

Nil Desperandum

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Never Alone



Picture Credit: [Cropped] "A Happy Man" by Krynowek Eine is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

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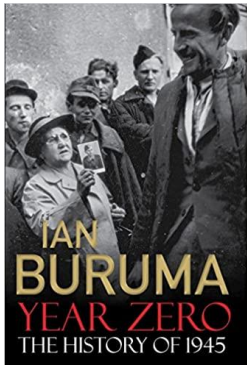
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Year Zero: A History of 1945



This selection is from a book with that title (pages: 16-19), published by Penguin Random House Company, Copyright 2013 by Ian Buruma (Author).

The official end to World War II in Europe was attended by jockeying among political leaders, confusion, and massive celebrations:

"The official date for the end of the war in Europe, V-E Day, was, in fact, May 8. Even though the unconditional surrender of all German troops was signed in a schoolhouse in Rheims on the evening of May 6, the celebrations could not yet begin. Stalin was furious that General Eisenhower had presumed to accept the German surrender for the eastern as well as western fronts. Only the Soviets should have that privilege, in Berlin. Stalin wanted to postpone V-E Day till May 9. This, in turn, annoyed Churchill.

"People all over Britain were already busy baking bread for celebratory sandwiches; flags and banners had been prepared; church bells were waiting to be tolled. In the general confusion, it was the Germans who first announced the end of the war in a radio broadcast from Flensburg, where Admiral Doenitz was still nominally in charge of what remained of the tattered German Reich. This was picked up by the BBC. Special editions of the French, British, and U.S. newspapers soon hit the streets. In London, large crowds gathered around Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square, expecting Churchill to announce victory so the biggest party in history could finally begin. Ticker tape started raining in the streets of New York. But still, there was no official announcement from the Allied leaders that the war with Germany was over.

"Just before midnight on May 8, at the Soviet HQ in Karlshorst, near my father's old labor camp, Marshal Georgy Zhukov, the brutal military genius, at last accepted the German surrender. Once more, Admiral von Friedeberg put his signature to the German defeat. Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, expressionless, rigid, every inch the Prussian soldier, told the Russians that he was horrified by the extent of destruction wrought on the German capital. Whereupon a Russian officer asked Keitel whether he had been equally horrified when on his orders, thousands of Soviet villages and towns were obliterated, and millions of people, including many children, were buried under the ruins. Keitel shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

"Zhukov then asked the Germans to leave, and the Russians, together with their American, British, and French allies, celebrated in style with teary-eyed speeches and huge amounts of wine, cognac, and

vodka. A banquet was held in that same room the following day when Zhukov toasted Eisenhower as one of the greatest generals of all time. The toasts went on and on and on, and the Russian generals, including Zhukov, danced, until few men were left standing.

"On May 8, crowds were already going crazy in New York. They were also pouring into the streets in London, but a peculiar hush still fell over the British crowds, as though they were waiting for Churchill's voice to set off the celebrations. Churchill, who had decided to ignore Stalin's wish to postpone V-E Day till the ninth, would speak at 3 P.M. President Truman had already spoken earlier. General Charles de Gaulle, refusing to be upstaged by Churchill, insisted on making his announcement to the French at exactly the same time.

"Churchill's speech on the BBC was heard on radios around the world. There was no more room to move on Parliament Square outside Westminster, where loudspeakers had been installed. People were pressed against the gates of Buckingham Palace. Cars could no longer get through the crowds in the West End. Big Ben sounded three times. The crowd went quiet, and at last, Churchill's voice boomed through the loudspeakers: 'The German war is therefore at an end ... almost the whole world was combined against the evil-doers, who are now prostrate before us ... We must now devote all our strength and resources to the completion of our task, both at home and abroad ...' And here his voice broke: 'Advance Britannia! Long live the cause of freedom! God save the King.' A little later, he made the V for Victory sign on the balcony of the Ministry of Health. 'God bless you all. This is your victory!' And the crowd yelled back: 'No, it is yours!'

"The Daily Herald reported: 'There were fantastic "mafficking" scenes in the heart of the city as cheering, dancing, laughing, uncontrollable crowds mobbed buses, jumped on the roofs of cars, tore down a hoarding for causeway bonfires, kissed policemen and dragged them into the dancing ... Motorists gave the V-sign on their electric horns. Out on the river, tugs and ships made the night echo and re-echo with V-sirens.

"Somewhere in that crowd were my eighteen-year-old mother, who had been given time off from her boarding school, and her younger brother. My grandmother, Winifred Schlesinger, daughter of German-Jewish immigrants, had every reason to be happy, and her worship of Churchill knew no bounds. But she was nervous that her children might get lost in the 'excited, drunken crowd-especially Yanks.'

"In New York, five hundred thousand people celebrated in the streets. Curfew was lifted. The clubs – the Copacabana, the Versailles, the Latin Quarter, the Diamond Horseshoe, El Morocco – were packed and open half the night. Lionel Hampton was playing at the Zanzibar, Eddie Stone at the Hotel Roosevelt Grill, and 'jumbo portions' of food were on offer at Jack Dempsey's.

"In Paris, on the Place de la Republique, a reporter for the Liberation newspaper watched 'a moving mass of people, bristling with allied flags. An American soldier was wobbling on his long legs, in a strange state of disequilibrium, trying to take

photographs, two bottles of cognac, one empty, one still full, sticking from his khaki pockets.' A U.S. bomber pilot thrilled the crowd by flying his Mitchell B-25 through the gap under the Eiffel Tower."

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.

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Available on Amazon

Many books have been written, and continue to be written, about the Second World War: military histories, histories of the Holocaust, the war in Asia, or collaboration and resistance in Europe. Few books have taken a close look at the immediate aftermath of the worldwide catastrophe. Drawing on hundreds of eye-witness accounts and personal stories, this sweeping book examines the seven months (in Europe) and four months (in Asia) that followed the surrender of the Axis powers, from the fate of Holocaust survivors liberated from the concentration camps, and the formation of the state of Israel, to the incipient civil war in China, and the allied occupation of Japan.

It was a time when terrible revenge was taken on collaborators and their former masters; of ubiquitous black markets, war crime tribunals; and the servicing of millions of occupation troops, former foes in some places, liberators in others. But *Year Zero* is not just a story of vengeance. It was also a new beginning, of democratic restorations in Japan and West Germany, of social democracy in Britain and of a new world order under the United Nations. If construction follows destruction, *Year Zero* describes that extraordinary moment in between, when people faced the wreckage, full of despair, as well as great hope. An old world had been destroyed; a new one was yet to be built. *

The book is available for purchase on Amazon (here).

* Description/review above derived from Amazon.co.uk

Book Reviews

- <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/oct/11/year-zero-1945-ian-buruma-review>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/29/books/review/year-zero-by-ian-buruma.html>
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The submerged village of South Tyrol

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- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reschensee>
- <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/20657/italys-most-famous-drowned-town>



Picture Credit: "the church in the lake" by [juliaschilling](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

Since Roman times, the towns of *Graun* and *Reschen* high in the Alps near the Italian-Swiss border, had been occupied. But things changed in 1939 when the local power company drew up plans for a dam to give the area plenty of seasonal electricity. It meant the creation of an artificial lake that would unify two natural lakes and submerge the towns in the valley between them. The villagers didn't like the idea, but despite public outcry and delays due to World War II, the towns were eventually submerged in 1950 (with everyone safely removed, of course).

Lake Reschen or Reschensee is now an artificial alpine lake in the western part of South Tyrol (municipality of Curon Venosta, Italy). It is one of the places tourists who visit the area love the most.

Today, all that you can see above the waterline is the *campanile*, or bell tower, of *Graun's* 14th century church - St. Katharina (founded in 1357). Below the lake's waters are fish and eels and the remains of 163 homes - instead of people. These days, the remaining church steeple draws tourists, especially in the winter, when the lake freezes and visitors can walk across it. Some say you can still hear the bell toll on the coldest nights - if so, they probably need to check their hearing as it's not true - the bells were removed from the tower on 18th July 1950, a week before the demolition of the church nave and the creation of the lake.

The lake is considered the largest in the province, with a capacity of 120 million cubic metres, and its surface area of 6.6 sq. km makes it the largest in the Alps. The church tower (see picture above) peeking above the water (frozen over in the picture above) offers a clue to the past at Lake Reschen in South Tyrol, Italy's most northern province.

The modern residential area of *Curon Venosta*, with some 2,450 residents, is basically the reconstruction of the old village submerged in 1950 to create the big artificial basin.

More Bodies Found

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- <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/old-church-site-of-st-marys/>
- <http://www.bucksas.org.uk/hbgprojects/hs2stokemandeville.html>
- <http://www.bucksas.org.uk/documents/hs2stokemlastchancepamphlet.pdf>



Picture Credit: "Abandoned Graves" by [R~P~M](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

Perhaps, more accurately, the headline might say *Bones Found** because the remains of around 3,000 people will be moved to a new burial site following the excavation of a medieval church on the HS2 rail link route. Archaeologists are working on the site of the old Church of St Mary the Virgin in Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, which dates to 1080. Until around 160 years ago, it was the parish church of Stoke Mandeville. It is still surrounded by headstones - some are still standing, but others have fallen. The remains that are being exhumed will be reburied at a new site with a specially created monument.

The old St Mary's Church was built shortly after the Norman conquest of England, but it fell into disrepair after a new church was built in the 1880s. The church burial ground was in use for 900 years. The Stoke Mandeville Parish Council say that the old church was destroyed in the 1960s as it was no longer safe, but now the ruins and old gravestones are open to the public. The site was de-consecrated in 1993. The route of HS2 will go through the middle of the site.

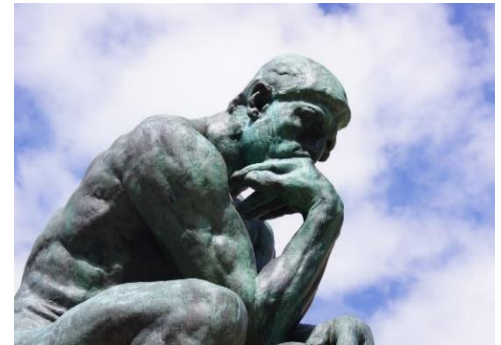
The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (BAS) website says that the deserted village of Stoke Mandeville has been a major focus for society members active around the HS2 issue for two reasons:

- First, because the site was an important Saxon settlement well before it appeared in Domesday Book in 1086, the remains of its church and churchyard may encapsulate 800 years of village history.
- And secondly, because the scale of destruction planned by HS2 will be total: four parallel rail lines on a low embankment will remove all traces of the village, the church, and the churchyard.

BAS has produced a pamphlet which summarises the national importance of 'old Stoke Mandeville' and the need for its protection from HS2. Printed copies of the pamphlet are sold out, but you can download a free PDF from [here](#).

* NOTE: Stoke Mandeville Hospital and the National Spinal Injuries Centre (NSIC) are renowned worldwide for the successful treatment of spinal injuries and as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement.

It makes you think – doesn't it?



Picture Credit: "thinker" by [freddie boy](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

- "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves" — [Abraham Lincoln](#), *Complete Works - Volume XII*
- "If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear." — [George Orwell](#)
- "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." — [Nelson Mandela](#)
- "The end may justify the means as long as there is something that justifies the end." — [Leon Trotsky](#), *Their Morals and Ours: The Class Foundations of Moral Practice*
- "Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious than to be able to decide." — [Napoleon Bonaparte](#)
- "But words are things, and a small drop of ink, falling, like dew, upon a thought produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions think." — [Lord George Gordon Byron](#)
- "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it." — [George Bernard Shaw](#), *Man and Superman*
- "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich." — [John F. Kennedy](#) [Inaugural Address, 20th January 1961]
- "If this nation is to be wise as well as strong, if we are to achieve our destiny, then we need more new ideas for more wise men reading more good books in more public libraries. These libraries should be open to all—except the censor. We must know all the facts and hear all the alternatives and listen to all the criticisms. Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors. For the Bill of Rights is the guardian of our security as well as our liberty." — [John F. Kennedy](#) [Response to a questionnaire in *Saturday Review*, 29th October 1960]
- "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." — [United Nations](#), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

The Last (and Strangest) Battle of World War II

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Castle_Itter
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32622651>
- <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-for-Castle-Itter>
- https://wargaming.com/en/news/battle_castle_iter/
- <https://www.historynet.com/the-battle-for-castle-itter.htm>



Picture Credit: "Major Josef 'Sepp' Gangl." by Julius.jaa is licensed under CC BY 2.0

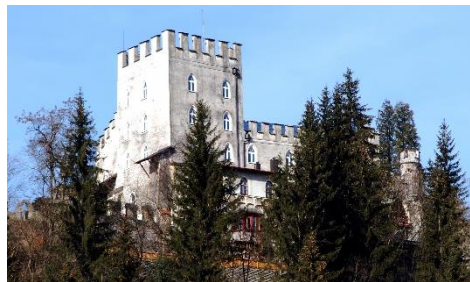
Major Sepp Gangl of the Wehrmacht, who took part in the defence of Itter Castle against troops of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division with soldiers of the Wehrmacht, the US Army and French prisoners, and lost his life in the process

Background

On 5th May 1945, two days before the end of World War II in Europe, one of the most unlikely and strangest battles of all took place at Itter in the Austrian Alps. It was a very curious event indeed: The Wehrmacht and the US Army fought the Waffen-SS together in what is known as the Battle for Castle Itter, thought to be the only time that Americans and Germans fought as allies during World War II.

Adolf Hitler had committed suicide five days before the Battle for Castle Itter, and what remained of the Third Reich was little more than smoking rubble. The German guards at Castle Itter fled. But the prisoners could not easily escape, as the woods around the castle were full of roaming units of the Waffen SS and Gestapo secret police.

The Castle and its Prisoners



Picture Credit: "File:Schloss Itter.JPG" by Svičková is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Itter Castle is a small castle situated on a hill near the village of Itter in Austria. After the Anschluss in 1938, the German government officially leased the castle (late 1940) from its owner, Franz Grüner, but not for long as it was seized from him by SS Lieutenant General Oswald Pohl under the orders of Heinrich Himmler (Reichsführer-SS) on 7th February 1943.

The castle's transformation into a prison was completed by 25th April 1943, and the facility was placed under the administration of the Dachau concentration camp. The prison held high-profile French prisoners considered valuable to the Reich. Notable prisoners included tennis player Jean Borotra, former prime ministers of France (Édouard

Daladier and Paul Reynaud), en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Castle_Itter - cite_note-FOOTNOTEHarding201343%E2%80%939344-11 former commanders-in-chief (Maxime Weygand and Maurice Gamelin), Charles de Gaulle's elder sister (Marie-Agnès Cailliau), right-wing leader and French resistance member (François de La Rocque), and trade union leader Léon Jouhaux. As well as the VIP prisoners, the castle held several Eastern European prisoners detached from Dachau – they were used for maintenance and other menial work.

The Battle

On 3rd May 1945, a prisoner - Zvonimir Čučković, a Yugoslav communist resistance member from Croatia who worked as a handyman at the prison, left the castle under the pretext of carrying out an errand for the prison's commander Sebastian Wimmer. Čučković intended to seek Allied assistance.

As the town of Wörgl (only 5 miles down the mountains) was still occupied by German troops, Čučković instead went on up the Inn River valley towards Innsbruck, which was 40 miles away. Late that evening, he reached the city's outskirts and encountered an advance party of the 409th Infantry Regiment of the American 103rd Infantry Division of the US VI Corps and told them about the castle's prisoners.

At dawn, a heavily armoured rescue was mounted but was stopped by heavy shelling just past Jenbach around halfway to Itter, and then recalled by superiors for encroaching into territory of the US 36th Division to the east.

Upon Čučković's failure to return, and the death at the prison of the former commander of Dachau (Eduard Weiter)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Castle_Itter - cite_note-FOOTNOTEHarding201396-20 under suspicious circumstances on 2nd May, Wimmer feared for his own life and abandoned his post.

The SS-Totenkopfverbände guards departed the castle soon afterwards, with the prisoners taking control of it and arming themselves with whatever weapons remained.

Failing to learn of the result of Čučković's effort, prison leaders accepted the offer of its Czech cook, Andreas Krobot, to cycle to Wörgl mid-day on 4th May in hopes of reaching help there. Armed with a similar note, he succeeded in contacting the Austrian resistance in that town, which had recently been abandoned by Wehrmacht forces but reoccupied by roaming Waffen-SS troops. He was taken to Major Josef Gangl, commander of the remains of a unit of Wehrmacht soldiers who had defied an order to retreat and instead thrown in with the local resistance, being made its head.

Major Gangl sought to maintain his unit's position in the town to protect local residents from SS reprisals. Nazi loyalists would shoot at any window displaying either a white or Austrian flag and would summarily execute males as possible deserters. Gangl's hopes were pinned on the Americans reaching Wörgl promptly so he could surrender to them. Instead, he would now have to approach them under a white flag to ask for their help.

Around the same time, a reconnaissance unit of four Sherman tanks of the 23rd Tank Battalion, 12th Armored Division of the US XXI Corps, under the command of 27-year-old Captain Lee, had reached Kufstein, Austria, some 8 miles to the north. In the

town square, it idled while waiting for the 12th to be relieved by the 36th Infantry Division. Asked to provide relief by Major Gangl, Captain Lee did not hesitate, volunteering to lead the rescue mission and immediately was given permission from his HQ.

After a personal reconnaissance of the Castle with Gangl in the major's Kübelwagen, Lee left two of his tanks behind but requisitioned five more and supporting infantry from the recently-arrived 142nd Infantry Regiment of the 36th. En route, Lee was forced to send the reinforcements back when a bridge proved too difficult for the entire column to cross once, let alone twice. Leaving one of his tanks behind to guard it, he set back off accompanied only by 14 American soldiers, plus Gangl, and a driver, and a truck carrying ten former German artillerymen. Four miles from the castle, they defeated a party of SS troops that had been attempting to set up a roadblock.

In the meantime, the French prisoners had requested an SS officer, Kurt-Siegfried Schrader, whom they had befriended during his convalescence in Itter from wounds, to take charge of their defence. Upon Lee's arrival at the castle, prisoners greeted the rescuing force warmly but were disappointed at how small the force was. Lee placed the men under his command in defensive positions around the castle and positioned his tank at the main entrance.

Lee had ordered the French prisoners to hide, but they remained outside and fought alongside the American and Wehrmacht soldiers. Throughout the night, the defenders were harried by a reconnaissance force sent to assess their strength and probe the fortress for weaknesses. On the morning of 5th May, a force of 100–150 Waffen-SS launched their attack.

Before the main assault began, Major Gangl phoned Alois Mayr, the Austrian resistance leader in Wörgl, and requested reinforcements. Only two more German soldiers under his command and a teenage Austrian resistance member (Hans Waltl) could be spared, and they quickly drove to the castle. The Sherman tank provided machine-gun fire support until it was destroyed by German fire; it was occupied at the time only by a radioman seeking to repair the tank's faulty radio - fortunately, he escaped without injury.

Meanwhile, by early afternoon, word had finally reached the 142nd of the defenders' plight, and a relief force was dispatched. Aware he had been unable to give the 142nd complete information on the enemy and its disposition before communications had been severed, Captain Lee accepted tennis star Borotra's offer to vault the castle wall and run the gauntlet of SS strongpoints and ambushes to deliver it.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Castle_Itter - cite_note-32 The tennis star was recognized by René Lévesque, a French Canadian reporter embedded with the 142nd and later Premier of Quebec. Borotra requested an American military uniform, then joined the force as it made haste to reach the prison before its defenders fired their last rounds of ammunition.

The relief force arrived around 16:00, and the SS were promptly defeated. Some 100 SS prisoners were reportedly taken. The French prisoners were evacuated towards France that evening and reached Paris on 10th May.

The Book

The Last Battle, by Stephen Harding, is available at Amazon ([here](#)). Based on personal memoirs, author interviews, and official American, German, and French histories, *The Last Battle* is the unbelievable story of the most improbable battle of World War II.

Railway Stations - gone but not forgotten

Sources and Further Reading:

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Disused_railway_stations_in_East_Sussex
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horsted_Keynes_railway_station
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Disused_railway_stations_in_West_Sussex
- http://www.disusedstations.org.uk/h/hove_first/index.shtml

Picture Credit: "Horsted Keynes Railway Station" by PAUL FARMER is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0



In the early 1960s, hundreds of the UK's railway stations were abandoned when they were closed down by Richard Beeching: Baron Beeching, known as Dr Beeching, was, for a short but very notable time, chairman of British Railways. He became a household name in Britain in the early 1960s for his report (*The Reshaping of British Railways*), commonly referred to as "The Beeching Report", which led to far-reaching changes in the railway network (un)popularly known as "the Beeching Axe". Sussex suffered from the sweeping cuts: Stations such as Bexhill West, Lewes Road (Brighton), and Horam were once local landmarks and hives of activity. But as society and their habits changed, rail bosses closed stations across the country and tore up miles of track. Today, remnants of the abandoned stations remain, albeit mere shadows of their glorious past, but they live on as auction houses, pubs and cafes, while others have been demolished and have vanished altogether:

Lewes Road, Brighton: Lewes Road station sat on the Kemp Town line, but it was closed several times during its lifetime as it was expensive to build as much of it travelled through a tunnel or over a viaduct. Despite this and its low passenger numbers, the line was built in 1906 by *London Brighton & South Coast Railway*, which was competing with the *London & Chatham & Dover Railway*. Lewes Road station, along with the rest of the line, was closed in 1933 after failing to offer advantage to passengers over the increased availability of local bus and tram services. The station continued to be used by freight services until 1971. After its closure, it was completely demolished.

Bexhill West: Bexhill West station, opened in 1902, was the largest and most imposing of three station buildings designed by CS Barry and CE Mercer. It was hoped that the railway would provide Bexhill with more tourists, but it failed to be as popular as nearby Hastings and Eastbourne. Despite offering a shorter route to London (by about 10 miles) and having impressive station buildings, passengers continued to prefer the *London Brighton & South Coast Railway's* more centrally-located station. The platforms at the station have now been demolished, but the main station building was given Grade II listed status in 2013. The line's demise was confirmed by its inclusion in the *Beeching Report*, and it finally closed to all traffic on 15th June 1964.

The station building still survives and operates as an antiques house, tearoom, and pub. The trackbed and site of the now-demolished platforms are now occupied by commercial industrial buildings.

Horam: Horam Station, opened in 1880, was originally called Horeham Road but changed its name several times. In 1900, it became Waldron and Horeham Road. A small town grew around the station, which became Horeham, and then Horam in the 1930s. This led to the station being renamed Waldron & Horam in 1935, before eventually becoming just Horam in 1953. The station was the main depot for Express Dairies and much of the freight travelled from the site's depot. It sat on the "Cuckoo Line" from Polegate to Eridge. Most of the station was cleared to make way for a housing estate in the 1990s, but some of the southbound platform still survives, along with the Cuckoo Trail.

Hove Station: The first Hove station opened in 1840 on the Brighton to Shoreham line. It was located on the east side of Holland Road. There was a goods yard to the south of the station with several sidings accessed by wagon turntables. The station closed on 1st March 1880 following the opening of the Cliftonville Curve, which opened in July 1879 and linked the Shoreham line to the Brighton Main Line between Hove and Preston Park. Old maps show a single platform and building, with a single signal box at the east end. The station was rebuilt as the Holland Road Goods Depot, which operated until 1971 and was later demolished. The existing Hove station, on the Brighton to Portsmouth line, was opened in 1865.

The Dyke Station: The Dyke station opened as the terminus for the standard gauge railway line, which ran from Dyke Junction Station (now known as Aldrington railway station) to 200 feet below the summit of Devil's Dyke. The line was opened by the Brighton and Dyke Railway Company to serve what was at the time a very popular tourist destination, boasting two bandstands, an observatory, a camera obscura and fairground rides. The station itself was equipped with basic facilities to accommodate tourists, and postcards of the station buildings reveal a converted railway carriage with a shack attached bearing the sign "Tea and Cakes". The area was popular - the 1893 August Bank Holiday saw around 30,000 people flock to the Dyke, many of them brought by the railway. Operations continued until 1917 when in the midst of the Great War, the line was closed. Services were recommenced in 1920 but lasted only a further eighteen years; the line closed in the face of increased competition from buses, and at the start of World War II, the Devil's Dyke was commandeered by the military and served as used for target practice for Canadian soldiers.

Uckfield Station: The original station in Uckfield, which opened in 1851, was located on the branch line from Lewes and became a busy centre for passengers and goods. In 1968 a section of the line between Uckfield and Lewes was closed, leaving the station stranded on the wrong side of a level crossing. The station was moved to the east side of the high street in 1991, and the original building was demolished in 2000. The remaining platforms and track have been cordoned off and have become overgrown.

Horsted Keynes: The main station building, the signal box and an engine house to the south of the station are all Grade II Listed buildings. All three were built around 1882 to the designs of Thomas Myres, the railway company's staff architect. The

station was closed by British Railways under the Beeching Axe in 1963 with the cessation of trains from Seaford via Haywards Heath (trains over the Lewes to East Grinstead line having ceased in 1958). It is now a preserved railway station on the Bluebell Railway

[Click the hyperlinks below for further details.]

Disused stations in Brighton and Hove

Golf Club Halt (Hove)
Hartington Road Halt
Holland Road Halt
Kemp Town
Lewes Road
Rowan Halt

East Sussex

Barcombe Mills
Barcombe
Bexhill West
Bishopstone Beach Halt
Bulverhythe
Dexter Halt
Forest Row
Glyne Gap Halt
Hailsham
Hartfield
Heathfield
Hellingly
Horam
Isfield
Junction Road Halt
Mayfield
Mountfield Halt
Newhaven Marine
Newick and Chailey
Rotherfield and Mark Cross
Rye (Rye and Camber Tramway)
St Leonards West Marina
Salehurst Halt
Sidley
Snailham Halt
Stone Cross Halt
Tide Mills
Withyham

West Sussex

Ardingly
Bramber
Bungalow Town Halt
Cocking
Christ's Hospital
Fittleworth
Grange Road
Henfield
Lavant
Midhurst
Midhurst (London and South Western Railway)
Partridge Green
Petworth
Roffey Road Halt
Rogate
Rowfant
Rudgwick
Selham
Singleton
Slinfold
Southwater
Steyning
The Dyke
West Grinstead
West Hoathly

NOTE: Sincere apologies for any stations that have been omitted.

A Cuckfield Miscellany

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Introduction

The origin of the name, *Cuckfield* (earlier spelt Kukefeld, Cucufeld, and Cucufelda), is debated, but it is generally associated with the cuckoo, which is the village emblem. The village grew as a market town and was an important coach stop between London and Brighton as it lay on the turnpike. In 1820, 50 coaches a day would stop at Cuckfield before passing through to Brighton to the south or to London to the north.

Cuckfield is a village and civil parish in the Mid Sussex District of West Sussex, England, on the southern slopes of the Weald. It is situated 34 miles south of London, 13 miles north of Brighton, and 31 miles east northeast of Chichester, the county town of West Sussex. Nearby towns include Haywards Heath to the southeast and Burgess Hill to the south. It is surrounded on the other sides by the parish of Ansty and Staplefield, formerly known as Cuckfield Rural.

Twin Towns

Aumale in Normandy has been a twin town since 1993 and Karlstadt in Bavaria since 1998.

The Railway

In 1825, John Rennie first proposed a 'direct' London to Brighton railway. But when the 1840s arrived, the plans were vigorously opposed by the town, landowners and parish of Cuckfield. Cuckfield was not alone - Lindfield also opposed the railway. Eventually, the line passed between Cuckfield and Lindfield, making Haywards Heath the terminus until the railway line opened to Brighton.

Notable Buildings

The Parish Council, Cuckfield Museum and village library reside within the **Queen's Hall**, built in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The parish church, dedicated to the **Holy Trinity**, has Norman foundations, although the building itself is 13th century. The lych gates are listed buildings and several of the stained glass windows as well as the pulpit and the ceiling's painting were designed by Charles Eamer Kempe.

The Elizabethan house, **Ockenden Manor**, is a Michelin star hotel and restaurant – it also has a gymnasium, pool and spa.

Mayoral Voting

Cuckfield is known locally for its rather unusual system of mayoral voting; unlimited numbers of votes can be purchased for the price of one penny each, with the winner receiving the most votes. The position is purely honorary, and the money raised supports local charities.

Cuckfield and the Wars

World War I

In August 1914, after the start of the Great War, a Roll of Honour was placed in the porch of Holy Trinity Church, noting the 56 men who had already enlisted into active service in the Army, Royal Navy and Territorial Force. During the course of that war, 460 men enlisted from Cuckfield. The absence of so many men to the battlefields of Europe meant the women of Cuckfield had to step forward to run the local shops.

The 2nd Battalion of the 8th City of London Regiment Post Office Rifles was billeted in Cuckfield for six months between November 1914 and May 1915 - training before leaving for France.

Cuckfield Compendium ([here](#)) records that a Detachment of the Red Cross had been located in Cuckfield from 1913. In November 1914, when the English Military Hospitals were filled to the brim by the influx of patients from Belgium as well as English patients, the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Eastern General Hospital in Brighton accepted the offer of a Red Cross Hospital to be set up in the Queen's Hall, which was turned into a Voluntary Aid Detachment hospital and local ladies trained as nurses to staff it.

The 10th Battalion Manchesters were stationed in Cuckfield for five weeks in 1915 on their way to Gallipoli in the Great War.

World War II

Albeit sometimes disputed, Cuckfield* lays claim to being the first place in the UK during World War II to be hit by a flying bomb (the dreaded 'doodle-bug'). The Cuckfield War memorial commemorates the residents of Cuckfield who were killed or missing in World War I (81 names) and World War II (14 names).

* At Mizbrooks Farm near Cuckfield

Notable People

People of note having an association with Cuckfield include:

- Daniel Betts (born 1971 in Cuckfield) – actor.
- Ross Chisholm (born 1990 in Cuckfield) – Harlequins rugby player.
- Tommy Cook (1901–50) – Sussex cricketer and Brighton & Hove Albion and England footballer was born in Cuckfield.
- Alfred Denning, Baron Denning (1899–1999), (resident from 1935 until 1963).
- Tara Fitzgerald, actress (born in Cuckfield in 1967).
- Kirsten Cooke, actress (born in Cuckfield) in 1952.
- The brothers Edward and James Fox (both actors) and Robert Fox (a producer) all grew up in the village; their mother died there in 1999.
- Sally Geeson (born 1950) – actress, best remembered for her role in the British sitcom *Bless This House* with Sid James, was born in the village.

- Dominic Glynn (born 1960 in Cuckfield) – composer of *Doctor Who* between 1986 and 1989.
- Mike Hazlewood (1941–2001) – singer, songwriter and composer, born in Cuckfield.
- Henry Kingsley (1830–1876) – the novelist, lived in Cuckfield for his last two years.
- Nancy Osbaldeston (born 1989), ballet dancer and principal dancer of *Royal Ballet of Flanders*.
- Charles Sergison (1655–1732) owned Cuckfield Park,
- Katie Stewart (1934–2013) – the British cookery writer, lived for many decades and died in Cuckfield.
- Thomas Vicars (1589–1638) – 17th-century theologian, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cuckfield (1622–1638).
- James Vince (born 1991 in Cuckfield) – Hampshire and England cricketer.

Cuckfield Museum

Cuckfield Museum opened in 1981. It traces the town's history from its earliest days to more recent times. The basis of the Museum's collection is derived from the banker and local philanthropist Richard Bevan (1834-1918), who was the leading instigator of the building of the Queen's Hall in celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The Bevan family bequeathed to Cuckfield several items from Horsgate, the house built for them in 1865.

The Museum**:

- has a Research Room with information on local history, local families, buildings, businesses etc.
- has a considerable collection of 19th and 20th century books and publications relating to a variety of topics and families in Sussex, including an almost full set of the Sussex Archaeological Society volumes and many from the Sussex Record Society collection.
- sells Cuckfield- and dinosaur-related souvenirs and gifts, and there are also Cuckfield- and Haywards Heath- related books available to purchase.

** Source: <https://cuckfieldmuseum.org/museum>

Cuckfield Park

The site was originally a deer park but was 'disparked' in 1618. An 1809 Estate Map shows the areas around the house laid out much as in an aerial photograph of 1967. Features include a kitchen garden, deer park, lakes, and a fine lime avenue.***

Cuckfield Park is a private Elizabethan house that was the seat of the Bowyer and then the Sergison family, and it inspired William Harrison Ainsworth's famous 1834 romance novel *Rookwood*, a story based around the inheritance of an estate involving illegitimacy. The house was said to be haunted by the ghost of Wicked Dame Sergison. Cuckfield Place (original name) was built around 1575 by Henry Bowyer (died 1589), an ironmaster who acquired the property from the 4th Earl Derby in 1573.

*** Source: <https://www.parksandgardens.org/places/cuckfield-park>

Cuckfield and Dinosaur's Teeth

In a quarry, now a playing field named Whiteman's Green, Dinosaur teeth were discovered in May 1821 - the discovery is credited to Dr Gideon Mantell and his wife Mary Ann. The dinosaur was formally named in 1825. At the time, fossil-hunting was a popular hobby, but only dimly understood as geology and palaeontology were in their infancy and dinosaurs were unknown.

Worth Reading

A Chronicle of Cuckfield by Masie Wright.

Video

You can view Cuckfield from a drone flight ([here](#)). The picture above, left, is a screenshot from that video.

Sussex Underground

Sources and Further Reading:

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- <https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/history/secret-brighton-newhaven-wadhurst-merstham-5382813>

Secret passages and tunnels - the old smuggling counties of Kent and Sussex have more than most in Britain. Some, probably many, were used for smuggling, while others had another, clandestine, romantic purpose.

Some examples are included in the text below.

Offham Chalk Pit



Picture Credit: "File: Offham Chalk Pit Tramway (Top) - geograph.org.uk - 1097217.jpg" by Simon Carey is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Lime or chalk has been the basic ingredient for lime mortar from at least Roman times. Since the medieval period, lime has also been used as agricultural fertiliser and, since the early 19th century, widely used in several other industries. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Offham Chalk Pit was a busy quarry. The Inn at Offham first started life as the offices for the chalk pit.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the pit owner, George Shiffner (the MP for Lewes), commissioned a visionary engineer, William Jessop, to solve this problem of accessing and moving the quarried chalk. In 1809 a revolutionary funicular railway was completed, which took wagons of chalk under the road (now the A275) to waiting barges at a loading wharf linked to the River Ouse. The railway survived until 1870 due to the efficiency of its design and cost-effectiveness. Although the railway has now been closed for more than 150 years, the tunnel entrance and exits can still be seen today. The quarry went out of use about the turn of the 19th century - it may have stopped operations about 1890 or even earlier.

Brighton's underground tunnels and vaults

In January 2017, an article was published on the Brighton Journal website ([here](#)) about a group of Brighton residents working together to create a map of the city's underground tunnels and vaults. Already existing for visitors interested in what is below the surface is *The Royal Pavilion's Basement and Tunnel Tour* ([here](#)) to discover the underground tunnels used by King George IV to visit the riding school and stables, now better known as the Brighton Dome. Sites marked on the map include potential tunnels running from the *Old Ship Hotel* to the beach and from *The Tempest Arms* - which dates back to the 17th century - to the basements of West Street.

Uppark House and Garden

On the surface, Uppark House appears to be a quiet 17th century house set within intimate gardens and woodland. Below the surface are echoing tunnels that go from the stables to the house. Sarah Wells, the mother of the famous author, HG Wells, was a maid at the house and his father a gardener. The house is now a National Trust property, near South Harting, in West Sussex.

Chyngton Bunker, at Seaford

Also known as the Seaford GPO Repeater station, a bunker was built in 1942 in preparation for the re-establishment of submarine cable links to continental Europe after D-Day. Several other booster or repeater stations were built elsewhere, but it is unknown if they survived.

A survey by the Sussex Archaeological Society revealed six rooms - they believed Room 1 was a guard room. Rooms 2 and 3 were for offices and stores. Room 4 was an entrance lobby with chemical toilets, Room 5 was the main equipment area and was insulated/sound-proofed. Room 6 was probably for an emergency generator. The new submarine cable was the first commercial Telcothene (Telcon's name for their polythene dielectric material) insulated telephone cable, and was laid from Hope Gap, near Cuckmere to Dieppe in 1945. There's more information about cable links on Cross Channel Cables ([here](#)).

Smugglers' Farm Hotel

The Smugglers' Farm Hotel is located near Herstonceux, East Sussex. It is a converted farmhouse dating from around the year 1600. In the Coffee Room is a primitive winch sited over a shallow shaft that is blocked at the bottom. The shaft is said to have led to a passage that came out on Pevensey Marshes and was used by smugglers to bring their goods to a safe haven.

South Highton (near Newhaven)

Deep beneath South Highton, are the forgotten remains of a once vibrant maritime intelligence centre. Recent research revealed just how vital this secret establishment was to the war effort. Newhaven was originally a casualty-clearing station for the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France during World War II. Twelve fully equipped hospital boats transported the sick and wounded to the east Sussex port from Dieppe, with special trains to carry them further inland on arrival. Medical supplies were loaded onto the boats for the return journey. English

Heritage has declared these tunnels to be of National Importance.

These World War II tunnels were excavated by the Royal Engineers 172nd Tunnelling Coy, beneath Glynde Estates and other private property from 3rd June to November 1941 under Emergency Powers Legislation for the Defence of the Realm. They were neither recorded nor registered at the time for reasons of absolute security. Following the war's end, the MOD paid compensation to the landowner(s), and the tunnel became private property.

Roedean School Passage

A passage exists at Roedean School, Sussex, connecting the school with the beach. It was built in 1910 through chalk and is 3ft wide x 6ft high, being electrically lit throughout. A chamber has been excavated at the beach end as a changing room.

Tunbridge Wells Broadwater Down

Between 1940 and 1941, a network of tunnels was excavated sixty feet below Hargate Forest on the south side of Broadwater Down in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. No documentary evidence relating to these tunnels survives, although there are strong local rumours that the tunnels would have been used as an underground operations room for Lt. General Montgomery (later Field Marshall) in the event of an invasion by Germany.

Rye, East Sussex

A notorious smuggling gang called *The Hawkhurst Gang* was said to have operated in Rye in the 18th century. They would go for drinks at The Mermaid Inn and another old pub called Ye Olde Bell Inne. Rumour has it that the smugglers built secret underground tunnels so they could move products around without getting caught.

Margate Grotto

Margate in Kent has more than its share of strange underground places. It was 're-discovered' in 1835 when a workman dug through the cover of what he thought was a well, but which turned out to be access to a tunnel 20ft down. Strangely, the walls were decorated with sea-shells in all types of patterns.

Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, Wakehurst

Not a cave or tunnel, but just as interesting is a treasure trove of scientific excellence in the heart of rural Sussex. The Millennium Seed Bank holds a collection of over 2.4 billion seeds from around the world, banking them to conserve them for the future. Beneath the glass atrium are sub-zero chambers, where seeds collected worldwide by Kew's global partnership are kept in flood, bomb and radiation-proof vaults.

Other Places

Well worth looking up are the following websites:

- Abandoned and Derelict ([here](#))
- Subterranea Britannica - East Sussex ([here](#))
- Subterranea Britannica - West Sussex ([here](#))

Research and Reading

Useful information is available on the Chelsea Speleological* Society website at:

<http://www.chelseaspelaeo.org/>

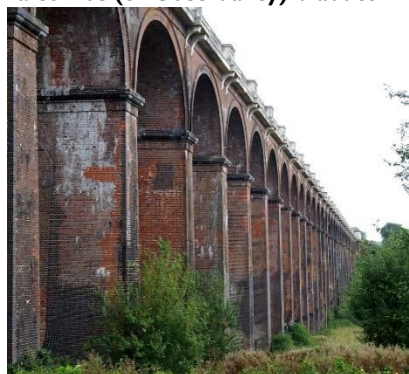
* Speleology is the study or exploration of caves.

The Great Viaducts of Sussex

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- <https://latitude.to/satellite-map/gb/united-kingdom/172777/lewes-road-railway-station>

Balcombe (or Ouse Valley) Viaduct



Picture Credit: "Balcombe Viaduct" by PrivatePit is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The magnificent Ouse Valley Viaduct (aka the Balcombe Viaduct), shown above, carries the London to Brighton Railway Line over the River Ouse in Sussex (albeit now just a stream at this location). It is one of the finest viaducts in the British Isles, with 37 semicircular arches. Its total length is 1,475 ft. At the highest point, the rails are 96 ft above the ground.

In the early 1840s, Sir John Rennie surveyed and planned the Brighton line, but it was John U. Rastrick (in association with the architect of the London to Brighton railway, David Mocatta) who was responsible for the design of the viaduct. It is built of red brick, and consists of 37 tall round-headed arches, each with a span of 30 ft, with each pier split latitudinally into two sections with a round-headed arch between and a cornice above this and below the springing of the main arch. A stone balustraded parapet at the top consisting of narrow round-headed arches with a small square recess over each pier, projects out on brackets. At each end of the Viaduct, where this joins the embankment, are four solid rectangular brick piers surmounted by little pavilions having a solid balustrade, three round-headed arches, a modillion eaves cornice and a nipped tiled roof. These form terminal features of the Viaduct, which are prominent when seen from the train. Sir John Rennie was the line's chief engineer. Acknowledgement: Listing NGR: TQ3226227952, at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1366101>

London Road Viaduct



Picture Credit: "Brighton railway viaduct Beaconsfield road 4" by Elsie esq. is licensed under CC BY 2.0

London Road (Brighton) railway station is located in Round Hill, an eastern suburb of the city. It is the first intermediate station on the Brighton branch of the East Coastway Line, 1.1 km down the line from Brighton station. The London Road station was designed by David Mocatta (who also designed Brighton Station) and opened on 1st October 1877, following housing development in the surrounding area. It was originally due to be called Ditchling Rise station – that is a more accurate name as London Road is a little distance away. Until the Kemp Town branch line closed in 1971, trains to Kemp Town station diverged from the Brighton to Lewes line to London Road station. The platform building on the Lewes-side was demolished in the early 1980s. The station had a substantial refurbishment at the end of 2004.

The magnificent London Road Viaduct, made of brick, carries the East Coastway Line between the Brighton and London Road railway stations. Built in 1846 for the Brighton, Lewes and Hastings Railway by the locomotive engineer and railway architect John Urpeth Rastrick, the sharply curving structure with a maximum height of 20m (67ft) and 359m (386 yds) long, has 27 arches and about 10 million bricks (not quite as many as the Balcombe Viaduct). It is still in constant use, and is listed as Grade II^{star} for its historical and architectural significance.

Brighton's most significant bombing raid of World War II severely damaged London Road Viaduct. On 25th May 1943, a Focke Wulf fighter-bomber aircraft dropped several bombs on Brighton, five of which landed on the railway. One demolished two arches and one pier at the west end of the viaduct, two arches west of the Preston Road span, leaving the tracks dangling the gap in mid-air. Despite this, a temporary repair allowed trains to start using the viaduct again within 24 hours, and in less than a month, the service was back to normal.

The viaduct uses red and brown brick in English bond, with dressings of yellow brick and stone (with some rebuilding in blue brick). It consists of an elliptical arch 50 ft wide over Preston Road and 26 round arches 30 ft wide, and it extends in a curve for four hundred yards from London Road station in the east almost to New England Road in the south-west. The second pier west of Preston Road was destroyed by the 1943 bombing but repaired.

Acknowledgement: Carder T: The Encyclopaedia of Brighton: Lewes: 1990-).

The Lost Viaducts

Some may remember the station called Lewes Road railway station in Brighton, located on the now-closed line from Brighton to Kemp Town.

In the late 1820s, Thomas Read Kemp, a Lord of the Manor of Brighton, developed an estate of large houses on his land on the East Cliff, east of Brighton's town centre. The development was known as Kemp Town (or Kemp Town).

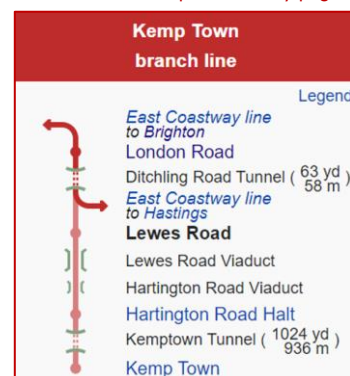
In 1869, the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, having obtained permission to build a branch line serving this part of the town, opened the Kemp Town Railway. It crossed Brighton due south-east in a wide arc between Hollingdean and what is now the Royal Sussex County Hospital. The Kemp town branch line was a double track between the junction and the end of the platforms but was a single track from this point all the way to Kemp town. The single-line track then crossed a 28-arch viaduct over the Lewes road*.

* Source: <http://kemp-town-railway.yolasite.com/lewes-road-area.php>

Lewes Road (Brighton) railway station was closed to passengers in 1932/33 – although goods trains continued to use it until 1971. Trains took about 10 minutes from Brighton to reach the terminus in Freshfield Place. Today the bus from Brighton station takes around 25 minutes to complete the same journey. During its life, two intermediate stations opened: Lewes Road opened in 1873 (sited by D'Aubigny Road and Richmond Road), and in 1906 Hartington Road Halt opened (sited near Bonchurch Road and Whippingham Road) but closed in 1911. The focal point of the line is the 1,024-yard tunnel which runs underneath Elm Grove and the top of the Hanover area, then continues parallel to Brighton Racecourse and on to the terminus at the area now occupied by the Freshfield Industrial Estate.**.

** Source:

<https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2018/04/04/10-real-facts-about-the-kemp-town-railway-plagiarists-welcome/>



It's said*** the station layout was quite unusual – a single track that passed through the station had a platform on either side of it linked by a footbridge.

Entry to the station was via a covered staircase situated next to the first arch of the Lewes Road viaduct. The station was demolished during the 1950s, before the Beeching Axe era. The site was redeveloped during the 1980s, and no visible trace of the station now remains. There were two viaducts (long gone) on the line – see above – the Lewes Road, and Hartington Road Viaducts.

*** Source: <https://latitude.to/satellite-map/gb/united-kingdom/172777/lewes-road-railway-station>

Portugal's highs and lows

Sources and Further Reading:

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- <http://www.localhistories.org/portugal.html>
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Vasco da Gama – The Portuguese explorer who was the first European to sail around Africa to India

Picture Credit: "Tribute to Vasco da Gama" by tiseb is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Although there are some high points (but not many) in Portugal's history, they are more than offset by plenty of low points, including two bankruptcies. It's hard to imagine that at one time, Portugal was at the forefront of maritime exploration, expanding to become the first global empire - the world's main economic power during the Renaissance, introducing most of Africa and the East to European society and establishing a multi-continental trading system extending from Japan to Brazil. The wealth it generated was not used to develop domestic industrial infrastructure, and much of its empire was quickly lost - leaving Portugal to gradually become one of western Europe's poorest countries in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Introduction to Portugal*

Portugal is a country in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula. The Atlantic archipelagos of Azores and Madeira are part of Portugal and occupy strategic locations along western routes to the Strait of Gibraltar. Spain and the Atlantic Ocean border the country. The geography is mountainous north of the Tagus River. The government system is a republic; the chief of state is the president, and the head of government is the prime minister. Portugal has a service-based mixed economy in which the government has privatised many state-controlled firms and liberalised areas of the economy.

* Source: <https://globaleledge.msu.edu/countries/portugal>

The economic history of Portugal

The development of the economy of Portugal throughout the course of its history is somewhat erratic – starting from the time when Roman occupation developed a thriving economy in

Hispania (the Roman name for the Iberian Peninsula and its provinces), in the provinces of Lusitania and Gallaecia, as producers and exporters to the Roman Empire. This continued under the Visigoths (the early Germanic people) and then Al-Andalus* Moorish rule until *The Kingdom of Portugal* was established in 1139.

** Al-Andalus was the Muslim-ruled area of the Iberian Peninsula. The term is used by modern historians for the former Islamic states based in today's Spain and Portugal.

Brazil was the jewel in the crown - in the late 17th century, gold was discovered there, and in 1730, diamonds were also discovered. Taxes on both helped the Portuguese treasury. But in 1822, Portugal lost Brazil, its main overseas territory (but managed to hang on to its colonies/overseas territories in Africa until 1974/1975). The loss of Brazil eventually brought about a devastating Civil War from 1828 to 34. All attempts to industrialise and modernise failed such that by the dawn of the 20th century, Portugal had a GDP per capita of 40% of the Western European average and an illiteracy rate of 74%.

Portugal's name

The Roman presence can be seen in the very name of the country, which derives from *Portus Cale*, a settlement near the mouth of the Douro River and the present-day city of Porto.

The *Kingdom of Portugal* was a monarchy on the Iberian Peninsula and the predecessor of the modern Portuguese Republic. It existed from 1139 until 1910. After 1415, it was also known as the *Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves*, and between 1815 and 1822, it was known as the *United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves*. The name is also often applied to the Portuguese Empire, the realm's extensive overseas colonies.

The murder of the King and Double Bankruptcy

On 1st February 1908, King Dom Carlos I of Portugal and his heir apparent, Prince Royal Dom Luis Filipe, the Duke of Braganza, were murdered in Lisbon. Under the King's rule, Portugal was twice declared bankrupt – on 14th June 1892 and again on 10th May 1902 – causing social turmoil, economic disturbances, protests, revolts and criticism of the monarchy. Manuel II of Portugal became the new king, but less than three years later, he was overthrown by the 5th October 1910 revolution, which abolished the regime and instated republicanism in Portugal.

Political instability and economic weaknesses

Political instability and economic weaknesses were fertile ground for chaos and unrest during the Portuguese First Republic, which, aggravated by Portugal's military intervention in World War I, led to a military coup d'état in 1926 and the creation of the National Dictatorship (called *Dictadura Nacional*). In turn, this led to the establishment of the right-wing dictatorship of the *Estado Novo* (new State) under António de Oliveira Salazar in 1933. Most of the Salazar years (1933–1968) were marked by a period of modest growth, but Portugal remained largely underdeveloped and its population relatively poor and with low education levels well into the 1960s.

Neutrality and Colonisation

Portugal was one of only five European countries to remain neutral in World War II. From the 1940s to the 1960s, Portugal was a founding member of NATO, OECD and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Gradually, new economic development projects and relocation of white mainland Portuguese citizens into the overseas colonies in Africa were initiated, with Angola and Mozambique, as the largest and richest overseas territories, being the main targets of those initiatives.

* ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Source for the above: <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/countries/23424925/>

During the *Portuguese Empire period***, which started in the 15th century, until the *Carnation Revolution* (the military coup in Lisbon which overthrew the authoritarian *Estado Novo* regime of 1974), the economy of Portugal was centred on trade- and raw material-related activities within large colonial possessions, en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raw_material mainly in Asia, Africa and South America. The country, and its transcontinental empire with plenty of natural resources and vast unexploited areas, was among the most powerful nations in the world.

** Also known as the Portuguese Overseas or the Portuguese Colonial Empire: composed of the overseas colonies and territories governed by Portugal.

The economy of Portugal and its overseas territories, until the military coup on 25th April 1974, enjoyed a period of growth which was well above the European average.

The EU

In 1986, Portugal joined the European Economic Community (ultimately the European Union [EU]), spurring strong and steady economic growth. Similar to those of other western European countries, Portugal's economy is now dominated by services. It adopted the euro in 1999.

Despite being both a developed country and a high-income country, Portugal's GDP per capita was lingering at about 80% of the EU-27 average, and the *Global Competitiveness Report of 2008–2009* ranked Portugal 43rd out of 134 countries and territories.

In 2011 the EU and the International Monetary Fund authorised a €78 billion bailout package for Portugal, contingent on adopting strict austerity guidelines.

Religion ***

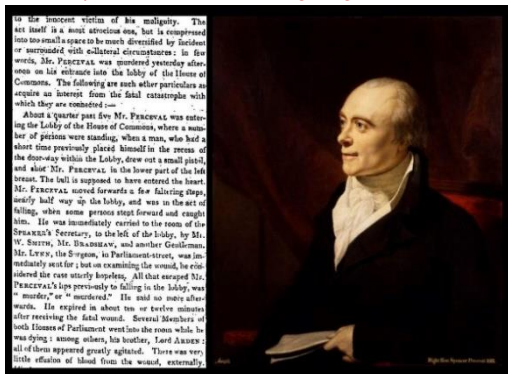
Some 90% of Portugal's citizens are Roman Catholic, but regular attendance at Mass has declined in the cities and larger towns. Less than 2% of the population is Protestant, with Anglicans and Methodists the oldest and largest denominations. In the late 20th century, fundamentalist and Evangelical churches grew in popularity, though the number of their adherents remained quite small. The Jewish population of Portugal is small, as Jews were forced to convert or emigrate during the Inquisition in the late 15th century.

*** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Source for the above: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Portugal>

The Murder of Spencer Perceval

Source and Further Reading:

- <https://www.onthisday.com/people/spencer-perceval>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spencer_Perceval
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bellingham
- <http://www.exclassics.com/newgate/ng550.htm>



Picture Credit: "11th May 1812 - Prime Minister Spencer Perceval is assassinated" by Bradford Timeline is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The Murder

Political assassinations are a rarity in Britain. It's just not cricket, you might say. In fact, only one of our Prime Ministers has ever been murdered. **Spencer Perceval** holds that dubious distinction in British political history – the only Prime Minister ever to have been murdered while in office.

A follower of William Pitt the Younger, Perceval always described himself as a "friend of Mr Pitt" rather than a Tory. On 4th October 1809, he became Prime Minister after William Cavendish-Bentinck the Duke of Portland, retired from ill health. Perceval had previously been Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Perceval is said to have overseen a politically weak government and had to deal with a number of crises in his brief term. These included the increasing madness of King George III, an inquiry into the failed 1809 Walcheren Campaign* and Luddite riots**.

* The Walcheren Campaign was an unsuccessful British expedition to the Netherlands in 1809 intended to open another front in the Austrian Empire's struggle with France during the War of the Fifth Coalition.

** The Luddites is the name given to a group of English textile workers in Manchester who, in 1799, started to rebel against the introduction of machinery (such as mechanised looms and knitting frames), which threatened their skilled craft.

Perceval met the crises described above head-on and overcame them. He successfully pursued the Peninsular War in the face of opposition defeatism and won the support of the Prince Regent, later King George IV. Perceval's position was looking stronger by early 1812, when, in the Lobby of the House of Commons at quarter past five on the afternoon of 11th May 1812, he was mortally wounded in the heart by a shot from a small handgun wielded by John Bellingham, a Liverpool merchant with a grievance against Perceval's government.

*** The Peninsular War (1807–1814) was the military conflict fought by Spain, the United Kingdom and Portugal against France's invading and occupying forces for control of the Iberian Peninsula during the Napoleonic Wars.

Bellingham's Grievance

Bellingham was born in 1769 in St Neots, Huntingdonshire, and brought up in London, where he was apprenticed to a jeweller, James Love, at age fourteen. Two years later, he went as a midshipman on the maiden voyage of the Hartwell from Gravesend to China. In the autumn of 1803, the Russian ship *Soleure* (or sometimes "*Sojus*") was lost in the White Sea, located on the northwest coast of Russia. The ship's owners (the house of R. Van Brien) filed a claim on their insurance, but an anonymous letter told Lloyd's the ship had been sabotaged. Solomon Van Brien believed Bellingham was the author of that anonymous letter. There was some suggestion of money due by Bellingham. As a result, Bellingham, about to return from Russia to Britain on 16th November 1804, had his travel pass withdrawn because of the alleged debt.

Matters went from bad to worse for Bellingham. Van Brien persuaded the local Governor-General to imprison Bellingham, which duly happened. A year later, he managed to secure his release and went to St Petersburg. You would think that he would be circumspect at that point, but no - Bellingham attempted to impeach the Governor-General. This angered the Russian authorities, who charged him with leaving Arkhangelsk in a clandestine manner. He was again imprisoned until October 1808, when he was put out onto the streets but still without permission to leave. In desperation, he petitioned the Tsar. Whether the Tsar provided help or not, Bellingham was allowed to leave Russia in 1809, arriving in England in December of that year, and commenced business as an insurance broker in Liverpool.



John Bellingham portrait 1812

Picture Credit: This work is in the public domain. Source - The Newgate Calendar.

<http://www.exclassics.com/newgate/ng550.htm>

Once home, Bellingham, bitter and twisted, began petitioning the UK government for compensation over his imprisonment in Russia. This was refused, as the United Kingdom had broken off diplomatic relations with Russia in November 1808. Bellingham's wife urged him to drop the matter, and he reluctantly did.

In 1812, Bellingham renewed his attempts to win compensation for his incarceration in Russian prisons. On 18th April 1812, he went to the Foreign Office, claiming that a civil servant

told him he was 'at liberty to take whatever measures he thought proper'. Percival took this in its widest meaning – 'if necessary, kill if you think it's right'.

Taking the civil servant at his word, on 20th April 1812, Bellingham purchased two .50 calibre pistols from a gunsmith at 58 Skinner Street (in the Greater London Urban Area of Clerkenwell). At this time, he was often seen in the lobby of the House of Commons. His purpose on 11th May 1812 was to assassinate Spencer Perceval, who, in his mind, was responsible for all the bad things which had been heaped upon him and who had done nothing to help him.

The Trial, Execution and Legacy

Four days after the assassination, Bellingham was tried at the Old Bailey, where he argued that he would have preferred to have shot the British Ambassador to Russia but insisted as a wronged man, he was justified in killing the representative of his oppressors (Spencer Perceval). He made a formal statement to the court, saying:

"Recollect, Gentlemen, what was my situation. Recollect that my family was ruined and myself destroyed merely because it was Mr Perceval's pleasure that justice should not be granted, sheltering himself behind the imagined security of his station, and trampling upon law and right in the belief that no retribution could reach him. I demand only my right, and not a favour; I demand what is the birthright and privilege of every Englishman. Gentlemen, when a minister sets himself above the laws, as Mr Perceval did, he does it at his own personal risk. If this were not so, the mere will of the minister would become the law, and what would then become of your liberties? I trust that this serious lesson will operate as a warning to all future ministers and that they will henceforth do the thing that is right, for if the upper ranks of society are permitted to act wrong with impunity, the inferior ramifications will soon become wholly corrupted. "Gentlemen, my life is in your hands, I rely confidently in your justice."

Evidence was presented at the Old Bailey that Bellingham was insane, but it was discounted by the trial judge, Sir James Mansfield. Bellingham was found guilty, sentenced to death, and hanged in public three days later at Newgate Prison. Bellingham's skull was preserved at Barts Pathology Museum, although the reason why is unknown.



Picture Credit: "JOHN BELLINGHAM" by Leo Reynolds is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

In September 2009, the St Neots Local History Society erected a plaque on Bellingham House in St Neots. The house, on the corner of Huntingdon Street and Cambridge Street, is said to be where Bellingham was born.

The 1937 London Busmen's Strike

Source and Further Reading:

- <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/0fd9018b-8db1-372d-a12d-2c606632aa88>
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13619462.2016.1226806>
- <http://archive.commercialmotor.com/article/21st-may-1937/68/what-london-bus-strike-is-costing>



Picture Credit: Screenshot from video, at <https://youtu.be/h-gOSVX8FI8>

The London Passenger Transport Board

The creation of the London Passenger Transport Board (known as London Transport or LT) in 1933 had brought all bus, tram, trolleybus and Underground services in London together under a single body. The strike was in protest about conditions of work for the bus drivers and conductors, notably hours of work, rates of pay and a proposed speed-up of London buses.

The London Busmen's Strike

The London Bus Strike in 1937 saw Transport and General Workers Union members walk out demanding a reduction of (30 minutes) in the length of their working day from 8 to 7.5 hours. Thirty thousand bus workers were employed by the London Passenger Transport Board (made up of private companies), and the strike was solidly supported. The Daily Worker summary of the strikers' case began with these words: "We demand the right to live a little longer".*

* Source: <http://transport.blogspot.com/2020/03/we-demand-right-to-live-little-longer.html>

The strike of nearly 27,000 busmen began in Central London at midnight on 1st May 1937. Five-thousand buses were involved, which usually carried about 5 million passengers a day. Simultaneously with the beginning of the strike in London, 126,000 busmen in the provinces were called on to cease work in support of the unofficial strike, which had already affected ten counties. The first day of the strike in London was not very eventful, but the position on the following Monday, 3rd May, became much worse.

The number of cyclists greatly increased. Regular passengers had to fight to get places in the packed trams or resort to using the underground or trying to hail a taxi, but they were generally in short supply.**

** Source: The Argus (Melbourne, Victoria Australia), 3rd May 1937.

The Archives Hub ([here](#)) lists papers relating to the Court of Inquiry's review of the 1937 Central London Omnibus Strike (as it was officially called):

- proceedings of the Court of Inquiry into the Central London Omnibus Dispute, 1937;
- documentary evidence submitted to the Court of Inquiry by the London Passenger Transport Board, 1926-1937, including details of rates of pay and conditions of service, correspondence of Ernest Bevin to Frank Pick and Theodore Thomas of the LPTB, statistics relating to driver illness, and details of London traffic and bus speed;
- left-wing material regarding the strike, 1936-1937, notably pamphlets issued by the London Busmen's Rank-and-File Movement, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Communist Party of Great Britain, as well as copies of The Daily Worker;
- miscellaneous material, including a memorandum of agreement between the TGWU and the LPTB regarding rates of pay and conditions of service for conductors and drivers.

Ernest Bevin

Ernest Bevin headed the Transport and General Workers' Union. Bevin co-founded and served as General Secretary of that Union in 1922-1940 and as Minister of Labour and National Service in the war-time coalition government. According to a transcription by Christian Hogsberg (see [here](#)), Bevin wrecked the London busmen's strike for the 7½-hour day by refusing to call out the tramway men, sending back provincial busmen who had come out in several areas and making no attempt to involve the Underground or other rail workers.

The 'busman's stomach'

Many people haven't heard of it before*** – something called the 'busman's stomach'. It was a stress-related disorder that rose to prominence during the inter-war years—and its relationship to the Coronation Bus Strike—the four-week walkout by 27,000 London bus drivers and conductors in May 1937.

Looking back, the bus strike is largely remembered for the tensions it revealed between the rank and file workers movement (an unofficial network of local workers' committees part-led, initially, by the Communist Party of Great Britain) and the executive of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) under its General Secretary, Ernest Bevin.

*** Source:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13619462.2016.1226806>

The coronation of King George VI

The coronation of King George VI took place on 12th May 1937, at Westminster Abbey, after he had ascended to the throne following the abdication of his older brother Edward (later, the Duke of Windsor). The coronation occurred during the strike (lasting from 1st to 27th May) by London's bus drivers and conductors.

Royal Holloway

Sources and Further Reading:

- <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/about-us/our-history/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Holloway_University_of_London



Picture Credit: Screenshot from YouTube video at: <https://youtu.be/7ReX6Ltyjek>

Royal Holloway is formed from two colleges founded by two social pioneers: Elizabeth Jesser Reid and Thomas Holloway. Elizabeth Jesser Reid was an English social reformer, anti-slavery activist and philanthropist - best remembered as the founder of Bedford College. Thomas Holloway was a Victorian entrepreneur and philanthropist. The colleges, boasting over 150 years of historic discoveries, notable alumni and academic innovation and were among the first places in Britain where women could access higher education:

- Bedford College, in London, which opened its doors in 1849; and
- Royal Holloway College's Founder's Building which was unveiled by Queen Victoria (who granted the use of "Royal" in the college's name) in 1886 – and is still the focal point of the campus.

In 1900, the colleges became part of the University of London, and in 1985 they merged to form what is now known as Royal Holloway.

Royal Holloway has six schools, 21 academic departments and approximately 10,500 undergraduate and postgraduate students from more than 100 countries. The campus is located west of Egham, Surrey, 19 miles from central London. The Egham campus was founded in 1879. The campus is dominated by the original 600-bed building - Founder's Building (see picture above) - a Grade I listed red-brick building modelled on the Château de Chambord of the Loire Valley, France. The campus is set in 135 acres of woodland, between Windsor and Heathrow.

In 1945, the college admitted male postgraduate students, and in 1965, around 100 of the first male undergraduates.

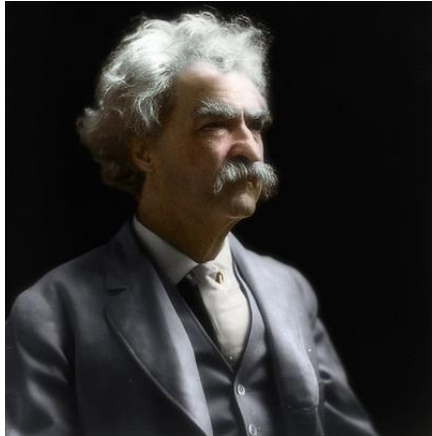
Royal Holloway's coat of arms consists of the Royal Holloway shield and its surrounding elements. There are three crescents shown on the coat of arms, which are taken from Thomas Holloway's own coat of arms.

There are strong links and exchange programmes with academic institutions in the U.S, Canada, Australia, and Hong Kong, notably Yale University, the University of Toronto, the University of Melbourne and the University of Hong Kong.

Mark Twain and his quotes

Sources and Further Reading:

- <https://www.ool.co.uk/blog/why-is-mark-twain-still-so-important-today/>
- https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mark_Twain



Picture Credit: "Mark Twain 1835 - 1910" by oneredsf1 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the birth name of the man we know as Mark Twain, was born on 30th November 1835 in the village of Florida, Missouri, USA. Many hold him in high esteem as one of the greatest authors, social critics and humourists that America has ever produced. His sharp mind, spirit, wit and humour still resonate amongst millions of people worldwide. Below are some of the witty, insightful and observant things he said:

- I haven't a particle of confidence in a man who has no redeeming petty vices whatsoever.
- [Of George Washington] He was ignorant of the commonest accomplishments of youth. He could not even lie.
- I have seen Chinamen abused and maltreated in all the mean, cowardly ways possible to the invention of a degraded nature. Still, I never saw a policeman interfere in the matter. I never saw a Chinaman righted in a court of justice for wrongs thus done him.
- Soap and education are not as sudden as a massacre, but they are more deadly in the long run.
- Formerly, if you killed a man, it was possible that you were insane—but now, if you, having friends and money, kill a man, it is evidence that you are a lunatic.
- Is not this insanity plea becoming rather common? Is it not so common that the reader confidently expects to see it offered in every criminal case that comes before the courts? [...] Really, what we want now, is not laws against crime, but a law against insanity.
- We haven't all had the good fortune to be ladies; we haven't all been generals, or poets, or statesmen, but when the toast works down to the babies, we stand on common ground.
- Among the three or four million cradles now rocking in the land are some which this nation would preserve for ages as sacred things if we could know which ones they are.
- Reader, suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.
- It does look as if Massachusetts were in a fair way to embarrass me with kindnesses this year. In the first place, a Massachusetts judge has just decided in open court that a Boston publisher may sell, not only

his own property in a free and unfettered way, but also may as freely sell property which does not belong to him but to me; property which he has not bought and which I have not sold. Under this ruling, I am now advertising that judge's homestead for sale, and, if I make as good a sum out of it as I expect, I shall go on and sell out the rest of his property.

- As I slowly grow wise, I briskly grow cautious.
- A circle is a round straight line with a hole in the middle.
- All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure.
- Don't mistake vivacity for wit, there iz about az much difference az there iz between lightning and a lightning bug.
- I am opposed to millionaires, but it would be dangerous to offer me the position.
- If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
- James Ross Clemens, a cousin of mine, was seriously ill two or three weeks ago in London but is well now. The report of my illness grew out of his illness; the report of my death was an exaggeration.
- A round man cannot be expected to fit in a square hole right away. He must have time to modify his shape.
- [Citing a familiar "American joke"] In Boston, they ask, How much does he know? In New York, How much is he worth? In Philadelphia, Who were his parents?
- Humour is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our hardnesses yield, all our irritations and resentments flit away and a sunny spirit takes their place.
- Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please. [Commonly paraphrased as: "First get your facts, then you can distort them at your leisure."]
- I believe I am not interested to know whether Vivisection produces results that are profitable to the human race or doesn't. To know that the results are profitable to the race would not remove my hostility to it. The pains which it inflicts upon unconsenting animals is the basis of my enmity towards it, and it is to me sufficient justification of the enmity without looking further. It is so distinctly a matter of feeling with me, and is so strong and so deeply-rooted in my make and constitution, that I am sure I could not even see a vivisection vivisected with anything more than a sort of qualified satisfaction.
- I was sorry to have my name mentioned as one of the great authors, because they have a sad habit of dying off. Chaucer is dead, Spencer is dead, so is Milton, so is Shakespeare, and I'm not feeling so well myself.
- He had only one vanity; he thought he could give advice better than any other person.
- There is nothing in the world like a persuasive speech to fuddle the mental apparatus, upset the convictions, and debauch the emotions of an audience not practised in the tricks and delusions of oratory.
- Definition of a classic — something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.
- It is more trouble to make a maxim than it is to do right.
- Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she had laid an asteroid.
- Honesty is the best policy — when there is money in it.
- Now what I contend is that my body is my own, at least I have always so regarded it. If I do harm through my experimenting with it, it is I who suffer, not the state.

- Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest.
- To create man was a fine and original idea; but to add the sheep was a tautology.
- To put it in rude, plain, unpalatable words — true patriotism, real patriotism: loyalty not to a Family and a Fiction, but a loyalty to the Nation itself!
- He is a stranger to me, but he is a most remarkable man — and I am the other one. Between us, we cover all knowledge; he knows all that can be known, and I know the rest.
- The only reason why God created man is because he was disappointed with the monkey.
- Laws are sand, customs are rock. Laws can be evaded, and punishment escaped, but an openly transgressed custom brings sure punishment.
- I have been complimented many times and they always embarrass me; I always feel that they have not said enough.
- Thunder is good, thunder is impressive; but it is lightning that does the work.
- The easy confidence with which I know another man's religion is folly teaches me to suspect that my own is also.
- Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.
- Always acknowledge a fault frankly. This will throw those in authority off their guard and give you opportunity to commit more.
- The best of us would rather be popular than right.
- It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world, and moral courage so rare.
- It is not worthwhile to try to keep history from repeating itself, for man's character will always make the preventing of the repetitions impossible.
- A man is never more truthful than when he acknowledges himself a liar.
- Principles have no real force except when one is well-fed.
- An injurious lie is an uncommendable thing; and so, also, and in the same degree, is an injurious truth—a fact that is recognized by the law of libel.
- The glory which is built upon a lie soon becomes a most unpleasant incumbrance... How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!
- If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.
- I must have a prodigious quantity of mind; it takes me as much as a week sometimes to make it up.
- Virtue has never been as respectable as money.
- Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.
- It is a mystery that is hidden from me by reason that the emergency requiring the fathoming of it hath not in my life-days occurred, and so, not needing to know this thing, I abide barren of the knowledge.
- The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not.
- Grief can take care of itself, but to get the full value of a joy, you must have somebody to divide it with.
- Whose property is my body? Probably mine. I so regard it. If I experiment with it, who must be answerable? I, not the State. If I choose injudiciously, does the State die? Oh no.
- What is the difference between a taxidermist and a tax collector? The taxidermist only takes your skin.
- Man was made at the end of the week's work, when God was tired.

The Spithead and Nore Mutinies

Sources and Further Reading:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spithead_and_Nore_mutinies
- <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/research-guides/research-guide-b8-spithead-nore-mutinies-1797>
- <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/blog/richard-parker-nore-mutiny-rebellion-retribution-royal-navy>
- <https://turbulentlondon.com/2015/05/12/on-this-day-the-nore-mutiny-12th-may-1797/>
- https://de.zxc.wiki/wiki/Meutereien_von_Spithead_und_Nore

Mutiny is described as an 'open revolt against constituted authority' by the Oxford English Dictionary and could be applied to any act of insubordination or defiance by an individual or collectively by a ship's crew. The Spithead and Nore mutinies were two major mutinies by sailors of the Royal Navy, taking place in the early summer of 1797, eight years before the *Battle of Trafalgar*. Discontent and minor incidents occurred on ships in other locations at the time, albeit not violent insurrections, being more in the nature of strikes, demanding better pay and conditions. The mutinies were potentially dangerous for Britain because, at the time, Britain was at war with revolutionary France, and the Royal Navy was the main component of Britain's war effort. There were also concerns in the government that the mutinies might be part of wider attempts at revolutionary sedition.

The mutinies were the first in an increasing series of outbreaks of maritime radicalism in the Atlantic World*. Despite superficial similarities, the mutinies differed in character. The Spithead mutiny was a simple, peaceful, successful strike action to address economic grievances, while the Nore mutiny was a more radical action, which articulating political ideals as well, and failed.

* The 'Atlantic World' comprises the interactions among the peoples and empires bordering the Atlantic Ocean rim from the Age of Discovery (aka the Age of Exploration), which began in the nation of Portugal under the leadership of Henry the Navigator.

The Mutiny at Spithead

In April 1797, 16 ships of the line of the Channel fleet, commanded by Admiral Lord Bridport, refused to sail and mounted a collective mutiny at Spithead. Their demands were about better pay and conditions, better victualling, increased shore leave and better treatment in general (compensation for sickness and injury) aboard Royal Naval ships. The mutiny at Spithead (an anchorage near Portsmouth) lasted a month until 15th May 1797. On 26th April, a supportive mutiny broke out on 15 ships in Plymouth, which sent delegates to Spithead to take part in negotiations. Seamen's pay rates had been established nearly 140 years earlier (in 1658) and, because of the stability of wages and prices, were still seen as 'reasonable' as recently as the 1756–1763 Seven Years' War – but raging inflation during the last decades of the 18th century had severely eroded the real value of the pay. It didn't help that pay raises had been granted to the army, militia, and naval officers. The Royal Navy had not made adjustments for any of these changes and had been slow to

understand their effects.

The mutineers were led by elected delegates and tried to negotiate with the Admiralty for two weeks, focusing their demands on better pay, the abolition of the 14-ounce *purser's pound*** (the ship's purser was allowed to keep two ounces of every true pound—16 ounces—of meat as a prerequisite), and the removal of a handful of unpopular officers; neither flogging nor impressment was mentioned in the mutineers' demands. The mutineers maintained regular naval routine and discipline aboard their ships (mostly with their regular officers), allowed some ships to leave for convoy escort duty or patrols, and promised to suspend the mutiny and go to sea immediately if French ships were spotted heading for English shores.

** Ships' provisions were issued by a [short] weight known as the 'purser's pound.' This was 'an abuse sanctioned by custom' and compensated the purser for the loss of weight of stores that arose, under his stewardship, due to spoilage, evaporation or shrinkage.

Because of mistrust, especially over pardons for the mutineers, the negotiations broke down, and minor incidents broke out, with several unpopular officers sent to shore and others treated with signs of deliberate disrespect. When the situation calmed down, Admiral Lord Howe intervened to negotiate an agreement. The mutiny at Spithead was conducted in a peaceful and organised manner, and within a few weeks, the demands of the mutineers had been met and a Royal Pardon granted. Afterwards, the mutiny was nicknamed the "breeze at Spithead".

The Nore Mutiny

Inspired by the example of their comrades at Spithead, the sailors at the Nore (an anchorage in the Thames Estuary) also mutinied, on 12th May 1797, when the crew of *Sandwich* seized control of the ship. Several other ships in the same location followed this example, though others slipped away and continued to slip away during the mutiny, despite gunfire from the ships that remained (which attempted to use force to hold the mutiny together). The mutineers had been unable to organise easily because the ships were scattered along the Nore (and were not all part of a unified fleet, as at Spithead), but quickly elected delegates for each ship.

Richard Parker



This death mask of Richard Parker was taken shortly after he was hanged for mutiny in 1797; a fine original casting is held at the Hunterian Museum (London).

Picture Credit: "File:Death mask of Richard Parker.jpg" By Baldovio is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Richard Parker was elected "President of the Delegates of the Fleet" but claimed that he had been nominated and elected without his consent and knowledge. Parker was a former master's mate who was disgraced and court-martialled in December 1793 and re-enlisted in the Navy as a

seaman in early 1797, where he came to serve aboard the brig-sloop *Hound*. Demands were formulated, and on 20th May 1797, a list of eight demands was presented to Admiral Charles Buckner, which mainly involved pardons, increased pay and modification of the Articles of War, eventually expanding to a demand that the King dissolve Parliament and make peace with France. These demands infuriated the Admiralty, which offered nothing except a pardon (and the concessions already made at Spithead) in return for an immediate return to duty.

Captain Sir Erasmus Gower commissioned HMS *Neptune* (98 guns) in the upper Thames and put together a flotilla of fifty loyal ships to prevent the mutineers moving on the city of London. It was largely fear of this blockade moving down river which made the mutineers reconsider their actions and begin to waver. Nevertheless, they blockaded London and prevented merchant vessels from entering the port, and the principals made plans to sail their ships to France, alienating the regular English sailors and losing more and more ships as the mutiny progressed.

On 5th June, Parker issued an order that merchant ships be allowed to pass the blockade, and only Royal Navy victualling (supply) ships be detained; the ostensible reason provided in the order was that "the release of the merchant vessels would create a favourable impression on shore", although this decision may have been more due to the complexities involved in such a wide undertaking as preventing all the merchant traffic on the busy Thames. After the successful resolution of the Spithead mutiny, the government and the Admiralty were not inclined to make further concessions, particularly as they felt some leaders of the Nore mutiny had political aims beyond improving pay and living conditions. The Admiralty probably felt it had been lenient and generous with the Spithead mutineers. When the government demanded the suppression of the mutiny and the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, brought in a bill to outlaw the mutineers, disagreements amongst them rose to the fore.

Meanwhile, Captain Charles Cunningham of HMS *Clyde*, which was there for a refit, persuaded his crew to return to duty and slipped off to Sheerness. This was seen as a signal to others to do likewise, and eventually, most ships slipped their anchors and deserted (some under fire from the mutineers), and the mutiny failed. Parker was quickly convicted of treason and piracy and hanged from the yardarm of *Sandwich*, the vessel where the mutiny had started. At the time of the mutiny, Parker was thirty years old. See [here](#), for a discussion on whether he was a ringleader or a scapegoat. In the reprisals which followed, 29 were hanged, 29 were imprisoned, and nine were flogged, while others were sentenced to transportation to Australia. The majority of men involved in the mutiny were not punished at all, which was lenient by the standards of the time.

After the Nore mutiny, Royal Navy vessels no longer rang five bells in the last dog watch (half the length of a standard watch period), as that had been the signal to start the mutiny.

Nelson's frustration, his love and his letters

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- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lord-nelson-hero-and-cad-105811218/>



Picture Credit: "04SEP06 - Nelsons Column London" by AegirPhotography is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The affair between Admiral Horatio Nelson and the beautiful (but married) Lady Emma Hamilton is widely known. No-so-well-known is that the Admiral was kept at sea by angry naval bosses who wanted to put an end to the relationship.

After being made Lord of the Admiralty in 1801, thus 'lording' it over Nelson, Sir Thomas Troubridge is said to have deliberately kept Nelson at sea for long periods to keep him apart from his mistress, Lady Emma Hamilton, as their affair was a public scandal. In a 216-year-old letter to his lover, Nelson wrote of his fury at Sir Thomas' action and confessed to feeling seasick because he had been at sea for so long. Admiral Nelson's affair was well known to Frances, his wife. She wrote to a friend in 1801 and said: "I can only say that no woman can feel the least attention from a husband more than I do."

Nelson's Letters*

Written between 18th December 1798 until his death on 21st October 1805, the letters and other Nelson artefacts were sold at Sotheby's in London on 21st October (Trafalgar Day) 2002, for more than \$3 million to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and assorted individual collectors.

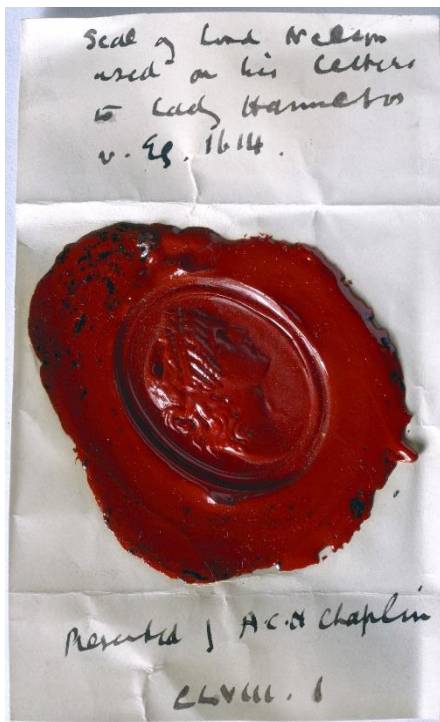
Nelson was a prolific letter writer. Although in his later years he had the help of secretaries, he still wrote a large number of his letters himself. Many of these still survive – at the last count, well over 5,000. Nelson's letters provide a better understanding of the man who wrote them. The letters fall into three distinct types.

- First are the official dispatches and reports he wrote to senior officers and politicians. Although more formal than the rest of his correspondence, they still contain traces of Nelson's engaging earnestness and directness.
- Then there are his letters to family and close friends: chatty, even gossipy at times, and often very frank about his own feelings and ambitions.
- Then finally, there are his letters to Lady Emma Hamilton, ranging from frenzied and excited to explicit and lustful to tearful and maudlin.

Many of his surviving letters are housed at the British Library, the National Maritime Museum and the Nelson Museum in Monmouth. There are also many others scattered in public and private collections all over the world.

* ACKNOWLEDGEMENT Source:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/nelson-man>



Picture Credit: "File: Seal of Lord Nelson, 1806 - BL Seal CLVIII 1.jpg" is marked with CC0 1.0

Despite Nelson's romantic dalliance with Lady Hamilton, only Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington and Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill rival Nelson's stature in British history. Nelson's death at Trafalgar secured his position as one of Britain's most heroic figures.

Nelson's signal just before the Battle of Trafalgar, "England expects that every man will do his duty", is regularly quoted, paraphrased and referenced. Numerous monuments, including Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, London, and the Nelson Monument in Edinburgh, have been created in his memory, and his legacy remains highly influential.

Even Adolf Hitler is said to have been a Nelson admirer and planned to move Nelson's Column to Berlin if victory in World War II had happened.

Obnubilate or Adumbrate?

The verb **Obnubilate** is a strange word and not often used. It means: *to cloud over; darken; becloud; obscure*. It comes straight from Latin *obnubilātus*, the past participle of the verb *obnubilāre* - to become cloudy, to darken.

Don't confuse it with **Adumbrate**, another verb which means: *to represent in outline; to foreshadow or overshadow*. It also means *to obscure*. It comes from Latin *adumbrātus*, represented only in outline, from *adumbrāre* to cast a shadow on, from *umbra* shadow.

Both words entered English in the second half of the 16th century.

Excerpted from Dictionary.com

Bonhomie!

Look closely at the picture first and then read the story:



This actually happened to an Englishman, while travelling in France, when he was totally drunk.

A French policeman stopped the Englishman's car and asked if he had been drinking.

With great difficulty, the Englishman admitted that he had been drinking all day, that his daughter got married that morning, and that he drank champagne and a few bottles of wine at the reception, and he had consumed many single malt whiskeys afterwards.

Quite upset, the policeman proceeded to breath-test the Englishman and verified that he was completely inebriated - far beyond tolerable standards for public safety.

The French policeman asked the Englishman if he knew why, under French law, he was going to be arrested.

The Englishman answered with a bit of humour, "No sir, I do not! Je ne sais pas! But while we're asking questions, do you realise that this is a British car and my wife is driving on the other side?"

Pullen, the Genius of Earlswood

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James Henry Pullen (1835–1916), also known as the Genius of Earlswood Asylum, was a British savant*, possibly suffering from aphasia**.

* **Savant syndrome** is a rare condition in which someone with significant mental disabilities demonstrates certain abilities that far exceed the average. The skills that savants excel at are generally related to memory. This may include rapid calculation, artistic ability, map making, or musical ability. Usually, only one exceptional skill is present. About half of the cases are associated with autism, and these individuals may be known as "autistic savants". The condition usually becomes apparent in childhood but sometimes develops later in life. Savant syndrome is estimated to affect around one in a million people and affects more males than females, at a ratio of 6:1.

** **Aphasia** is an inability to comprehend or formulate language because of damage to specific brain regions – usually caused by a stroke or head trauma. Aphasia can also be the result of brain tumours, brain infections, or neurodegenerative diseases, but the latter are far less prevalent. It affects about 2 million people in the US and 250,000 in Britain.

Pullen was born in Dalston, London, in 1835 and grew up in Balls Pond Road. He and his brother William were regarded as deaf, mute and developmentally disabled. By the age of seven, Pullen had learned only one word, *mother*, which he pronounced poorly. As a child, Pullen began to carve small ships out of firewood and draw pictures of them. At age 15, in 1850, he was taken to the new Earlswood Asylum (later called Royal Earlswood Hospital) in Reigate, Surrey, when it opened in 1855. Once admitted, Pullen spent the rest of his life in the asylum. He died there in 1916, and his obituary was published in the Daily Telegraph.

In 1878, Pullen - a man who did not speak until he was seven and barely spoke a comprehensible word for the rest of his life - drew his own pictorial autobiography in which he portrayed his mother as a remote figure, handing him over to an asylum for children at the age of seven apparently without a backward glance. When he was moved to the newly built Earlswood Asylum, one scene shows him in tears of despair.

Apparently, Pullen could not give answers through speech but could communicate through gestures. He could read lips and gestures but never learned to read or write beyond one syllable. Earlswood Asylum tried to teach its patients a number of handicrafts so they could support themselves and the asylum. Pullen became a gifted carpenter and cabinet maker. Most of his drawings were of the corridors of the asylum, but he also made practical items, such as bed frames, for the needs of and use by the asylum.

He was highly regarded, paid a salary for designing and building furniture for the asylum,



Picture Credit: "File: James Pullen's model of SS Great Eastern at Langdon Down Museum.JPG" by P0mbal is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Pullen was alternatively aggressive or sullen. He could be reserved but also wrecked his workshop once in a fit of anger. He did not like to accept advice and always wanted to get his own way. Nautical themes were his particular favourite and staff at the Redwood Asylum once used the gift of an admiral's uniform to placate Pullen when he became infatuated with a local woman who he decided he wanted to marry.

Over the 60 years spent at Earlswood, he completed many fine models, paintings and drawings. Queen Victoria accepted some of his drawings, and Prince Albert received one that Pullen had drawn of the *Siege of Sebastopol* in the Crimean War, which he based on newspaper accounts. He even attracted the interest of the Prince of Wales (the future king Edward VII), who sent him pieces of ivory so he could carve something out of them.

The Superintendent of the asylum was Dr John Langdon Down - a man who transformed the care of people with learning disabilities and who first described and classified *Down's syndrome*. Down gave Pullen significant leeway both in terms of managing his occasional violent outbursts and by providing for his creative outputs in the form of a specially converted studio room – from which the creativity would endlessly flow. Another example of the leeway given to Pullen was that he was allowed to eat his meals with the staff.

Pullen's masterpiece is a model ship, a 10-foot-long replica of *SS Great Eastern*, which he started in 1870 and spent seven years in its completion. Pullen made everything, including 5,585 rivets, 13 lifeboats and interior furniture in miniature, himself. The model ship sank for lack of buoyancy in its maiden voyage, but Pullen later repaired that flaw. The model was exhibited in the Crystal Palace.

Pullen also built a large, mechanical mannequin in the middle of his workshop; he would sit inside it, manipulate its face and appendages and talk through a concealed bugle in its mouth. After Pullen died in 1916, his workshop became a museum of his work until the Royal Earlswood Hospital was closed in 1997. It is now an apartment complex.

The state barge and his magnificent model ship named *Princess Alexandra*, in honour of the royal wedding of 1863 – launched on the pond in the asylum gardens in front of invited patrons and

locals, as well as the hospital brass band and all the residents – were exhibited at the 1867 *Paris Exposition Universelle*. Today, many of the treasures Pullen created, including Pullen's model of *SS Great Eastern* (see above), are in the care of The Langdon Down Museum of Learning Disability at Normansfield, Teddington.

Although well known as an example of an *Idiot Savant* – one who is mentally retarded but has a special talent in one narrow field – it is now known that Pullen was intelligent but suffered from a severe communication disorder and high-frequency deafness.

Recommendation

Pay a visit to The Langdon Down Museum of Learning Disability website ([here](#)) – you won't be disappointed. In particular, you can download a booklet - *The Life of James Henry Pullen (1835-1916)*, which can be accessed from [here](#).



Pullen in a Royal Navy uniform, holding what appears to be a navigational chart.

Historical photograph of James Henry Pullen (1825–1916). Permission details: Copyright expired no later than 1966 under Copyright Act 1911 S.52

Picture Credit: Original publication:

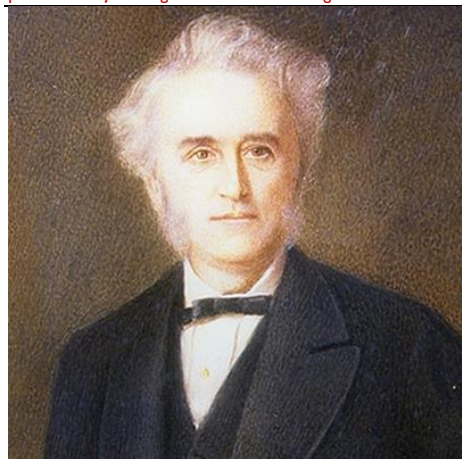
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Dr John Langdon Down

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Picture Credit: Public Domain. Sydney Hodges - St. George's University of London
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:JLHdown.jpg>)

John Langdon Haydon Down (changed to Haydon Langdon) was born on 18th November 1828 and died on 7th October 1896. He was a British physician best known for his description of the genetic condition now known as *Down syndrome*, which he originally classified in 1862, exactly in the mid-point of his life.

John Down was born in Torpoint, Cornwall. His father was descended from an Irish family, his great-great-grandfather had been the Protestant Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. At age 14, he was apprenticed to his father, the village apothecary at Anthony St Jacob's. The vicar gave him a present of Arnot's *Physics* which made him determined to take up a scientific career.

In 1846, a chance encounter with a strange-looking girl sparked Down's interest in becoming a doctor. At age 18, he went to London, where he got a post working for a surgeon in the Whitechapel Road, where he had to bleed patients, extract teeth, wash bottles and dispense drugs. Later, he entered the pharmaceutical laboratory in Bloomsbury Square and won the prize for organic chemistry.

More than once, Down was called back to Torpoint to help in the business until his father died in 1853, whereupon Down entered the Royal London Hospital as a student. Honours and gold medals distinguished his early career. He qualified in 1856 at the Apothecaries Hall and the Royal College of Surgeons.

He was appointed Medical Superintendent of the Earlswood Asylum in Surrey in 1858 and worked there for ten years. Down decided to transform Earlswood, a large institution which had its origins in two pioneering institutions set up in Highgate and Colchester, while he took his MB in London, won a Gold Medal in physiology and took his MRCP and MD degrees.

He was elected Assistant Physician to the London Hospital and continued to live at Earlswood and practice there and in London. He and his wife Mary (who had met through his sister) transformed Earlswood from a place of horror where patients were subject to corporal punishment and kept in dirty conditions and uneducated to a happy place where all punishment was forbidden and replaced with kindness and rewards, the dignity of patients was valued, and they were taught horse riding, gardening, crafts and elocution. Down restructured the administration of the Asylum and started a regimen of stimulation, good food, and occupational training.

In 1866, Down wrote a paper entitled "*Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots*", in which he put forward the theory that it was possible to classify different types of conditions by ethnic characteristics. He listed various kinds, including the Mongolian, Malay, Caucasian, Aztecs, and Ethiopian types. In the main, the paper is about what became known as Down syndrome, but which he classified as the *Mongolian type of idiot*. As a result, Down syndrome was also known as "*Mongolism*", and people with Down syndrome were referred to as "*Mongoloids*".

Down's findings were based on measurements of the diameters of the head and of the palate and on his series of clinical photographs (he was a pioneer of the use of photography in hospitals). *Mongolian idiocy* became a widely used term, but in 1961, a group of genetic experts wrote to the *Lancet* suggesting four alternatives. The editor chose "*Down's syndrome*". WHO endorsed this later. The People's Republic of Mongolia had objected to the use of the descriptive term '*Mongolian Idiot*' as it was derogatory to them.

Down syndrome cannot be cured. Early treatment can help improve skills. They may include speech, physical, occupational, and/or educational therapy. With support and treatment, many people with Down syndrome live happy, productive lives.



Picture Credit: "Royal Earlswood Park" by Ian Capper is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

After resigning from Earlswood in 1868, Down set up his own private home for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities at Normansfield - located between Hampton Wick and Teddington.

The Normansfield home's first occupants were 18 mentally disabled children of upper-class families in the community - such as lords and physicians. In the home, Down and his wife did their best to educate the children and exposed them to a wide variety of mentally stimulating activities. Normansfield was a success and eventually had to be expanded to house the growing number of its inhabitants. By 1876 the number of inhabitants in Normansfield had grown to 160.

Down also made contributions to medicine through his research and was the first person to publish a description of the *Prader-Willi** syndrome, which he called 'polysarcia'.

* Prader-Willi syndrome is a rare genetic condition that causes a wide range of physical symptoms, learning difficulties and behavioural problems. It's usually noticed shortly after birth. Often, affected individuals have a narrow forehead, small hands and feet, short height, light skin and hair. Most are unable to have children. The syndrome is caused by missing genetic material in a group of genes on chromosome number 15.

In 1887, John Down wrote a book entitled "*Mental Affections of Childhood and Youth*". It was published at the request of the Medical Society of London and was a transcript of three lectures along with fifteen papers Down published on mental defects. The book details his ideas and findings about several mental abnormalities such as Down syndrome and microcephaly. It also contains his view on the leading thoughts and available literature on the subject. In the lectures and some of the papers, he also weighed in on what he believed were the potential causes of various mental disorders. A recurring theme was the influence of parental physical and mental health on their child's chances of being born with a mental disorder. He also explored how the obstetric practices of the time could have influenced post-natal health.

His sons, Reginald and Percival, both qualified in medicine at the London Hospital, joined their father, and became responsible for the hospital after his death in 1896.

By a wicked twist of fate, John Down's grandson (Reginald's son) was born in 1905 with Down Syndrome. The mother, Jane Down, never came to terms with her son's problems. However, the boy grew to manhood in the Langdon Down home and became a well-loved member of the family, living a happy life and dying at age 65.

People with Down syndrome (DS) enjoy a longer life expectancy now than they ever have before and are therefore at greater risk of developing conditions associated with ageing, including dementia. A century after Down's death, his contributions to the field of medicine were celebrated at the Mansell Symposium in the Medical Society of London, and the Royal Society of Medicine published a biography about him.

Down's institution was later absorbed into the National Health Service in 1952.

The History of Dentistry

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Picture Credit: "dentist's chair" by Dr Sam C is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Dentistry is one of the oldest of all medical professions, dating back to 7000 B.C. with the Indus Valley Civilisation* or even earlier to prehistoric man. But, it wasn't until 5000 BC that descriptions related to dentistry and tooth decay appeared. Dentistry is thought to have been the first specialisation in medicine.

Proving prehistoric man's ingenuity, research indicates that dental drilling dates back 9,000 years. Primitive dentists drilled nearly perfect holes into teeth of live patients between 5500 and 7000 BC, as shown by recent carbon dating of at least nine skulls with 11 drill holes found in a graveyard in Pakistan. It is thought that a small bow was used to drive flint drill tips into patients' teeth, a method that probably evolved from intricate ornamental bead drilling. Skeletal remains from Mehgarh (now in Pakistan) dated to that time show evidence of teeth having been drilled with flint tools to remove decay, a method found to have been "surprisingly effective" **

* A Bronze Age civilisation in the northwestern regions of South Asia, lasting from 3300 BCE to 1300 BC and in its mature form from 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE.

** See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4882968.stm>

In ancient Greece, Hippocrates and Aristotle wrote about dentistry, specifically about treating teeth - including the eruption pattern of teeth, treating decayed teeth and gum disease, extracting teeth with forceps, and using wires to stabilise loose teeth and fractured jaws. It took a

long time for a book to be published devoted entirely to dentistry: *The Little Medicinal Book for All Kinds of Diseases and Infirmities of the Teeth* was published in Germany in 1530. It was written for barbers and surgeons who treated the mouth - it covered practical topics such as oral hygiene, tooth extraction, drilling teeth, and placement of gold fillings.

By the 1700s, dentistry had become a more defined profession. In 1723, Pierre Fauchard, a French surgeon credited as the Father of Modern Dentistry, published his influential book, *The Surgeon Dentist, a Treatise on Teeth*, which for the first time defined a comprehensive system to care for and treat teeth. Fauchard introduced the idea of dental fillings and the use of dental prosthesis, and he identified that the acids from sugar and the like led to tooth decay. Fauchard was the pioneer of dental prostheses, and he invented many methods to replace lost teeth. He suggested that substitutes could be made from carved blocks of ivory or bone. He also introduced dental braces, although they were initially made of gold, he discovered that tooth position could be corrected as the teeth would follow the pattern of the wires. Waxed linen or silk threads were usually employed to fasten the braces.

In the 14th century, Guy de Chauliac most probably invented the dental pelican (so-named as it resembled a pelican's beak), which was used to perform dental extractions until the late 18th century. The pelican was replaced by the dental key, which, in turn, was replaced by modern forceps in the 19th century.

Instruments used for dental extractions date back several centuries. Blacksmith's tongs or pliers were used for extractions. Barbers usually limited their practice to tooth extraction to alleviate pain and solve associated chronic tooth infections. Sometimes, it didn't work to plan - ever-present was the danger of infection, and a few patients bled to death. One estimate shows one death in 10 in London in the 1660s was linked in one way or another to toothache.

Historically, dental extractions have been used to treat a variety of illnesses. During the Middle Ages and throughout the 19th century, dentistry was not a profession in itself - often, dental procedures were performed by barbers or general physicians.

Toothpaste and Toothbrushes

By 1873, Colgate saw an opportunity and mass-produced the first toothpaste. They mass-produced toothbrushes, which followed a few years later.

Timeline (Extracted from: <https://bda.org/museum/the-story-of-dentistry/timeline>)

- 1530 Artzney Buchlein wrote the first dentistry book.
- 1563 Bartholomew Eustachius published the first accurate book on dental anatomy, *Libellus de dentibus*.
- 1683 Antony van Leeuwenhoek identified oral bacteria using a microscope.
- 1685 The first dental book written in English, *The Operator for the teeth* by Charles Allen, was published.
- 1723 Pierre Fauchard published *Le Chirurgien dentiste*.
- 1764 First lectures on the teeth at the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh by James Rae.

- 1771 John Hunter published *The natural history of human teeth* - giving a scientific basis to dental anatomy.
- 1780 William Addis manufactured the first modern toothbrush.
- 1820 Claudius Ash established his dental manufacturing company in London.
- 1831 James Snell designed the first reclining dental chair.
- 1830s-1890s *The Amalgam War* recurring conflict and controversy generated over the use of amalgam mercury as a filling material.
- 1843 *First British Dental Journal* was published.
- 1844 Horace Wells demonstrated nitrous oxide as an anaesthetic.
- 1846 W T G Morton demonstrated ether as an anaesthetic.
- 1846 James Robinson carried out the first tooth extraction under ether in the UK.
- 1851 Vulcanite, invented by Charles Goodyear, began to be used for denture bases
- 1858 Dental Hospital of London opened, the first clinical training establishment for dentists in Britain. Medical Registration Act permitted the College of Surgeons to grant licences in dental surgery
- 1859 Opening of first dental schools in Britain.
- 1860 First licences in dental surgery were awarded by the Royal College of Surgeons of England.
- In 1871 James Beall Morrison invented the foot treadle engine. A tooth coloured filling material, silicate cement, was introduced.
- 1878 First British Dentists Act . 1879 First Dental Register.
- 1880 British Dental Association was founded.
- 1884 Cocaine introduced as a local anaesthetic by Carl Koller.
- 1890 W D Miller formulated his 'chemico parasitic' theory of caries in Micro-organisms of the human mouth.
- 1896 G V Black establishes the principles of cavity preparation.
- 1900 Federation Dentaire Internationale was founded.
- In 1901, the University of Birmingham awarded the first dental degree in Britain.
- Novocaine was introduced as a local anaesthetic by Alfred Einhorn.
- 1907 George Cunningham established the Cambridge school children's dental institute.
- 1907 George Northcroft established the first orthodontic study group in the UK.
- 1921 Dentists Act: only registered dentists were permitted to practise.
- C 1932 Synthetic resins were introduced for denture bases.
- 1947 Founding of the *Faculty of Dental Surgery* within the Royal College of Surgeons of England.
- 1948 National Health Service was introduced.
- 1956 Dentists Act: General Dental Council established.
- 1957 High-speed turbine handpiece introduced.
- 1958 Fluoride toothpaste was first marketed in Britain.
- 1985 Water Fluoridation Act passed.
- 2006 The new General Dental Services NHS contract was introduced.



Picture Credit: "J. Jones Dentist Surgery" by Timitrius is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The First Books Ever Written

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The First Book

The first book ever written is believed to be *The Epic of Gilgamesh*: a mythical retelling of an important political figure from history. It came from ancient Mesopotamia and is the earliest surviving notable literature and the second oldest religious text, after the Pyramid Texts. Written: c. 2100-1200 BCE, it is the oldest-known fictional story that can be called a book.



Picture Credit: "File: The Newly Discovered Tablet V of the Epic of Gilgamesh. Meeting Humbaba, with Enkidu, at the Cedar Forest. The Sulaymaniyah Museum, Iraqi Kurdistan.jpg" by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin FRCP(Glasg) is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

The invention of writing marks the boundary between pre-history and history. The first written language that we know of was archaic cuneiform*. It is believed to have appeared around 3400 BCE during the early period of ancient Sumerian civilisation, located in the region between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers in what is now modern-day Iraq.

* Cuneiform was originally a pictographic language gradually becoming syllabic and composed of wedge-shaped characters (the word "cuneiform" comes from the Latin term *cuneus*, meaning wedge.) Source:

<https://andyrossagency.wordpress.com/tag/first-book-ever-written/>

The first bound parchment books, or codices, were the Bibles of the early Christian church, like the 4th century A.D. *Codex Vaticanus*** and the *Codex Sinaiticus***.

** The '*Codex Vaticanus*' is regarded as the oldest extant manuscript of the Greek Bible. The Codex is named after its place of conservation in the Vatican Library, where it has been kept since at least the 15th century. It is written on 759 leaves of vellum in uncial letters and has been dated paleographically to the 4th century. The literal meaning of '*Codex Sinaiticus*' is the Sinai Book. The word 'Sinaiticus' comes from the fact that the Codex was preserved for many centuries at St Catherine's Monastery near the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt.

Before books, humans had stories, the telling and retelling of which was a communal way of sharing joy and keeping bad dreams away. This is how fairy tales began and how language and the spoken word found its power.

But the earliest examples of "writing" – either on stone slabs or impressed onto pieces of bark – were more to record numbers, lists, or convey information.

Writing on Different Material

In 1454, the German - *Johannes Gutenberg* - built his very own (and the world's first ever) mechanical movable-type printing press to print on paper. Before this, the material used was:

- **Clay Tablets:** the first written form of communication was found in Mesopotamia in the 3rd Millennium BC.
- **Papyrus Writing:** Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs used Papyrus as books. The first evidence of a book is from the account books of King Neferirkare Kakai, an ancient Egyptian pharaoh, the third king of the Fifth Dynasty (about 2400 BC).
- **Wood and Silk:** The first printing of books started in China (during the Tang Dynasty, an imperial dynasty that ruled from 618 to 907 CE), but exactly when is not known. Printing is considered to be one of the Four Great Inventions of China*** that spread across the world. A specific type of printing called mechanical woodblock printing on paper started in China during the Tang dynasty before the 8th century CE.

*** Being the compass, gunpowder, papermaking, and printing.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Great_Inventions - cite_note-3

Different Languages

The first books to be printed in different languages and when, were:

- 1377: *Jikji* is the abbreviated title of a Korean Buddhist document, *Selected Teachings of Buddhist Sages and Seon Masters*, the earliest known book printed with movable metal type.
- 1455: The Gutenberg Bible was the first major book printed in Europe with movable metal type by Johannes Gutenberg.
- 1461: *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* printed by Albrecht Pfister****, is the first printed book in German, and also the first book illustrated with woodcuts.
- **** See [here](#).
- 1470: *Il Canzoniere* by Francesco Petrarca, is the first book printed in the Italian language.
- 1472: *Sinodal de Aguila* was the first book printed in Spain (at Segovia) and in Spanish.
- 1474: *Obres e trobes en llaor de la Verge Santa Maria* was the first book printed in the Catalan language, at Valencia.
- c.1475: *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* was the first book printed (by William Caxton) in the English language.
- 1476: *La légende dorée*, printed by Guillaume LeRoy, is the first book printed in the French language.
- 1476: *Grammatica Graeca, sive compendium octo orationis partium*, is the first book written entirely in Greek by Constantine Lascaris.
- 1477: The first printed edition of the *Geographia*, in Bologna, was the first printed book with engraved illustrations.
- 1477: The Delft Bible, was the first book printed in the Dutch language.

Source: mostly from <https://www.quora.com/Who-wrote-the-very-first-book-in-the-world>

Some of the World's oldest Books

Before the evolution of the printing press and the emergence of the *Gutenberg Bible*, each text was a unique hand-crafted article, personalised through the design features incorporated by the scribe, owner, bookbinder and illustrator. Apart from books already referred to earlier, the following will be of interest:

- **Etruscan Gold Book:** Although not much is known about this book, it may be the oldest book in the world as it dates back to around 600 BCE. The entire book is made out of 24-carat gold and consists of six sheets bound together, with illustrations of a horse rider, a mermaid, a harp, and soldiers. The finder of the book, donated it to Bulgaria's National History Museum.
- **Prygi Gold Tablets** were found during an excavation of the ancient port town of Pyrgi, Italy in 1964 and date back to around 500 BCE. The tablets are notable because they are written in two different languages, two of the tablets are written in ancient Etruscan and the third one is written in Phoenician. Due to the bilingual text, researchers have been able to use their knowledge of Phoenician to interpret the Etruscan tablets.
- **The Nag Hammadi library:** this collection of thirteen codices buried in a sealed jar was found in 1945 by a farmer in the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi. The writings found in the codices are mostly about Gnostic treatises but also contain works belonging to the *Corpus Hermeticum* and a partial translation or alteration of Plato's *Republic*. One of the codices contains the only known complete text of the *Gospel of Thomas*. The codices are believed to date back between the 3rd and 4th centuries.
- **The Garima Gospels:** these are two gospel books from the Abba Garima Monastery in Ethiopia and are the oldest known complete illuminated Christian manuscripts. Recent carbon-testing shows that the books date back to between 330 – 650 AD. The books were written by Abba Garima, a Byzantine royal who founded the monastery.
- **The St. Cuthbert Gospel:** this is the oldest surviving European book and dates back to around the 7th century. The book is a copy of the *Gospel of St. John* and was named for St. Cuthbert, in whose coffin the book was placed sometime after he died in 687. The book has been on loan to the British Library in London since 1979, and they are now the current owners.
- **The Book of Kells or the Book of Columba:** this is one of Ireland's greatest treasures - an illuminated manuscript dating back to about 800 AD. The book was named for the Abbey of Kells, where it was housed for many centuries – it is currently on permanent display at Trinity College Library in Dublin, Ireland. The book features four Gospels from the New Testament and consists of 340 folios made from calfskin vellum.

Source for this section: <https://www.oldest.org/culture/books-ever-existed/>

Spying and Espionage

Sources and Further Reading: •

- <https://www.history.com/tag/spies>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/M16>
- <https://www.amazon.co.uk/History-Espionage-Ernest-Volkman/dp/1844424340> •
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espionage>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_espionage
- <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Espionage>
- <https://www.britannica.com/biographies/history/espionage>
- <https://www.deutsches-spionagemuseum.de/en/espionage>
- <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/spies/spies/default.htm>

What is it?

Espionage or spying is the act of obtaining secret or confidential information from non-disclosed sources or divulging it without the permission of the owner of the information. A person who commits espionage is called an *espionage agent* or a *spy* and uses covert, clandestine, illegal or unethical behaviour as it is, by definition, unwelcome. Almost all nations have strict laws concerning espionage, and the penalty for being caught is often severe.

Espionage in the military is typically referred to as "*military intelligence*," while espionage in the corporate world is termed "*industrial espionage*." The Latin word *spicere* (to look on) evolved into "spy".

Spying has existed since ancient times, although it is only very recently that official intelligence organisations were founded, and spying was established as a profession. In the 1980s, scholars characterised foreign intelligence as "*the missing dimension*" of historical scholarship." Since then, a large body of popular and scholarly literature has emerged, particularly in World War II and the Cold War era (1947–1989), which has been a favourite genre for novelists and filmmakers.

Counterintelligence

One of the most effective ways to gather data and information about a target or country is by infiltrating its ranks. Spies can then return information such as the size and strength of enemy forces. They can also find dissidents within an organisation and influence them to provide further information or defect. In times of conflict, spies steal technology and sabotage the enemy in various ways. The practice of thwarting enemy espionage and intelligence-gathering is *Counterintelligence*.

History

Efforts to use espionage for military advantage are well documented throughout history. Some examples are:

- Sun Tzu, a theorist in ancient China who influenced Asian military thinking, still has an audience in the 21st century for the *Art of War*. He advised, "*One who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements*." He stressed the need to understand yourself and your enemy for military intelligence. He identified different spy roles. In modern terms, they include the *secret informant* or *agent in place* (who provides copies of enemy secrets), the *penetration agent* who has access to the enemy's commanders, and the *disinformation agent* who feeds a mix of true and false details to point the enemy in the wrong direction, to confuse the enemy).

- Ancient Egypt had a thoroughly developed system for the acquisition of intelligence. The Ancient Egyptians even coined a description for the new breed of public servant: "*the eyes of the Pharaoh*".
- The Hebrews used spies too, as recounted in the story of Rahab, who was said to be a '*prostitute woman*'. The Bible (Joshua 2:1–24) tells the story of a woman (said to be Rahab) who lived in Jericho and assisted the Israelites in their capture of the city by hiding two men who had been sent to scout the city before their attack.
- In France, Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) used his "*Cabinet Noir*" to monitor the letters etc. of foreign diplomats and those suspected of treason.
- Feudal Japan (see here) often used *shinobi* (or *ninja*) * to gather intelligence through a covert agent or mercenary in feudal Japan. The functions of a *ninja* included espionage, deception, and surprise attacks. Their covert methods of waging irregular warfare were deemed dishonourable and beneath the honour of the *samurai*. *Shinobi* proper, as specially trained spies and mercenaries, appeared in the 15th century but may have existed as early as the 12th century.
Shinobi is a related term of *ninja*. As nouns, the difference between *shinobi* and *ninja* is that *shinobi* is a male *ninja* while *ninja* is (martial arts/historical) a person trained primarily in stealth, espionage, assassination and the Japanese martial art of *ninjutsu*. Source: <https://wikidiff.com/shinobi/ninja>
- Aztecs used *Pochtecas*, people in charge of commerce, as spies and diplomats, and had diplomatic immunity. Along with the *pochteca*, before a battle or war, secret agents, *quimitchin*, were sent to spy amongst enemies, usually wearing the local costume and speaking the local language, techniques similar to modern secret agents.
- World War I markedly changed the development and scope of many countries' espionage activities. Due to the complicated global political climate and numerous, often secret, allegiances between countries, espionage became a valuable and necessary means of obtaining essential information. By the time of World War I, some countries, including the United States and Great Britain (see below), organised agencies solely devoted to the collection of intelligence.
- World War II espionage activities were characterised by the use of cryptography, or codes, one example of which was the German *Enigma* machine. The British, with help from the Poles, cracked the code,

Sir Francis Walsingham

The British intelligence service has existed in various forms since 1569 when Sir Francis Walsingham, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth I, established a secret service. He was driven by Protestant zeal to counter Catholicism and sanctioned the use of torture against Catholic priests and suspected conspirators. Walsingham used Antony Standen to pass information from Europe, and his reports on the activities of the Spanish Armada made him a key figure in the Elizabethan secret service. Yet, Standen was a Roman Catholic refugee from Protestant England for almost thirty years.

Despite a knighthood from Elizabeth, he could never reconcile loyalty to his religion with service for his country.* Walsingham's staff included the cryptographer Thomas Phelippes, an expert in deciphering letters and forgery, and Arthur Gregory, who was skilled at breaking and repairing seals without detection.

** Source:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/spies/spies/standen/default.htm>

Charles Whitworth

A highly successful operation took place in Russia under the supervision of minister Charles Whitworth (1704 to 1712). He closely observed public events and noted the changing power status of key leaders. He cultivated influential and knowledgeable persons at the royal court, and befriended foreigners in Russia's service, and in turn, they provided insights into high-level Russian planning and personalities, which he summarised and sent in code to London.

Nathalie Sergueiew

Russian-born Nathalie Sergueiew was one of many agents who double-crossed the German secret service during the Second World War. Between 1943 and 1945, Sergueiew's contacts in the German *Abwehr* believed her to be a loyal German spy. In reality, she was sending them deliberately misleading messages composed by the British secret service. Known as '*Treasure*', Sergueiew did valuable work for MI5, but there were suspicions she lacked discretion and commitment. *Treasure* was an effective double agent, but according to *Masterman*, the architect of the double-cross system, she was also 'exceptionally temperamental and troublesome'. In conversations with her MI5 handler, Mary Sherer, *Treasure* revealed that she had let slip her double identity to an American soldier with whom she had an affair. She also threatened to stop working for MI5 unless they arranged for her beloved pet dog left in Spain to join her.

*** Source:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/spies/spies/treasure/default.htm>

Military Intelligence 6 (MI6)

In its present form, MI6 was established in 1912 by Commander (later Sir) Mansfield Cumming as part of Britain's attempt to coordinate intelligence activities. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was considered the most effective intelligence service in the world. MI6 (formally Secret Intelligence Service) is the British government agency responsible for collecting, analysing, and appropriately disseminating foreign intelligence. It is also charged with the conduct of espionage activities outside British territory.

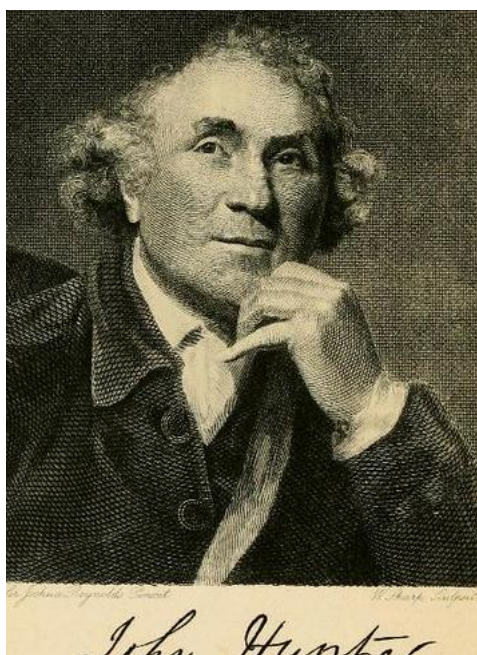


Picture Credit: "*Enigma machine*" by papayatreelimited is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The Life and Times of John Hunter (Surgeon)

Sources and Further Reading:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hunter_\(surgeon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hunter_(surgeon))
- <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/museums-and-archives/hunterian-museum/about-us/john-hunter/>
- <https://www.healio.com/news/hematology-oncology/20120325/john-hunter-founder-of-scientific-surgery>
- https://www.facs.org/~media/files/archives/shg%20poster/2017/05_john_hunter.ashx
- <https://www.jameslindlibrary.org/articles/john-hunter-1728-93/>
- <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/people/cp87166/john-hunter>
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00381-015-2852-x>
- <http://www.madehow.com/inventorbios/88/John-Hunter.html>



Picture Credit: [Cropped Left & Right] "This image is taken from John Hunter, man of science and surgeon (1728-1793) With introd. by Sir James Paget" by Medical Heritage Library, Inc. is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

John Hunter FRS (1728–1793) was a Scottish Surgeon - one of the most distinguished scientists and surgeons of his day. He was an early advocate of careful observation and scientific method in medicine. He was a teacher of and collaborator with Edward Jenner, pioneer of the smallpox vaccine.

Hunter is alleged to have paid for the stolen body of the *Irish Giant*, Charles Byrne, and proceeded to study and exhibit it against Byrne's explicit wishes (Byrne wanted to be buried at sea). It's said that Hunter paid £500 cash to procure Byrne's corpse of the 'Irish Giant', Charles Byrne, the London Circus attraction. Justifiably afraid that his body would wind up on a dissection table, the almost eight-foot-tall giant had arranged before his death for his body to be buried at sea. Somehow his coffin instead was filled with rocks, and his skeleton was on display in the anatomic collections of John Hunter.*

* Source:

https://www.facs.org/~media/files/archives/shg%20poster/2017/05_john_hunter.ashx

Hunter came to London in 1748 at the age of 20 and worked as an assistant in the anatomy school of his elder brother William - an established physician and obstetrician. Under William's direction, John learnt human anatomy and showed great aptitude in the dissection and preparation of specimens.

Suffering from ill health, Hunter became a staff surgeon with the British army in 1760, serving during the Seven Years' War. He acquired surgical skills and experience with gunshot wounds and inflammation during this time. Afterwards, he worked with the dentist James Spence conducting teeth transplants and, in 1764, set up his own anatomy school in London.

Hunter built a collection of living animals whose skeletons and other organs he prepared as anatomical specimens, eventually amassing nearly 14,000 preparations demonstrating the anatomy of humans and other vertebrates, including more than 3,000 animals.

Hunter became a Fellow of the *Royal Society* in 1767. He was elected to the *American Philosophical Society* in 1787. The *Hunterian Society of London* was so named in his honour, and the *Hunterian Museum* at the Royal College of Surgeons preserves his name and his collection of anatomical specimens. It still contains the illegally procured body of Charles Byrne, despite ongoing protests.

John Hunter researched blood while bloodletting patients with various diseases. This helped him develop his theory that inflammation was a bodily response to disease and was not itself pathological. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hunter_\(surgeon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hunter_(surgeon)) - cite_note-9

Hunter studied under William Cheselden at Chelsea Hospital and Percival Pott at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. After qualifying, he became assistant surgeon (house surgeon) in 1756 at St George's Hospital and surgeon in 1768, an appointment that was short-lived because he wanted to devote himself to anatomy.

Hunter and Dentistry

When Hunter returned to London after his war service, he was drawn to dentistry. Preventive dental care was unknown, and the mania for sugar to sweeten tea led to an epidemic of *caries* - the decay and crumbling of a tooth or bone.

It wasn't long before Hunter entered into a partnership with dentist James Spence, whose practice afforded the opportunity to study the anatomy and diseases of teeth. Hunter recognised the role of gum disease in the loss of teeth. He recorded his observations and study in the first comprehensive study on the anatomy and diseases of teeth, a two-volume treatise that became the definitive text in the field and established his reputation among London's surgical elite. Hunter's solution to the loss of teeth after extraction was to take the

appropriate tooth from a 'poor' human donor (generally someone who needed the money) and attempt to establish it in the 'rich' host's empty socket.

Hunter's treatise on human teeth was a basic building block of modern dentistry.

Hunter – blunt-speaker and disputatious

By the 1780s, Hunter enjoyed widespread recognition as the leading teacher of surgery of his time. However, the acclaim did little to mellow his blunt-speaking and argumentative nature. His temper was to be his downfall: Hunter died in 1793 suffering a fit after an argument at St George's Hospital over the acceptance of students for training.

Source: <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/museums-and-archives/hunterian-museum/about-us/john-hunter/>

Hunter and bodies for dissection

Hunter is said to have spent far more than he could afford on bodies for dissection, and he overpaid for curiosities. As with all surgeons and anatomists of the day, he engaged grave robbers, ironically called "resurrectionists," to procure bodies for study and examination. John Hunter's home on Leicester Square had two entrances: a respectable one for patients and students, one more sinister for the deliveries of corpses.

Source:

https://www.facs.org/~media/files/archives/shg%20poster/2017/05_john_hunter.ashx

Hunter's lasting contribution to Science

Always the innovator, John Hunter's experiments provided many invaluable insights for modern medicine. Primarily a student of observation as opposed to strict academia, his wide-ranging interests allowed him to explore several areas of medicine simultaneously. He introduced the modern approach to surgery: 'Start with a thorough understanding of anatomy and physiology, meticulously observe the symptoms of disease in a living patient and post-mortem findings of those that died of it, then, based on the comparison, propose an improvement in treatment, test it in animal experiments, and try the procedure on humans.'

Hunter was a key figure of the *Enlightenment* who transformed surgery, advanced biological understanding and perhaps anticipated the evolutionary theories of Darwin. Today, Hunter is remembered as a founder of 'scientific surgery'. He helped improve the understanding of human teeth, bone growth and remodelling, inflammation, gunshot wounds, venereal diseases, digestion, the functioning of the lacteals, child development, the separateness of maternal and foetal blood supplies, and the role of the lymphatic system. He carried out the first recorded artificial insemination in 1790 on a linen draper's wife.

RECOMMENDED READING

- *John Hunter, the father of scientific surgery*, is available for download [here](#).
- *The Knife Man: The Extraordinary Life and Times of John Hunter, Father of Modern Surgery*, by Wendy Moore, available on Amazon [here](#).

Recalling the Great Polymaths of History

Sources and Further Reading:

- <https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2019/05/great-polymaths-of-history-all-the-all-round-geniuses/>
- <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/polymath>
- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polymath>
- <https://www.lifehack.org/430148/how-to-become-a-modern-day-polymath>
- <https://bigthink.com/stephen-johnson/historys-greatest-polymaths-and-the-advice-they-left-behind>
- <https://www.diygenius.com/polymaths/>
- <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/39873848-the-polymath>
- *The Polymath: A Cultural History from Leonardo da Vinci to Susan Sontag*, by Peter Burke. Available at Amazon, [here](#).

What is a Polymath?

Take Leonardo da Vinci, for example. Not only was he an amazing artist, but also an engineer, inventor, mathematician, and much more. When a person's knowledge covers many different areas, they are a *polymath*. The Greek word for it is *polymathos*, "having learned much," with *poly* meaning "much". It's important to understand that polymaths are rare and require probing intelligence, unquenchable curiosity and inventive imagination. They have a broad range of expertise in many areas that contributes to higher levels of mastery and enlightenment in most things they do. A polymath is someone whose knowledge spans a substantial number of subjects, and is known to draw on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems.

Polymaths who stand out

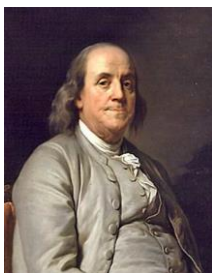
Some polymaths you may be interested to read about are shown below, based on the sources referred to above and other research. It is not a full list. Arguably, it is not complete without mentioning others, such as Martine Rothblatt (see next page), Steve Jobs and Elon Musk.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

Leibniz was born in 1646 in Leipzig, Germany. He studied law and philosophy. At age 15, he earned a bachelor's and master's degree in philosophy at the University of Leipzig. By the age of 20, he was a Doctor of Law at the University of Altdorf. He spent his 20s undertaking scientific studies and writing. In London, he presented a calculating machine at the Royal Society and was granted an honorary fellowship. He discovered *infinitesimal calculus* (a distinction shared with Sir Isaac Newton, although each made this discovery separately) – a branch of mathematics concerned with differentiation, integrations, and limits of functions. Leibniz also developed the *law of continuity* and *transcendental law of homogeneity*, cutting-edge theories that were not published or used in mathematics until the 20th century.

Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov

Lomonosov (born 1710) was a Russian polymath, scientist and writer who made important contributions to literature, education, and science. Among his discoveries were the atmosphere of Venus and the law of conservation of mass in chemical reactions. A devoted student of Latin, he went to Moscow at the age of 19. After graduating from St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, he went to Marburg in Germany to study metallurgy and chemistry. At 35, he returned to St. Petersburg to become professor of chemistry. He formulated the kinetic theory of gases and law of conservation of mass. In 1761, he observed a transition across the Sun's disk by Venus and, from that, inferred that Venus had an atmosphere, something experimentally proved only a century later. Lomonosov successfully opened a teaching and research lab in St. Petersburg in 1749, and as a result of experiments there, went on to establish a factory specialising in glass mosaics. Along with the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler, he helped found Moscow University in 1755.



Benjamin Franklin

Picture Credit: "Benjamin Franklin" by elycefeliz is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Benjamin Franklin, born in 1706 in Boston, Mass., USA., was a scientist, inventor, Freemason, postmaster, humourist, civic activist, diplomat, administrator and statesman. His face still graces the \$100 bill – called 'a Benjamin'. He was

one of the 'founding fathers' leading the American revolution that cut ties with Britain and helped draft the *Declaration of Independence*. He first became a printer, then a newspaper editor. He published the *Poor Richard's Almanack*, an early equivalent of *Reader's Digest*, in which he coined several adages still in use today, including 'A penny saved is a penny earned' and 'A friend in need is a friend indeed'. Franklin pioneered the science of demography, taking notes on America's population growth, later used by demographer Thomas Malthus. As the USA's Deputy Postmaster, in constant contact with mail ship captains from the mother country, he learned that some sailing routes out of England were much faster than others. The slowest was held up by an eastbound current in the mid-Atlantic, which Franklin named the 'Gulf Stream'. He made important contributions to science, especially in understanding electricity, and is remembered for the wit, wisdom, and elegance of his writing. As a scientist and inventor Franklin conducted famous electricity experiments, invented the lightning rod, bifocals and the Franklin stove.



Sir Isaac Newton

Picture Credit: "Sir Isaac Newton" by aldoaloz is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Sir Isaac Newton PRS (born 1642) was an English mathematician, physicist, astronomer, theologian, and author and is one of the greatest mathematicians and most influential scientists of all

time and a key figure in the scientific revolution. His 1687 book *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, established classical mechanics. Newton made seminal contributions to optics, and shares credit with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz for developing the infinitesimal calculus. The list of his achievements goes on and on (see [here](#)).

Michelangelo

Picture Credit: Public Domain.

Daniele da Volterra – Metropolitan Museum of Art, online collection (The Met object ID 436771)

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni was born in the Republic of Florence, Italy, in 1475, with that name but was known simply as Michelangelo – during his lifetime, he was often called *Il Divino* ("the divine one"). He was a sculptor, painter, architect and poet of the High Renaissance and exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western art. His artistic versatility was of such a high order that he is a contender for the title of the archetypal Renaissance man, alongside his rival and elder contemporary, Leonardo da Vinci. Several scholars have described Michelangelo as the greatest artist of his age and even as the greatest artist of all time.

Omar Khayyam

The Persian scholar and poet Omar Khayyam was born in Nishapur, north-eastern Iran in 1048. He worked first in Samarkand and Bukhara, (today's Uzbekistan). He was invited by the Sultan in 1074 to reform the solar calendar and run an astronomical observatory. He built a catalogue of the fixed stars. His best-known work in mathematics, 'Treatise of Demonstrations of the Problems of Algebra', dealt with the theory of cubic equations.

Dubbed 'the Astronomer Poet of Persia', Khayyam also wrote about music and philosophy, and many of his views in this area were reflected in the famous work of poetry, the *Rubaiyat*. It is still very popular today. As an astronomer, he designed the Jalali calendar, a solar calendar with a very precise 33-year intercalation cycle that provided the basis for the Persian calendar that is still in use after nearly a millennium and is more accurate than that of Pope Gregory.

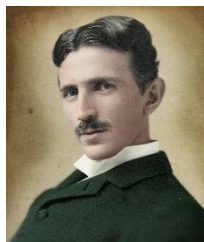


Leonardo da Vinci

Picture Credit: "Leonardo da Vinci LACMA 19.4.22" by Fæ is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Born in 1452, the archetypal Renaissance Man, the list of Leonardo da Vinci's accomplishments is staggering. As an artist, he was the father of the High Renaissance style, having painted the 'Mona Lisa' and 'The Last Supper.' Applying observations made in his scientific endeavours,

da Vinci introduced the idea of painting with aerial perspective – painting faraway objects less distinctly and with less vibrant colours. Da Vinci was also particularly interested in anatomy. He used his skills as an artist to create the Vitruvian Man, a study on body proportion and an exemplar of the intersection of math and art common in the Renaissance era. To get an even better understanding of the human body, he would dissect cadavers in the middle of the night, a practice which was eventually barred by the pope. Da Vinci made contributions to many other fields: urban planning, mathematics, botany, astronomy, invention, history, sculpting and cartography. There are simply too many to note. His greatest achievement, perhaps, was making others feel bad about how little they had done with their lives. Still, da Vinci left us with some great advice on how to be successful, most of which comes from his journals.



Nikola Tesla

Picture Credit: "Nikola Tesla" by Javier Moreno Vilaplana is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Nikola Tesla was a Serbian American inventor, electrical engineer, mechanical engineer, theoretical and experimental physicist, mathematician, futurist and humanitarian. He was a hyper-polyglot who could speak eight

languages fluently, including Serbo-Croatian, English, Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, and Latin. Tesla invented the technology that underpinned many of the 20th century's greatest advances, including the induction motor, the first x-rays, radio-controlled vehicles, hydroelectric power turbines, wireless transmission stations, and the alternating current (AC) power standard used globally today. He was probably the first to discover the electron, radioactivity, cosmic rays, terrestrial resonance, stationary standing waves, and fluorescent light bulbs.

Aristotle

Picture Credit: "Aristotle (384-322 BC)" by Tilemahos Efthimiadis is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Aristotle's status as one of mankind's greatest minds is partly evidenced by his monolithic nicknames: "the master" or "the philosopher". Born 382 BC, he was a polymath who made fundamental contributions to diverse fields of study, including logic, rhetoric, ethics, physics, story, poetry, government, metaphysics, geology and zoology. But it was in moral philosophy that Aristotle gave some of his most practical advice. To live well, Aristotle argued, people should behave according to virtues that allow them to excel in many types of situations across time. Each virtue relates to a vice, which can either exist in deficiency or excess. He believed we should strive to live a life of moderation, nurturing the virtues within ourselves and avoiding the vices on either extreme end.



Dr Martine Rothblatt: a modern-day Polymath



Sources and Further Reading:

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- <https://www.forbes.com/profile/martine-rothblatt/?sh=7f039ed34c6c>
- <https://www.lifenaut.com/martine-rothblatt/>
- https://www.ted.com/speakers/martine_rothblatt
- <https://www.ft.com/content/0682a232-dbb6-11e6-86ac-f253db7791c6>

You can watch Martina Rothblatt on TED – click [here](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Picture Credit: The picture above is a screenshot from a TED Talk.

Introduction

Dr Martine Aliana Rothblatt is an American lawyer, author, entrepreneur, and transgender rights advocate. She is Chairman & CEO of *United Therapeutics*, a company she launched to save the life of one of her daughters (see below) and watch on video (see above). She leads efforts to create novel therapies for rare diseases, to decode the pharmacogenomic properties of medicines and to manufacture an unlimited supply of transplantable organs.

Rothblatt previously created and led *Sirius XM* as its Chairman & CEO and launched other satellite systems for navigation and international television broadcasting. In the field of aviation, her *Sirius XM* satellite system enhances safety with real-time digital weather information to pilots in flight nationwide, and she designed the world's first electric helicopter, subsequently setting dual-pilot speed, altitude and endurance records in it. Dr Rothblatt also led the first efforts to create transgender health law standards and protect privacy and autonomy rights in genetic information via an international treaty.

She has Bachelor's (Communications Studies, Summa Cum Laude), JD* and MBA degrees from UCLA, and a PhD in Medical Ethics from the Royal London School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Source: <https://www.lifenaut.com/martine-rothblatt/>

After creating satellite radio with a startup that went on to become *Sirius XM*, Martine Rothblatt was on the verge of retirement. But her daughter's rare lung disease inspired her to start *United Therapeutics* and develop an oral medication that changed the lives of thousands of patients.

Source: https://www.ted.com/speakers/martine_rothblatt

Rothblatt's Career

Born in October 1954 to a Jewish family from Chicago, Illinois, she was raised in a suburb of San Diego, California. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, with JD and MBA degrees in 1981.

She then began to work in Washington, D.C., first in the field of communications satellite law and eventually in life sciences projects like the Human Genome Project.

She is the founder and chairwoman of the board of *United Therapeutics*. She was also the CEO of *GeoStar* and the creator of *SiriusXM Satellite Radio*. In 2013, Rothblatt was the highest-paid female CEO in America, earning \$38 million. Rothblatt received total compensation of nearly \$32 million in 2014. In 2018, she was the top-earning CEO in the biopharmaceutical Industry, earning a compensation package worth \$37.1 million from *United Therapeutics*. ***

Rothblatt left college after two years and travelled extensively, including the Seychelles, where at the NASA tracking station during the summer of 1974, she had her epiphany to unite the world via satellite communications. Rothblatt subsequently became an active member of the LS Society** and its Southern California affiliate, *Organization for the Advancement of Space Industrialization and Settlement (OASIS)*.

During her four-year JD and MBA program, also at UCLA, she published five articles on the law of satellite communications and prepared a business plan for the Hughes Space and Communications Group titled *PanAmSat* about how satellite spot beam technology could be used to provide a communication service to multiple Latin American countries. She also became a regular contributor on legal aspects of space colonisation to the OASIS newsletter.

1981

Upon graduating from UCLA in 1981, Rothblatt was hired by the Washington, D.C., law firm *Covington & Burling* to represent the television broadcasting industry before the *Federal Communications Commission* in the areas of direct broadcast satellites and spread spectrum communication.

1982

She left *Covington & Burling* to study astronomy at the University of Maryland, College Park but was soon retained by NASA to obtain FCC approval for the IEEE C band system on its tracking and data relay satellites and by the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Radio Frequencies to safeguard before the FCC radio astronomy quiet bands used for deep space research. Later that year, she was retained as vice president to handle business and regulatory matters for a newly invented satellite navigation technology - known as the *Geostar System*.

1984

Rothblatt was retained by Rene Anselmo, founder of *Spanish International Network*, to implement his *PanAmSat* MBA thesis as a new company that would compete with the global telecommunications satellite monopoly, *Intelsat*.

1986 - 1990

Rothblatt discontinued her astronomy studies and consulting work to become the full-time CEO of *Geostar Corporation*. She left *Geostar* in 1990 to create both *WorldSpace* and *Sirius Satellite Radio*.

1992 - 1997

She left *Sirius* in 1992 and *WorldSpace* in 1997 to become the full-time Chairman and CEO of *United Therapeutics*.

Rothblatt helped pioneer airship internet services with her *Sky Station* project in 1997, together with Alexander Haig****. She also led the International Bar Association's biopolitical project to develop a draft Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights for the United Nations (whose final version was adopted by UNESCO in November 1997 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1998).

In 1994, at age 40, Rothblatt came out as being Transgender and changed her name to Martine Aliana Rothblatt. In 1996, Rothblatt had sex reassignment surgery and has since become a vocal advocate for transgender rights.

At that time, she also began studying for a PhD in medical ethics at the Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London. The degree was granted in June 2001 based upon her dissertation on the conflict between private and public interests in xenotransplantation. This thesis, defended before England's leading bioethicist John Harris, was later published by Ashgate House under the title *Your Life or Mine*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martine_Rothblatt_-_cite_note-24

2017 - 2018

Rothblatt is an aeroplane and helicopter pilot with night-vision goggle (NVG) certification. On 16th February 2017, her electric helicopter established new world records for a 30-minute duration flight and an 800-foot altitude at Los Alamitos Army Airfield. On 4th March 2017, Rothblatt and Ric Webb set a world speed record for electric helicopters of 100 knots at Los Alamitos Army Airfield.

Conclusion

These days, *United Therapeutics* refurbishes human lungs and flies them to hospitals in unmanned electronic helicopter drones designed by Rothblatt.

In January 2017, an article by Judy Olian on FT.com ([here](#)) summed up Martine Rothblatt perfectly:

"Rothblatt is many people. She is a lawyer and has an MBA and a PhD in bioethics. She is the author of six books, among them [are] The Apartheid of Sex, Unzipped Genes and Virtually Human: The Promise — and the Peril — of Digital Immortality. She is transgender: she attended UCLA Law and UCLA Anderson in the late 1970s to early 1980s as Martin and some ten years later transitioned to become Martine. Her wife then and now, Bina, and their four children, are a close-knit, loving family."

Explanations

* JD is also known as Doctor of Law or Doctor of Jurisprudence.

** The LS Society was founded in 1975 by Carolyn Meinel and Keith Henson to promote the space colony ideas of Gerard K. O'Neill (an American physicist and space activist). In 1987, the LS Society merged with the National Space Institute to form the National Space Society.

*** The compensation package included stock options.

**** Alexander Haig was the United States Secretary of State under President Ronald Reagan and the White House chief of staff under presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Paul Robeson – another Polymath

Sources and Further Reading:

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- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Robeson>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Robeson
- https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-137-05361-9_3
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"I'm goin' to tell God all of my troubles when I get home."

Those words - from Robeson - sung and recorded in New York City on 10th May 1927 - epitomise a gifted but tormented life. Robeson rose to the pinnacle of fame as an actor and singer but fell to the nadir as an activist.

Paul LeRoy Bustill Robeson, born 9th April 1898, was the son of a former escaped slave turned Presbyterian minister. Robeson grew up in Princeton, New Jersey and became an American bass-baritone singer and stage and film actor. He found fame because of his many cultural accomplishments but was equally well-known for his political activism. He was also a scholar, a lawyer and a linguist and the greatest American footballer of his time.

Robeson, the Linguist

Robeson's radical influences stimulated and fed his growing interest in African civilisations, cultures and languages and eventually led him to take classes in *Swahili* and *Phonetics* at SOAS in 1934. Robeson was an accomplished linguist and studied other major African languages, such as Igbo, Yoruba and Zulu, in addition to important Asian languages, such as Chinese and Hindi. Interesting to note is that Robeson's 1934 application form for admission (see opposite) to the SOAS University of London's School of Oriental Studies showed that he already had two degrees: ABMA from Rutgers College (1919) and a law degree from Columbia Law School (1923).

Robeson, the Activist

His political activities began with his involvement with unemployed workers and anti-imperialist students whom he had met in Britain. This continued to grow - Robeson supported the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War and opposed fascism. Robeson became active in the Council on African Affairs (CAA), supporting their efforts to gain colonised African countries independence from European colonial rule. Returning to the United States during World War II, Robeson supported the American and Allied war efforts. But, after the war ended, the CAA was placed on the US Attorney General's *List of Subversive Organizations*, and Robeson was investigated during the age of McCarthyism. He had been active in the civil rights movement and showed sympathies for the Soviet Union and communism as well as becoming vociferous in his criticism of the United States government and its foreign policies. He refused to sign an affidavit disclaiming membership in the Communist Party.

It did not bode well for him, and the US State Department denied him a passport. It meant he could no longer travel abroad to perform, and his career was stifled. Of this time, Lloyd Brown, a writer and long-time colleague of Robeson, states: "Paul Robeson was the most persecuted, the most ostracised, the most condemned black man in America, then or ever." * After eight years, Robeson's right to travel was restored due to the 1958 United States Supreme Court decision in *Kent v. Dulles*.

Robeson, the Academic

In 1915, Robeson won an academic scholarship to Rutgers College, where he stood out as a class football player and was the class valedictorian.

Picture Credit: Source/Acknowledgement:
<https://twitter.com/soas/status/10500253127702446>

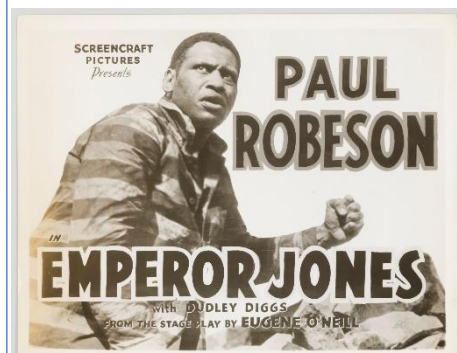
He received his LL.B. from Columbia Law School while playing in the National Football League (NFL). Whilst at Columbia in the 1920s, he sang and acted in off-campus productions, and after graduating, he made his mark with performances in *The Emperor Jones* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*.

Robeson, the Athlete

At Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Robeson was an All-America football player. Upon graduating from Rutgers at the head of his class, he rejected a career as a professional athlete and entered Columbia University instead. In 1995, more than seventy-five years after graduating from Rutgers College, his athletic achievements were finally recognised with a posthumous entry into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Robeson, the Singer

Paul Robeson had a most beautiful voice and his linguistic skill meant he could sing in more than 20 different languages.

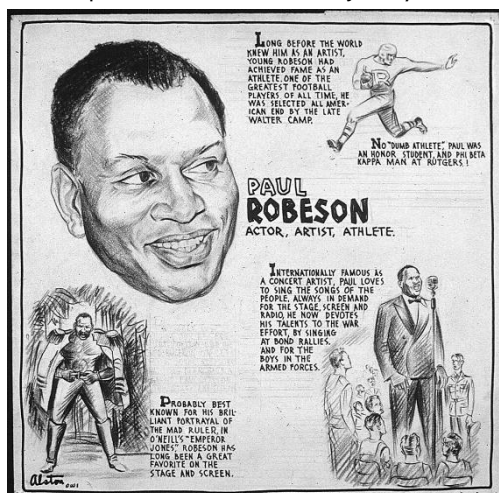


Picture Credit: "Photograph for *The Emperor Jones*" by Screencraft Pictures, American, founded 1932 is marked with CC0 1.0

Between 1925 and 1961, Robeson recorded and released around 300 songs, many of which were recorded several times. The first of these were the spirituals *Steal Away*, backed with *Were You There?* in 1925. He spanned many styles, including Americana, popular standards, classical music, European folk songs, political songs, poetry and spoken excerpts from plays.

Robeson performed in Britain in a touring melodrama, *Voodoo*, in 1922 and *Emperor Jones* in 1925, and scored a major success in the London premiere of *Show Boat* in 1928, whilst living in London for several years with his wife.

With songs such as his trademark *O! Man River* (listen to it [here](#) - guaranteed to make your hair stand on end), he became one of the most popular concert singers of his time. He also gained attention in the film production of *Show Boat* (1936) and other films such as *Sanders of the River* (1935) and *The Proud Valley* (1940). Although a handful of movies and recordings are still available, they are a sad testament to one of the greatest Americans of the 20th century. ** In the early 1960s, he retired and lived the rest of his life privately, trying to cope with his demons in Philadelphia, where he died on 23rd January 1976.



Picture Credit: "Public Domain: Paul Robeson by Charles Henry Alston (NARA)" by pingnews.com is marked with CC PDM 1.0

* ** Source: <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/paul-robeson-about-the-actor/66/>

Hypatia: the first female mathematician

Sources and Further Reading:

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- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/hypatia-ancient-alexandrias-great-female-scholar-10942888/>
- <https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/killing-hypatia>
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Picture Credit: [Cropped] "Library Hypatia by Alfred Seifert 1901 720X480" by mharrsch is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

On the streets of Alexandria, Egypt, in the year 415 or 416, a mob of Christian zealots led by *Peter the Lector** accosted a woman's carriage and dragged her from it and into a church, where they stripped her and beat her to death with roofing tiles (although other accounts say that sharp-edged oyster shells were used). The zealots then tore her body apart and burned it.

Who was this woman, and what was her crime? And who were the zealots that murdered her? The woman's name was Hypatia. She was a Hellenistic** Neoplatonist philosopher, astronomer, and the first female mathematician. Her 'crime' was that she was regarded as a pagan. Hypatia was a prominent thinker of the Neoplatonic*** school in Alexandria, where she taught philosophy and astronomy and was renowned in her lifetime for her great wisdom. She came to symbolise learning and science which early Christians identified with paganism.

The murderers, the *Parabalani*****, were a volunteer militia of monks serving as henchmen to the archbishop. Their conscripted purpose was to aid the dead and dying, but they could be more readily found terrorising opposing Christian groups and levelling pagan temples.

Hypatia was born around 350–370 AD. She lived in Alexandria, Egypt, which at the time was part

of the Eastern Roman Empire. Although she was preceded by *Pandrosion*, another female mathematician from the same city, only Hypatia's life is reasonably well recorded. Many modern scholars also believe that Hypatia may have edited the surviving text of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, based on the title of her father's (Theon) commentary on Book III of the *Almagest*. Theon was also a mathematician and philosopher, and Hypatia continued her father's work - which was essentially a determined effort to preserve the Greek mathematical and astronomical heritage during what were extremely difficult times. Nothing is known about Hypatia's mother, who is never mentioned in any of the surviving sources.

Hypatia constructed astrolabes and hydrometers, but invented neither of them - both were in use long before she was born. Although she was a pagan, she was tolerant towards Christians and taught many Christian students. Ancient sources record that Hypatia was widely beloved by pagans and Christians alike and that she established great influence with the political elite in Alexandria.

Before Hypatia's death, Alexandria was shaken by a series of civic disturbances involving three main groups: Christians, pagans, and Jews. The Egyptian city was beset by interfactional rivalry among them, and this rivalry often took violent form. In March 415 AD, Hypatia was murdered by a mob of Christians led by the lector* named Peter. Her murder shocked the empire and transformed her into a "martyr for philosophy", leading future Neoplatonists to become increasingly vigorous in their opposition to Christianity.

Hypatia is famous for being the greatest mathematician and astronomer of her time, for being the leader of the Neoplatonist** school of philosophy in Alexandria, for spectacularly overcoming the profound sexism of her society, and for suffering a violent death at the hands of misguided Christian zealots. She became an icon for women's rights which, arguably, was a precursor to the feminist movement. Undoubtedly, Hypatia made extraordinary accomplishments for a woman in her time.

The Christian historian - *Socrates of Constantinople* - a contemporary of Hypatia, describes her in his *Ecclesiastical History*, thus: "There was a woman at Alexandria named Hypatia, daughter of the philosopher Theon, who made such attainments in literature and science, as to far surpass all the philosophers of her own time. Having succeeded to the school of Plato and Plotinus, she explained the principles of philosophy to her auditors, many of whom came from a distance to receive her instructions. On account of the self-possession and ease of manner which she had acquired in consequence of the cultivation of her mind, she not infrequently appeared in public in the presence of the magistrates. Neither did she feel abashed in going to an assembly of men. For all men on account of her extraordinary dignity and virtue admired her the more."

NOTES

- * Lector is a person who assists at a worship service.
- ** The word *Hellenistic* comes from the root word *Hellas*, which was the ancient Greek word for Greece. The *Hellenic Age* was the time when Greek culture was pure and unaffected by other cultures.
- *** *Neoplatonism* is a strand of Platonic philosophy (so named after the Greek philosopher Plato) that emerged in the second century AD against the background of Hellenistic philosophy and religion.
- **** The *Parabalani* or *Parabolani* were the members of a brotherhood who, in early Christianity, voluntarily undertook the care of the sick and the burial of the dead, knowing they themselves could die.

Turning Visualised Letters into Text

Source and Further Reading:

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- <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03506-2.epdf>
- <https://www.braingate.org/>
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In May 2021, *Scientific American* published an interesting *article* about something called *Brain-computer interfaces*, or BCIs. BCIs can restore movement in people with paralysis and may help treat neurological and psychiatric diseases.

A *study* published in *Nature* reports on a brain implant that will allow people with impaired limb movement to communicate with text formulated in their mind—no hands needed. Developed by a team at Stanford University, the artificial intelligence software, coupled with electrodes implanted in the brain, could "read" the thoughts of a man with full-body paralysis as he was asked to convert them to handwriting. The BCI transformed his imagined letters and words into text on a computer screen—a form of "mental handwriting." The technology could benefit millions worldwide who cannot type or speak because of impaired limbs or vocal muscles by letting them perform thought dictation at rates approaching the thumb speeds of texters.

The new study is the latest phase of a clinical trial called *BrainGate*, directed by Dr Leigh Hochberg, a professor of neurology at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. Frank Willett, a research scientist at Stanford University and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), led the study. He said: "We want to find new ways of letting people communicate faster."



Picture Credit: "braingate" by 漂泊的鱼 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Debtors' Prisons

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- <http://victorian-era.org/debt-prisons-of-victorian-era-england.html>

Until 1861, only people in business who bought and sold goods to make a living – in other words, traders – could be made bankrupt. Others who were unable to pay their debts were referred to as 'insolvent debtors'. Debt was a classless crime. Many people from the more 'respectable' sections of society found themselves in debtors' prisons, through gambling or having spent more than they could afford just to keep up appearances.

Debtors' prisons

Since the 14th century, if you couldn't pay your debts, you could end up in prison. If you owed less than £100, and were not trading, your time behind bars could be indefinite. Prison could be avoided by declaring bankruptcy, but only if you were a merchant or trader, but the cost (£10) could make your eyes water as it was equivalent to as much as 20% of the average annual income for the common worker in the mid-1800s.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, more than half of all prisoners were debtors. The number of convicted criminals increased so sharply that they decided that prisons were the best form of punishment. For example, between 1842 and 1857, ninety prisons were built. In some places, there were separate prisons for debtors, but in most local prisons, the debtors were simply kept separate from other prisoners in their own wings. They had more visitors than convicts and were released if they could find someone to pay their debts, for example, a rich uncle or grandfather or if they could earn enough in prison to settle what was owed.

Generally, conditions in prison depended on your standing in society. The warden of the prison would charge for accommodation – prisons were state-owned and subject to regulation but were operated for private profit. If you could afford it, accommodation allowed access to a bar and shop, and even the pleasure of being allowed out during the day, with the potential to earn money to repay debts owed.

Indefinite incarceration was the mode of punishment. Sometimes, the convicts stayed with their families in prison. Family members were free to come and go according to their wishes. Sometimes, even children were born and raised behind bars.

Until the law changed in 1815, debtors could be worse off after a few years in prison than when they entered. It was a very slippery slope – having no money to pay their debts brought

them to prison in the first place but then having to pay for their keep put them further into debt. The small amounts they could earn in prison were usually insufficient to cover their accommodation.

The concept of debtors' prison was, of course, flawed from the outset. If you were thrown into prison and had no family, you could not earn to repay your debts, which continued to accumulate. Most debtors were left with little choice but to beg for alms from passers-by. Conditions for debtors who couldn't raise money were appalling, with whole families crammed into overcrowded, cold, damp cells. Both men and women could find themselves imprisoned after falling into poverty.

Prisons in London where debtors were held included Fleet (closed 1842); Farringdon (closed 1846); King's Bench (closed 1880); Whitecross Street (closed 1870); and Marshalsea (closed 1842).

Wardens were appointed by something called *letters patent*. Some who became wardens were little short of sadistic, and deaths by starvation, exacerbated by appalling conditions, were fairly common. There are records showing some prisoners who managed to repay the debts for which they were imprisoned but were detained because money was owed for food and lodging. There could even be fees charged for turning keys or taking irons off. When the infamous Fleet Prison closed, two debtors were found to have been there for 30 years.

Over half the population of England's prisons in the 18th and early 19th centuries were in jail because of debt, and during the same period, some 10,000 people were imprisoned for debt each year.

Imprisonment for inability to pay your debts only ended in 1869. *The Debtors Act 1869*, with some exceptions, ceased the practice of indefinite imprisonment for non-payment of debt. In the same year, the Bankruptcy Act established the first statutory regime for preferential debts in bankruptcy, which included local and central taxes as well as wages and salaries of clerks, servants, labourers and workers.

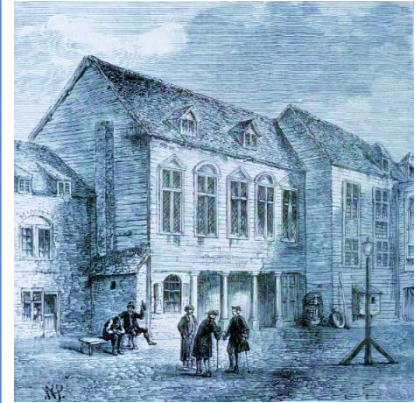
The London Gazette

Public notices regarding insolvent debtors and bankrupts, informing creditors about proceedings and applications for release, have appeared in *The London Gazette* for centuries as a statutory requirement. Queen Anne's Act to Relieve Insolvent Debtors in 1712 stated that debtors could discharge a portion of their liabilities. One clause required the publication of insolvency notices in *The London Gazette*.

Of the high-profile individuals imprisoned for debt, perhaps the most notable was John Dickens – father of the author Charles Dickens. John Dickens was incarcerated in Marshalsea in February 1824, when Charles was just 12 years old, profoundly affecting the boy who became a keen advocate for debtors' prison reform.

The whole issue of debt and social injustice is a recurrent theme in his work. *Little Dorrit* is a story about a debtor imprisoned in Marshalsea over such a long term that his three children grow up there. Dickens also wrote about Marshalsea in *David Copperfield* and *The Pickwick Papers*.

The Marshalsea



Marshalsea Prison, London, 18th century

Picture Credit: Public Domain. This is the Marshalsea in the 18th century, which would make it the first Marshalsea (14th century – 1811). The second existed from 1811 to 1842. The image was published in England in 1878.

Over half of England's prisoners in the 18th century were in jail because they owed money they either could not or would not pay. One such prison was Marshalsea – a notorious prison in Southwark, just south of the River Thames in the city of London. It operated from 1373 to 1842. Although it housed a variety of prisoners, including men accused of crimes at sea and political figures charged with sedition, it became known for its incarceration of the poorest of London's debtors.

Run privately for profit, as were all English prisons until the 19th century, the Marshalsea looked like a University college but functioned as an extortion racket. Debtors in the 18th century who could afford the prison fees had access to a bar, shop and restaurant, and retained the crucial privilege of being allowed out during the day, which gave them a chance to earn money to repay their creditors. Apart from those privileged few, everyone else was crammed into one of nine small rooms with dozens of others, possibly for years, for the most modest of debts, which increased as prison fees accumulated. The poorest faced starvation and, if they crossed the jailers, torture with skullcaps and thumbscrews.

Much of the prison was demolished in the 1870s, although parts of it were used as shops and rooms into the 20th century. A local library now stands on the site. All that is left of the Marshalsea is the long brick wall that marked its southern boundary.

Fair or foul?

Fortunately, the treatment of debtors has evolved to be more equitable, though time in the clink is still imposed in certain circumstances, for example, where a debtor has willfully defrauded creditors of significant amounts.

Keep Smiling

ONE HALFPENNY. PICTURES, PRIZES, JOKES. ONE HALFPENNY.

$\frac{1d.}{2}$ **Comic Cuts.** $\frac{1d.}{2}$

No. 1. Vol. I.] ONE HALFPENNY WEEKLY. [May 17, 1890.

**THE STRONG MAN FRAUD ;
OR, THE 1000-LB. AIR-BALL.**






THE JOYS OF THE SUBURBANITE.



"You women don't know how to hang pictures—takes a man to do it."



"A trifle farther yet—this is the spot: now just hand me a hook and some string, and I'll have this picture up in a jiffy. I tell you, I understand hanging pictures right down to the—
—ground!"

**THE LATEST BOTANICAL DISCOVERY.
THE BLOOMING PILOT.
(Genus: Cigarettes).**

BY HOOK-AND CROOK.

"O, you may laugh, but it's a great deal better way than the old-fashioned chais round his neck."



WHY TIMPKINS IS GOING TO MOVE AGAIN.



Timpkins said (last September) "I've moved to Chingford. Awfully jolly place; fine fresh country air; splendid walk to the station and back; making a man of me." His friends said nothing; they were picturing Timpkins in the winter.



Timpkins's splendid walk in October.



And in December.

Picture Credit: "17th May 1880 - Comic Cuts published" by Bradford Timeline is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Quickies

My doctor asked if anyone in my family suffered from mental illness, and I said, "No, we all seem to enjoy it."

Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say, "Close enough."

Being an adult is the dumbest thing I have ever done.

I'm a multitasker. I can listen, ignore and forget all at the same time!

Retirement to-do list: 'Wake up.' - I Just Nailed it!

People who wonder if the glass is half empty or half full miss the point. The glass is refillable.

I don't have grey hair. I have wisdom highlights.

Sometimes it takes me all day to get nothing done.

I don't trip, I do random gravity checks.

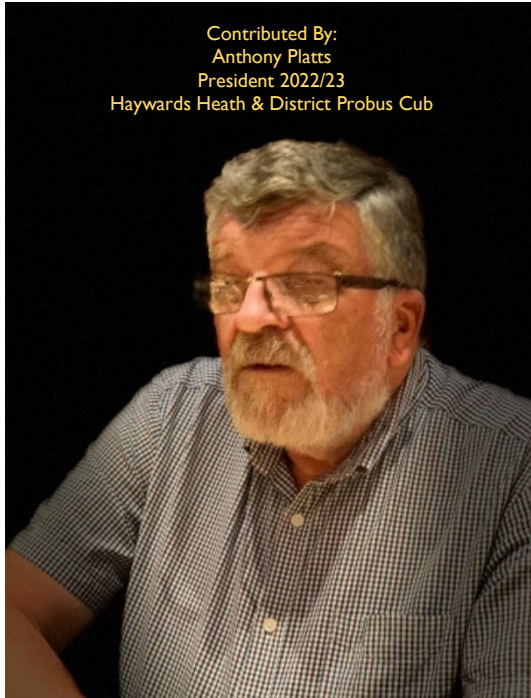
One minute you're young and fun. Next, you're turning down the car stereo to see better.

I'd grow my own food if only I could find bacon seeds.

Some people are like clouds. Once they disappear, it's a beautiful day.

Some people you're glad to see coming; other people you're glad to see going.

Contributed By:
Anthony Platts
President 2022/23
Haywards Heath & District Probud Club



Common sense is not a gift. It's a punishment!! Because now you have to deal with those who don't have it.

I came. I saw. I forgot what I was doing. Retraced my steps. Got lost on the way back. Now I have no idea what's going on!

If you can't think of a word, say: "I forgot the English word for it." That way, people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.

I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.

I don't always go the extra mile, but it's because I missed my motorway exit when I do.

I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food supply in 3 hours and 20 minutes.

I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented... Mmmm... I forget where I was going with this.

Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.

It's weird being the same age as old people.

When I was a kid, I wanted to be older... This is certainly NOT what I expected.

Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to operate a helicopter either.

It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.

Never sing in the shower! Singing leads to dancing, dancing leads to slipping, and slipping leads to paramedics seeing you naked. So, remember... don't sing!

I see people my age going mountain climbing. I feel good just getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance.

We all get heavier as we get older because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story anyway.