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“Russia’s greatest love machine,” went the Boney M hit song, Rasputin. In an uncanny coincidence, the band’s frontman Bobby Farrell died on the same date and in the same town as the ‘Mad Monk’ himself, back in 2010. Suffice to say, it was under very different circumstances.

Poisoned, shot, beaten and drowned, Rasputin was murdered for meddling in imperial affairs. To the Russian people, he pulled the strings of the tsar and tsarina like a master puppeteer, having reportedly healed their only son and heir of his life-threatening illness. But while the tsar was away during WWI, Rasputin’s relationship with his wife was called into question.

Over the years, his story has become fodder for legend, movies and the aforementioned 1978 record, but what role did the holy man play in the fall of the Romanov dynasty? On the 100th anniversary of the February Revolution and the abdication of Nicholas II, we examine the man behind the mystic.
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How accurate is Rasputin: Dark Servant Of Destiny's depiction of the infamous 'Mad Monk'?

Enjoyed the magazine? Subscribe & save 25%
On 5 May 1889, visitors flooded to the Exposition Universelle – a huge celebration of French culture. The main attraction was the newly built Eiffel Tower, which served as the entrance. As the lifts were still a work in progress, visitors had to walk to the second-floor platform. The event was held during the centenary of the storming of the Bastille, a defining moment at the start of the French Revolution.
The first commercial jumbo jet flight touched down at Heathrow Airport on 22 January 1970. The Boeing 747 was several hours late due to technical issues, but the 324 passengers, including Pan Am staff and FAA officials, were smiling and waving as they completed their flight from New York to London. The 747 was the largest aircraft until the Airbus A380 ‘Superjumbo’ took the title in 2004.
26 February marks the 100th anniversary of the first-ever jazz recording. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB) from New Orleans made their debut track in 1917 and though they didn’t invent the genre, they did much to popularise the craze. This photograph shows members of ODJB playing for a polar bear in the New York Zoo, as part of an experiment to test whether animals like music.
Zippo tracks – M132 armoured personnel carriers with flame throwers – burn a field in the Iron Triangle. This patch of jungle in South Vietnam was believed to be a communist headquarters. Operation Cedar Falls, the largest US ground operation in the Vietnam War, sought to destroy this heavily fortified base camp. It began on 8 January 1967 and lasted for 18 days. Pictured here is the 1st Squadron 4th Cavalry.
Discover the reel history of the film industry, from its black-and-white beginnings to Hollywood blockbusters and low-budget B-movies.
Film firsts

The major milestones that gave birth to contemporary cinema as we know it today.

**EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE’S ZOOPRAXISCOPE**
Photographer Eadweard Muybridge uses trip wires to shoot pictures of each step of a horse in motion. The zoopraxiscope allows these images to be viewed in sequence creating the first ‘film’.

**INVENTING THE KINETOSCOPE**
Thomas Edison and William Kennedy Dickson use new technologies, including emulsion-coated celluloid developed by John Carbutt, and continuous film strips, to create the first practical motion picture camera, called the kinetoscope.

**FIRST TALKIE, THE JAZZ SINGER**
88 MINUTES
*Al Jolson in The Jazz Singer*
$3,500,000 gross profit (USA)
$422,000 budget

*The Jazz Singer* was the first successful feature film with sound – a true pioneer.

**BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN USES MONTAGE**
Sergei M Eisenstein’s landmark silent film, which depicts early revolutionaries in Russia in 1905, pioneers the use of montage, in which clips are cut together to create a narrative sequence.

**FIRST PUBLISHED FILM REVIEW**
Though writers had recorded their responses to earlier films, 1909 sees the first published film review, in the *New York Times*. The film is *Pippa Passes*, about a woman who heals through song.

**FIRST ACADEMY AWARDS**
With the advance of cinema, the inaugural iconic movie awards ceremony is held at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. Best picture went to *Wings*, set during World War One.

**FILMMAKING**

**MBBC IS FORMED**
With the intention of bringing a uniform standard of classification across films in Britain, the British Board of Film Censors (later, Classification) is created. Two ratings could be given, U or A.

**BIRTH OF THE MULTIPLEX**
A cinema owner in Ottawa, Canada, disgruntled at having to stop profitable showings for new releases, adds a second screen to the Elgin Theatre, creating the first two-screen cinema.

**MICKEY AND MINNIE’S FIRST FILM**
Mickey Mouse and his main partner in crime, Minnie, begin their long career as icons of Walt Disney’s animation company, in the film *Steamboat Willie*. This is Disney’s first film with sound.

**FIRST ACAD EMY AWARDS**
With the advance of cinema, the inaugural iconic movie awards ceremony is held at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. Best picture went to *Wings*, set during World War One.
**THE FIRST FILM STUDIO**

Thomas Edison constructs the Black Maria, the first dedicated film studio. It has a retractable roof and is built on a turntable, so it can always face the sunlight when filming.

**FIRST KINETOSCOPE PARLOUR, NEW YORK**

10 KINETOSCOPES in the parlour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Machine cost</th>
<th>$250</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A ticket costs 50 CENTS approx.

$16 today

**FIRST LUMIÈRE BROTHERS SCREENING**

In what is essentially the first ‘cinema’ screening, Auguste and Louise Lumière show ten short, silent films to paying customers, projected on to the wall at the Grand Café, Paris.

**EMILE COHL'S FANTASMAGORIE**

Considered to be the first fully animated film, Fantasmagorie is made by drawing directly on to a glass plate, with the image then traced with small changes to show movement.

**THE FIRST TRUE ‘CINEMA’**

Shows lasted 15 MINUTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry price</th>
<th>1 NICKEL</th>
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</table>

450 people attended on first day

**THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY**

Described as the first film to show a narrative, and also the first Western, The Great Train Robbery is shot and directed by Edwin S Porter, employed by Thomas Edison’s film company.

**EDISON’S KINETOPHONE**

The first device to bring sound to moving pictures, the kinetophone, is created by adding a phonograph to a kinetoscope. Due to union issues and unreliable synchronisation, the kinetophone eventually fell from favour.

**FIRST IMAX THEATRE**

752 SEATS

25,000-WATT lamp in the projector

The screen dimensions were 24x18 M

**INVENTION OF THE STEADICAM**

Garrett Brown invents the Steadicam, which allows moving shots to be taken smoothly. Notable early uses include the ‘running up the steps’ scene in Rocky, and Bound For Glory (1976).

A large pulley joined a projector and phonograph, synchronising sound and pictures.

The Steadicam was used in Bound For Glory with lead actor David Carradine walking through 900 extras.
When Georges Méliès’ artistic work was rediscovered by the general public in the 1930s, he was an old man running a toy shop, really nothing more than a kiosk, in the Gare Montparnasse, a train station in Paris, France. It was an ignoble decline for an artist who took the medium of the movies to extraordinary heights in the very early days of cinema. Working as an illusionist before becoming a filmmaker, Méliès’ background must have given him an edge when it came to creating special effects in cinema. Some of his techniques – the double exposure, split screen and the dissolve – are still used to this day.

While many films from the so-called ‘primitive period’ – which is defined as being between 1894 and 1908 – are lost or likely to bore a modern audience to tears, Méliès’ work is still charming and enjoyable to watch. By focusing so much on magic, trickery and the fantastic, Méliès pretty much single-handedly devised genre cinema, making around 500 short films during his filmmaking career. Méliès originally saw the potential in motion pictures as a special effect device to utilise in his popular stage productions and magic shows at the Theatre Robert-Houdin. He initially purchased films from others to show at his theatre productions, as part of the programme.

By the middle of 1896, Méliès was making his own films at a studio at Montreuil, an eastern suburb of Paris. The studio is among the world’s first to be created for the sole purpose of filmmaking, and it was built in the garden of his property. From his base of operations, Méliès could control every aspect of the filmmaking process, creating a finished product that would delight its audience. However, the studio was eventually turned into a variety theatre in 1915 when his films fell out of favour.

**Storing canvas**

Props, painted backdrops and other items required to stage a film production needed a place to be stored. As in a theatre, all these things were rolled up and put away close to the filming ‘stage’, ready to be used as and when needed. Prop masters and set dressers were put in charge of assembling the sets, ready for the cameras to roll. Many of the film costumes were also stored at Montreuil.

**Glass walls**

To maximise the natural light in the studio, three walls were made from glass. An abundance of light was required for the camera to register an image and for the silver nitrate in celluloid film stock to chemically record it. However, too much light was bad, so frosted glass and cotton cloth drapes diffused it. The glass-house studio was designed to achieve an evenness of light and filming schedules made optimum use of sunshine.

**Rehearsal space**

As with a theatre, actors could rehearse in the environment they would perform. Much of early film was very theatrical in origin and ‘movie acting’ was developed and refined as the years went by. Many stage actors were positively snooty about acting in movies to begin with, and both the business and the medium received little respect.

**Framing the shot**

While Méliès was crafting fantastical compositions, his approach to camera placement was stuck in a theatre-type sense of perspective. This meant a full-frame and shooting in a long shot. But his style of photography – heavily invested in tricks – also demanded static camera placements.
Beams for rigging and hauling
Although the glasshouse structure was greatly inspired by late-19th century still photography studios, the Montreuil studio was more like a new type of theatre. The glass and iron building was fitted with beams and rigs to haul giant canvas backdrops, which were painted for individual films. A work force would have to hoist and move them into place.

The studio
Designed by Méliès as a ‘théâtre de prises de vues’ (shooting theatre), the structure was built from glass and iron. It would house everything associated with the production of films, and function as a multipurpose venue. The filmmaker purchased a lot at Montreuil, with the intention of producing and distributing his own movies. For this, he founded the Star Film Company.

Imaginative sets
The sets were made from wood and canvas. What began as simple and cheap became elaborate and lavish as money rolled in. Méliès’ work was very popular up until WWI. Creating spatial depth through art design (sets), camera position and props gave the films a dazzling look. Some films, such as *A Trip To The Moon* (1902), which featured the Moon with a human face, have become iconic.

The camera
The Cinematograph’s inventors wouldn’t sell to Méliès. Not because they feared a rival, but because the Lumière’s saw no commercial value in their invention. Early cameras were fixed to a three-pronged tripod and Méliès went to England – to see Brighton School pioneer RW Paul – to purchase a projector, which he built, with the help of Lucien Reulos, into his own equipment. He patented this as the Kinétographe Robert-Houdin.

Workshop space
The studio also functioned as a workshop, where sets were created and devised. As with Méliès’ Theatre Robert-Houdin, space could be used for multiple purposes and kept everything ‘in-house’. Draftsmen, builders, costume designers and production designers all worked on their latest production, often with Méliès contributing to every facet and stage of a film.
Many stunt performers on western movies were real-life cowboys, taking advantage of the work while the ranching industry was in decline. Their experience of handling horses and cattle, particularly of rodeo riding, proved very useful when training animals for stunts on set.

Although there were female stunt performers at the time, the majority were male, and so they were sometimes required to dress up to double for actresses. However, the reverse was also sometimes the case, as female stunt performers would double for small male actors.

Chaotic and noisy gunfights were achieved using real guns loaded with blank cartridges. These cartridges contained gunpowder, resulting in a flash and a loud bang when triggered. However, they didn’t fire a shell so the victim would remain unharmed.

If a scene called for a bottle to be smashed over someone’s head, then the glass was swapped for something sweeter. By dissolving sugar in water and then heating it, it could be made to look and smash like transparent glass, yet cause no physical harm.

In order to safely stage a fall from a galloping horse, specially designed L-shaped stirrups were used. These enabled the stunt performer to leap clear from the horse without the risk of getting their foot stuck in the stirrup and being dragged along the ground.

Although many stunts were performed unaided, some required the use of harnesses, cables and pulleys. Not only did this help to make the stunts safer, it also allowed for more spectacular effects and meant that the scenes could be carefully planned to reduce the need for retakes.
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Beyond the Pillars of Hercules with Jason Webster
The late 15th century saw Spain burst wide open, creating a trans-global empire the likes of which the world had never seen. We pay a visit to the land of Cortés and Columbus, who were quickly making their mark on a New World.

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Mon 15th – Mon 22nd May, 2017

The Face Of Evil with Nigel Jones
In this tour exploring the darkest episodes of German history, we trace the rise and fall of the Third Reich. Presented as the salvation of a Germany exhausted by war and depression, it instead unleashed the horror of the Holocaust and plunged the nation back into war.

£2,495 incl. flights  £245 single supp
Sat 10th – Sun 18th June, 2017

The Final Solution with Roger Moorhouse
Join us on a journey to the epicentre of the Second World War. From opening shots in Gdansk, to the eventual liberation of a host of nightmarish death camps, Poland experienced the conflict to its full murderous extent.

£1,995 incl. flights  £225 single supp
Sat 1st – Sat 8th July, 2017

The Loire Châteaux with Dr Michael Jones & Lys Hall
The fertile Loire Valley has long nurtured not just France’s noble families, but also its prized vines, as we discover on this History & Wine tour. Our journey through central France is a feast of stories, sites and sumptuous wines.

£2,445 incl. coach and ferry  £245 single supp
Sun 3rd – Sat 9th September, 2017

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AN INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER

The Innovative Young Directors Who Led a New Hollywood Revolution, USA, 1970s

With the growth of television and the weakening of the old Hollywood studio system, a new generation of young independent filmmakers rose to prominence in the late 1960s. These so-called ‘Movie Brats’, including George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola, revolutionised the industry, ensuring artistic control was in the hands of the director, not the studio. This New Hollywood movement saw more experimental narratives and creative filmmaking techniques reach the big screen, drawing in younger and more affluent audiences. As a result, the era spawned several big-budget blockbusters with mass appeal, including *Jaws* and *Star Wars*.

GO TO FILM SCHOOL

Many of the Movie Brats of the 1970s had studied filmmaking at universities such as UCLA and NYU, and were then given an opportunity to cut their teeth at American International Pictures. The film company’s producers emphasised the use of low-budget filmmaking techniques and encouraged creative interpretations, mentoring many of the young directors through their early projects.

FIND INSPIRATION

The ‘New Wave’ movement happening in European cinema had a big influence on the young American independent filmmakers, who sought to emulate the work of the Italian neorealists and French New Wave directors. As well as foreign-language films, American cult classics of the 1960s such as *The Graduate*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* also provided inspiration.

INVENT A STORY

The replacement of the Motion Picture Production Code with a new film rating system in 1968 meant that several restrictions on filmmakers were lifted. They began including more cultural realism in their narratives, as well as more sex, nudity and violence, which appealed to a younger audience. Style, sound and action were also given more prominence in their stories.
The Movie Brats began using non-human characters, created using robotics and special effects. The character development praised in European New Wave cinema was slowly adopted by the young American directors, who often cast relatively unknown actors so as not to distract the audience’s attention from the role they were playing. Several non-human characters also became unlikely stars, with puppets and robotics used to create sharks, aliens and Jedi Masters.

**CREATE CHARACTERS**

**USE SPECIAL EFFECTS**

Advances in special effects techniques such as bluescreen, computer-generated imagery and animatronics opened up new storytelling possibilities for the Movie Brats, and transformed their films into big cinema events that wowed audiences young and old. The rising cost of these FX-filled blockbusters meant that fewer movies were made, but they each had bigger budgets.

**SCOUT LOCATIONS**

Most old Hollywood movies were filmed in studios, but the introduction of the lightweight Panavision Panaflex camera in 1972 made shooting on location easier. It was also much cheaper, as there was no need to build sets, so many independent filmmakers favoured shooting outdoors in everyday locations or exotic landscapes, which also helped to enhance their stories.

**ACTION!**

As well as proving more fast-paced and suspenseful, the action sequences that were characteristic of many independent films were much smoother. The introduction of the hand-held Steadicam made it easier to achieve fluid, non-jerky motion and was used for the training sequence in *Rocky* and the bike chase in *Return Of The Jedi*.

**EDITING**

In their quest for realism, many New Hollywood filmmakers used editing for artistic purposes, rather than just simply for continuity. This practice was commonly used in European art films and by directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, and helped to influence the style and narrative of the films. Soundtracks were also used to enhance the productions, with suspenseful scores and rock anthems proving particularly popular.
How to MAKE A B-MOVIE
USE YOUR INGENUITY AND PASSION TO MAKE LOW-BUDGET, HIGH-CONCEPT FILMS LOS ANGELES, 1930s-1960s

Not every film can be an Oscar-winning classic, and they’re not all going to set the box-office on fire. Some movies are put together with a combination of hard work, ingenuity and an instinctive knowledge of how to draw a crowd. B-movies were born in the Golden Era of Hollywood when double-features led with the big draw, followed by a second film cobbled together from available sets and talent. As the decades passed, the studios’ stranglehold on theatres weakened, allowing the rise of B-movie moguls who knew how to do a lot with very little and, crucially, how to grab audiences’ attention with cheap, schlocky shockers.

**WHAT YOU’LL NEED...**

- **A CAMERA**
- **STOCK FOOTAGE**
- **A MONSTER**
- **A POSTER**
- **A GIMMICK**

**HIRE HAS-BEENS**

Why get the biggest star of the day when you can get the biggest star of yesterday? Whether they’re silent movie stars struggling to cope with sound, celebrities whose reputations have taken a hit due to ‘questionable’ behaviour or ageing actors who have been replaced by younger models, they will bring name-recognition value for next to nothing.

**AN EYE FOR BUSINESS**

Nobody’s going to give you a blank cheque so you need to learn how to make the most of every opportunity at every stage, from locations to distribution.

**KEEP ROLLING**

Don’t spend too much time writing the script, start filming as soon as possible. The quicker you can turn it around, the more money you stand to make.

**GREAT ADVERTISING**

Get the word out with a brilliant poster, a killer tagline and, if at all possible, a bit of controversy. And get an ‘X’ on there if you can.

**OLD SETS**

Nobody’s building anything for this film, so you’ll be shooting where you can, when you can. Previously used sets and spooky locations are a bonus.

**SMALL CREW**

There’s no money to pay anybody, so the crew will be made up of friends, hungry nobodies and easily conned investors.

**IGNORE THE REVIEWS**

Nobody gets into the B-movie business to please the critics. Well, some do, but they’re on a hiding to nothing. The great B-movie producers understand that the only reaction that means anything is the audience’s. Why? Because they pay to see the pictures, that’s why. The real test of a B-movie’s success is whether or not it makes money.
ACT FAST
One of the advantages of the B-movie is the fact that you are not waiting around for anyone. If there's a crisis terrifying the public, make a film about that, and make it in a week. If a film is making a killing at the box-office, make your rip-off while people still want more. And be aware that the time is coming when your cheap effects won't be enough for people.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT
Making films is an expensive business, so make the most of what you have. If you're working for a studio and there's footage they're not using, take it. If you've already made one film with a flying saucer in it, use it again. If you've hired an actor for a week and his role will only take three days, shoot footage for another film with the rest of his time.

BANNED IS GOOD
As previously mentioned, you won't be getting good reviews, so the important thing is controversy. You need to make sure that your horror film is the scariest and most provocative thing ever. Plant people in the audience to scream and faint. Leave sick bags on the seats. Make the health warning on your poster as big as the movie's title.

TAKE A CHANCE ON TALENT
You won't be able to afford big stars, but you will be swimming in bright, hungry young talent. So while you'll inevitably end up with some truly wooden performances, you just might stumble across a star of tomorrow. Roger Corman's roster of talent included Jack Nicholson, Francis Ford Coppola, Jonathan Demme, Joe Dante and Martin Scorsese.

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China's movie capital Shanghai began churning out stories of sword-wielding heroes in the early 20th century, but when the genre was banned in the late 1930s, production moved to the British Crown colony of Hong Kong. Action-packed martial arts movies were soon exported around the world, spawning screen legends and a billion-dollar industry.

01 Many of the films were based on books
Stories of heroic warriors and their martial arts can be found in the literature genre wuxia, which dates back to c.300 BCE. Featuring sword-fighting and sorcery, the novels inspired many early Hong Kong action movies and continue to influence plots to this day.

02 There were a lot of sequels
When Hong Kong cinema found a hit, it did its best to draw out that success for as long as possible. When the 1928 film *The Burning of the Red Lotus Monastery* proved successful, a total of 17 sequels were produced – all of which would take a staggering 27 hours to watch back-to-back.

03 Pioneering special effects were used
Fantastical elements in the original stories required some on-set movie wizardry; filming the actors jumping down, then reversing the footage, created the illusion of flying through the air. Beams of magical light could also be drawn directly onto the film negatives.

04 Women were the early stars of the screen
Many of the first martial arts movies featured female actors in their starring roles. Szu-Ying Chien was cast in her first movie in 1925, when she was aged just 16. She performed all her own stunts and continued to appear in movies until 2002, finally retiring aged 92.

05 Bruce Lee wasn’t the first icon
Kwan Tak-hing’s portrayal of Chinese folk hero Wong Fei-hung in the 1949 film *Whip Extinguishes Candle* saw him become a martial arts legend. He played the role in a further 77 films, creating a trend for authentic unarmed combat, as opposed to mythical sorcery.
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It's World War 1990: Castro's Folly

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MASTERS OF SPECIAL EFFECTS

The movie legends whose work behind the camera has produced some of the most ground-breaking scenes on the big screen

GEORGES MÉLIÈS
French 1861-1938

At the Lumière brothers' unveiling of their Cinématographe, Georges Méliès was spellbound. He tried to buy it and was refused, so he built his own and began creating movies. While shooting a street scene, the camera jumped, and when he processed the film, he saw an object disappear and reappear; this was the first special effect and led to many more, including double exposures and split screen.

RAY HARRYHAUSEN
American 1920-2013

Aged 13, Ray Harryhausen emerged from a screening of King Kong in awe. Desperate to know how the effects were created, he saw the movie a further 80 times, and began teaching himself stop-motion animation techniques. Fascinated by dinosaurs, he worked for hours in his parents' garage creating clay models of prehistoric creatures to star in his own productions. After receiving advice from his idol, King Kong effects artist Willis O'Brien, Ray went to art school and continued to hone his technique until he got the call to work with O'Brien on Mighty Joe Young. The Oscar-winning effects launched his long career bringing amazing creatures to life on screen.

STAN WINSTON
American 1946-2008

While waiting for his big break as an actor, Stan Winston began working as an apprentice makeup artist for Disney, and soon rediscovered his childhood passion for puppetry. Swapping a career in front of the camera for one behind it, he set up the Stan Winston Studio in his garage, and began building animatronic characters for the movies. He created the Jurassic Park T-Rex, Terminator, the alien queen in Aliens, and Tony Stark's alter ego Iron Man. As technology advanced, Stan became a big supporter of combining the use of robotics and CGI, doing whatever it took to create the most believable characters possible.

GEORGES MÉLIÈS is considered by many to be the father of special effects.

In 1952 Ray Harryhausen created Dynamation, the process of combining stop-motion animation with live-action backgrounds.

For The Wolf Man (1941), it took Jack Pierce six hours each day to glue thousands of yak hairs onto actor Lon Chaney Jr's face.

Frankenstein's head was stuffed with collodion, cotton and greasepaint.

“Everything about my being is creating characters that tell stories in films”
Stan Winston

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GEORGES MÉLIÈS
French 1861-1938

At the Lumière brothers' unveiling of their Cinématographe, Georges Méliès was spellbound. He tried to buy it and was refused, so he built his own and began creating movies. While shooting a street scene, the camera jumped, and when he processed the film, he saw an object disappear and reappear; this was the first special effect and led to many more, including double exposures and split screen.

JACK PIERCE
Greek 1889-1958

After travelling to the United States from Greece, Jack Pierce turned his hand to baseball, stunt work, acting and other professions, before finally realising his talents as a make-up artist. Landing a job as Universal's head of makeup, he was tasked with executing some terrifying movie transformations, including The Wolf Man and The Mummy. But his most iconic work was for the 1931 film Frankenstein. The monster makeover took four hours to apply to actor Boris Karloff's head, but the finished result became the universally recognised depiction of Mary Shelley's creation.

RAY HARRYHAUSEN
American 1920-2013

Aged 13, Ray Harryhausen emerged from a screening of King Kong in awe. Desperate to know how the effects were created, he saw the movie a further 80 times, and began teaching himself stop-motion animation techniques. Fascinated by dinosaurs, he worked for hours in his parents' garage creating clay models of prehistoric creatures to star in his own productions. After receiving advice from his idol, King Kong effects artist Willis O'Brien, Ray went to art school and continued to hone his technique until he got the call to work with O'Brien on Mighty Joe Young. The Oscar-winning effects launched his long career bringing amazing creatures to life on screen.

For The Wolf Man (1941), it took Jack Pierce six hours each day to glue thousands of yak hairs onto actor Lon Chaney Jr's face.

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Animatronics master Carlo Rambaldi began his career creating monsters for Italian horror movies, with one of his realistic designs landing a director in trouble. After the release of *A Lizard In A Woman’s Skin*, Lucio Fulci was facing a prison sentence for animal cruelty, until Carlo proved in court that the dogs mutilated in the film were actually models of his own creation. He went on to build Ridley Scott’s *Alien* and Spielberg’s *E.T.*, both incredibly sophisticated robots for their time.

Growing up with deaf parents, Lon Chaney learned to communicate through sign language and facial expressions, helping to develop the skills needed for his career as a stage actor. He starred in several successful productions until, in 1913, his wife Cleva drank a vial of poison in the theatre he was working in. Her public suicide attempt, although unsuccessful, destroyed their marriage and Lon’s stage career, forcing him to find work as a silent movie actor instead. For each role he would use makeup and prosthetics to transform himself, earning him the nickname: The Man of a Thousand Faces.

Hired by George Lucas to lead the special effects team for *Star Wars*, John Dykstra developed several pioneering technologies that made the movie’s spectacular action sequences possible. His Dykstraflex motion-controlled camera was programmed to follow the miniature X-Wing models to shoot the final scenes in a documentary style. This was filmed against a blue screen, and then the background elements were shot with the same motions so the two could be seamlessly combined.

Inspired by *King Kong*, Eiji Tsuburaya dreamt of creating his own monster movie using special effects. He practised his craft on Japanese propaganda films during World War II, producing a depiction of the Pearl Harbor attack that was so realistic it was mistaken for news footage. Eventually, he brought his monster dream to life, using miniature models and actors in costumes to create *Godzilla*. The effects were revolutionary, and spawned a new genre of movies, called kaiju, featuring strange beasts terrorising Japan.

If you can imagine it, we can make it

*John Dykstra*
nine children, from a very early age Rasputin did not fit in. He did not attend school, for there was no school for him to attend, and he soon fell into a life of debauchery and drunkenness. The peasants of the close-knit village did not trust the strange boy, and he was an outsider even in his place of birth. He found the backbreaking labour of peasant work boring and empty, and he stole horses, fences – anything to add colour to his dull existence.

Rasputin was not a fool; he did not live a life of crime due to incompetence, but instead because of a feeling that his life was lacking something. He had a wife, he even had children, but he still felt a gaping emptiness. Now in his twenties, he found himself, either through divine providence or banishment, at the newly expanded Verkhoturye Monastery. It was there that he met Starets Makary, an elder who lived a humble existence in the woods near the monastery. Rasputin's interactions with this holy man slowly transformed the rebel youth into a deeply spiritual individual. Rasputin gave up alcohol, tobacco and meat. When he returned to Pokrovskoye the rebellious criminal had become a fervent religious convert.

Rasputin had been inspired by Makary but not by the monastery. Not only did he accuse the place of practising a "vice" which was likely homosexuality, but he also later proclaimed that the monastic life was not for him, saying, "One finds violence over people there." He believed that for a great deal of time in Russia it was believed that the name Rasputin meant 'licentious', and it was this image of the man that became the most prevalent. Rasputin was an accused sexual deviant, a rapist, and 'Mad Monk' who played the Russian royals like keys on a piano and whispered dark urges into the tsarina's ear. Rasputin, however, does not mean licentious at all. Its meaning is closer to, 'Where two rivers meet', referring to the place where he was born.

Just like his name, the true Rasputin, the man who lived and breathed, has been lost to history and replaced with caricatures; an old man with a long scraggly beard, terrible teeth and even more terrible deeds - but also a doting father, a respected holy man and a lover of beauty. It is this duality that has confounded and caused debates to this day. Was he indeed the man who brought a Russian dynasty to its knees, or has history created a scapegoat out of a man who only ever acted with good intentions?

The village of Pokrovskoye was small even by Siberian standards. It was more like a remote scattering of houses in the wide expanse of the West Siberian plains. With only 200 dwellings and no more than a thousand residents, it was an incredibly isolated start for the man whom every citizen of Russia would come to know, fear and loathe. But it was in this quiet, sleepy peasant village that Grigori Rasputin was born. The fifth of nine children, from a very early age Rasputin did not fit in. He did not attend school, for there was no school for him to attend, and he soon fell into a life of debauchery and drunkenness. The peasants of the close-knit village did not trust the strange boy, and he was an outsider even in his place of birth. He found the backbreaking labour of peasant work boring and empty, and he stole horses, fences - anything to add colour to his dull existence.

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Alexandra believed Rasputin cured her son with faith-healing, but it’s one of many explanations.

The wrong drugs
Aspirin was in use at the time and it is likely it was administered to the heir to help reduce his pain. Rasputin may have rejected the use of this drug, and by doing so unintentionally helped the boy, as aspirin thins the blood and would have worsened Alexei’s condition.

Calming presence
As a holy man it is not out of the question to assume that Rasputin brought a calm, tranquil air to both Alexandra and her son. This reduced stress may have helped the bleeding to gradually slow and stop.

Drugging
A popular theory at the time was that Rasputin was drugging Alexei with Tibetan herbs. This theory was fuelled by the disconnect people felt towards the imperial family.

Good timing
Others believed Rasputin to be less occult and more cunning. It was argued that he had a confidant at the court, a lady-in-waiting, who fed him information about Alexei, and when the boy was on the mend the healer made an appearance to claim the credit.

Hypnosis
The court physician at the time, Botkin, fiercely disliked Rasputin and claimed he had used hypnosis on the child, whispering words into his ear and inducing the bleeding to stop.

only by venturing across the world could he truly become closer to God and salvation. Throughout his whole life, Rasputin had never been one to sit idly, and he was definitely not accustomed to bowing to authority and blindly following orders, so it is not surprising he was repulsed by a life of servitude in a cold stone building. Rasputin, after all, did not belong in small places, or behind locked doors. His ever-wandering heart wished to explore the vastness of the Earth, and that’s exactly what he set about doing.

Rasputin packed few belongings, wished his family goodbye and began the life of a strannik, or mystic wanderer. We do not know the extent or length of Rasputin’s various pilgrimages in this stage of his life, but it is possible that he travelled as far as Mount Athos, the centre of the Orthodox Church. Sometimes he did not come back home for years, and his own wife and children struggled to recognise the man that returned. However, even in this life of a strannik Rasputin began to carve his own path. He disliked abiding by the accepted norms, preferring to do things his own way. For example, he would refuse to wear the traditional fetters and instead wore the same shirt for an entire year. He was rebellious and headstrong, but he was also thoughtful, independent and astonishingly open-minded for a peasant from a tiny village.

During these years of wandering Rasputin encountered many different kinds of people from all branches of the Russian social order. He developed strong opinions but also discovered and refined his ability to read people. Many have commented in memoirs and elsewhere that what Rasputin possessed was a very unique magnetism. He had a talent for understanding people quickly, he knew exactly what to say to them and he was unlike any priest or holy man they had encountered. This is because it was the truth - Rasputin was different, he had not confined himself to books and monasteries, but to the real world, and real people. When he spoke about God it was with a meaning that normal people could understand and his own beliefs were strengthened not simply with study, but with vivid, electric and very real experiences.

This ‘magnetism’ began to draw people to Rasputin’s home. Villagers and pilgrims further afield travelled to sit, talk, pray and seek council from the man. He soon amassed a loyal group of followers who would meet regularly to read from the Bible and sing religious songs in a secret chapel - a cave beneath the stables created by Rasputin himself. However, as these meetings grew in popularity, Rasputin also attracted negative attention. Rumours quickly spread that he was often seen with young women, that his followers would bathe him, and that he was teaching them mysterious rituals.

Rasputin was especially despised by the resident priest of Pokrovskoye, who likely didn’t relish the idea of an upstart peasant gaining such popularity over himself and his own teachings. Due to all this attention, Rasputin’s meetings were abandoned and the priest probably thought that was the end of it, but little did he know Rasputin had only just begun to scratch the surface of the power and influence he held.
Just how widespread was the Russian upper-class fascination with mysticism?

The turn of the century was a period of intense spiritual searching in Russia. During what became known as Russia’s Silver Age, from roughly 1890 to 1914, the country’s educated classes exhibited a fascination for mysticism and the occult and all manner of the supernatural, from table turning, hypnotism, and chiromancy, to Rosicrucianism, fortune-telling, telepathy, and Theosophy. Hypnotism was more popular in early 20th century Russia than in Western Europe and was a particularly common practice among St Petersburg psychiatrists. The best-known psychiatrist-hypnotist at the time was Vladimir Bekhterev, who used hypnosis widely as part of his science of ‘psychoneurology.’

The fascination for the occult became widespread, extending well beyond Russia’s artists and intellectuals and reaching deeply into the middle classes.

How and why did this obsession with the occult grow among Russian aristocrats?

Most educated Russians began turning away from the materialist positivism of the 19th century and back to the church and other forms of spiritualism in what can be called a true religious renaissance. Many sought to revitalise what was widely perceived as a hidebound, bureaucratic, and spiritually dead official Russian Orthodox Church, to infuse it with a renewed sense of mystery, fervency, and life. Others rejected the church altogether for new forms of spiritual experience that held the promise of even more powerful encounters with the sacred.

Did this religious renaissance help Rasputin gain influence over the imperial family?

This religious renaissance is crucial to understanding the rise of Rasputin. On one hand, his biography reflects this moment in Russian history. He himself had some sort of profound religious experience in his late twenties and he left home in Siberia to become what the Russians call a strannik, a holy pilgrim. For years he wandered in rags and often in fetters across the empire in search of spiritual enlightenment. This was his university, so to speak, and in time he became known for his profound knowledge of scripture and insights into Christian teachings and human nature. He was embraced in St Petersburg by lofty bishops and members of the Romanov family as a charismatic peasant holy man in whom burned the true unvarnished Orthodox faith. It was they who introduced Rasputin to Nicholas and Alexandra, thus opening his path to the throne.

Was Rasputin as much a mystic as the public perceived him to be or were his aims more political?

From the beginning of his relationship with Nicholas and Alexandra, Rasputin offered not only religious teachings, but political counsel as well. They first met during the Revolution of 1905, and Rasputin instructed the tsar to remain firm and not give in to the demands for political change. In the summer of 1914, Rasputin wrote a remarkable letter to Nicholas, begging him to ignore the voices of the warmongers and resist the temptation to go to war. In apocalyptic terms, Rasputin wrote he foresaw “ruin” and “grief without end.” Nicholas, of course, did not heed this prophetic advice. In late 1916, not long before his murder, Rasputin pleaded with Nicholas to do something about the growing bread lines in the capital. He told the tsar the people were hungry and growing angry. Nothing, however, was done, and soon these same people would spark a revolt that would bring down the 300-year-old dynasty of the Romanovs.

Rasputin’s arrival to the lives of the Imperial family could not have been better timed if he had planned it himself. Russia was in a state of disarray; they had lost a war against Japan in devastating fashion, humiliating the country on the world stage. The tsar also had to deal with the fallout after Bloody Sunday - where hundreds, if not thousands, of peaceful protestors were massacred by the Imperial Guard. Although Nicholas himself had not given the order to fire, for many it condemned the tsar, who they had, until the massacre, regarded as a ‘father’. The Imperial family were facing a brutal backlash and there was a very real chance of them losing their grip on the country entirely. Rasputin sat and listened to
Alexandra's worries and they spoke at length about religion. The holy man calmly told her that her husband needed to be closer to his people, and that she could trust his words. Alexandra immediately became close to Rasputin, as she too had a strong belief in the strength of the dynasty, and believed that he had been sent by God to secure the strength of their royal line.

Alexandra's trust in Rasputin meant that when her son, Alexei, suffered from one of his hemophiliac bleeding episodes, she summoned him immediately. The boy was the Imperial family's only male heir, and his mother adored and doted on him. Alexandra was well aware of the seriousness of his condition; she had lost an uncle and brother to the same hereditary disease, passed down from her grandmother, Queen Victoria, and it is likely she knew that it would claim her son, too. Alexei became a symbol of the future of Russian royalty - to save him was also to save tsardom. Alexandra had spoken to many doctors and tried multiple cures for her son's disease but nothing had worked, and so in her moment of need, with her child dangerously close to death, she called upon the mystic holy man.

Rasputin came to the palace, began to pray by the boy's bedside and amazingly, seemed to be able to calm the child, his condition rapidly improving. In another incident Alexei sustained an injury and lay suffering and moaning for days. Alexandra, remembering how Rasputin had managed to ease her child previously, sent a telegram to the man. Rasputin quickly responded to her worries, "The little one will not die. Do not allow the doctors to bother him too much." Just as he said, the boy's health went on to improve and Alexandra became convinced Rasputin was responsible for his recovery. Rasputin's place in the royal household was secured.

Although Rasputin's role was primarily as a healer to Alexei, he became a close confidant of the family, even occasionally serving as advisor to the tsar himself. For example, he warned Nicholas about entering World War I, urging him to make peace with Germany. Nicholas, of course, went along with the war anyway, which was a huge, costly mistake to the country and to his own reputation. However, Rasputin's easy access and apparent influence over the household did not go unnoticed. Living in an apartment on Gorokhovaya street, Rasputin was frequently visited by peasants seeking assistance, but even more so by the aristocracy, many of whom planned to use him to gain their own favour at court.

There were others, however, who were less than fond of the strange peasant. Malicious rumours concerning Rasputin began to resurge - that he seduced women with his charm, using his power to gain their own favour. However, Rasputin somehow survived.

It has since been argued that a dose large enough to kill several men, Rasputin somehow survived. It has since been argued that Rasputin was secured.

THE MEN WHO KILLED RASPUTIN
Pushed to the edge of desperation, these men formed a conspiracy to put an end to Rasputin once and for all.

Felix Yusupov
Coming from an extremely wealthy family - richer than the Romanovs - Felix was the oldest surviving male heir to the huge fortune. Although he was clever and quick-witted, he faced criticism for avoiding service during World War I. As the husband of Alexander Romanov's niece, Princess Irina of Russia, he disliked the influence that Rasputin held over the family, and became a key player in the plot to bring about his downfall.

Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich
Dmitri was grandson of Alexander II of Russia and after his primary care, his uncle, was killed by a revolutionary attack, he went to live with the Romanovs. He was known to be something of a playboy and these actions likely ruined plans for him to marry the eldest Romanov daughter, Olga. In his later life he moved to Paris and had an affair with Coco Chanel.

Vladimir Mitrofanovich Purishkevich
Born in Bessarabia, a region in Eastern Europe, Purishkevich followed his strong right-wing leanings and founded the Union of Russian People, a counter-revolutionary group. He was then elected to the Russian Duma, but he was a disruptive presence. Behind the scenes he was working on a plan to rid the country of Rasputin's influence for good.

Stanislaus de Lazovert
Originally born in Poland, Lazovert moved to Russia and crossed paths with Purishkevich during WWI. Trained as a doctor, it is believed he was given the task of lacing the cakes with poison – potassium cyanide to be exact. Claiming to have used a dose large enough to kill several men, Rasputin somehow survived. It has since been argued that Rasputin's supposed control over the Imperial family was fodder for satire and rumour.

Sergei Mikhailovich Sukhotin
A lieutenant in the Preobrazhensky Regiment, one of the oldest elite regiments of the Imperial Russian Army, it is believed that Sukhotin was an old friend of Felix's but was injured near the beginning of the war. Little is known about Sukhotin beyond this, but it is likely he had some familiarity with the men to become embroiled in the plot.
Was Rasputin’s relationship with Alexandra purely platonic, or were his charms too great to resist?

Alexandra had never really been a popular woman; the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, she was an immensely traditional person, and it was these beliefs that led the imperial family to leave St Petersburg. This disconnect from her own people was fated to be a constant aspect of her life, as she lived in seclusion with her husband and children. As family became her whole life, she leapt at the chance, any chance, to save her only son. The moment Rasputin’s apparent powers bore fruit, she made him a key member of the royal entourage.

When Nicholas made the disastrous decision to assume supreme command of the Russian army, the country was essentially run by Alexandra and in turn Rasputin, as her most trusted advisor. She proceeded to dismiss ministers and their deputies, making enemies left, right and centre. This hatred soon gave rise to rumours; people began to believe the two hated figures were secretly part of a pro-German group. Rasputin was painted as a dark, manipulative demon, and Alexandra as a hysterical, easily persuaded woman.

The public began to believe that the Germans, through Rasputin, had the imperial family in their clutches. The ‘Mad Monk’ already had a reputation as a womaniser, and now it was thought he had seduced the most important woman in Russia. Alexandra ignored the rumours that Rasputin had openly said the tsar would let him have sex with his wife whenever he wanted. The tsarina was accustomed to writing flowery letters to all her close companions, but when her letters to Rasputin fell into the wrong hands, they were catastrophically misinterpreted.

Pornographic caricatures of the two were produced and Rasputin became the most hated man in Russia. On the tsarina’s part, she had many faults, but committing affairs was not one of them. It is more likely that she was drawn to Rasputin as she believed he the only man capable of saving her beloved son, and she was willing to put up with all the rumours and slander in the world for that.

Alexandra had the nickname ‘Sunny’ which her mother and husband called her to organise secret sex rituals. For many who had met the ‘Mad Monk’ in passing, these claims were not out of the question, as he was seen to be overly intimate with women and his eyes, by all accounts, were oddly hypnotising. One memoir from the period wrote of Rasputin: “What eyes he has! You cannot endure his gaze for long. There is something difficult in him, it is like you can feel the physical pressure, even though his eyes sometimes glow with kindness, but how cruel can they be and how frightful in anger...” Many who had first adored the curious man were swept up in the hate campaign against him.

Some of Rasputin’s enemies went to Nicholas and Alexandra directly to warn them of his influence, but both were quick to dismiss them. When Nicholas was urged to exile him to Tobolsk he commented, “I know Rasputin too well to believe all the tittle-tattle about him.” One of the most damning accusations against Rasputin was that he was a member of the Khlysty, an underground sect split off from the Orthodox Church. The fact that he was a good dancer, and the sect was known for their dances and possible sexual promiscuity, seemed to add fuel to the accusation. Many different figures in the Orthodox Church leapt on this, accusing Rasputin of numerous immoral practices.

Against such a torrent of abuse, Nicholas had no choice but to investigate the holy man. However, after two months with nothing uncovered, the investigation ended. Anyone who criticised Rasputin was condemned by a royal family pushed to the brink. Politicians who spoke out against him often found themselves relieved of their positions, and more willing, obedient men were put in their place. Rasputin’s influence now went beyond the Royal family and into politics as well. Even Bishop Theophan attempted to persuade the tsar to put some distance between himself and Rasputin, but was dismissed. Whether the allegations against Rasputin were true or not, many people now had a legitimate reason to loathe him.

If Nicholas wasn’t willing to condemn Rasputin with the rest of them, then the two of them would burn together. By associating and supporting a man who was regarded by many as a licentious, perverted and even evil force, Nicholas did little to bolster his own reputation. This reached an extreme when the tsar took supreme command of the Russian armies during WWI. As this meant frequent trips away from the capital, his wife...
As his conspirators discovered, Rasputin was a very difficult man to kill.

The 'Mad Monk': Rasputin

The Many Lives of Rasputin

1. **Stabbing**
   A former prostitute stabbed Rasputin in the gut so violently that his entrails fell from his stomach. She also screamed, 'I've killed the antichrist!' However, he survived after surgery.

2. **Poison**
   Fuelled by the country’s hate, a group of conspirators lured Rasputin to their home and encouraged him to dine on wine and cyanide-laced cakes. Despite consuming enough poison to kill several men, he was nevertheless unaffected.

3. **Shooting**
   After Rasputin failed to be affected by the poison, one of the conspirators rushed upstairs then returned with a revolver. Rasputin was shot through the chest. The bullet went clean through his body, but he still wasn't dead.

4. **Beating**
   After falling to the floor having been shot, Rasputin tried to escape through the yard. The conspirators chased after him and beat him with a rubber club when they caught up.

5. **Poison**
   After his body was discovered, a bullet wound was found square in his forehead. It is said that one of the conspirators, his identity a mystery, delivered this killing blow when Rasputin made a sudden movement.

6. **Drowning**
   Rasputin (allegedly still alive) was bundled in a blanket and dumped into the icy Neva River. When his dead body was discovered, his arms were outstretched as if to make the sign of the cross.
was put in charge of domestic policy alongside the only advisor she now trusted – Rasputin. The backlash was immediate; all the ministers threatened to resign, the nobles loudly voiced their disgust at Nicholas’ decision and pleaded with him to think again - but Rasputin’s own headstrong determination had rubbed off on the impressionable tsar and he stood his ground.

Just as they had feared, Rasputin became Alexandra’s close personal confidant. She was not a weak woman, but she was ultimately entirely at the whim of a man able to command immense power by speaking softly while dressed in rags. Rasputin ordered that the tsarina persuaded a far weaker man to obey - her husband. In this way Rasputin held the fate of Russia, and all of its citizens, within his hands. For the many who viewed him as a weird, immoral and dangerous peasant, this was simply unacceptable.

It is difficult to know exactly what Rasputin, at this time, believed. His entire demeanour was said to have changed immensely after an assassination attempt in 1914, and it is quite possible that the near-death experience made him a little warier of trusting people. Although he was said to be strict and somewhat harsh with his words, there is no evidence to prove that Rasputin was ever violent or cruel. His character was, and always had been, independent, headstrong and in possession of incredible self-belief.

Whether he thought he was doing the right thing or not, Rasputin had made some very dangerous enemies. With the tsarina refusing to acknowledge that he was a bad influence, the nobles decided to take matters into their own hands and eliminate the threat to Russia themselves. A group of conspirators, including the tsar’s first cousin and a member of parliament, tricked Rasputin into meeting with them under the pretence of meeting the tsar’s niece. Rasputin entered the Yusupov Palace on the night of 17 December 1916 and was not seen alive again. His disappearance was noted when Rasputin abandoned his life of crime to become a holy man, horse thievery was not the only thing he left behind. He also said goodbye to his wife and three children: Dmitri, Maria and Varvara. It must have been peculiar for the children when their father returned as he had undergone a startling transformation, from vagabond to holy man. Maria recorded all her memories of her father in her diaries as she grew up, even complaining about his strict rules and long hours of prayer, “for which everything, anniversaries or penitences, served as an excuse.” Maria eventually followed her father to the hallowed halls of St Petersburg in order to be trained to become a proper lady. She quickly became friends with the imperial family, but as we know, this was ill-fated. Maria’s world was torn apart as her father was assassinated and later, her new friends, the Romanovs. It is rumoured that it was Maria who was forced to identify her father’s body.

As Russia was torn apart Maria escaped and lived a fugitive’s existence, constantly fleeing the entrapments of the Red Army. Maria travelled all of Europe, married a man of ‘dubious character’, had two daughters, and lost her husband all in less than a decade. As Maria’s family members disappeared, she performed across the continent as a cabaret dancer, while penning a staunch defence of her father entitled The Real Rasputin. The book and its successor, My Father, painted a very different portrait of her loathed and despised father. The Rasputin in Maria’s text was closer to a pious saint and she claimed her enemies were responsible for the common perception of him. Maria continued to travel across Europe, but this time as a lion tamer in a travelling circus. Eventually Maria’s non-stop lifestyle was forced to an end when she was mauled by a bear. Despite surviving the attack, her circus career was over, and she moved to Los Angeles and finally settled into a quiet life.

When Rasputin abandoned his life of crime to become a holy man, Maria Rasputin led a life almost as eventful as her father's
immediately the next morning, and a search began. His body was finally discovered, frozen solid beside the riverbank of the Malaya Nevka River. The man with the hypnotising eyes was dead.

When the conspirators planned Rasputin’s murder, their goal was likely to eliminate the powerful influence over the monarchy. However, the monarchy could not be saved, not even by destroying Rasputin. Russia was already hurtling off the cliff by the time he was murdered, and it was far too late to save it. In December 1916, Rasputin wrote a letter to the tsar about a peculiar prophecy, that if he was killed by the tsar’s relations then “none of your children will remain alive for more than two years.” He also predicted the tsar’s death, and the coming of the antichrist, to plummet the country into plague and poverty. He also claimed that “the Russian land will die.”

There were many who doubted Rasputin, who called him a charlatan and a fake that coerced people with pretty words and a hypnotic gaze. They may have been correct, and we have no way of knowing Rasputin’s true power. However, the ‘Mad Monk’ was right about one thing – the Romanovs were overthrown ten weeks after his death and, just as he predicted, within two years the entire family was dead. It had been very easy to place blame at the feet of the peculiar travelling mystic, rather than the weak leader who was supposed to be a father to all, but now both were dead, and Russia faced an uncertain, tumultuous future.

**THE BLOODY END OF A DYNASTY**

When Nicholas II abdicated his throne, it marked the end of a history of tsardom that stretched back to Ivan IV ‘The Terrible’.

Nicholas II had never been a natural ruler and his father had not prepared him to rule believing that, as he was in his forties, he had a great many years yet. He was wrong and Nicholas, young, naive and ill-prepared became tsar aged just 26. This was the beginning of a reign that was clouded by bad judgements, mistakes and a blindness to the plight and opinions of his subjects. After the revolution of 1905 Nicholas had promised to listen to his people’s demands for basic civil liberties, but because of his strong belief in the divine right of tsars, these promises were soon revoked.

After leading his country into disastrous and costly wars, conditions in Russia worsened. Food was scarce, soldiers died in their tens of thousands and defeat after defeat destroyed any confidence the people had in their leader. Prices soared and riots tore through the country, leaving the nation completely disillusioned by a regime that didn’t seem to care about their welfare at all. Revolution was inevitable.

Nicholas ordered that the demonstrators be dealt with, and some 200 citizens were shot dead in the street. Eventually even the army garrison at Petrograd, the oldest and most loyal regiment, joined the fight and Nicholas had no choice but to abdicate his throne, aged 48.

Nicholas and his family were quickly exiled and imprisoned, forced to live on soldiers’ rations, as they remained unaware of their ultimate fate. It was believed the tsar may eventually be put on trial, but the events of 17 July 1918 changed everything. Though there are many conflicting accounts, it is believed the family was awoken in the early hours and were led down to a basement room under the guise of safety. With time only to splutter, “What? What?” Nicholas was shot dead. Only the young children survived the first hail of bullets, their jewel-laden dresses shielding them, but they were soon ran through with bayonets and shot in the head at close range. The elimination was not only of the family, but also of the line of tsars in Russia. The people believed they were better to rule themselves rather than rely on the aristocracy. However, they ultimately discovered that normal men could be just as terrible as tsars.

Nicholas and his family were canonised as martyrs by the Russian Orthodox Church, though outside of Russia.
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Dennis Showalter, author of Instrument of War

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Crafted out of straw, wood and mud, these structures present a modest face for what lies within – not great halls of gold or marble, but instead a centre of scholarship. The mosques of Djinguereber and Sankoré are where you should stay if you wish to benefit most from what the city has to offer, as it is here that many great teachings, including astronomy, medicine, and mathematics are recorded in thousands of manuscripts. These writings are influenced by traditional African thought combined with the Islamic faith, and offer unique insights into tolerance and peace, which draw scholars so respected they are known as the Ambassadors of Peace. A chance to converse with these wise men should not be traded, even for more comfortable or lavish lodgings.

Timbuktu was founded when Tuareg nomads first settled there and took advantage of the location near the Niger River. They set up a trading post for profitable goods such as ivory, salt and gold along the Trans-Sahara caravan routes. Over time the city rapidly grew due to the influx of Tuaregs, Fulani and Songhai seeking trade, with the population increasing from 10,000 to 50,000 over two centuries. Now a bustling hub for a number of trading routes, Timbuktu has been annexed by the Mali Empire and has quickly become its commercial centre.

The huge economic growth has also attracted prominent scholars, leading to huge advances in science, art and religion, with thousands of manuscripts produced and traded throughout the Islamic world. Now a cornucopia of knowledge and commerce, this bustling religious and cultural centre of merchants and scholars has attracted Europe’s attention. In 1375 it literally was put on the map, appearing in the Catalan Atlas and has become a destination for travellers the world over.

WHERE TO STAY

Crafted out of straw, wood and mud, these structures present a modest face for what lies within – not great halls of gold or marble, but instead a centre of scholarship. The mosques of Djinguereber and Sankoré are where you should stay if you wish to benefit most from what the city has to offer, as it is here that many great teachings, including astronomy, medicine, and mathematics are recorded in thousands of manuscripts. These writings are influenced by traditional African thought combined with the Islamic faith, and offer unique insights into tolerance and peace, which draw scholars so respected they are known as the Ambassadors of Peace. A chance to converse with these wise men should not be traded, even for more comfortable or lavish lodgings.

**Dos & don'ts**

- **Look out for Ibn Battuta.** This famous traveller visited Timbuktu, bringing it to many influential people’s attention.
- **Learn how to ride a camel.** This was Ibn Battuta’s transport of choice to the city of Timbuktu and is, in fact, the best way to journey overland.
- **Converse with the native scholars.** Emperor Musa Mali was amazed that the Arab scholars he brought to the city were unable to engage in debates with the natives, as they were so out of their depth intellectually.
- **Brush up on your canoeing skills.** If you want to travel down the Niger River, perhaps to Gao, a canoe is the fastest and surest way.
- **Miss out on the profitable trading opportunities.** Timbuktu is especially known for its gold and salt trade, and is the perfect place to meet travellers.
- **Take advantage of Musa’s generosity too much.** He was so incredibly wealthy that while he was in Egypt the local currency lost its value.
- **Be rude to any other visitors and residents.** Timbuktu is a very open, welcoming place, home to a diverse population of Jews, Arabs and Berbers.
- **Forget to visit some of Timbuktu’s large and fascinating libraries.** Many of these contain unparalleled scholarly works.

**Did you know?**

The Islamic faith is central to Timbuktu, and the city is crucial in the spread of Islam in Africa.
**WHO TO BEFRIEND**

**Musa I**  
This ruler or sultan of the Mali Empire is the man who really brought Timbuktu to Europe’s attention. The King peacefully annexed the city when he was returning from his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. He is also the man behind much of the new construction work in the city including a royal palace, the centre of learning Sankoré Madrasah and several mosques, such as the great Djinguereber. Musa’s power is something that you definitely want on your side; he has conquered approximately 24 cities and brought many wealthy and influential men into the city, including the renowned architect Ishaq El Teudjin.

**Extra tip:**  
Another reason to befriend Musa is his money. Musa’s wealth is so great that even today he tops the list of the richest people in history, and it is said his procession included 60,000 men. He is also very generous, distributing gold among the poor, and trading it for souvenirs.

**WHO TO AVOID**

**Mossi Cavalry**  
Even such a cultural hub of peace, tolerance and scholarship is not safe from invasion. Likely due to its position as a profitable trading post, in 1339 the Mossi King, from the nearby Mossi Empire of modern-day Burkina Faso, invaded the city of Timbuktu. He brought with him war, corruption, destruction and death. Although the invaders were repulsed by the Mandika dynasty of the Mali Empire, it is a brutal reminder of the danger that lies just outside the door. Now under the protection of Musa and his descendants, Timbuktu appears to be a welcoming place. However, it would be wise to stay on guard while within the prosperous city.

**Helpful Skills**  
The best skills to help you take advantage of this prosperous city of opportunity

**Academic**  
Timbuktu is a centre of learning and your academic skills will benefit from the esteemed scholars at the university, which boasts three renowned departments and 180 Quranic schools.

**Construction**  
The city is in the middle of a grand expansion and two of Western Africa’s oldest mosques are currently being built here, so being able to contribute your skills will ensure work and income.

**Hunting**  
Hippopotamuses frequent the rivers of Timbuktu and they are immensely feared by the local boatmen. Being able to hunt them will earn you prestige and may save your life.
Death, swords and deposition: get acquainted with the would-be kings that changed the course of history

Written by Nicola Tallis

History is riddled with 'what ifs', and with the benefit of hindsight, it is easy for those of us living in the 21st century to speculate what could have been. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the monarchy: when kings and queens have died, been displaced, killed or otherwise, we are often left wondering what might have happened if things had turned out differently. This is also the case with royal heirs – the sons, daughters, nephews, nieces and so on who could, and often should, have become king or queen, but through a cruel twist of circumstance had their inheritance snatched away.

In 17th century England, for example, the population eagerly anticipated the succession of James I’s heir, the cultured Prince Henry. Unfortunately the prince was carried off by typhoid fever in 1612. Thus when James died, he was succeeded by his younger son, Charles I, who embroiled the country in the Civil War of 1642. Elsewhere, when the sultanate of the Ottoman Empire was abolished in 1922, Mehmed VI’s son, Prince Mehmed, was forced into exile with his father, his chance of ruling thus being eliminated. Such was the cruel hand that fate had dealt them, and they were not alone. Here are some more examples of people who could, should, and would have become king.

The Tudor
King Arthur
& 7 other lost monarchs

PRINCE ARTHUR (1486-1502)

Arthur, the first-born child of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, was born in September 1486. His birth of was of the utmost importance, for he was the heir of the newly established Tudor dynasty. Not only was Arthur named after the legendary king, but he was also born in Winchester, a deliberate choice of his father’s, influenced by Arthurian legend. In 1489 Arthur was created Prince of Wales, and was idolised by his parents. He was raised with every expectation of succeeding his father, and was given a magnificent education befitting a Renaissance prince. He excelled in his lessons, and many of his contemporaries also thought him handsome.

Henry VII had planned a marriage for his heir, and on 14 November 1501 Arthur was married to Catherine of Aragon, the youngest daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. The question of whether or not the marriage was ever consummated has been hotly debated for centuries, but the likelihood is that it was not. Nevertheless, the couple were sent to establish their household at Ludlow on the Welsh Marches, where Arthur was to learn the art of government. It was here that the couple fell ill in March 1502: Catherine recovered, but Arthur did not. He died on 2 April, leaving his parents devastated. His younger brother Henry replaced him as his father’s heir.

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IF THEY WERE KING

Arthur was expected to emulate his famous ‘ancestor’, the great King Arthur, and become one of history’s legendary kings. He was of gentle temperament, and certainly did not possess the fiery disposition of his younger brother, Henry VIII. Had Arthur survived, then it is likely he would have remained married to Catherine of Aragon, thus the Great Matter and the break from the Church of Rome would have been avoided. More interestingly, Anne Boleyn would not have become as well-known as she is today.
Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria (1488-1550)

Ferdinand was styled Duke of Calabria and Apulia from the time of his birth, and was raised with every expectation of succeeding his father, Frederick of Naples. In 1501, however, Frederick was deposed during the Italian Wars following an alliance between France and Aragon. Ferdinand was taken hostage and was held in Barcelona, but he was treated well. He also managed to win the friendship of King Ferdinand II of Aragon, and retained the favour of Ferdinand II’s heir, Charles V. Charles thought so highly of his prisoner that in 1526 he arranged for Ferdinand to be married to Germaine de Foix, the widow of Ferdinand II of Aragon. The couple established themselves in Valencia, where they became patrons of the arts. Despite his royal status, Charles V clearly did not perceive Ferdinand as a threat.

“Ferdinand was taken hostage and held in Barcelona”

If they were king

Ferdinand was evidently a very personable man, for he managed to earn the friendship and trust of both Ferdinand II of Aragon and Emperor Charles V. Had he succeeded his father as King of Naples, then his kingdom would undoubtedly have continued to be a part of the Italian Wars, and, faced with the might of the Holy Roman Empire, it is certainly possible that like his father before him, he would have been deposed.

Alexei Petrovich (1690-1718)

The Russian Tsarevich Alexei was brought up with an intense dislike for his father, Peter the Great, which was highly influenced by his mother. The feeling of dislike was mutual, and in 1716 Alexei fled to Austria in fear of his life. He was lured back to Russia with the promise that his father would not punish him, but was instead forced to renounce his rights to the Russian throne, arrested and tortured. On 26 June 1718 Alexei was dead, either submitting to wounds from torture or secretly killed on his father’s orders, on the grounds that he had allegedly plotted to kill Peter.

If they were king

Alexei did not have the same strength of character as his father, and was constantly complaining. He was also lazy and feeble, with no interest in politics. He would have been a weak ruler who was easily manipulated.
PREPARATION: THE KEY TO SUCCESS
Top tips for would-be heirs

BE SEEN
For anyone with a claim to the throne who hoped to inherit, it was important that the subjects of the realm see him or her. Regular public appearances helped to boost popularity – after all, when Lady Jane Grey succeeded, nobody cheered because few people knew who she was.

Left: Lady Jane Grey’s claim to the throne was unpopular, and her life ended on the block

LOOK THE PART
Image was everything: if you were going to rule, it was important that you looked like royalty. Clothes and jewels were an essential part of this, and did much to project an image of majesty – the Tudors and Stuarts were particularly fond of using jewels to impress.

Left: Image was of the utmost importance to Elizabeth I, who spent lavishly on finery

CHOOSE FRIENDS (AND ENEMIES) WISELY
It was useful to have friends in high places at court who were placed to pass on information, and to guide you when you succeeded. Similarly, it was wise to keep your enemies close and on side until such time as you could dispose of them.

Left: François I’s mother, Louise of Savoy, was active on her son’s behalf during his predecessor’s reign

MAKE A GOOD MARRIAGE
If chosen correctly, the right marital partner could enhance your own power and position as heir, as well as adding to your wealth. They could also be a powerful supporter – Joanna ‘the Mad’s husband Philip, for example, pressed for his wife’s succession to the Castilian throne.

Left: Philip the Handsome, husband of Joanna ‘the Mad’, fought for his wife’s rights

CREATE YOUR LEGACY
While preparing for the possibility of succeeding, think about the way in which you want to be remembered by history and how this will influence your actions if you become king or queen. Pious, like Martin I ‘the Ecclesiastic’ of Aragon, or perhaps intelligent like Alfonso X ‘the Learned’ of Castile?

Left: History has remembered Martin of Aragon as ‘the Ecclesiastic’

Louis XVII (1785-1795)
Louis XVII was in the almost unique position of having the title of a king, but never actually having ruled. Louis was the second son of the ill-fated Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, but upon the death of his elder brother he became his father’s heir. As the heir to the throne Louis enjoyed a privileged lifestyle, but that was all about to change. In 1789 the French Revolution erupted, and King Louis and his family were imprisoned in the Tuileries Palace in Paris. They were allowed to remain together, but after a failed escape attempt in 1791, the conditions of their imprisonment became gradually harsher. In January 1793 Louis XVI was executed, and thus the title, although not the power, of king became invested in the young Louis. Later that year the young Louis was separated from his mother, and on 8 June 1795, the young boy died of scrofula. He was still a prisoner.

IF THEY WERE KING
Given that the French Revolution had led to the establishment of a republic, had Louis XVII lived he would almost certainly have remained imprisoned. However, had he been given the opportunity to rule, it is likely he would have been a puppet king. As a youngster, he would have been ruled by a regent, and beyond this, he would still have been faced with many problems, for France was in a perilous state and it would have taken someone with real leadership qualities to tackle this.
James, Duke of Monmouth (1649-1685)

The eldest of Charles II's acknowledged illegitimate brood of children, James's mother was Lucy Walter, one of Charles's earliest mistresses. Although James was duly honoured by his father and was created Duke of Monmouth, in Charles's mind there was never any question of his son becoming king. James had other ideas; however, and maintained that he possessed evidence that his parents were married, thus giving him a claim to the throne - evidence that he never produced. When Charles II died and was succeeded by his brother James II in 1685, James responded by leading a rebellion against his uncle. Proclaiming himself king in several English towns, he marched his army towards Sedgemoor where the two armies met and fought on 6 July. His forces were defeated, and Monmouth was captured and taken to the Tower of London. He was executed in an appalling display of butchery on 15 July.

If they were king

Had Monmouth either succeeded his father or successfully deposed his uncle James II, the Glorious Revolution that saw King James toppled from power in 1688 would never have taken place. England would have remained a Protestant country.

If they were king

Had Franz Ferdinand become king then he would doubtless have begun implementing his unpopular policies, chiefly for 'Trialsm', the idea of a triple monarchy that would include the empire's Slavs. This, coupled with his general unpopularity, may have led to other assassination attempts.
Leopold of Brabant (1859-1869)

Leopold was the only son of Leopold II of Belgium and his wife, Marie Henriette of Austria. As his father’s only son and heir, Leopold was a precious commodity, and his birth had been a cause of great joy both to his parents and in Belgium. His parents had no more sons, and thus all of their hopes were firmly invested in Leopold. Sadly, when he was nine years old, he had an accident and fell into a pond. He did not drown, but he fell dangerously ill with pneumonia. Despite the best care, young Leopold succumbed and died. His father was devastated, and in a heartbreaking public display, broke down in uncontrollable sobs beside the little boy’s coffin.

“As his father’s only son and heir, Leopold was a precious commodity”

If they were king

Leopold’s father had made a fortune from his atrocities in the Congo, which served to severely damage his reputation. Had his son survived, it is possible that he would have avoided exploiting the Congo, and thus would have been more popular.
Probably the mummified corpse of Pentaweret, the treacherous son of Rameses III

PENTAWERET  (c.1173 BCE-1155 BCE)

The son of the Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses III and one of his wives, Tiye, Pentaweret was involved in the Harem Plot to kill his father. When it became known that he was not his father’s nominated heir, he was encouraged by his mother to seize the throne by force. However, the plot was discovered, and Pentaweret was tried and condemned for treason. The exact nature of his death is unclear, but he may have been forced to take his own life by drinking poison.

“When it became known he was not his father’s nominated heir, he was encouraged by his mother to seize the throne by force”

IF THEY WERE KING

The Harem Plot had the support of many of Rameses’ courtiers, who evidently believed that Pentaweret had all of the ingredients that were necessary in a successful monarch. However, the rule of Pentaweret’s father had witnessed the economic decline of Egypt and had been faced with several invasions. Thus Pentaweret would have inherited some significant challenges, and in the absence of more evidence about his character, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how he would have gone about dealing with these.

KINGS OVER QUEENS

For hundreds of years, male rulers have been viewed as preferable to females. In France, a male ruler was not only preferable but compulsory, as the Salic Law banned a woman from inheriting the throne. There were many reasons that a male ruler was perceived to be the better choice, including the long-standing belief that women were inferior to men, and were not capable of governing effectively. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth I in England – a reign that was generally believed to have been successful – that this idea began to be challenged. Unlike Elizabeth however, there were many princesses before her who were not given the opportunity to rule.

ELIZABETH OF YORK  (1466–1503)

History may have run a very different course, had the mother of Henry VIII and co-founder of the Tudor dynasty been allowed to succeed in her own right. The Plantagenet dynasty would have continued, and one of the biggest mysteries may never have taken place: the disappearance of Elizabeth’s brothers, the Princes in the Tower.

ISABELLA OF ARAGON  (1470–1498)

Isabella was the eldest daughter of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Until the birth of her brother John in 1478, she was her parents’ heir presumptive. She was first married to Alfonso, the King of Portugal’s heir, and following his death Isabella married Manuel I of Portugal. She died in childbirth – a queen consort, but not a queen regnant.

ELEANOR OF AUSTRIA  (1498–1558)

The most powerful man in 16th century Europe, the Emperor Charles V, was Eleanor’s younger brother. Eleanor would become queen consort of Portugal and France, although her political influence was minimal. She was famous for her charitable deeds, and as consort performed the task of mediator admirably on many occasions.

MARGUERITE D’ANGOULEME  (1492–1549)

Marguerite was the elder sister of the French King, Francis I, and was later married to Henry II of Navarre. Marguerite was well known for her interest in religious reform, and had a significant influence on the Reformation in Europe. She was also a great patron of the arts and an author in her own right, most notably of poetry.
The London-born John Dee was actually of Welsh descent, his family having made a place for themselves in the capital after the accession of a fellow Welshman, Henry VII, to the English throne. Over the years, the young and ambitious Dee invented a lineage that was far grander than his true humble beginnings, claiming a family connection with various Welsh princes, and even suggesting descent from the fabled King Arthur himself.

Dee gained his Bachelor’s degree in 1545 from Cambridge. During his time at university, he had his first brush with the occult, in the form of alchemical studies, and came across the mathematical concepts that would become the basis of many of his later ideas. By the time he left university for good, he had already established something of a reputation in this area, though this did not stop him from taking Holy Orders in 1554.

Trouble erupted in 1555 when Dee was engaged by Queen Mary Tudor to use his already established skills to see what lay in store for herself and her half-sister, Princess Elizabeth. He found himself in hot water when on 28 May, he and his associates were arrested on suspicion of magic, a charge that rapidly escalated in the volatile political climate of the time to that of conjuring and witchcraft. Despite the potentially fatal situation, Dee was eventually cleared of all charges, and emerged as household chaplain to Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London.

Upon the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, Dee’s fortunes appeared to be improving. The new monarch was said to have chosen her coronation date based on a horoscope that Dee had cast for her and he was generally held in favour by the Queen. Despite this seemingly auspicious start and the connection he had with Elizabeth throughout his life, Dee had a fluctuating career and he never achieved the level of patronage and recognition that he felt was his due.

By the 1560s, the mystically inclined Dee had fully embraced the occult and arcane, and in 1564 he produced a work titled *The Hieroglyphic Monad*, exploring the meaning of a glyph that he himself had created. Ever hopeful, he dedicated himself in hot water when on 28 May, he and his associates were arrested on suspicion of magic, a charge that rapidly escalated in the volatile political climate of the time to that of conjuring and witchcraft. Despite the potentially fatal situation, Dee was eventually cleared of all charges, and emerged as household chaplain to Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London.

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the decidedly dense text to Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, though again it did not bring the rewards Dee had hoped for. More success came from his attempts to have references to himself as a conjuror removed from Foxe’s highly popular work, *Acts And Monuments*: the critical comments were removed from later editions of the text, though his reputation could not be changed so easily.

Dee was also vociferous in his support of English expansion in the New World, and he devoted much time and effort to this cause, attempting to boost England’s claims over those of Spain in the continuing battle for supremacy over the territory. In 1577 he published *General And Rare Memorials Pertaining To The Perfect Art O f Navigation*, outlining his ambitious ideas regarding England’s developing empire. As was the case with so many of his visions, however, the majority of his ideas in this area were not adopted.

A great lover of books, Dee turned his attentions to developing a private library in his Mortlake home. He expanded it into a great wonder, including many texts of an occult nature, and it was known as one of the leading libraries in Europe and the largest personally owned library in England during his lifetime. The great fascination of the occult coupled with a burning desire for greater recognition was again made clear in 1574, when Dee wrote to William Cecil, Lord Treasurer to Elizabeth I. Dee apparently claimed to have knowledge of hidden treasure in the Welsh Marches, hinting at his ability to recover it for the right patron.

The 1580s saw Dee into his fifties and signalled a change of direction, as he finally acknowledged his disappointment about his lack of advancement. As such, Dee switched his attentions even more fully towards the occult, and it was now that he devoted himself to communicating with spirits and angels. For this work he required a partner skilled in the art of crystal gazing to act as go-between for the two worlds and, after impressing him at an audition, Dee finally settled on the unlikely choice of convicted criminal Edward Kelley.

Their attempts were deemed successful, and Dee fully believed that, through Kelley, they had made contact with angels. These communications were meticulously recorded by Dee. Despite his links with the occult, he was a devout Christian, and prayer and fasting played a large role in his spiritual communications. His motives were also not, arguably, entirely selfish – he believed, apparently wholeheartedly, that what he was learning through Kelley and the angels would be profitable to the entire human race.

Kelley was not the only questionable individual to whom Dee was drawn in his lifetime; it was during this decade that Dee, at the behest of Albert Leski, a Polish nobleman, was induced to uproot his family, along with Kelley, and move to Poland. The whole situation soon fell apart, as it transpired that Leski didn’t have a penny to his name and was even further from favour at his native court.
than Dee felt at his own. Instead of returning home however, Dee, with the ever-present Kelley and their families, embarked upon a tour of Europe. They continued their angelic communications (indeed it had been the angels that told them, according to Kelley, to go to Poland with Leski in the first place). The pair attempted to interest some great names in their work with angels, holding an audience with Emperor Rudolf II and King Stefan Batory of Poland. Even here Dee lost out; while he focused on angelic communication, Kelley’s skill at alchemy saw his eventual appointment as chief alchemist to the Emperor.

It was this time in Europe that helped promote Dee’s lingering reputation as a spy in the pay of Elizabeth I. Despite being greatly respected for his intellectual abilities, there was an ever-present suspicion from the monarchs he approached as to the true reason for his interest.

As the decade neared an end, relations between Kelley and Dee began to deteriorate. This was not helped by the younger man – Kelley was nearly 30 years Dee’s junior – announcing that one of their angel communicators had declared that the men must share everything in common – including, much to Dee’s consternation – their wives. Although it appears that this arrangement was entered into, Dee and Kelley parted company not long afterwards – though there continues to be some dispute as to the parentage of the child born nine months later to Dee’s third wife.

His long absence from home had consequences. The house at Mortlake was in a sorry state due to vandalism, and his precious library had been ransacked. The political and religious environment to which he returned was also not very welcoming, the tide having turned against the occult beliefs that Dee held so dear and leaving him with even less hope of gaining favour. Despite this he was granted the role of warden at Christ’s College, Manchester in 1595, but the 68-year-old Dee didn’t manage to properly benefit even here as he was not held in any great respect by those he kept watch over. He also came under fire for his involvement with the exorcist craze that gripped the capital around that time, and for his apparent connection to John Darrell, as well as claims of fraudulent possession. All of this mean that any hopes of further promotion or advancement were completely dashed by the end of the affair.

Rumours still persist to this day, but it is highly unlikely that Dee was a member of the Rosicrucian Order, and in fact there is no hard evidence that it even existed during Dee’s lifetime. Along with some of the more extreme claims regarding Dee, the factual truth does little to hamper the persistent legend of this learned and intriguing figure.

Dee fared little better when James I followed Elizabeth on the throne, and the new monarch was not interested in supporting the famed occultist. Dee went on to live out his years in poverty and died in c.1609 at Mortlake, under the care of his daughter Katherine.

Was John Dee a hero or a villain? Let us know what you think
Through History

JEWELLERY

It may be the finishing touch to your outfit, but jewellery has been adding some extra sparkle for centuries.

**NEOLITHIC STONE NECKLACES 4500 BCE**

Early Neolithic jewellery used stones, bone and shells as a basis, rather than metals or pottery. One selection of necklaces, found in the tumulus of Mané-er-Rhoek near Locmariaquer and dating back to the 5th millennium BCE, uses beads made from variscite, a blue-green mineral. The bright colour may not be equal to the gemstones used in later jewellery, but they would still have added an extra dimension to any Neolithic outfit. The first signs of trade between neighbouring groups of people meant that owning a desirable object such as this would have been particularly useful.

**SUMERIAN HOOP EARRINGS 2500 BCE**

While the later ancient Egyptians also wore earrings, these hoops from ancient Sumeria (modern Iran) are the earliest examples to have been found, and display the hoop style that many people wear even in the present day. They were found in what was thought to have been a royal tomb, which also contained the remains of over 70 people, most of whom were women and girls. They had all been adorned with jewellery of gold, lapis lazuli and carnelian - the colour scheme of red and blue stones with yellow metal was particularly popular in this period.

**EGYPTIAN PROTECTIVE JEWELLERY 4000 BCE**

The ancient Egyptians believed that some jewellery could ward off evil spirits and bring luck and success in both their mortal lives and the after-life. With brooches, necklaces, bracelets and more made from gold, silver, glass and even wire, the practice of decorating oneself spanned society. However, the upper classes favoured elaborate gold accessories, which they would wear not only during life, but also when buried. The scarab beetle was a particularly powerful symbol, as it represented the abilities of renewal associated with the Sun god Ra. Brooches with scarab beetle designs were popular, and many would have the wearer’s name inscribed.

**ROMAN FIBULAE 1ST CENTURY CE**

While jewellery most often exists simply to adorn and beautify, Roman fibulae performed a vital function while also jazzing up an outfit. A fibula was a brooch, commonly used to fasten fabric garments such as shawls, jackets and togas (fibulae were also used in ancient Greece, but were popularised by the spread of the Roman Empire). They were most often based on the recognisable shape and mechanism of a safety pin, but could be made of gold or decorated with gems. The modern brooch is visibly descended from fibulae.

**BRONZE AGE TORC 1200 BCE**

Gold torcs dating from the time of the Bronze Age have been found throughout England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. They are one of the most recognisable pieces of jewellery from the period, and continue to influence necklace designs even today. The torc was often formed of an elliptical bar of gold, fashioned into a sort of slim collar, which sat around the neck, and the easiest way to put it on was to bend it out of shape. Torcs were usually inscribed with decorative patterns such as grooves and concentric circles, which were also found on the gold bracelets from the Bronze Age.
**NAVARATNA STONES** **UNKNOWN**

Navaratna is derived from the Sanskrit for ‘nine gems’ which describes the gems at the centre of this astrological tradition. For centuries, people across Asia have worn jewellery with these nine gems: diamond, pearl, coral, hessonite, sapphire, yellow sapphire, cat’s eye, emerald and ruby. Each stone represents a Hindu god and has its own significance - the pearl represents the Moon, for instance - and wearing navaratna jewellery is believed to bring balance to emotional and religious life. The earliest navaratna is not known, due to its widespread use across Asia, and its origins have never been successfully traced.

**CHEQUERS RING** **1575**

An icon of Tudor jewellery and a special insight into the emotions of one of England’s great monarchs, the Chequers ring was worn by Queen Elizabeth I. When she died in 1603, the ring was apparently taken from her hand by Robert Carey as proof of her death. Made from gold, pearl, rubies and diamonds, it bears a letter ‘E’ and ‘R’ combined, and holds twin portraits of both Elizabeth, and her mother Anne Boleyn, inside. Elizabeth rarely spoke of her mother, and following Anne’s gruesome end, it was probably in her best interest to distance herself from the Boleyn legacy.

“Hair was also used to create a unique token of remembrance”

**GIMMEL RINGS** **12TH CENTURY**

From the Latin ‘gemellus’, meaning twin, these ingenious rings were historically used as a way for both men and women to display their commitment before marriage. The ring would begin as two rings, worn by each half of the betrothed couple. When the marriage had taken place, the two parts would be joined and the whole ring worn by one partner, usually the woman. Often an inscription would sit on the inside of the rings, hidden when the closed ring was worn, known only to the husband and wife.

**MOURING JEWELLERY** **16TH CENTURY**

The art of making and wearing jewellery for mourning had been around since the 16th century but with the Victorian era came both a larger emphasis on mourning rituals and mass production, which made the practice more widespread. Pieces such as brooches, lockets and rings would be made in precious metals, using black enamel, jet (fossilised coal) and even the hair (often of a deceased loved one), woven into patterns, to form the somewhat macabre decoration. Hair was also used inside lockets, sometimes in place of a picture, to create a unique token of remembrance.

**TRANSDERMAL IMPLANTS** **21ST CENTURY**

While the methods of body modification (piercing, tattooing, scarification and more) have been used historically by cultures across the world for centuries, the process of implanting objects into the skin surgically is fairly new. Still not entirely legal, this method is used to implant metal spikes, beads or other foreign objects either into or under the skin, to give the appearance of the jewellery being naturally fused to the body.
Discover the true story of the folk and fairy tale collectors who bewitched generations of readers

Written by Jonathan Hatfull
The enduring image of the Grimms is of two travelling scholars, journeying far and wide across the land to track down these stories and record them for posterity. The truth, of course, is somewhat different: The Brothers Grimm were born in Hanau in Germany. Jacob was born in January 1785 and Wilhelm arrived just a few months later. They were the eldest of their many siblings, and quickly became the men of the household following the death of their father and grandfather in relatively quick succession, creating tremendous financial difficulties for the family. This responsibility was not lost on the two boys. They were sent to school in Kassel, further north, and this shared experience cemented their close relationship. Life wasn’t easy for Jacob and Wilhelm, as the privileged nature of the school was a constant reminder of their lower social standing. While the other children had their places assured by wealth and privilege, the Grimms were forced to work incredibly hard to excel and they relied on each other for support.

“From that time onward, they felt a deep bond and never separated from one another, even after Wilhelm married,” says Jack Zipes, professor emeritus of German and comparative literature at the University of Minnesota. “They exchanged a letter swearing that they would never separate and became the virtual father to their four other siblings.”
Thanks to their incredible work ethic, Jacob and Wilhelm graduated with high honours and they were both able to attend the University of Marburg, where they pursued their first passion: law. However, their legal interests would not last long. The brothers worked with Professor Friedrich Karl von Savigny, who sowed the seeds of their fascination with German history. There was a collision of interests and passions occurring, a perfect storm that put the siblings on the path to securing their place in literary history.

Von Savigny spoke about a united Germany, rather than the collection of principalities that it was at the time. This idea carried with it the notion of a national cultural history and identity, which tied in with the Grimms’ own interests in folk tales and mythology.

After finishing their studies at Marburg, they found work at a library back in Kassel, and it was here that they realised that there was a gap to be filled, a tradition that needed to be recorded and celebrated. “What became clear to them was that the folklore of the German people had not been appreciated and studied as it should have been,” explains Zipes. “From 1802 onward, they dedicated themselves to preserving the folklore of the German people and also other European countries.”

They first began working on these stories as part of a commission from Clemens Brentano. Together with Achim von Arnim, Brentano had formed a collection of German folk songs, published in 1805 and titled Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte Deutsche Lieder (The Boy’s Magic Horn: Old German Songs). He greatly admired the brothers’ efforts and asked them to begin collecting fairy tales and folk tales for a collection but, although the Grimms sent him their work in 1810, Brentano’s book would never be published. Instead, Brentano lost the 54 stories that the Grimms had donated in Alsace.

Thankfully, this loss was not final. Jacob and Wilhelm had made and retained their copies of the stories and, encouraged by von Arnim, they began work on the Kinder-und Hausmärchen (Children And Household’s Tales). This work would bear their name: a collection of folk stories they perceived as being classically German and which would create a shared reading experience among the German people. Jacob’s work was more structural, while Wilhelm would finesse and sculpt the tales as a writer. They complemented each other perfectly.

Once upon a time, Germany was a collection of principalities as opposed to a single united nation, but in the early 19th century there was a movement that yearned for a greater national identity. This romanticism was what drove artists like the Brothers Grimm and Clemens Brentano, but the reality was far more complicated than that. Following the defeat of Napoleon and his forces in 1815, the German confederation was created, consisting of 39 states, with Prussia to the north and Austria to the south.

In terms of industrialisation, the German confederation was some ways behind its European neighbours but quickly began to take steps to develop and the introduction of railroads in the 1840s played a huge part in this process. But with so many independent states making up this messy confederation, it was a politically volatile and turbulent time. The Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 enforced strict censorship and targeted university professors with liberal leanings. The failed revolutions of 1848 showed a great discontent among the people, who longed for a united Germany. The Grimms lived in a time when change was brewing, and they shared their beliefs with many of their readers.
If we take a step back to look at exactly how the brothers came by these stories, it’s here that the popular myth begins to deviate from the reality. Over the centuries, an image has been created of the two brothers setting out into the German countryside and heading into the woods to hunt the stories down. The truth is somewhat more sedentary, if still industrious. The brothers called on people they knew to send in their folk tales for inclusion in their tome, while some stories were found in the pages of other countries’ fairy tale collections and were classified as being German, or at least German enough.

“The popular image of the Grimms travelling about and gathering folk tales from the people is totally false and ridiculous,” says Zipes. “The Grimms did, in fact, collect tales from young women in Kassel and also from some peasant storytellers in and near the city. However, most of the tales in their Kinder Und Hausmärchen were sent to them by friends and colleagues throughout the German principalities. They generally noted their sources, and they had numerous contacts in central Europe. They also took tales from ancient collections.”

Their first book was published in 1812, and it contained 86 tales, including stories like *Hansel & Gretel*, *Rapunzel*, and *Little Briar-Rose* (a version of the Sleeping Beauty story). Although it wasn’t a huge success at first, a second volume followed in 1815. These collections would be republished several times as their popularity grew, and the style would evolve with each subsequent edition.

The first is generally regarded as being a relatively straightforward telling - a simple collection of stories. With each new reprinting, the Grimms’ talent as writers became more apparent.
These stories, particularly in their first editions, are notably darker than the versions that we know today. There is blood, murder and sex. Small children are killed, damsels are impregnated by their princes and parents are at best neglectful and at worst, murderous. Indeed, parents are some of the primary figures of danger in the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. Interestingly, while later versions took steps to (slightly) tone down the horror with wicked stepmothers, the earliest versions feature biological parents taking the most drastic, terrifying measures. Take *Hansel and Gretel*, for example. These days, it’s the Woodcutter’s new wife who is largely responsible for abandoning the children in the woods, with the husband a reluctant and remorseful accomplice who later comes back for his children. In the earliest version, it is the unlucky siblings’ own mother who propels this evil plan, and their father is just as complicit. Similarly, we all think of the wicked queen in Snow White as being an evil interloper into a happy family, but in the original, the monster who orders the Huntsman to kill Snow White is actually the maiden’s own mother.

Brutal events and punishments abound in the rest of the collection. For example, Cinderella’s wicked stepsisters hack off pieces of their own feet in a desperate bid to fit into that famous slipper, an act that has since been reprised in several stage productions of the tale. Rapunzel puzzles at being unable to fit into her dress following her encounter with the Prince, while the Princess hurls the Frog into a wall and kills it, as opposed to giving it a kiss. Witches are burnt at the stake (*The Six Swans*) or pushed into burning ovens (*Hansel and Gretel*), murderers are drowned in sacks when their crimes are uncovered (*The Singing Bone*), and young girls are maimed by a wrathful devil (*The Girl Without Hands*).

“There is a strong sense of social justice in almost all the tales,” says Zipes. “And despite some violence, most of the tales end on a happy note. The difficulty is that most people do not read all 210 tales of the final edition to see how diverse, and to a certain extent, how humorous the tales are. The notion that the Grimms’ tales are dark is derived from the ignorance of critics, teachers, and parents.” It has been noted that a possible reason for the recurring villainy of
women and the tragic absence of father figures is a reflection of the Grimms’ own loss of their father and grandfather. Whether they made those alterations themselves or not, the themes of famine found throughout these stories are certainly a reflection of the times in which they originated. In subsequent editions, the Grimms began to edit these stories to make them more suitable for their younger readers (probably as a reflection of their enormous success), and began adding more Christian elements. The themes of punishment are present right from the start and the villains’ deeds are certainly wicked, but the reprisals are often even more severe.

While the brothers may have been growing in stature and fame, their lives were not becoming easier. They were still living together following Wilhelm’s marriage to Henriette Wild in 1825, but by 1830 they had grown disillusioned with their work in the library. They found new positions at the University of Göttingen, where they taught and continued their research into fairy tales. Jacob wrote a book on German mythology, but their romantic political views created problems for them. When King Ernest Augustus required an oath of allegiance from the university’s professors, Wilhelm, Jacob and five other professors refused. The so-called ‘Göttingen Seven’ were exiled in 1837.

“The Grimms were what we today might call liberals,” Zipes explains. “They had a firm belief in constitutional monarchy and democracy. This is why they refused to kowtow to the King of Hesse when they were in Göttingen. Then, even after they were professors in Berlin from 1840 until their deaths, they maintained a liberal democratic attitude towards politics.

In 1848 Jacob Grimm was appointed the place of honour at a gathering of the revolutionaries in Frankfurt am Main. The brothers were not, however, activists. Their political beliefs were reflected in their dedication to the common people (das Volk) and their desire to preserve the most humane aspects of German culture.”

Activists or not, the brothers’ strident political views had left them without any means of income. They would eventually find employment at the University of Berlin thanks to the intervention of their old friend von Savigny and Bettina von Arnim, a noted scholar, author and literary figurehead, who appealed directly to King Frederick William IV of Prussia. It was here that they remained until they died, and where they continued work on their final passion project: The German Dictionary.

“[The dictionary was] extremely important,” Zipes tells us. “After the Grimms were banished from Göttingen in 1837, they had very little money and means to support themselves. Then the Berlin publisher Reimer proposed that they edit the very first extensive dictionary of the German language. Needing money, the Grimms accepted.

As usual, they were impeccable and thorough in their research, and both of them were eminent philologists with a vast knowledge of the German language. Once they began publishing the dictionary - they never got beyond the letter F - they set an example for all editors of dictionaries because they provided historical examples of how words were used in different contexts."

On 16 December 1859, Wilhelm Grimm died in Berlin. Jacob would die less than four years later. Their work inspired not only readers, but also storytellers and historians. Their devotion to the history of language and folk tales invigorated the scholars and writers who followed them, and their work as authors defined the tales that generations of children grew up with.
Bluffer's Guide

Robert FitzRoy was the captain of HMS Beagle, which took Charles Darwin to the Galápagos Islands.

Did you know?

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Timeline

The Treaty of Waitangi is signed by more than 500 Maori chiefs, placing all of New Zealand under British sovereign rule.

The New Zealand Company illegally begins surveying land at Wairu, despite the Maoris refusing to sell. 22 British and four Maoris are killed in clashes.

The British flagpole at Maiki Hill is cut down by Chief Te Harata, sparking nine months of fighting called the Flagstaff War.

Governor Thomas Gore Browne deliberately provokes the First Taranaki War by accepting dubious land sale contracts. The fighting ends in a messy cease-fire.

NEW ZEALAND, 1845-1872

The New Zealand Wars

17 JUNE 1843

The New Zealand Company illegally begins surveying land at Wairu, despite the Maoris refusing to sell. 22 British and four Maoris are killed in clashes.

17 MARCH 1860

Governor Thomas Gore Browne deliberately provokes the First Taranaki War by accepting dubious land sale contracts. The fighting ends in a messy cease-fire.

8 JULY 1844

The British flagpole at Maiki Hill is cut down by Chief Te Harata, sparking nine months of fighting called the Flagstaff War.

6 FEBRUARY 1840

The Treaty of Waitangi is signed by more than 500 Maori chiefs, placing all of New Zealand under British sovereign rule.
What was it?
The New Zealand Wars were eight separate armed conflicts fought between British colonials and Maori tribes over a 30-year period. Colonial troops were outnumbered at the start, but after 1862, Governor George Grey acquired heavy reinforcements from Britain. By 1864, he had 18,000 troops at his disposal, against a total Maori force of 4,000.

Despite these odds, the casualty figures for both sides were surprisingly even. This is because the Maori had a long tradition of bitter intertribal fighting and were extremely good at building temporary forts, called ‘pās’. Each pā consisted of wooden palisades, faced with woven flax leaves that absorbed musket fire, and trenches to protect them from artillery.

The Maori could erect a pā overnight, defend it ferociously, and then abandon it as soon as they were in danger of being overrun. Nevertheless, each of the conflicts eventually ended in a loss for the Maori and in 1863 another 16,000km² of Maori land was confiscated, ostensibly as a punishment.

Why did it happen?
When the first white settlers arrived in New Zealand, around 1810, it wasn’t yet a British colony. The shanty town that grew up in Kororāreka, in the north, was a lawless place consisting mostly of grog shops and brothels. The Maoris were already involved in an endless series of intertribal wars, but the introduction of the musket escalated these conflicts dramatically.

Eventually the country became so unstable that Britain decided to formally annex New Zealand. The first Consul, Captain William Hobson negotiated the treaty of Waitangi with the Maori chiefs, to place them under British sovereignty and require them to sell land to the British Government only.

Although the treaty didn’t require the Maori to sell, in practice governors and private companies often attempted to pressure them by force. A nationalist movement, called the Kingitanga emerged in the 1850s to oppose the sale of tribal land.

Who was involved?

Hone Heke
c.1807/1808 – 7 August 1850
The chief of the Ngāpuhi tribe defiantly chopped down the British flagpole at Maiki Hill three times during the Flagstaff War.

Governor Robert FitzRoy
5 July 1805 - 30 April 1865
He condemned initial illegal land purchases made by the New Zealand Company, but lacked the resources to bring order.

Riwha Titokowaru
c.1823/hyphen.uc1888
A Maori leader who constructed the strongest ‘pā’ fortress ever built in New Zealand but later worked for peace.
Awakened in her Paris prison cell, Mata Hari pulled on her stockings, high-heeled slippers, long black velvet cloak and announced, “I am ready.” She cut a striking figure, a woman who moved with the cool confidence of one accustomed to admiring glances. To a passerby, she could have been on her way to just another performance, but this would be her last. Flanked by an army officer, her lawyer and two nuns, she was escorted to meet the firing squad.

It was not quite 6am when the car stopped and Mata Hari stepped out, pulling her coat tight to keep out the chill autumnal air. She glanced at the 13 soldiers with what one eyewitness described as “disdain”, and calmly walked towards a large wooden stake in front of a hummock of earth that would provide a backdrop for any stray bullets.

When she was offered the customary blindfold, she asked, “Must I wear that?” “If Madame prefers not, it makes no difference,” came the officer’s reply. Mata also refused the cord to bind her hands to the stake. Head held high, she faced her executioners as a man’s voice shattered the morning stillness. In the next instant the soldiers raised their rifles, each one gazing down the barrel at the breast of the women a few yards away. Their officer stood to the side, just in their eye-line, his sword hovering in the air.

Forty-one years earlier, Margaretha ‘Gretha’ Geertruida Zelle had been born to a wealthy family in Holland, the only daughter among four children. She grew up resourceful and confident, learning much from the observation of her brothers and her successful father. But not long into her adolescence, Gretha’s idyll collapsed when her father’s speculation in oil shares left them bankrupt. He walked out on the family...
soon afterwards his wife died and Gretha was sent to live with distant relatives. The decade that followed was dogged by despair. Perhaps in search of a surrogate father, she married a man twice her age, a hard-drinking and abusive officer in the East Indies army, and bore him two children. The family sailed to the Dutch East Indies where they lived in military garrisons, but it’s thought that her husband was so disliked by the locals that a maid poisoned the children. The boy died and the girl was badly harmed.

Gretha divorced her husband in 1902 but he refused to pay his ex-wife any maintenance money, so, unable to feed her young daughter, she had no choice but to send the child to live with her father in Holland. Not willing to give up hope, Gretha moved to Paris to try and earn enough money to take back her daughter, but there were few jobs for young women in the French capital. For a while, Gretha scraped a meagre living giving piano lessons and teaching German, but she was soon obliged to accept less respectable work, first as an artist’s nude model and then as an exotic dancer. “Don’t think that I’m bad at heart,” she wrote to an acquaintance. “I have done it only out of poverty.” It wasn’t long, however, until she realised that she had a talent for dancing. She also had looks, physique and grace, not to mention a gift for invention. Trading on her olive complexion and her years in the Dutch East Indies, she styled herself as an exotic dancer of Indian extraction.

To complete the makeover, Gretha took the stage name Mata Hari, an Indonesian expression meaning ‘eye of dawn.’

Soon she was dancing in Paris, Berlin and Vienna, her photograph splashed across newspapers around the world. In an interview with the New York Daily Tribune in 1905, she spun one lie after another, telling the paper she was born in India to a Javanese mother and had married a Scottish baronet at the age of 15. Mata Hari told the truth in describing the marriage as unhappy, though, but embellished when asked about her art: “I can dance the sacred dances of India,” she said, “which were taught me by my mother, who belonged to the dominant caste of the Hindoo [sic] community.”

Describing Mata Hari as ‘exceedingly muscular... lithe and agile’, the newspaper furnished its readers with a brief account of her act: “The dance begins in slow rhythms, and gradually becomes highly impassioned. The costume is purely Indian, disclosing the skin, which is profusely ornamented with jewels and slender gold chains. The feet are bare and in her improvisations... she often works herself up into a pitch of excitement and frenzy.”

A decade after this breathless description, her career was over. The originality of her act had long since faded, its success spawning a series of imitators who, even if they lacked Mata Hari’s charisma, could still capture the allure of the dance. Nonetheless, she had enjoyed a good run, performing for private audiences in European cities and crossing the paths of rich and influential men. By the outbreak of war in 1914 and her 38th birthday, she had managed to morph from dancer to courtesan.

She was fortunate that, as a Dutch national, she could take advantage of the country’s neutrality to travel freely across Europe, reputedly taking the opportunity to visit her many lovers. Such a position made her an attractive proposition for both German and French intelligence services. The first approach was made in the summer of 1916 by Captain Georges Ladoux of France’s Deuxième Bureau, who Mata described as “tall and fat”. He offered her one million francs in return for information on Crown Prince Wilhelm, the son of the German Kaiser and a man for whom she had danced before the war.

Money wasn’t the only incentive for Mata to accept the offer; her favourite lover, a Russian
Espionage has been a military weapon for at least 1,000 years. It was said that King Harold employed spies during his short-lived reign as king of England but it wasn’t for another 600 years until intelligence became an organised branch of a monarch’s army. The man responsible was John Thurloe, the spymaster for Oliver Cromwell in the years after King Charles I and his forces had been defeated in the Civil War. Thurloe planted spies in the most unlikely of places, including the mathematical genius John Wallis, who became arguably the world’s first code-breaker, deciphering messages sent between Royalist dissidents.

If some spies relied on brains, others deployed bravado or beauty. In the American Civil War, Rose O’Neal Greenhow spied for the Rebel Confederates, using her charm and good looks to extract information from Union officers. Working for the other side was a Welshman called Pryce Lewis, who dressed as an English nobleman and toured the rebel states in a luxurious carriage, fooling Confederate officers over a glass of port into divulging information to the sympathetic Briton. One of Lewis’s fellow Union spies was an Englishman called Daniel Webster; he was caught by the Rebels in 1862 and hanged. Execution has been the fate of many spies caught behind enemy lines, although the Hague Regulations of 1907 state that: “A spy taken in the act shall not be punished without previous trial.”

Of the 31 German agents brought to trial in Britain in World War I, 12 were executed, with all but one of the unfortunate spies shot at the Tower of London. With the technological advances of the 20th century, spying grew ever more sophisticated but the punishments remained the same – when Soviet general Dmitri Polyakov was caught spying for the USA in 1988, he was subsequently executed.

If Gretha’s invention of Mata Hari enticed some of the wealthiest and most powerful people in Europe, the fate of Mata Hari led to her subsequent arrest in France and few in Britain had much sympathy for her. So the death of Mata Hari evened the score in British eyes.

Britain’s security service sealed the fate of Mata Hari. Britain’s first Secret Service Bureau was established in 1909 and following the outbreak of World War I, had split into Directorate of Military Intelligence Section 5 (MI5) and Military Intelligence, Section 6 (MI6). Head of MI5 was Captain Vernon Kell, and he and his team of agents pursued the many German spies who were operating in Britain. In total they captured 65 of the 120 agents sent to the UK by Germany and little important intelligence was sent back to Berlin. Such was the extent of MI5’s counter-espionage work during WWI that their staff increased to over 800 agents, several of whom were women. MI5’s suspicions about Mata Hari led to her subsequent arrest in France and few in Britain had much sympathy for her. Germany had shot a British nurse in 1915. Edith Cavell, for treason, so the death of Mata Hari evened the score in British eyes.

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fighter pilot called Vadim Maslov, had recently been shot down, and was recovering in a French military hospital. Spy for us, posited Captain Ladoux, and access to Maslov will be arranged. Within a few weeks Mata was in Madrid, in the company of the German military attaché, Major Arnold Kalle, requesting a private audience with the Crown Prince. It was during this time that suspicions began to surface about exactly where Mata's loyalties lay.

She had first come to the attention of Britain's intelligence services, the recently formed MI5, in November 1915 when her ship from Holland docked at Tilbury. She was searched and questioned, and although nothing incriminating was found by the authorities, a letter was sent to MI5 declaring: “She is regarded by police and military to be not above suspicion and her subsequent movements should be watched.” When Mata returned to England the following year, she was interrogated for three days by MI5 and although she said she was in the pay of the French secret service, her "contradictory statements" led the British to put her on a boat to Spain with a message circulated that "should she again return to the United Kingdom she was to be detained."

While the British communicated their suspicions to their French counterparts that perhaps the dancer was not all she seemed, she arrived in Madrid and went straight to the German Embassy. By now the Germans were also harbouring doubts and a trap was set for her, into which she fell, passing some false information about submarines that had been fed to her by Major Kalle on to Captain Ladoux. When Kalle learned of Mata's deceit, he radioed Berlin that their spy, code-named H-21, was a double agent. The coded message was intercepted by a French listening station in the Eiffel Tower, and subsequently decoded by British cryptographers. An English town where the first 'tanks' were being developed was soon revealed to be the hideout of invisible ink that Captain Ladoux claimed had been discovered in her hotel room, Mata Hari said it was nothing of the sort and was actually part of her make-up.

The British and American press joined in the farrago, claiming the woman on trial was indeed one of the war's most dangerous spies. According to the New York World, she "spent some time in an English town where the first 'tanks' were being made," and subsequently had passed on crucial information to the Germans about their design, "resulting in the enemy rushing work on a special gas to combat their operations." It was nonsense.

In truth, Mata might have passed on inconsequential gossip about life in France to the Germans but she was guilty of nothing more than that. MI5 described her in its report as a "demi-monde", a harlot, and in a telegram to Major Anson of MI5, a member of the British secret service, her "contradictory statements" led to her by MI5 declaring: "She is regarded by police and military to be not above suspicion and her subsequent movements should be watched." When Mata returned to England the following year, she was interrogated for three days by MI5 and although she said she was in the pay of the French secret service, her "contradictory statements" led the British to put her on a boat to Spain with a message circulated that "should she again return to the United Kingdom she was to be detained."

The evidence against her was weak. She admitted taking money from the Germans but denied that she had divulged classified information, ridiculing suggestions she was indirectly responsible for the deaths of 50,000 French soldiers. As for the phial of invisible ink that Captain Ladoux claimed had been discovered in her hotel room, Mata Hari said it was nothing of the sort and was actually part of her make-up.

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Mission in Paris wrote: "Captain Ladoux, who had the case in hand, tells me that they found nothing incriminating among her effects and nothing to show that she had been in any way connected with espionage in England. During her interrogation she divulged nothing." Yet after a trial that lasted just two days, the dancer was found guilty and sentenced to death. "C'est impossible!" she reportedly cried, when informed of the verdict.

What Mata didn't know was that France needed a victim. The war was going badly, and a major offensive on the Aisne in April had failed, prompting widespread mutinies among soldiers. It would strike a further blow to the nation's morale if the notorious spy Mata Hari was found 'not guilty'. She had to die, if only for the sake of morale if the notorious spy Mata Hari was found

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British reporter Henry Wales was one of the few journalists present at the execution of Mata Hari on 15 October 1917. He couldn't help but marvel at her composure as she stood at the stake, waiting for death. "She did not die as actors and moving picture stars would have us believe that people die when they are shot," he wrote. "She did not throw up her hands nor did she plunge straight forward or straight back. Instead she seemed to collapse. Slowly, inertly, she settled to her knees, her head up always, and without the slightest change of expression on her face."

Margaretha Geertruida Zelle's life was over. Abandoned by her father, abused by her husband and exploited by three intelligence agencies, she went to her death with dignity and courage. The woman who had played so many parts over the years saved her greatest performance till last.

The last photo taken of Mata Hari before she was executed by firing squad in 1917

An inaccurate depiction of Mata Hari's execution from a 1920 film

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

World War I was one of the first conflicts where technology was used to spy on the enemy, and both sides came up with some ingenious ruses to outsmart their adversary.

**Bird's eye view**
A German doctor invented 'pigeon cam' in 1908, creating a harness and breastplate to secure the camera to the pigeon. During WWI pigeons flew over British lines and the camera would take photographs using a pneumatic system time delay.

**Tree trickery**
Observation post trees were used by Germany and Britain on the Western Front to spy on each other. Built using iron and canvas, the hollow tree stumps could accommodate a man whose job it was to observe enemy activity during the day and report back at night.

**Naughty 40**
Room 40 was the name given to the team of British code-breakers based in the Admiralty Old Building, who, using a captured German code book, successfully decoded some 15,000 of the enemy's secret communications during WWI.

**Telephone taps**
Germany had a unit of 'Telephone Troops' on the Western Front in WWI, who eavesdropped on British phone conversations by detecting the electrical signals as they went through the ground and amplifying them on high-powered listening sets.

**Vanishing act**
Secret agents of both sides used invisible ink in WWI to pass messages. German spies made their ink using powdered aspirin mixed with pure water, while another reliable recipe was lemon juice and potassium, which would reveal the message when heated.

© Alamy, Getty Images, TopFoto

**MATA HARI: SPY OR SCAPEGOAT?**
The galley, a design of ship dating back to antiquity, and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into the Mediterranean Sea, both met their end at the Battle of Lepanto. The Ottoman invasion of Cyprus in 1570 resulted in the occupation of the island and the slaughter of the defenders of Famagusta, the final Venetian stronghold. The Ottoman Empire, ruled by Sultan Selim II, threatened further westward encroachment. Pope Pius V formed the Holy League to turn back an assault on European Christendom.

Poised to strike westward, the Ottoman fleet and its commander Pasha Ali Monizindade anchored at Lepanto, 230 galleys and 70 faster galiots strong. The Holy League fleet assembled at the Sicilian port of Messina under Don Juan of Austria, the 25-year-old half-brother of King Philip II of Spain, including 206
that prevailing winds would prohibit the formation of a battle line; however, at the critical moment the winds shifted. His warships took stations, those to the left under Venetian commander Agostino Barbarigo, on the right under Gianandrea Doria of Genoa, and in the centre under Don Juan with Sebastiano Venier of Venice and Marcantonio Colonna of Rome in support. Don Alvaro de Bazan, Spanish Marquis of Santa Cruz, commanded the reserve.

As the Ottoman galleys approached, the heavy cannon of the Venetian galleasses lashed the enemy. On the Ottoman right, Mehmed Sirocco's swift galiots sliced between Barbarigo's galleys. The Venetian commander turned sharply, trapping the enemy against the north shoreline of the Gulf of Patras. A wild melee ensued as galleys pulled alongside galleys, troops trading arquebus fire and clouds of arrows. Barbarigo held the line but died with an arrow penetrating his eye. Sirocco also fell.

In the centre, the opposing flagships locked in combat, as the Spanish infantry fought the Ottoman Janissaries. Don Juan suffered a leg wound, but a lead ball through the head killed Ali Pasha. Their commander's death panicked the Turks in the centre.

On the Holy League right, the critical moment was reached as Uluch Ali led Turkish galleys through a gap near Doria's position. The Holy League reserve raced to the rescue. Don Alvaro contained the enemy flanking manoeuvre and supported Gianandrea Doria.

With its last bid for victory thwarted, the Ottoman fleet disintegrated. Only Uluch Ali's command survived with few losses. Over 130 Ottoman vessels were taken and 50 sunk. The Turks lost 30,000 men. Holy League losses, however, totalled 7,500 dead.
**Greatest Battles**

**Holy League Fleet**

**TROOPS 29,000**
**SAILORS 40,000**
**CANNON 1,800**
**WARSHIPS 212**

**DON JUAN OF AUSTRIA**

**LEADER**

Don Juan was a proven military commander on land, experienced beyond his years by Lepanto. 

**Strengths** Don Juan maintained a tenuous coalition and unity of command.

**Weakness** Although a veteran warrior, Don Juan lacked naval combat experience.

**ARQUEBUS**

**KEY WEAPON**

The arquebus was an early muzzleloading smoothbore matchlock firearm.

**Strengths** The arquebus offered firepower, sometimes concentrated, against somewhat distant enemies.

**Weakness** The arquebus was cumbersome to operate, particularly at close range.

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**Dawn of battle**

As the sun rises on the morning of 7 October 1571, the Holy League fleet under 25-year-old Don Juan of Austria sails along the western coastline of Greece and glides eastward toward the Gulf of Patras. Soon, the vast fleet of the Ottoman Empire comes into view, sailing from its anchorage at Lepanto. Priests have provided ritual absolution and led rosary prayers aboard the galleys of the Holy League fleet.

**Deploying for the engagement**

Don Juan of Austria, illegitimate son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and half-brother of Spanish King Philip II, pushes his heavily armed galleasses forward to disrupt the Ottoman vanguard. Don Juan recalls the words of Pope Pius V: “The Turks, swollen by their victories, will wish to take on our fleet… God will give us victory. Charles V gave you life. I will give you honour and greatness. Go, seek them out!”

**Wind from the east**

Pasha Ali Monizindade, commanding the Ottoman Turkish fleet, arranges his warships in a great crescent formation, but the wind shifts in favour of the Holy League fleet. Compelled to drop their sails, the Turks exhort oarsmen to pull against the wind as they approach the enemy. Although his galleys outnumber the Holy League, Ali Pasha is significantly outgunned. His galleys mount fewer than 800 cannon, while the Christian array have more than 1,800.

**Battle commences**

Around noon, the opposing fleets collide. In the centre, the cannon of Venetian galleasses, deployed forward of the main Holy League dispositions, sink at least two Turkish galleys. On advice of Gianandrea Doria, Don Juan has ordered all bow spars removed from Holy League galleys. These would be used to ram enemy vessels. Their removal allows Holy League cannon to depress lower, inflicting damage on enemy galleys below the waterline.

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**HOLY LEAGUE INFANTRYMEN**

**KEY UNIT**

The infantrymen aboard the Holy League vessels at Lepanto performed admirably, particularly elite Spanish arquebusiers aboard Don Juan’s flagship.

**Strengths** Holy League infantry demonstrated expertise with the muzzleloading arquebus firearm.

**Weakness** On unstable shipboard platforms, infantrymen were vulnerable to Ottoman archers.

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The galley’s last hurrah

Ushering in the age of sail, the last major naval battle between galleys and one of the largest naval battles in history ends as remnants of the Ottoman fleet withdraw.

Timely arrival of Don Alvaro

The Holy League reserve, 35 galleys under Spain’s Don Alvaro de Bazan, holds off Uluch Ali’s flanking assault on the centre and then bolsters Doria to blunt the Ottoman threat.

Don Juan versus Pasha Ali

The flagships of Don Juan and Pasha Ali become hotly engaged. Ali’s Sultana rams Don Juan’s Real. Spanish infantrymen, or arquebusiers, pour deadly fire into the elite Ottoman Janissaries. Spanish troops board Sultana twice but are thrown back in hand-to-hand fighting. Fired from an arquebus, a lead ball kills Pasha Ali, whose head is severed from his lifeless body and placed on a pike. Terrified, the Turks in the vicinity panic.

Ali’s desperate rush

As the fighting intensifies and Don Juan is drawn into combat, Giandrea Doria struggles to maintain contact with the centre of the Holy League line. A widening gap invites Uluch Ali to charge into the breach, in an attempt to outflank the Holy League centre and cut off Doria’s right wing.

Deaths of the duellers

Augustin Barbarigo of Venice encourages his men to maintain their line; he learns that Mehmed Sirocco has been killed in the battle but dies a short while later with an Ottoman arrow lodged in his eye. Inspired by their leader’s bold sacrifice, the Venetians prevail. The enemy attack is shattered.

Corsairs versus Venetians

Swift Ottoman galiots sweep between the galleys under the command of Augustin Barbarigo on the left flank of the Holy League fleet. Followed by galleys under Mehmed Sirocco, they disrupt the defences; however, Barbarigo skillfully turns into the threat, trapping numerous Turkish vessels against the Greek shoreline, where they are destroyed in detail.

Pasha Ali Monizindeh

Leader

Killed at the Battle of Lepanto, Ali Pasha also lost the ‘Grand banner of the Caliphs,’ a treasured Islamic flag.

Strengths

Bold and daring. Ali Pasha was confident, inspiring his forces.

Weakness

Impetuous Ali Pasha, a poor tactician, lost force cohesion at Lepanto.

Janissaries

Key unit

Elite infantrymen of the Ottoman Empire, the Janissaries were originally formed as the sultan’s bodyguard or household troops.

Strengths

Willing to forfeit their lives, Janissaries were particularly effective shock troops.

Weakness

Early Janissaries were expert archers but were also vulnerable to enemy gunfire.

Ottoman bow and arrow

Key weapon

Although Ottoman infantrymen carried firearms at Lepanto, many archers were also present.

Strengths

The sturdy composite bow provided an excellent rate of fire.

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THE BIRTH OF VENICE

How the Venetians became the masters of the Mediterranean and created a trading empire

Written by Edoardo Albert
Venice is not like anywhere else in the world. From its origin as a safe place for refugees, through its dominance as the city of merchant princes and on to its decline as a beautiful mirror to reflect visitors back upon themselves, it has been a place set apart. This was the very reason why people first made their homes on the islands of the Venetian lagoon.

In the dangerous, chaotic centuries after the fall of the western Roman Empire, there was safety on the little islands hidden among twisting waterways. No city is as much a product of its geography as Venice. Set on islets and mud banks in a lagoon, it is sheltered and protected from the Adriatic Sea by a long ribbon of narrow islands. Cut off from mainland Italy by almost impenetrable marshes, Venice provided home and refuge, but at a price. The richest and most powerful people in the Middle Ages were those who owned the most land, as prosperity had long been determined by land ownership. It produced food and supported men, in particular the soldiers required to cement power. But almost all of Venice was water. The danger for the inhabitants was that they had swapped peril for poverty. With no agricultural hinterland and no natural resources other than fish and salt, the Venetians had to trade. This was where their island homes came into their own: having learned the ways of the sea in order to live, they turned mastery of ships to their favour.

The traditional date for the foundation of Venice is 25 March 421, when the first church, San Giacomo, was dedicated on the island of Rialto (now part of what we think of as Venice). For its first centuries, Venice still owed allegiance to a Roman emperor, but one enthroned in Constantinople, and this connection, allied to its position at the top of the Adriatic Sea, was a
major factor in turning the city into the mercantile power it became.
To build houses along the edge of the lagoon required the back-breaking labour of driving wooden pilings deep into the sand and clay. The thousands of trees on which Venice is built had to be transported to the city, most of them carried across the Adriatic Sea from Dalmatia. It was a huge exercise that required the rich as well as the poor to take turns hauling the oars of galleys or driving pile drivers on to heavy logs. Such enterprise went towards creating the fiercely communitarian ethos that was to be the mainstay of Venetian life.

Although Venice came into being as an outpost of the Byzantine Empire, it shook itself free of the political control of the emperors while retaining a flavour and orientation towards the east. By the end of the 11th century, Venice was recognised as an independent state.

With its maritime capability, Venice had played a large part in the Crusades from their beginning. When Outremer, the collection of Crusader states in the Holy Land, was founded in 1099 following the conquest of Jerusalem, Venetian merchants reaped the commercial benefits. With bases in ports such as Acre and shorter routes to eastern commodities, Venetian merchants were able to ship high value, low volume items back to Venice and then sell them on to the kingdoms of Europe, which had developed tastes for these new luxuries. Of all these goods, spices were the most profitable and, being light, easily portable and long-lived, eastern spices were the perfect trade goods.

So when the Crusader states started to fall before the resurgent armies of Islam, the Venetians turned a willing ear to Pope Innocent III’s call for a Fourth Crusade: the recovery of the Holy Land was not only necessary for the souls of the Christian Venetians, but for their profits too. When representatives of the Crusade arrived in the city to ask about boats and shipping, the Venetians listened carefully, especially the Doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo. Dandolo was in his 90s and blind, but his mind was as sharp and clear as glass.

The crusaders wanted ships to transport 33,500 men and 4,500 horses – a huge army. To carry such an army, and to supply it, would require the undivided efforts of all Venice for two years: the first for preparation, the second to carry the army to its destination. Accepting such a contract would mean staking the future of Venice on the outcome. To decide, Dandolo called the whole population to the church of San Marco. Hearing the appeal of the crusaders, the Venetians consented.

The agreement would mark the beginning of the apotheosis of Venice and lead to one of the

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**NOTABLE DATES IN VENICE’S HISTORY**

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<tr>
<td>421</td>
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<td>828</td>
<td>Venetians acquire relics of St Mark.</td>
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worst man-made calamities to strike Medieval Christendom. For when the Crusaders arrived in Venice, they arrived with far fewer men than they had promised, and with much less money than the agreed 94,000 marks. The Venetians had bet their city on the Crusade and it looked as if they were going to lose it.

The leaders of the Crusade were acutely aware - in part because the Venetians made no bones about it - that they had failed to keep their side of the contract. The Venetians had already committed too much to cut the deal; the Crusaders faced disgrace if the crusade should fail before it had even begun. Under the circumstances, a diversion to help the Venetians with some difficulties they had with a rival on the other side of the Adriatic had begun. Under the circumstances, a diversion to help the Venetians with some difficulties they had with a rival on the other side of the Adriatic 

The Crusaders lay siege to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire and the chief bulwark against the advance of the armies of Islam. But in its desperate need for cashflow, the Fourth Crusade became embroiled in the succession struggles of the Empire, installing one emperor on the throne only for him to fail to honour his promises of payment. Camped outside the richest city in Christendom, and with the grievances of the previous 18 months coming to the boil, everything exploded. The Crusaders attacked and sacked Constantinople, ransacking the city of Constantine and Justinian. All except the Venetians. While the Franks and the Germans hacked and spoiled, the Venetians quietly acquired Constantinople’s best for the beautification of their city, most famously the four bronze horses that stood over the Hippodrome of Constantine. Dandolo sent the horses to Venice, where they were put on the loggia above the San Marco entrance.

“The Crusaders faced disgrace if the crusade should fail before it had begun.”

THE VENETIAN WAR GALLEY

For the four centuries of Venetian mastery of the Mediterranean, the war galley was the instrument of Venetian power. Shallow drafted, manoeuvrable, and fast, the war galley enabled the Venetians to dominate the seas of the Eastern Mediterranean. In order to produce the necessary ships, the Republic created the Arsenal, the largest industrial site in Europe before the Industrial Revolution. Surrounded by walls, the Arsenal could produce ships on such a scale and in such a way that was unique for the time, with the ships being floated to each of the different craftsmen in a manner that predated Henry Ford’s production line by centuries.

Life on board

Only the ship’s officers had any protection from the elements, with a tent being erected at the stern. The men on deck had little or no shelter, from rain or sun.

The sharp end

The weapons of a galley were concentrated at the front: a ram and, as the technology developed, cannons were placed there too.

The sails

Venetian galleys had lateen (triangular) sails, which allowed them to tack into the wind, providing greater manoeuvrability than square sails.

The rowers

Uniquely among the Mediterranean seagoing powers, Venetian galleys were usually crewed by free men rather than slaves. This meant their ships were not liable to sudden mutinies during battle and that the rowers could take part in boardings of enemy vessels.
The birth of Venice

THE MERCHANT PRINCES

In the late Middle Ages, Venice became the world's first commercial superpower, establishing a trading empire through the Mediterranean.

Trade was central to Venetian life. Everything was done for the honour and profit of the Republic - and if it came down to a choice, profit won every time. Living in a lagoon with virtually no natural resources, the Venetians had no choice but to rely on their wit and their skills if they were to earn their living amid the competing, often violent, kingdoms that surrounded the Mediterranean. Such was their success in doing so that other peoples looked on them with amazement and considerable suspicion. But the Venetians did not care, so long as it brought honour and profit to their city.

"Everything was done for the honour and profit of the Republic"

Merchants
Merchants were at the top of Venetian society, rather than warriors or landowners.

Exchange
To cope with the risks of long-distance trade, Venetian bankers virtually invented modern banking.
The birth of Venice

The Venetian ducat became a byword for fiduciary trust, containing 99.47% gold.

Spices
Spices were the perfect import goods for Venetian merchants: high value, long lasting and low volume.

Gondoliers
They paddled standing up and transported a variety of goods between different stalls.

Island hopping
Crete and the islands of the Aegean Sea were vital bases and ports for Venetian galleys.

Silk Road treasures
The Pax Mongolica of the 13th and 14th centuries opened the Silk Road to the east to Venetian and Genoese merchants.

Long distance trade
Venetian and Genoese merchants connected the kingdoms of the north to the Middle East and the Far East.

The ducat
The Venetian ducat became a byword for fiduciary trust, containing 99.47% gold.

Retailers
Venetian retailers sold goods in small amounts in the streets of urban centres.
THE BIRTH OF VENICE

In 828, two Venetian merchants, Buono of Malamocco and Rustico of Torcello, were in Alexandria doing business. Alexandria had been conquered by Muslim armies and in 828 it was under the control of the Abbasids. Speaking to the priests of the church of St Mark in Alexandria, Buono and Rustico learned that the priests feared for the safety of the relics of the saint that they kept in the church, and indeed their own safety under the Abbasids. Hearing this, the Venetians offered the priests safe passage back to Venice - at the price of bringing the body of St Mark too. The priests agreed and, taking the body from its sarcophagus and replacing it with a less eminent corpse, they put the saint's remains in a chest, carefully covering the body with a layer of salt pork and cabbage, before loading the chest onto the Venetian ship. Before setting sail, Muslim customs officials came on board to inspect the cargo but, seeing the pork, they recoiled in horror without digging any deeper. Safely out to sea, the saint's body was taken from the chest and placed in honour on deck, surrounded by thuribles and candles. And so St Mark came to Venice, where he swiftly supplanted the city's previous patron, St Theodore, in the affection and devotion of Venetians. Mark had arrived by sea and it was to the sea that Venice looked for its fortune; it was a fortuitous, or providential, arrival.

ST MARK COMES TO VENICE

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"Venice had become beautiful by the wealth it earned from trade"
The birth of Venice

The Original City of Culture

Venice has inspired more great art than any other city in the world; here are some of the best

A Regatta on the Grand Canal by Canaletto

A Venetian himself, Giovanni Antonio Canal, or Canaletto as he is better known, made his name by painting views of his city that were marketed to British gentry making the Grand Tour. When war stopped visitors coming to Italy, Canaletto moved to England, painting views of the Thames among other places.

Death in Venice by Thomas Mann

Venice, that shifting, phantasmagorical city, provokes infatuations, and Thomas Mann’s story explores just such an infatuation, when an aged writer is transfixed by the sight of a beautiful boy and, doomed by unvoiced love, follows him through the twisting alleys.

Don’t Look Now, directed by Nicolas Roeg

This 1973 film starring Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie is widely regarded a classic. In it, a couple grieving for the loss of their daughter to drowning, visit Venice where they meet a psychic who claims to be able to see their daughter.

Antonio Vivaldi

For 30 years, Vivaldi was the master of violin at an orphanage, the Ospedale della Pietà, in Venice. It supported children who had been orphaned or abandoned. Vivaldi composed most of his major works at the Ospedale, including the Four Seasons.

Venetian Architecture

The architecture is classed as Venetian Gothic, which combines the Gothic lancet arch with Byzantine and Islamic influences. It originated in the 14th century.
What if... Constantinople hadn’t fallen to the Turks in 1453?

How the world would have looked if this Christian city hadn’t finally been defeated

Written by Thomas F Madden

On 29 May 1453 Sultan Mehmed II, the leader of the Ottoman Empire, achieved the dream of generations of Muslim leaders by conquering Constantinople, once the greatest Christian city in the world. The last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI, died fighting to defend his city against the Turks. Mehmed followed up his victory by waging vigorous wars against Christian powers in the Balkans and the Aegean, finally extending his empire to the Adriatic Sea. In 1481 he began his invasion of Italy at Otranto, but died before he could carry it out. But what would have happened if a war fleet dispatched from Venice to defend Constantinople had not been delayed, but had instead made it in time to save the city?

With the Venetian fleet occupying Constantinople’s secure harbour, Mehmed is unable to bring his own vessels overland into those waters, which allows the resupplied defenders to focus their efforts on the land walls. After four months of failure, Mehmed is forced to retreat to his capital at Edirne. In retaliation, he declares war against Venice in April 1454, focusing his attacks on Venetian territories in the Peloponnese. The Venetian commander, Cristoforo Moro, defeats the Turks at the Battle of Negroponte in June 1455. Six months later, a revolt of Anatolian beyliks forces Mehmed to leave Greece, along with much of his army. In 1456 Moro captures the island of Lesbos and the port city of Piraeus, and on 1 May, Venetian and Greek forces conquer Athens. Meanwhile, the Genoese at Galata (just north of Constantinople) manage to capture Mehmed’s castle of Rumeli Hisari on the Bosphorus. Because of this, the sultan is unable to make another attack on Constantinople.

After Mehmed’s death in 1481 his two sons, Bayezid and Cem, fight a decade-long civil war for control of the empire. In the end, they divide it, with the former taking the European territories and the latter the Asian. Emperor Manuel III of Constantinople exploits the division, winning concessions from both sultans, but little territory.

In April 1512, Selim I becomes sultan in the West after poisoning his father and brother. He immediately invades Anatolia. The war ends one year later with the execution of Cem and the reunification of the Ottoman Empire under Selim. Given the sultan’s extraordinary power and reputation for cruelty, the Genoese give him Rumeli Hisari in exchange for a promise to leave the Genoese colony in Galata unharmed.

Over the next two years Selim brings land and sea forces to Constantinople, preparing for another siege. It begins in March 1515 and ends with the fall of the city on 15 May. The last emperor, Constantine XII, flees the city on a Venetian galley. He is later given an apartment in the papal residence in Rome, where he sets up a short-lived residence. With the Protestant Reformation fizzled out, limited to the last of the Protestant leaders in Germany. Relations between Charles and Pope Clement VII thus remained cordial. This gives Clement the freedom he needs to respond favourably in 1527 when Henry VIII of England requests an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. The Protestant Reformation is fizzled out, limited to a few isolated pockets in Switzerland and Scotland.

How would it be different?

- **A new castle on the Bosphorus**
  - Sultan Mehmed II builds Rumeli Hisar, a massive fortification that commands the Bosphorus strait and the heights just north of Constantinople. More than 100,000 soldiers begin their march to Constantinople. **April 1452**

- **Help on the way**
  - The Senate in Venice sends a squadron of war vessels under the command of Captain General Giacomo Loredan to Constantinople to assist with its defence. In addition, they send envoys to the courts of Europe urging that reinforcements be sent to support the threatened city. **February 1453**

- **The Turks retreat, again**
  - The third major Turkish siege of Constantinople fails after Venetian vessels cut off supplies to the besiegers making their way from the north. Mehmed II retreats to his capital at Edirne, where he plots his revenge on Venice. **30 June 1453**

- **Venetian-Turkish War**
  - Mehmed II’s war against Venetian holdings in the Peloponnese flounders when he is forced to divert forces to Anatolia to put down a revolt of Turkish beyliks, semi-independent lords, who sense the sultan’s plans for Europe are unravelling. **April-May 1454**
What if… Constantinople hadn’t fallen to the Turks in 1453?

Brother against brother
Beyazid claims the throne. His brother, Cem, contests the claim leading to a bloody civil war. At the Peace of Konya in September 1491 the two agree to divide the empire, with Beyazid ruling the European side and Cem ruling Asia. 1481-1491

Ottoman Empire reunited
Sultan Selim I defeats his uncle, Cem, at the Battle of Smyrna. Cem delivers control of the Asian territories to Selim on the promise that he can live out his days under house arrest in Constantinople. That evening he is executed. 10 April 1513

The fall of Constantinople
With over 100,000 troops and powerful navy, Selim attacks Constantinople. When the land walls crumble on 15 May the few defenders flee to a Venetian fleet. The last emperor, Constantine XII, escapes. 12 March – 15 May 1515

A heretic is sent to the flames
With no threat to his eastern borders, Emperor Charles V comes to the Diet of Worms determined to end the Lutheran movement in Saxony. When Martin Luther refuses to recant what he proclaimed in his pamphlets he is arrested, tried, found guilty of heresy, and burned at the stake. 21 April 1521

The Byzantines, being driven back by the Ottomans, retreat to the Venetian fleet occupying the Bosphorus
In the currently divided America of Donald Trump, fond memories of Ronald Reagan are one of the only things on which Democrats and Republicans agree. Reagan’s tenure from 1981 to 1989 is often recalled as an era of renewed optimism, a revived economy, and a favourable end game of the Cold War.

Yet during his presidency, Reagan was a divisive and often unpopular public figure, sometimes criticised as reckless, ignorant and, as ‘Ronnie Raygun’, posing a danger to global security.

Born in the small town of Tampico, Illinois, in 1911, Reagan began his career as a sports radio announcer before becoming a Hollywood actor. Although he starred in several films, he was even more successful off-screen. He became a union representative for the Screen Actors Guild, and then, in 1947, he became president of the guild. Having begun as a Democrat – his first wife, actress Jane Wyman, divorced him in part because she was a Republican and they argued over politics – he became a fervent anti-communist, even supplying various lists of suspect actors to the FBI.

In 1962, then married to actress Nancy Davis, Reagan became a Republican. Four years later, he won the governorship of California with a platform of balancing the budget and a tough line on crime. In his 1980 campaign, the same recipe won him the first of two terms in the White House. He would be remembered for leading the United States during a time of great international transition.

“Although he starred in several films, he was even more successful off-screen”
On 30 March 1981, Reagan was shot in the chest outside the Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. His attacker, John Hinckley Jr, shot the president because he wanted to impress the actress Jodie Foster, with whom he was obsessed. Reagan returned to work after 13 days in hospital.

Reagan’s 1980 campaign slogan was ‘Are you better off than you were four years ago?’ Few remember it now. But another 1980 campaign slogan, ‘Make America great again’, lived on in both Bill Clinton and Donald Trump’s presidential campaigns.
On 12 June 1987, Reagan went to West Berlin and challenged the Soviet Union to tear down the Berlin Wall. Today, this speech is seen as a pivotal moment, anticipating the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

Reagan came to power just over a year after Margaret Thatcher. Both were committed to reviving their own nation’s economy, and to winning the Cold War. Their alliance was not always smooth though – in 1982, Reagan was slow to support Britain in the Falklands War.
After the stagnant 1970s, the US economy took off again under Reagan. He may have been the first president to go from the screen to the Oval Office, but he was not the last. Here, Reagan welcomes a young Donald Trump to the White House in 1987.

Reagan was a keen horseman. Studio publicity shots from the 1940s show him riding English-style, but when he entered politics, he only allowed himself to be photographed on a Western saddle, and often wearing a cowboy hat. Here, he rides English-style again, with Queen Elizabeth II.
The curse of haemophilia  ●  King George VI ●  Hitler's puppet duke

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How to make...
MACONOCHIE RATIONS

WW1 TRENCH FOOD THE WESTERN FRONT, 1914-1918

Did you know?
At the beginning of the war, many men in the trenches who came from poorer families ate better than they would have done at home.

Feeding the British Army in the trenches of the Western Front was no mean feat, and it was a triumph that not a single soldier starved during the war. However, feeding thousands came with its challenges and the regiment cooks received no training. Rations were also given to each soldier. The Maconochie company of Scotland produced a tinned stew of the same name, which became one of the most notorious WWI Tommy ‘dishes’.

True Maconochie was said to be just about edible warmed up, but a ‘man-killer’ when cold, because the meat was mostly fat in thin gravy, so it would congeal. This slightly modernised recipe is a little more palatable, while still giving you a taste of trench life.

METHOD

01 If you’re using the fresh beef option, cut it up into bite-sized chunks.

02 Roughly chop the potatoes (leave the skin on), onions, carrots and drain the canned beans.

03 Put all of the chopped ingredients into a large pan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook until tender. If you’re using the bully beef, just cook the vegetables at this stage.

04 In a frying pan, warm up the fat on a medium heat. Drain all the boiled ingredients and then tip them and the beans into the frying pan.

05 If you’ve opted for bully beef, now’s the time to open the can and add it to the pan. Tins of Fray Bentos corned beef were very common in ration packs. Soldiers were encouraged to pierce the tin first – if it made a hissing sound then the beef was bad.

06 Prepare the beef stock and whisk in the flour until smooth. Then pour all of this into the frying pan, and stir through.

07 Keep stirring and cook the stew over a medium heat until the sauce thickens up, then add salt and pepper to taste.

08 Serve up with stale bread (or for a further challenge, in the winter of 1916 there was a shortage of flour, so bread was made with ground turnips instead) or wheat-flour biscuits. The soldiers would normally soften these trench mealtime staples with water before tucking in.

Did you make it? How did it go? ▶️ www.historyanswers.co.uk ▶️ /AllAboutHistory ▶️ @AboutHistoryMag

Ingredients
- 350g fresh beef or 1 can of ‘bully beef’ (corned beef)
- 3 medium waxy potatoes
- 2 carrots
- 2 onions
- 1 can haricot beans (or similar pulse)
- 100ml beef stock
- 1 tbsp lard
- 1 tbsp flour

Did you make it? How did it go?
The Tudor age conjures up many images: mighty monarchs, elaborate clothes, timber-framed houses and the blossoming of English literature. It was a period of rapid change and no other location defines the era quite so vividly as London. During the 16th century it was by far England’s largest city and was the central hub of cultural and political life.

Stephen Porter, who is an acknowledged expert on the Tudor capital, has assembled this new work that aims to cover all aspects of London life. In some ways this follows a familiar path featuring the famous and magnificent such as Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, Thomas Cromwell, Walter Raleigh and William Shakespeare.

On the other hand the book is equally peppered with characters from all sections of the population including rich merchants, great artists, the poor and criminals. What is especially striking is how cosmopolitan London was during this period with flourishing foreign communities from across Europe who greatly contributed to the capital’s economy and cultural diversity.

Porter’s work also amply demonstrates that London was a raucous society in a state of flux and suffered from social upheavals such as the English Reformation and epidemics of deadly diseases such as sweating sickness and the plague. Despite these problems urban life teemed with activity and the arts in particular thrived. This is vividly illustrated in a very literal sense as Porter has included fine examples of the work of Hans Holbein the Younger. Holbein was one of the finest portraitists of the 16th century and although he is most famous for his paintings of the English nobility, there are evocative sketches in the book of unknown people, the anonymous Londoners who nevertheless represented the vast majority of the population. Through the gaze of this “Tudor photographer”, the reader is given an immediate portal into a lost world that is then backed up by interesting facts.

However, it could be argued that there is an overabundance of works relating to the period. It is hard to escape the cloud of subject repetition and a general sense of “Tudor saturation” in the current market. It is easy to see the appeal of the period with its upheavals and dramatic developments.

But what makes this period more important than the arguably cataclysmic events of the 17th century, with its civil wars and political revolutions, not to mention the 1665 plague and the Great Fire of London? It is perhaps too large a question to answer and may just be a matter of taste.

Nevertheless, Porter’s work on its own merits is intricately researched and is a good reference for many of modern London’s attractions, such as the Tower of London and Hampton Court. Thanks to the mass of detail, the city rises before the reader as a distinct character in its own right with its squashed streets and large houses, the squalid living alongside the opulent, and all bound by the stench and threat of disease.

“Porter’s work amply demonstrates that London was a raucous society in a state of flux.”
The Channel Islands were the only British territory under Nazi occupation during World War Two. Christopher Menaul’s Jersey-set film is the story of Louisa Gould (Jenny Seagrove) and her resistance against the Wehrmacht stationed on the island. Taking in an escaped Soviet POW (Julian Kostov) eventually cost Mrs Gould her life – she died in the gas chambers at Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1945, but she was posthumously recognised for her bravery and defiance. Her brother, too, Harold Le Druillenec, who survived Bergen-Belsen, received France’s Medaille de la Resistance.

Another Mother’s Son is a lousy, mawkish title for this occasionally gripping and moving drama. While its production values are clearly limited and the dialogue can be a bit too on the nose, where the film shines is in the portrayal of Jersey’s curious situation. Of zero strategic importance to the Nazis, they used the Channel Islands primarily as propaganda against the British, whose turf they were technically on. Neither does Menaul’s film skirt around community tensions – some Jersey women who courted soldiers were vilified as ‘Jerry Bags’ and it’s made clear Mrs Gould was reported by her neighbours.

Interestingly, a scene that smacks of narrative contrivance, where Louisa and Harold reunite briefly at a railway station in northern France, actually occurred in real life. Truth is often stranger than fiction.

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HISTORY'S PEOPLE
Explore the stories of individuals, from devious dictators to innovative inventors

Author Margaret MacMillan
Publisher Profile Books
Price £8.99
Released Out now

History is full of iconic personalities and it’s these characters that have moulded the world we live in. At least that’s the view of acclaimed author Margaret MacMillan. History's People investigates the lives of individuals rather than events, groups or entire civilisations. The book is packed full of alternate history and digs deep into key turning points. Would Al Gore have gone to war with Iraq if he’d been president rather than George W Bush? Would Germany have been unified if it weren’t for Bismarck?

MacMillan also sheds light on important yet lesser-known figures. There's Michel de Montaigne, a French philosopher who was the first to question what it is to be human, and William Lyon Mackenzie King, a relatively unknown but influential Canadian politician. The chapters are split into different categories such as 'Hubris', which focuses on political leaders and dictators, and 'Daring' that dissects military minds. There's a lot to like, whether you're interested in how the writings of Karl Marx changed politics, the importance of Mikhail Gorbachev in preventing nuclear war or a trip inside the minds of Churchill, Hitler and Napoleon.

MacMillan's accessible yet thought-provoking writing helps the reader comprehend the significance of an individual's actions or thought processes. It also helps question what would have happened if these figures didn't exist or acted differently. As 2016 was the year in which the international community got to know the personalities of the likes of Donald Trump, so History's People may help provide an insight into why today's political figures think and act like they do.

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, BOMB
A giddy card game with an undercurrent of totalitarianism

Illustrator Mads Berg
Publisher Laurence King
Price £8.99
Released Out Now

As the name suggests, this is a perennial playground hand-wagging favourite. It's a game of two players, so it's statistically probable that one player could wind up with all four 'bombs' and win by default, but more likely you'll simply be putting down cards for about 17 hours as the only way of neutralising a 'bomb'. You could wind up with all four 'bombs', but more likely you'll simply be putting down cards for about 17 hours as the only way of neutralising a 'bomb'. It may not sound like it, but we gave it a bash and it was surprisingly robust, which is quite surprising if you do end up slamming your fists down like Mussolini and happen to knock it around. The box is quite robust, which is surprisingly useful if you do end up slamming your fists down like Mussolini and happen to knock it around.
THE TRENCH COOKBOOK 1917
Western Front recipes, from bully beef stew to trench tea

Author Hannah Holman Publisher Amberley
Price £9.99 Released Out now

With a collection of recipes sourced directly from the War Office and the Red Cross, this book is perfect for anyone who is keen to find out what Napoleon really meant when he said: “an army marches on its stomach.” With content reprinted from original publications, it’s very easy when reading Hannah Holman’s book, to imagine a military cook in the field kitchen, holding the original well-thumbed pamphlet in their hands – preparing for the momentous task of feeding hundreds of hungry soldiers.

Accompanying the well-known trench-tea and bully beef stew (the war truly was powered by spam, and you can find an authentic stew recipe on page 89 of this issue to give you a taste of trench delicacies). There are also handy tips for limiting waste as well as concocting nutritious (and imaginative) drinks.

There is much practical advice for creating field kitchens on the march, using emergency utensils (recycling biscuit tins as ovens and tin cans as kettles were common lifesavers) and even a guide to fireless cookery for the times when stealth was of the greatest importance.

With detailed background knowledge to accompany the wartime publications, Holman has served up an appetising read of very unappetising meals. Calves foot jelly, baked rabbit, sea pie and curried mutton show the sheer ingenuity of the cooks on the frontline.

This is the essence of the book – highlighting the inventive foodstuffs and recipes, tips, rations and rationales that went into ensuring that not one British Army soldier starved throughout the Great War. Highly recommended reading for creative chefs, history hounds and the particularly peckish – strong stomachs required.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST: WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR’S SUBJUGATION OF ENGLAND
The tale of a brutal outsider who rode his luck in pursuit of the throne is re-examined, over 950 years later

Author Teresa Cole Publisher Amberley Price £20 Released Out now

With the battle’s 950th anniversary having just passed, readers would be forgiven for expecting author Teresa Cole to start at Hastings. Instead, half of her book concerns what happened before William the Conqueror was even born. She describes particularly well the turbulence of Anglo-Saxon England, with periods of peace under half-forgotten kings like Cnut interspersed with war, famine and multiple treacheries.

England itself was barely a nation so much as an agglomeration of rival kingdoms - Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, Northumbria and the Danelaw - under seemingly constant attack from each other and Scandinavia. As a result, no king sat securely on the English throne. The scene thus set, Cole comes to the conquest - and her argument there is clear. William the Bastard, as he was then called (“though probably not to his face”, she notes wryly), was the least likely of at least half a dozen claimants of the crown. He won it as much by fortune as judgement, and kept it through savagery - seasoned with shrewd negotiations and further luck.

Having seen William’s nasty deeds - mutilating civilians at the siege of Alençon (1051) and harrying the entire north of England into starvation (1069-1070) among them - it’s hard to suppress a cheer when he’s knocked off his horse and stabbed in the hand by his eldest son. Still, even the Conqueror probably deserved a more dignified funeral than he got: his corpulence burst open his stinking coffin, causing even the mourners to flee.

Throughout the book, Cole is a genial host, who nimbly negotiates the stunning complexities of succession and dynastic rivalry across Norway, Denmark, Normandy and England. Did England really benefit from the closer links with Europe? The author challenges traditional views and reassesses the origins and outcomes of the Norman Conquest, using new discoveries that have cast doubt on what we thought we knew about the year that changed history.
**HISTORY ANSWERS**

Send your questions to questions@historyanswers.co.uk

In revolutionary France, your political allegiance was decided by where you chose to sit

**How useful were WWII scrap metal collection campaigns?**

Izzy Murdock

The British government ran a huge scrap metal drive during WWII, which resulted in iron railings being removed from houses, parks and churchyards. While much of this scrap was easily recyclable wrought iron, there was also a lot of cast iron. This has a higher carbon content, which makes it more brittle. As little as 26 per cent of the salvaged iron may have been used for the war effort. Left-over cast iron may have been stockpiled or even dumped, but stories of iron being tipped into the Thames estuary to the point where it interfered with the compasses of local ships are almost certainly untrue. The recycled aluminium from the thousands of pots and pans donated by British housewives was used to build aircraft. Downed aircraft were a better source of scrap, and Britain was mostly limited by a shortage of pilots, not Spitfires.

Where did the political terms left and right wing come from?

Aidan Horn

They date back to the National Assembly, formed during the French Revolution in 1789. Supporters of the King sat at the right-hand side of the Assembly President and supporters of the revolution sat to the left.

The terms left and right were used initially as insults by each side and gradually came to be used as shorthand for conservative or socialist political views. In Britain, however, the terms weren’t in common use in the Houses of Parliament until the 1930s, during debates about the Nationalist and Republican factions in the Spanish Civil War.

Throughout the 19th century, the British Whig and Tory parties were both broadly right-wing.

This day in history 2 March

- **Louis V crowned** The last Carolingian King of West Francia is crowned at the age of 20, when his father King Lothair dies suddenly. Louis will only last another year before dying in a hunting accident.
- **Great Fire of Meireki** In a blaze that lasts three days, two-thirds of the Japanese city of Edo (now Tokyo) burns down. The fire was supposedly started by a priest who was burning a cursed kimono.
- **Semaphore debut** In France, the Chappe brothers send the message “If you succeed, you will soon bask in glory” over 16km, by semaphore. Within two years there are 556 semaphore stations across France.
- **International slave trade abolished** President Thomas Jefferson signs a federal law that prohibits the importation of slaves at any US port. Many in Congress declare that this law will mark the end of slavery across the country.

Hollywood star Rita Hayworth donated the steel bumpers from her car to aid the US war effort during WWII
Did Emperor Caligula really make his horse a member of the Senate?

Fern Kelly

No. Caligula was certainly extremely lavish in his spending habits but many of the more extreme stories about him were probably made up by his detractors. The story about his horse, Incitatus, comes from the Roman historian Suetonius, who was writing during the reign of Hadrian – several decades after Caligula’s death. He describes how Caligula provided his horse with a stall of marble, a manger of ivory and a collar of precious stones. Then he adds, “it is also said that he planned to make him consul”. Notice that Suetonius doesn’t say that he actually did make Incitatus a consul, only that he planned to, which is much harder to disprove. Even then, he makes it sound like second-hand gossip. Caligula’s dislike for the Senate is well documented and it’s possible that he might have wanted to promote his horse to the highest electoral office as a way of insulting the senators. But it’s more likely that Suetonius intended this as a satirical joke. In any case, whether or not Caligula ever considered this appointment, he was assassinated after less than four years on the throne, so he never had a chance to put it into practice.

Caligula’s horse was certainly spoilt rotten, but there’s no evidence that it was ever promoted to political office.

When did pancakes become associated with Shrove Tuesday?

Myles Jakeman

Shrove Tuesday falls on the eve of Lent. The word ‘Lent’ comes from the Old English ‘lencten’, meaning spring, and like some other Christian traditions, it was originally a pagan festival. In Slavic countries, the last week of winter is called Maslenitsa and it is traditionally celebrated with pancakes, which represent the sun god Volos. When the Eastern Orthodox Church banned eggs and dairy products for 40 days before Easter, the Maslenitsa feast just before Lent became an opportunity to use up these ingredients.

Discover Marie Antoinette’s journey from startled teen to iconic queen at historyanswers.co.uk

1882
Poet shoots Queen Victoria
Roderick McLean fires a pistol at Queen Victoria’s carriage after one of his poems receives only a curt thank you. Victoria declares, “It is worth being shot at to see how much one is loved”.

1859
Great Slave Auction
…But 52 years later in Savannah Georgia, 436 men, women and children are sold, in the largest slave auction in US history. The sale takes two days and nets $303,850.

1933
King Kong
The film King Kong opens in New York. It has since been ranked as the greatest horror movie of all time. The latest reboot, starring Tom Hiddleston and Samuel L. Jackson, is out this month.

1949
Round the world flight
The B-50 Superfortress bomber Lucky Lady II completes the first non-stop, round the world flight. The flight takes 94 hours and the plane is refuelled in mid-air four times.

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© Alamy
Living up to its name, the film captures Rasputin’s reported allure and charisma. It portrays his influence over the tsarina, who really did desire to heal her son, while avoiding the sexual undertones that stem from the propaganda of the time.

Rasputin’s death is on the whole accurate and dramatic – the man really was that difficult to kill! He is finally ended in a hail of bullets after poisoned refreshments fail to do the job. The assassins were banished from Russia but never brought to trial.

Not enough time is given to the severe socio-economic problems plaguing Russia in this period. Mention is made of the ‘revolutionaries’ and Tsar Nicholas’s ignorance of the country’s social inequality, but less screen time is given to Rasputin’s dramatic rise.

The film depicts Pyotr Stolypin, Russian prime minister and social reformer, being assassinated after the outbreak of World War One in 1914. Stolypin was assassinated in 1911, although the film does rightly portray him as an enemy of Rasputin.

Rasputin was never banished from the imperial court by Tsar Nicholas II, or disowned by Tsarina Alexandra. He would remain a close friend and confidant to the royal couple and their family right up until his death in 1916.

VERDICT: Small errors and omissions aside, this is a solid study of the ‘Mad Monk’s’ final years.
FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

14 February (1-2 pm)
‘Revealing Verulaneum: Community Heritage, Geophysics and the Archaeology of a Roman Town’

21 March (1-2 pm)
‘Talking King Arthur in the Middle Ages’

25 April (1-2 pm)
‘Hands Across Time: Medieval Fingerprints on Wax Seals’

16 May (1-2 pm)
‘The Vulliamy Clockmakers: Two Clocks in the Antiquaries’ Collection’

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