalis Books 2019.
- **The Lady Is A Spy**, a young adult book by Don Mitchell, Scholastic 2019.
- **The Spy with the Wooden Leg: The Story of Virginia Hall**, by Nancy Polette
- **Miss Fatale - Virginia Hall, The Greatest World War II Female Spy**, by Edgar Wollstone, independently published 2020.

## Enigma unplugged



"Enigma" was the coding machine (see left) used throughout the German government and military leading up to and during World War II.

Both the notched wheels and the plugboard had circuits running through them so when you pressed a key on the keyboard, a letter would light up on the display. With every

key press, one of the wheels would rotate a space and change the internal configuration of the machine. When the right wheel went through an entire rotation it would move the next wheel one space.

To use it, you set up the three (or four) wheels in a particular configuration that was changed every day. You also set up the plugboard, so it was the same as all the other machines, and this was changed too. You then typed in your message, wrote down the lights that lit up, and then sent the message by radio. On the other end, you received the coded message by radio, set up the machine identically to the sending machine, then as you pressed the keys it would light up with the original letter.

Because there are over 17,000 initial wheel combinations, the Germans believed Enigma was unbreakable. However, allied intelligence got their hands on two of the machines and 'reverse-engineered' it. They then built a massive mechanical computer that could run through all 17,000 combinations in less than an hour.

Source: Quora.com at: <https://www.quora.com/What-is-Great-Germanys-Enigma-code/answer/Steven-Haddock>

Picture Credit: see [here](#).

## Sidney Reilly, Ace of Spies

Sources:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reilly,\\_Ace\\_of\\_Spies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reilly,_Ace_of_Spies)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Reilly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Reilly)
- <https://spartacus-educational.com/SSreilly.htm>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/sep/07/russia.artsandhumanities>
- [https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Reilly](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Sidney_Reilly)
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546549508575638>



Sidney George Reilly was a Jewish Russian-born\* adventurer and secret agent employed by Scotland Yard's Special Branch and later by the Foreign Section of the British Secret Service Bureau, the precursor to the modern British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6/SIS).

\* Reilly was born Shlomo Rosenblum in 1873 in what is now the Ukraine.

The picture (left) is a cropped 1918 passport photo Reilly. This passport was issued under his alias of George Bergmann. *Deutsches Reich* (September 1918) - From Andrew

Cook's book *Ace of Spies: The True Story of Sidney Reilly* (2004). This passport photo is in the public domain as it was issued by the German state has been reprinted in numerous books.

Sidney Reilly is alleged to have spied for at least four different great powers, and documentary evidence indicates that he was involved in espionage activities in 1890s London among Russian émigré circles, in Manchuria on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), and in an abortive 1918 *coup d'état* against Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik government in Moscow.

Reilly disappeared in Soviet Russia in the mid-1920s, and British diplomat and journalist R. H. Bruce Lockhart publicised their 1918 operation to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. Lockhart's 1932 book *Memoirs of a British Agent* became an international best-seller and garnered global fame for Reilly. The memoirs retold the efforts by Reilly, Lockhart, and other conspirators to sabotage the Bolshevik revolution while still in its infancy.

The world press made Reilly into a household name within five years of his execution by Soviet agents in 1925\*\*, lauding him as a peerless spy and recounting his many espionage adventures. Newspapers dubbed him "the greatest spy in history" and "the Scarlet Pimpernel of Red Russia".

\*\* Confirmation that Stalin approved the final decision to shoot Reilly was given by a 100-year-old Russian intelligence colonel, Boris Gudiz, who took part in the 1925 operation to lure the secret agent back to Moscow – see *The Guardian* 7/9/2002. [here](#).

The London *Evening Standard* described his exploits in an illustrated serial in May 1931 headlined "Master Spy". Ian Fleming used him as a model for James Bond in his novels (set in the early Cold War). Reilly is considered to be "the dominating figure in the mythology of modern British espionage".

Among Reilly's exploits, in the early 20th century, were the infiltration of the German General Staff in 1917 and a near-overthrow of the Bolsheviks in 1918. His reputation with women was as legendary as his genius for espionage.

In Spring 1918, Sir Mansfield Smith-Cumming, codenamed "C", formally swore Reilly into the British Secret Intelligence Service and dispatched him to infiltrate Soviet Russia.

### Query Fake Information?

*Ace of Spies* (see below) biographer Robin Bruce Lockhart recounts Reilly's alleged involvement in obtaining a newly developed German magneto at the first Frankfurt International Air Show ("Internationale Luftschiffahrt-Ausstellung") in 1909. According to Lockhart, on the fifth day of the air show in Frankfurt am Main, a German plane lost control and crashed, killing the pilot. The plane's engine was alleged to have used a new type of magneto far ahead of other designs. Reilly and a British SIS agent posing as one of the exhibition pilots diverted the attention of spectators while they removed the magneto from the wreck and substituted another. The SIS agent quickly made detailed drawings of the German magneto. When the airplane had been moved to a hangar, the agent and Reilly managed to restore the original magneto. However, later biographers such as Spence and Cook have countered that this incident is unsubstantiated with no documentary evidence of any plane crashes occurring during the event.

### TV Mini-Series

*Ace of Spies* is a 1983 television miniseries dramatising the life of Sidney Reilly, a Russian-born adventurer who became one of the greatest spies ever to work for the British. The miniseries was written by Troy Kennedy Martin, and based on the 1967 book *Ace of Spies* by Robin Bruce Lockhart, whose father R. H. Bruce Lockhart was one of Reilly's fellow spies. The actor, Sam Neill, starred as Reilly.

The theme music is the romance movement from Dmitri Shostakovich's *The Gadfly Suite*, although Shostakovich is not actually credited (Harry Rabinowitz is credited with the music).

### READ MORE:

- *Trust No One: The Secret World of Sidney Reilly*, by Richard B. Spence, 2003 Feral House.
- *Russian Roulette: How British Spies Thwarted Lenin's Global Plot*, by Giles Milton, 2013 John Murray.
- *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community*, by Christopher Andrew,
- *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949*, by Keith Jeffery, 2011 Bloomsbury Paperbacks.
- *A History of the Russian Secret Service*, by Richard Deacon, 1987 Grafton.
- *Ace of Spies: The True Story Of Sidney Reilly*, by Andrew Cook, 2004 Tempus.
- *Sidney Reilly: The True Story of the World's Greatest Spy*, by Michael Kettle, 1984 St. Martins Press.
- *Adventures Of A British Master Spy: The Memoirs of Sidney Reilly: The Memoirs of Sydney Reilly*, by Sidney Reilly, 2014 Biteback Publishing.
- *Ace of Spies: Story of Sidney Reilly*, by Robin Bruce Lockhart, 1981 Futura Publications.

Also:

- Sidney Reilly's Lubianka 'Diary' (edited and annotated by Richard B Spence) 30<sup>th</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November 1925 at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546549508575638>

### WATCH

Film clip from miniseries at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENhwwj-CksQ>

## 'British Restaurants' to meet the needs of wartime

Researched from the sources shown below and excerpted from text at those sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Restaurant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Restaurant)  
<https://www.1900s.org.uk/1940s-british-restaurants.htm>  
<https://www.1900s.org.uk/1940s-british-restaurants-experiences.htm>  
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/blog/history/british-restaurants>  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/all-notices/content/100292>



Picture Credit: Diners at a British Restaurant, 1943. Ministry of Information Photo Division Photographer, Smith Jack <http://media.iwm.org.uk/iwm/media/Lib/34/media-34488/large.jpg> (photograph D 12268 from the collections of the Imperial War Museums.) This photograph was scanned and released by the Imperial War Museum on the IWM Non Commercial Licence. The image was catalogued by the IWM as created for the Ministry of Information, which was dissolved in 1946. Consequently, the image and faithful reproductions are considered Crown Copyright, now expired as the photograph was taken prior to 1<sup>st</sup> June 1957.

'British Restaurants' was not a general term for restaurants in Britain. It was the name given to dedicated communal restaurants set up to meet the needs of wartime on the Second World War British home front, particularly to help people who had been bombed out of their homes, had run out of ration coupons or otherwise needed help. They were more like canteens than restaurants. Customers collected a tray and queued up to receive their food which was cooked on site.

In 1943, 2,160 British Restaurants served 600,000 very inexpensive meals a day. They were disbanded in 1947. There was a political dimension as well, as the Labour Party saw them as a permanent solution to equalising consumption across the class line and guaranteeing a nourishing diet to the poor.

Called *Community Feeding Centres*, the name *British Restaurants* was chosen by the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who feared that the Ministry of Food's original name – *communal feeding centres* – was too 'redolent of communism and the workhouse'.

They were set up by the Ministry of Food, following an initiative led by Britain's Minister of Food Lord Woolton to improve the nation's health and strength in the war. On Lord Woolton's instruction, the Ministry of Food formalised the establishment of *communal feeding centres* in 1940. They were also known as *community kitchens*, *community meal centres*, *civic* or *municipal restaurants*. They had already been established by local authorities and volunteer groups across the country, some of whom had the experience of similar initiatives in the First World War when they were called *national kitchens*.

Run by local government or voluntary agencies on a non-profit basis, meals were sold for a set maximum price of 9d (in old money). No-one could be served with a meal of more than one serving of meat, game, poultry, fish, eggs, or cheese. In one in ten restaurants the meals were prepared at central depots. Schools and churches were often used because they had dining halls and kitchens. In London, mobile canteens delivered meals to air raid shelters and on the street in the aftermath of air raids.

By contrast, ordinary private restaurants continued in operation and were not subject to rationing. They did have some restrictions: for instance, no meal could be more than three courses and the maximum price was five shillings (old money).

By mid-1941, over two hundred British Restaurants operated in the London County Council area alone, although the Wartime Social Survey conducted in 1942–43 indicated they were more popular in London than elsewhere in the country. By November 1942, there were 1,899 restaurants. By 1943, there were some 2,160 British Restaurants across the country, serving around 600,000 meals per day for around 9d a time (old money).

Some smaller places did not qualify for a British Restaurant, but, instead, had what was termed a *Cash and Carry Restaurant* with meals being delivered to it from a nearby British Restaurant.

The ministry's dieticians prepared food based upon regional preferences and health. For example, the food served in Scotland was very different from that served in London due to the taste preferences of the inhabitants. Health was also a concern for BRs, as they were supposed to provide diners with a third of the day's energy needs. The dieticians were especially concerned with Vitamin C intake. Due to the war efforts and rationing, fruit intake was extremely limited. Vegetables such as cabbage, which has a high percentage of Vitamin C, were implemented as a staple vegetable in BRs, to provide diners with beneficial nutrients. There was concern that, with mass catering, vitamins such as Vitamin C would be destroyed in the food sources.

The food in British Restaurants was said to be filling and of good quality. For 9d (again, old money), customers could get a three-course meal. Traditionally, customers wanted a meal of meat and two vegetables. Most BRs served choices of five meat dishes, five vegetables, and five desserts. BRs in more populated areas had even more options. Popular dishes included roasts and potatoes, which acted as a substitute for bread. The foods served in British Restaurants could be prepared in large quantities, which made them good options for feeding several hungry people.

The preparation of food in BRs was industrialised, which also helped with inexpensive, commercial food preparation. For example, volunteers sliced potatoes with machines, rather than by hand. After 1947 some restaurants were converted, under the Civic Restaurants Act, into civic restaurants run by the local council. In 1949, 678 still existed throughout the United Kingdom. The restaurants moved beyond the privations of wartime and into the new world of a Labour government making many changes to the social fabric of the country. The Labour Minister of Food, John Strachey, noted that "*private enterprise in the catering trade has, on the whole and by and large, catered for the middle class and not for the working class.*"

If a civic restaurant operated at a loss for three consecutive years, the act provided that ministerial consent would be needed for it to continue to remain open. These restaurants existed at least into the late 1960s, and in some areas later still – for example Cambridge had one until the redevelopment of Lion Yard in the early 1970s.

### WORTH READING:

In an article called 'National kitchens: communal dining in wartime', at: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/all-notices/content/100292> Dr Bryce Evans, senior lecturer in history at Liverpool Hope University, Describes the rise and fall of national kitchens, which offered simple, cheap, communal meals to combat hunger during World War I.

**Better Motoring for Less Money**  
**VAUXHALL** *alone*

Complete Range of New Models for 1979 Season as seen at the Motor Show

**10 h.p.** 40 m.p.g. The new edition of the popular Vauxhall "10." Smoother and sweeter in performance. Many refinements of detail. From **£168**

**12 h.p.** 35 m.p.g. Costs less to buy and less to run. From **£189**

**14 h.p.** 30 m.p.g. VAUXHALL'S LATEST and a worthy successor to the famous Vauxhall "Fourteen" which has a way on the leader in its class. De Luxe Saloon **£230**

**25 h.p.** 20 m.p.g. The aristocrat of the Vauxhall range. 80 m.p.h. Outstanding acceleration. From **£345**

**COMBINES ALL THESE 7 FEATURES**

- 1 20% more m.p.g.
- 2 Lively acceleration and excellent top speed performance.
- 3 Independent Springing. Not only changes riding into gliding but improves stability.
- 4 High standard of safety. Hydraulic brakes.
- 5 Greater strength with less weight.
- 6 Driving ease. Controlled Synchromesh. Accurate shock-free steering.
- 7 Comfort. Body Conformity seats. No-Drought Ventilation and sliding roof on all de luxe models.

Scientific sound insulation.

**E. R. MORRIS,**  
**FRANKLYNN GARAGE, HAYWARDS HEATH**

**Phone 200.**

May we demonstrate  
or send a separate  
booklet on any model?

**NEW 14 H.P. 8-CYL. DE LU  
SALON, £230.**

**THE LAST DANCE** (R)  
(for Adult)  
Exchange is **DRUM AND GRASS** (R)  
by **Recording Industry**  
Children's show at 10 a.m.

---

**"NE (THE LORD) satisfieth  
the longing soul and filleth  
the hungry soul with  
goodness."**

**Have YOU real heart-  
satisfaction?**

*Help will gladly be given,  
in confidence and freely, if you  
write to "Son Nite," Box  
108, 4 Mid - States Tones  
Office, Naperville, Ill.*

**NATIONAL MARK EGGS.**  
Inquire: Peter Lammie and Son Ltd.,  
Glasgow, request the following official size  
and wholesale egg prices.—Spermin, 22  
to 24; 24 to 26; 26 to 28; 28 to 30; 30 to 32;  
32 to 34; 34 to 36; 36 to 38; 38 to 40; 40 to 42;  
42 to 44; 44 to 46; 46 to 48; 48 to 50; 50 to 52;  
52 to 54; 54 to 56; 56 to 58; 58 to 60; 60 to 62;  
62 to 64; 64 to 66; 66 to 68; 68 to 70; 70 to 72;  
72 to 74; 74 to 76; 76 to 78; 78 to 80; 80 to 82;  
82 to 84; 84 to 86; 86 to 88; 88 to 90; 90 to 92;  
92 to 94; 94 to 96; 96 to 98; 98 to 100; 100 to 102;  
102 to 104; 104 to 106; 106 to 108; 108 to 110;  
110 to 112; 112 to 114; 114 to 116; 116 to 118;  
118 to 120; 120 to 122; 122 to 124; 124 to 126;  
126 to 128; 128 to 130; 130 to 132; 132 to 134;  
134 to 136; 136 to 138; 138 to 140; 140 to 142;  
142 to 144; 144 to 146; 146 to 148; 148 to 150;  
150 to 152; 152 to 154; 154 to 156; 156 to 158;  
158 to 160; 160 to 162; 162 to 164; 164 to 166;  
166 to 168; 168 to 170; 170 to 172; 172 to 174;  
174 to 176; 176 to 178; 178 to 180; 180 to 182;  
182 to 184; 184 to 186; 186 to 188; 188 to 190;  
190 to 192; 192 to 194; 194 to 196; 196 to 198;  
198 to 200; 200 to 202; 202 to 204; 204 to 206;  
206 to 208; 208 to 210; 210 to 212; 212 to 214;  
214 to 216; 216 to 218; 218 to 220; 220 to 222;  
222 to 224; 224 to 226; 226 to 228; 228 to 230;  
230 to 232; 232 to 234; 234 to 236; 236 to 238;  
238 to 240; 240 to 242; 242 to 244; 244 to 246;  
246 to 248; 248 to 250; 250 to 252; 252 to 254;  
254 to 256; 256 to 258; 258 to 260; 260 to 262;  
262 to 264; 264 to 266; 266 to 268; 268 to 270;  
270 to 272; 272 to 274; 274 to 276; 276 to 278;  
278 to 280; 280 to 282; 282 to 284; 284 to 286;  
286 to 288; 288 to 290; 290 to 292; 292 to 294;  
294 to 296; 296 to 298; 298 to 300; 300 to 302;  
302 to 304; 304 to 306; 306 to 308; 308 to 310;  
310 to 312; 312 to 314; 314 to 316; 316 to 318;  
318 to 320; 320 to 322; 322 to 324; 324 to 326;  
326 to 328; 328 to 330; 330 to 332; 332 to 334;  
334 to 336; 336 to 338; 338 to 340; 340 to 342;  
342 to 344; 344 to 346; 346 to 348; 348 to 350;  
350 to 352; 352 to 354; 354 to 356; 356 to 358;  
358 to 360; 360 to 362; 362 to 364; 364 to 366;  
366 to 368; 368 to 370; 370 to 372; 372 to 374;  
374 to 376; 376 to 378; 378 to 380; 380 to 382;  
382 to 384; 384 to 386; 386 to 388; 388 to 390;  
390 to 392; 392 to 394; 394 to 396; 396 to 398;  
398 to 400; 400 to 402; 402 to 404; 404 to 406;  
406 to 408; 408 to 410; 410 to 412; 412 to 414;  
414 to 416; 416 to 418; 418 to 420; 420 to 422;  
422 to 424; 424 to 426; 426 to 428; 428 to 430;  
430 to 432; 432 to 434; 434 to 436; 436 to 438;  
438 to 440; 440 to 442; 442 to 444; 444 to 446;  
446 to 448; 448 to 450; 450 to 452; 452 to 454;  
454 to 456; 456 to 458; 458 to 460; 460 to 462;  
462 to 464; 464 to 466; 466 to 468; 468 to 470;  
470 to 472; 472 to 474; 474 to 476; 476 to 478;  
478 to 480; 480 to 482; 482 to 484; 484 to 486;  
486 to 488; 488 to 490; 490 to 492; 492 to 494;  
494 to 496; 496 to 498; 498 to 500; 500 to 502;  
502 to 504; 504 to 506; 506 to 508; 508 to 510;  
510 to 512; 512 to 514; 514 to 516; 516 to 518;  
518 to 520; 520 to 522; 522 to 524; 524 to 526;  
526 to 528; 528 to 530; 530 to 532; 532 to 534;  
534 to 536; 536 to 538; 538 to 540; 540 to 542;  
542 to 544; 544 to 546; 546 to 548; 548 to 550;  
550 to 552; 552 to 554; 554 to 556; 556 to 558;  
558 to 560; 560 to 562; 562 to 564; 564 to 566;  
566 to 568; 568 to 570; 570 to 572; 572 to 574;  
574 to 576; 576 to 578; 578 to 580; 580 to 582;  
582 to 584; 584 to 586; 586 to 588; 588 to 590;  
590 to 592; 592 to 594; 594 to 596; 596 to 598;  
598 to 600; 600 to 602; 602 to 604; 604 to 606;  
606 to 608; 608 to 610; 610 to 612; 612 to 614;  
614 to 616; 616 to 618; 618 to 620; 620 to 622;  
622 to 624; 624 to 626; 626 to 628; 628 to 630;  
630 to 632; 632 to 634; 634 to 636; 636 to 638;  
638 to 640; 640 to 642; 642 to 644; 644 to 646;  
646 to 648; 648 to 650; 650 to 652; 652 to 654;  
654 to 656; 656 to 658; 658 to 660; 660 to 662;  
662 to 664; 664 to 666; 666 to 668; 668 to 670;  
670 to 672; 672 to 674; 674 to 676; 676 to 678;  
678 to 680; 680 to 682; 682 to 684; 684 to 686;  
686 to 688; 688 to 690; 690 to 692; 692 to 694;  
694 to 696; 696 to 698; 698 to 700; 700 to 702;  
702 to 704; 704 to 706; 706 to 708; 708 to 710;  
710 to 712; 712 to 714; 714 to 716; 716 to 718;  
718 to 720; 720 to 722; 722 to 724; 724 to 726;  
726 to 728; 728 to 730; 730 to 732; 732 to 734;  
734 to 736; 736 to 738; 738 to 740; 740 to 742;  
742 to 744; 744 to 746; 746 to 748; 748 to 750;  
750 to 752; 752 to 754; 754 to 756; 756 to 758;  
758 to 760; 760 to 762; 762 to 764; 764 to 766;  
766 to 768; 768 to 770; 770 to 772; 772 to 774;  
774 to 776; 776 to 778; 778 to 780; 780 to 782;  
782 to 784; 784 to 786; 786 to 788; 788 to 790;  
790 to 792; 792 to 794; 794 to 796; 796 to 798;  
798 to 800; 800 to 802; 802 to 804; 804 to 806;  
806 to 808; 808 to 810; 810 to 812; 812 to 814;  
814 to 816; 816 to 818; 818 to 820; 820 to 822;  
822 to 824; 824 to 826; 826 to

**THE CO-OPERATIVE CLOTHING STORES**  
MAIL ORDER DEPARTMENT  
**SAVINGS IN MEN'S WINTER CLOTHING**

11	5.35	6.11	5140	Palmer	Can.	71
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						
31						
32						
33						
34						
35						
36						
37						
38						
39						
40						
41						
42						
43						
44						
45						
46						
47						
48						
49						
50						
51						
52						
53						
54						
55						
56						
57						
58						
59						
60						
61						
62						
63						
64						
65						
66						
67						
68						
69						
70						
71						
72						
73						
74						
75						
76						
77						
78						
79						
80						
81						
82						
83						
84						
85						
86						
87						
88						
89						
90						
91						
92						
93						
94						
95						
96						
97						
98						
99						
100						

[illegible]

**CO-OPERATIVE CLOTHING STORE**  
(Smith & Brown Ltd.),  
25 TRAFALGAR STREET, BRIGHTON  
Sunder 41 14 Lorne Road, Brighton, S.  
75 George Street, Hove.

**Very Low Rates, Expert Packing**

**GAITY**  
LEWES RD BRIGHTON  
Free Car Park, Tel.: 01293 3314, From: 6.45, 9d. 11.10, 12.30, 2.30

**SAVOY**

 <b>THE ELBOW INN</b> 1431 STREET BRIGANTON, N.J. 07001 201-991-1111 • 201-991-1112			
<b>Daily Thursday Night—</b> Tami Walla, Sax Minors to OLD 1807 • Dennis O'Keefe, Ann Morris to THE CLASS •			
Friday, December 10th, to Seven Days			
<b>DAVIDSON &amp; GULYAN</b> DENNIS O'KEEFE		<b>JAYE WITHERS</b> ROBERT KENT	
<b>HOLD THAT KISS</b>		<b>ANGEL'S HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>SECRET ROONEY</b> 1.50 2.50 3.50		<b>RALLY HARE</b> 1.00 2.00 3.00 T	
Midnight Performances every Wednesday, at 1.50			
<b>SAVOY RESTAURANT</b>		<b>FULLY LICENSED</b>	

**PALACE PIER, BRIGHTON.**  
The House of Fashioning.  
Opening Day and onwards. Times 8.15 and 7.30.  
BALLARD BROWN'S 1915 Annual Performances—  
"MOTHER HUBBARD"  
A Wonderful Two Performers in 10 Curious Scenes.  
ERNE LENO. HARRY NEIL. FRED & CAROL. MARIAN FRANGE.  
EVE MATTHEWS. BARRY TARKER. THE TIVI SHAKENFELDS.  
Mills Jackson's Dazzling 12. Teddy Rappo and His Orchestra.

## History of the toilet

Researched from the sources shown below and, in some cases, excerpted from text at those sources. They are also recommended for reading if you are interested in this subject:

- [https://www.baus.org.uk/museum/164/a\\_brief\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_flush\\_toilet](https://www.baus.org.uk/museum/164/a_brief_history_of_the_flush_toilet)
- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/tudor/toilet-history-facts-thomas-crappier-spend-penny-romans/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toilet>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zfhmrj6>
- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/turrets-toilets-partial-history-throne-room-180951788/>
- <https://victoriaplum.com/blog/posts/a-brief-history-of-the-toilet>
- <https://www.plumbworld.co.uk/the-history-of-the-toilet-infopage>
- <https://fiveminutehistory.com/a-brief-history-of-toilets/>
- <http://www.localhistories.org/toilets.html>



Picture Credit: "M.Ulster 20180428 - Portaferry - IMG\_20180428\_210420" by M. Ulster is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

*"The humble toilet is something many of us take for granted. However, the next time you flush, just pause a minute to marvel at what is a truly incredible feat of human engineering. The idea of a room in a home dedicated to personal hygiene and grooming is, strictly speaking, a recent one. For the most part, houses built much before the turn of the century didn't have bathrooms. So, in the span of about 100 years, the modern bathroom has evolved from a novelty into an almost universal residential fixture. But there has always been a need for disposing of human waste, as well as a need for providing facilities for bathing and grooming. How those human needs evolved into the modern bathroom is a story about both technology and culture."*

VictoriaPlum.com

The honour of producing the first toilet goes either to the Scots (in a Neolithic settlement dating back to 3000 BC) or to the Greeks who constructed the Palace of Knossos (in 1700 BC) with large earthenware pans connected to a flushing water supply.

**Timeline** (from: <http://www.localhistories.org/toiletttime.html>) Items marked \* are additions to that timeline by Martin Pollins

### Introduction

\* King Minos of Crete had the first flushing water closet recorded in history over 2800 years ago. A toilet was discovered in the tomb of a Chinese king of the Western Han Dynasty from 206 BC to 24 AD. The ancient Romans had a system of sewers. They built simple outhouses or latrines directly over the running waters of the sewers that poured into the Tiber River.

### Ancient Toilets

- C 2,300 BC: At Skara Brae in Scotland stone huts have drains with cubicles over them. They may have been toilets.
- C 2,000 BC: In Northwest India and Pakistan, towns are built with networks of sewers. Toilets are flushed with water.

- C 1,800 BC: On Crete some toilets are flushed with water.
- C 1,200 BC: In Egypt rich people use a container with sand, which is emptied by slaves.
- C 100 AD: In Rome sewers collect rainwater and sewage. There are public lavatories. The Romans have a goddess of sewers called Cloacina.

### Medieval and Renaissance Toilets

- 12th Century: At Portchester Castle monks built stone chutes leading to the sea. When the tide went in and out it flushed away the sewage.
- 1200: In castles the toilet is a vertical shaft cut into the thickness of the walls with a stone seat on top.
- 14-15th centuries: Some towns in Medieval Europe have public toilets,
- \*1449: Thomas Brightfield of London was the first to provide a written specification for a flushing toilet.
- 1500: Ordinary people often use the leaves of a plant called woolly mullein as toilet paper.
- 1547: People are forbidden to go to the toilet in the courtyards of royal palaces.
- 1596: Sir John Harrington is credited with inventing a flushing toilet, but the idea fails to catch on. People continue to use cesspits, which are cleaned by men called gong farmers.

### Modern Toilets

- 1775: Alexander Cumming patents a flushing lavatory.
- 1778: Joseph Bramah makes a better design.
- 1850: Earth closets are popular. When you pulled a lever, granulated clay from a box covered the contents of the pan.
- 1852: The first modern public lavatory opens.
- \*1861: Thomas Crapper improved on the original model created by Harrington and becomes widely celebrated as the pioneer of the flush toilet.
- 1857: Toilet paper goes on sale in the USA. It is sold in sheets.
- 1883: The vacant/engaged bolt is invented.
- 1884: The first pedestal toilet pan is made.
- 1890: Toilet paper on rolls goes on sale in the USA.
- 1892: John Nevil Maskelyne invents the coin-operated lock for toilets
- 1900: For the first time, some houses for skilled workers are built with inside lavatories.
- 1928: Toilet paper on rolls goes on sale in Europe,
- 1942: Soft toilet paper goes on sale.

**Roman Toilets** (attribution: [https://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/article\\_hadrianswall-housesteads-lat.htm](https://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/article_hadrianswall-housesteads-lat.htm))

To the Romans, going to the lavatory was something of a social occasion so no provision was made for privacy and the seats were more like a continuous bench with keyhole shaped openings. The system was flushed by a system of water channels fed by rainwater and runoff—this was later supplemented by an enormous cistern with a capacity of close to 24,000 litres. Another water channel ran around the perimeter of the central platform so that the men could wash themselves—the Roman generally used a 'sponge on a stick' in place of toilet paper. Eventually the water channel became so badly worn as to be unusable and large basins were provided instead.

### The 'Great Stink' of 1858

When the smell from the River Thames was so bad in 1858 that MPs even considered abandoning Westminster, the Metropolitan Board of Works was tasked with overhauling London's sewerage system. Civil engineer Joseph Bazalgette was put in charge of operations. His 16-year project included embanking parts of the Thames, constructing 1,100 miles of street sewers, 82 miles of main interceptor sewers and building four monumental pumping stations, all designed to take the sewage eastwards to be discharged into the river away from heavily-populated areas.

## Who owns England?

Researched from the sources shown below and, in some cases, excerpted from text at those sources. They are also recommended for reading if you are interested in this subject:

- <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/articles/who-really-owns-britain-20219>
- <https://www.forbritain.uk/2020/07/28/who-owns-britain/>
- <https://map.whoownsengland.org/>

### Our Countryside and the importance of Nature

On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, BBC News reported that PM Boris Johnson has promised to protect 30% of UK's land by 2030. An extra 400,000 hectares of English countryside will be protected to support the recovery of nature. He made the commitment at a virtual United Nations event, joining a global pledge from 65 leaders to reverse losses in the natural world by the same date. National parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and other protected areas make up 26% of land in England. The 'Who Owns England' website says this has thrown a spotlight on how poorly protected many of our remaining habitats are. It also raised questions about what land we target for nature restoration.

So, the big questions are: how are England's 10 largest landowners using their land? What sorts of habitats do they own? And what more can they be doing to help fix the climate and ecological emergencies?

These are all good questions. Investigations by the *Who Owns England* people resulted in the publication of some very interesting information reproduced by the table below. Friends of the Earth's press release at: <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/trees/englands-10-biggest-landowners-must-grow-more-trees> (also covered by the Guardian at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/04/englands-biggest-landowners-not-growing-enough-trees-report>) revealed the extent of woodland cover of England's top ten landowners, with the Duchy of Cornwall and the Church Commissioners ranked last.

Landowner	Acreage owned in England	%age woodland
Forestry Commission	489,814	85%
National Trust	474,641	18%
MOD	397,098	15%
Crown Estate	264,233 (landward acreage only)	15%
United Utilities	141,000	12%
Highways England	114,314	12%
Network Rail	100,525	11%
RSPB	127,032	10%
Duchy of Cornwall	130,639	6%
Church Commissioners	105,000 (mapped 73,000 acres)	3%-4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,344,296 (7% of England)</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>32,000,000</b>	<b>10%</b>

### Who owns England?

Behind this simple question lies this country's oldest and best-kept secret: How England's elite came to own our land.

Simon Cocking who reviewed Guy Shrubsole's book (see later) says:

*"For centuries, England's elite have covered up how they got their hands on millions of acres of our land, by constructing walls, burying surveys and more recently, sheltering behind offshore shell companies. But with the dawn of digital mapping and the Freedom of Information Act, it's becoming increasingly difficult for them to hide. It is quite shocking to learn how opaque and labyrinthine the land ownership of so much of England is. The Crown, especially between various duchies and legacy creations, has ensured that much of what they own is never visible for public scrutiny. While also at the same time successive national governments have seemed, hell-bent on a fire-sale of valuable areas of nature and beauty, at uneconomic prices, and with no criteria about how the land should be cared for."*

Country Life Magazine (16<sup>th</sup> November 2010) published an article titled: *Who Really Owns Britain*. (You can read the article at: <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/articles/who-really-owns-britain-20219>). When *Who Owns Britain* was originally published in 2001, the Government was forced to admit that the Land Registry did not possess information about the total acreage of land in England and Wales, nor records as to the ownership of at least 35% of the two countries. We were told in 2010 that more than 24.7 million acres-or just under 75% of land is subject to a register of title with the Government agency (the Land Registry). However, as compulsory registration was brought in on a regional basis - beginning with parts of London in 1890 and the rest of England and Wales by 1990 - a piece of land that has not changed hands or been re-mortgaged since the date when it became compulsory to register in that particular area of the country may not have been registered at all. Therefore, although the Land Registry aims to reflect another 618,000 acres through voluntary registration in 2010/11, we may never know exactly who owns how much of the British countryside.

What we do know, however, is that the aristocracy and the Royal Family still play an important role in the ownership of our country. More than a third of land is still in the hands of aristocrats, and traditional landed gentry. Indeed, the 36,000 members of the CLA own about 50% of the rural land in England and Wales.

What is also clear is that, for all of us and not only the very rich, the pursuit of land ownership is as important as it's ever been. And, according to leading estate agents, an increasing number of overseas buyers feels just the same way about owning a slice of the British Isles.

ABC Finance, at: <https://abcfinance.co.uk/blog/who-owns-the-uk/>, says that the UK is made up from approximately 60 million acres which certainly seems like enough room for everybody to carve out their property dreams. However, the top 50 landowners currently control 7.3 million acres which equates to over 12% of the total of Britain's landmass. See how the numbers come together:

Who?	Acreage owned
Charitable Organisations and Environmental Interests	3,238,057
Royalty and Nobility	1,591,251
Military	1,116,060
Foreign companies, Royalty or Business Moguls	562,285
Utility Companies	459,876
British Entrepreneurs and Large Business Owners	188,974
Other (Educational and Religious Institutions)	119,707
Property Developers	55,033

### READING:

Available at Amazon:

- Who Owns England? How We Lost Our Land and How to Take It Back, by Guy Shrubsole, 2018 IndiBooks.
- Who Owns Britain and Ireland, by Kevin Cahill, 2002 Canongate Books.



Picture Credit: "Ascot House Gardens, Buckinghamshire, UK | National Trust gardens with fields of spring daffodils as far as the eye can see (5 of 22)" by ukgardenphotos is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

## Operation FORTITUDE - designed to mislead the Germans

Researched from the sources shown below and, in some cases, excerpted from text at those sources. They are also recommended for reading if you are interested in this subject:

- <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/d-day-spies>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Fortitude](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Fortitude)
- <https://www.history.co.uk/article/operation-fortitude-the-d-day-deception-campaign-that-fooled-the-nazis>
- <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle/history-and-stories/d-day-deception/>
- <https://www.dday-overlord.com/en/d-day/preparations/operation-fortitude>
- <http://ukhistorianbendavidson.co.uk/operation-fortitude/>
- [https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Fortitude](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Operation_Fortitude)



Picture Credit: Screenshot from YouTube Video (see URL at end of this story)

Operation Fortitude was the codename for a World War II military deception employed by the Allied nations as part of an overall deception strategy (itself codenamed Bodyguard) during the build-up to the 1944 Normandy landings. Fortitude was divided into two sub-plans, North and South, with the aim of misleading the German High Command as to the location of the invasion.

### Double Agents

The story of Operation Fortitude is both fascinating and complex. Some of the key people involved in the Operation were an odd mix, a bisexual Peruvian playgirl, a tiny Polish fighter pilot, a mercurial Frenchwoman, a Serbian seducer, and a deeply eccentric Spaniard with a diploma in chicken farming. The best of the double agents were men and women who were recruited by the Nazis but were anti-Nazi. Two of these agents were:

- Eddie Chapman was a professional criminal and safecracker imprisoned on the Channel island of Guernsey in 1940 when it was occupied by the German Army. Recruited by the Abwehr, he was trained in codes and tradecraft and then parachuted into England where he promptly surrendered to MI-5. Codenamed ZIGZAG (for his erratic past record and possibly some initial doubts about his loyalty), Chapman quickly impressed his German case officer. In the end, he was awarded the Iron Cross, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. In fact, the only Englishman to be awarded that medal.
- The last agent was codenamed GARBO by his case officers: Juan Pujol Garcia was a Spanish anti-Fascist, and a cavalry officer, but also a graduate of the Royal Poultry School in Spain, the most prestigious chicken farming school in the country. Unfortunately, his chicken farm in Barcelona failed (in a strange coincidence, Heinrich Himmler and Adolf Eichmann were also failed chicken farmers. At first, his offer to spy for the British was refused. He then offered himself to the Germans with the plan to become a double agent for the British. The Germans declined but after he began to concoct "intelligence" for them (all derived from public sources and attributed to a network of fictitious sub-agents) the Germans took him on board not realising he was a double agent. By June 1944, Pujol had a network of some 26 agents (all false) producing a constant stream of hundreds of coded messages, all drafted by Pujol and his case officer Tomas Harris.

### Phantom Field Armies

Both Fortitude sub-plans involved the creation of phantom field armies (based in Edinburgh, and the south of England) which threatened Norway (Fortitude North) and Pas de Calais (Fortitude South). The operation was intended to divert Axis attention away from Normandy and, after the invasion on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, to delay reinforcement by convincing the Germans that the landings were purely a diversionary attack.

### Planning and Responsibility

The planning of Operation Fortitude came under the auspices of the London Controlling Section (LCS), a secret body that was set up to manage Allied deception strategy during the war. However, the execution of each plan fell to the various theatre Commanders. In the case of Fortitude, it was Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEP) under General Dwight Eisenhower. A special section, Ops (B) was established at SHAEP to handle the operation and all the theatre's deception warfare. The LCS retained responsibility for what was called "special means", the use of diplomatic channels and double agents.

Fortitude was split into two parts, North and South, both with similar aims. Fortitude North was intended to convince the German High Command that the Allies, staging out of Scotland, would attempt an invasion of occupied Norway. Fortitude South used the same tactic, with the apparent objective being Pas de Calais.

### ULTRA and Double Cross

The Allies were assisted in the deception by two factors:

- The first of these was ULTRA – the codename for the intelligence received from Bletchley Park, where a crack team of codebreakers had successfully broken the German secret coding system Enigma. The Germans, convinced that Enigma could not be broken, remained totally unaware of this fact and their consequent vulnerability. So that the Allies could check the success of any information, or misinformation, that they planted, they intercepted and read the decoded responses.
- The second factor was the Allies control of several double agents by the Twenty Committee of MI5, the British intelligence agency, under the Double Cross System, as mentioned left. Their direction of these agents was such that the Germans were completely unaware that they were being constantly manipulated.

### WATCH:

YouTube Video -The Greatest Deception of WW2: Operation Fortitude: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRIEWXlmo\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRIEWXlmo_c)

### READ MORE:

The D-Day Overlord website gives you access to the complete D-Day and Battle of Normandy media archives. You can discover more than 3,700 photos and 35 hours of videos illustrating the preparation, the progress and the consequences of the Normandy campaign: <https://www.dday-overlord.com/en/media-library>

### Selected books, all available at Amazon:

- Operation Fortitude: The Greatest Hoax of the Second World War, by Joshua Levine 2012
- D-day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion (Praeger Security International), by Mary Kathryn Barbier 2007
- OPERATION FORTITUDE: The Closed Loop D-Day Deception Plan, by Major Ernest S. Tavares Jr. USAF 2015
- Double Cross: The True Story of The D-Day Spies, by Ben Macintyre 2016

### You could have heard a pin drop... but don't be unkind to the French

**D**ean Rusk, John F Kennedy's Secretary of State, was in France in the early 1960s when President DeGaulle decided to pull out of NATO. De Gaulle said he wanted all US military out of France as soon as possible. Rusk responded: "Does that include those who are buried here?"

#### You could have heard a pin drop



Picture Credit: "File:Bundesarchiv B 145 Bild-F015892-0010, Charles de Gaulle (cropped 2).jpg" by Wegmann, Ludwig is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

**T**here was a conference in France where a number of international engineers were taking part, including French and Americans. Shortly after a coffee break, one of the French engineers came back into the room saying sarcastically: "Have you heard the latest dumb thing Bush has done? He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims. What does he intend to do, bomb them?"

A Boeing engineer standing nearby replied in a measured tone: "Our carriers have three hospitals on board that can treat several hundred people; they are nuclear powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they have three cafeterias with the capacity to feed 3,000 people three meals a day; they can produce several thousand gallons of fresh-water from sea-water each day, and they carry a number of helicopters which can be used in transporting victims and injured to and from their flight deck.

"We have eleven such ships; how many does France have?"

#### You could have heard a pin drop.

**A** Royal Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., England, Canada, Australia and France.

At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of Officers from those countries.

Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks when a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, the English learn only English.

He then asked "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?"

Without hesitating, the British Admiral replied: "Maybe it's because the British, the Americans, the Canadians, the Aussies, the Kiwis and the South Africans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German."

#### You could have heard a pin drop

**R**obert Whiting, an elderly British gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane. At French Customs, he took some time to locate his passport in his carry on.

"You have been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked sarcastically.

Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously.

"Then you should know enough to have your passport ready."

The Englishman replied, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it.."

"Impossible... You English always have to show your passports on arrival in France!"

The English senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look - then he quietly explained,

"Well, when I came ashore at Gold Beach on D-Day in 1944, to help liberate this country, I couldn't find a single Frenchmen to show a passport to."

#### You could have heard a pin drop

*Contributed by Duncan Reeves*

## Finish with a Smile



Contributed by  
Chris Maschamp

Senior Citizens crossing the road: see the video: click>>>> [HERE](#)



Contributed by  
Alan Tatnall



Contributed by  
Peter Nillson

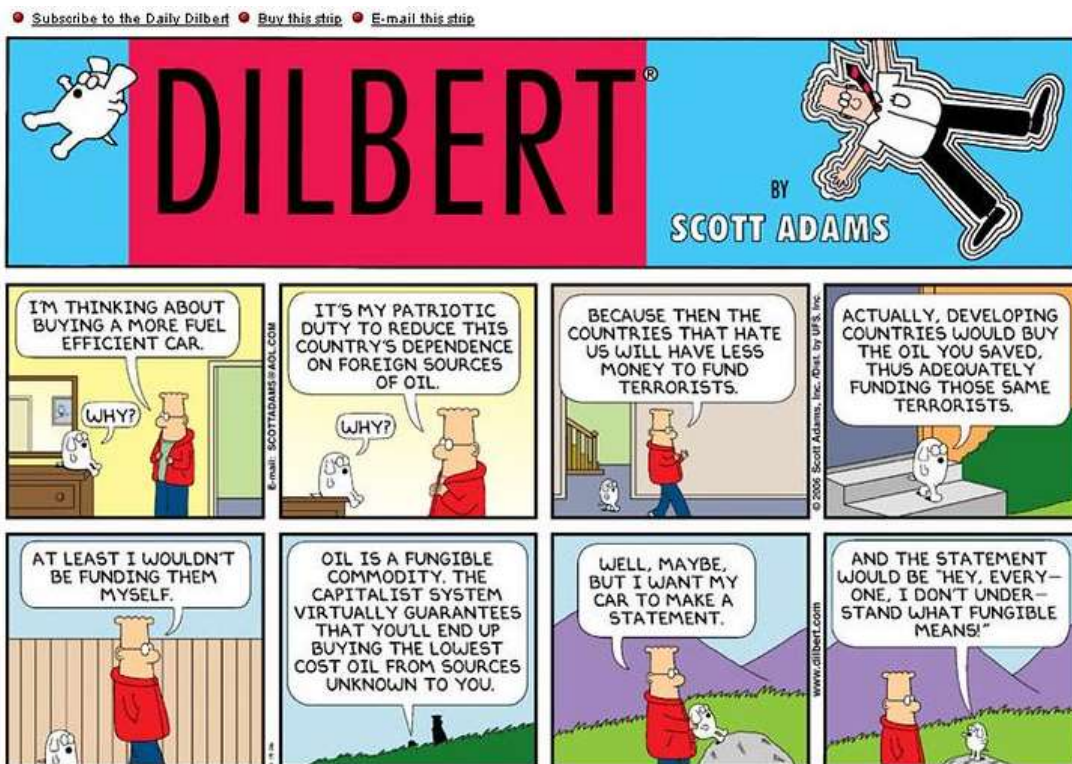
Learn what the new speaking rules are: click>>>> [HERE](#)

The buses were all full



Contributed by  
Mike Strolley

So Stan took the Tube home



© Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

Picture Credit: "what is fungible?" by ~C4Chaos is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0