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THE HISTORIAN

The magazine of The Historical Association

The calm before the storm?

The world in 1913

The Historical Association

The voice for history

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China's Wars: Rousing the Dragon 1894-1949

Philip Jowett

Osprey Publishing, 2013, 408pp., £25-00
ISBN 978-1-78200-407-3

This is a richly illustrated work of meticulous detail. Anyone interested in the small detail of the various civil wars and invasions which beset China between 1894 and the moment that Mao Tse-tung secured Communist control of the mainland in 1949 will find this book fascinating. Philip Jowett provides all that one would need to know about the detail of the various campaigns, the chief personalities involved, the scale of the military hardware harnessed and indeed the sourcing of that hardware.

Having said that, more general readers can use this book, with its clear sub-headings, its clear index and its splendid illustrations, to give themselves a clear overview of what happened in this hitherto secretive part of the world, remote from the industrialised West. This will reveal to them that, while severely unpleasant and horrific events were unfolding in the West, a prolonged tragedy of enormous proportions occurred in China, in which huge armies waged extensive bloodthirsty campaigns, almost without ceasing. Because of its strategic interests in the Far East Soviet Russia had expectations of playing a part, especially in Manchuria, and the Japanese saw China as an area for expansion and exploitation, which reached a climax with their declaration of war and invasion in 1937. Their occupation was then superseded by the civil war between Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang and the ultimately victorious Communists.

It is easy for us to deny our own ignorance but this book has reinforced just how ignorant I was of the scale and protracted nature of the suffering imposed on the Chinese population by internal rivalries and external invasion. My only academic encounter with this topic was 'World History 1919 to the present' as my A-level special option and I doubt whether we spent more than three hours on the Chinese element of that course. This is not a retrospective criticism: rather it is a reflection on what perspectives were 50 years ago. Philip Jowett has made a very strong contribution to providing a more secure foundation to my understanding.

Trevor James

Out of Birmingham: George Dixon (1820-98), Father of Free Education

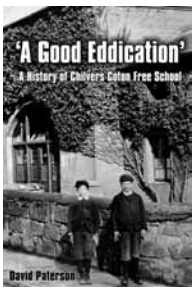
James Dixon

Brewin Books, 2013, 264p [hardback and paperback].

James Dixon is to be congratulated on the tenacity with which he pursued every scrap of evidence to produce this life of his ancestor, George Dixon. From Yorkshire to Australasia, James has left no stone unturned in a tenacious attempt to compensate for the loss of family and business records destroyed by bombing in 1941. The Dixon brothers, Abraham and George, took over the Birmingham merchant firm of Rabone Bros and profited hugely from the marketing of everything from guns to railway equipment. Abraham, the elder, was able to retire to Surrey in 1871 and to build a house, Checkley, which was later sold to Lord Beaverbrook and today is the subject of a well-publicised planning dispute. George, by contrast, was content to remain in Birmingham, with his wife May, where they brought up six children in a spacious house, The Dales, in Augustus Road, Edgbaston. From there he was strategically placed to play a leading part in both the economy and the politics of Birmingham. James Dixon aptly describes him as 'the Third Man', his status in the city inferior only to that of John Bright and Joe Chamberlain.

Dixon was Mayor of Birmingham from 1866 to 1877, MP for Birmingham from 1867 to 1876 and again from 1885 to 1898. His greatest contribution, especially in his adopted city but also nationally, was to the advancement of education and it is this theme which furnishes the spine of this biography. Founder of the Birmingham Education Society in 1867 and the National Education League in 1869, of which he became the Parliamentary spokesman, he fought hard for the improvements to William Forster's seminal Education Act of 1870, demanded by the League, and especially the abolition of fees. In Birmingham he became the leading figure on the School Board, which was not infrequently a hotbed of sectarian conflict. George, an Anglican, transcended sectarian rivalries and earned the trust of all groups. Rightly, he was described as 'the most popular man in Birmingham', his friendships transcending both religious and political divisions. He did not always find it easy to reconcile his differences with Joe Chamberlain, but followed him from Liberalism into Liberal Unionism. He was made a Freeman of the City of Birmingham shortly before his death in 1898. His monuments are scattered all over the city, not the least being the school bearing his name in Edgbaston. A biography of George Dixon has long been overdue, as Asa Briggs writes in the Introduction. This one will not be bettered.

Roger Ward



A Good Eddication: A History of Chilvers Coton Free School

David Paterson

Chilvers Coton Heritage Centre [Avenue Road, Nuneaton CV11 4LU], 2013, 100pp. £6-99+£2 if ordered by post.
ISBN 978-0-9927628-0-3

Our Nuneaton Branch Chairman, David Paterson, has explored the fascinating history of the Free School in Chilvers Coton, near Nuneaton in Warwickshire. The village itself was originally part of the Newdigate's Arbury Hall estate, where George Eliot's father was the land agent. The Newdigates took a keen interest in the welfare of their estate tenants and this included the provision and development of basic education for the poor, hence the opening of this eighteenth-century Free School. This is a good account of the growth of the school and the problems encountered. The Newdigates supported the school well into the nineteenth century, until local government took over. The school was finally closed in the 1970s. Its story does not end there, however. The buildings were saved from intended demolition and they now function as a Heritage Centre, which is a fitting tribute to over two centuries of educational development in the area.

Trevor Osgerby

editorial

This issue arose out of our discussions on how to respond to the centenary of World War I. We wondered what it would be like to explore the world before the war. Was it really the last great hurrah of the aristocracy, as portrayed in *Downton Abbey*? Or the Golden Age of Empire? Did the war suddenly appear from nowhere into an untroubled world? Were there no trouble spots causing tension? And had the Liberal Government's social reforms had much of an impact on life in Britain? We hope the articles will begin to answer some of these questions, and help provide a context in which to understand the catastrophe of the Great War.

Daniel Weinbren explores the importance of Friendly Societies in the life of the poor. We tend to forget just how important the 'burial club' was, even after the state took responsibility for poor relief. And Timothy Bowman looks at that forgotten army, the Yeomanry Regiments, part-time soldiers some of whom were to support the BEF in France and Belgium in 1914. Just how prepared were they for active service? Elsewhere, Ian Beckett explores Franz Ferdinand, whose death sparked off the war. What kind of man was he, and why was he such a divisive force in Austria-Hungary? Could he have modernised and saved the Hapsburgs? Seán Lang writes about India before the war, pointing out that the British Raj was at its most visually gorgeous in the years before 1914, despite the stirrings of nationalism and divisions more obvious perhaps in the 1930s and 1940s. And Catherine Merridale looks at the 300th anniversary of the Romanovs, and asks whether it masked the tensions in Russian society. Her comments on events of the Tercentenary might provide an effective yardstick by which to measure our own commemorations in 2014.

Elsewhere in this issue we begin a new occasional feature, where we explore a classic text that had a major impact both at the time it was published, and since. Maud Pember Reeve's study of poverty, *Family Life on a Pound a Week*, first published in 1913, reminds us that the problem of poverty is not new, and that many of the arguments we use today seem very familiar. To complete this issue 'Out and About' explores Letchworth Garden City, an Edwardian attempt to create better places to live, and 'My Favourite Place' is Beamish Open Air Museum which vividly recreates life in the North of England around 1913. We also explore Britain's biggest coal mining disaster, at Senghenydd in South Wales, which occurred in October 1913. If you thought the Davy Safety Lamp and Parliamentary Legislation made working in coal mines safer during the Industrial Revolution then this article will make you think again! We hope we have achieved our aim of providing a context in which to remember 'the War to end all Wars'.

Alf Wilkinson, guest editor.

Within the last month a BBC journalist was filmed in Somerset against a backdrop of a huge expanse of water, with a village in the distance just appearing above the waterscape. The journalist commented that it was fortunate that the village of Muchelney seemed to be safe from the flooding. My instinctive thought, as a landscape historian, was that the 'ey' ending of a place name implies 'island'. Rapid reference to Ekwall's Dictionary confirmed that it did, in Anglo-Saxon England, mean 'large island'. Interestingly within the hour someone must have alerted the BBC to this historic explanation for this island site in the Somerset Levels because the commentary changed. Equally at much the same time severe flooding occurred in East and West Looe, and I reflected on the fact that historically the churches at both small towns were chapels-of-ease, daughter churches of the inland St Martin-by-Looe. If these two small examples are typical, we can conclude that our forebears had a good understanding of the potential hazards posed by our weather patterns. The Somerset people knew that there would be periodic flooding, and so chose the best possible site for their settlement, and the people who fished at Looe traditionally had lived more safely a mile or so inland, so as to avoid the periodic violence of Atlantic storms. With this in mind, people who live in Batter**sea** have an inherent warning incorporated in their place name!

My point arising from the above is that historians do have a practical contribution to make to society in a variety of ways. This edition of *The Historian* has been guest-edited by Alf Wilkinson with the deliberate intention of trying to guide us into a broader perspective on British life and experience just before the Great War in 1914, helping us to realise that it was one not necessarily poised to be drawn into a protracted and deeply damaging human tragedy.

Trevor James

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The Romanov Tercentenary:

nostalgia versus history on the eve of the Great War

Catherine Merridale

The Romanovs on the *Standart*, 1910.

The spring of 2013 was unusually significant for devotees of the Romanov dynasty. Though there was little international recognition of the fact, the season marked the 400th anniversary of the accession of Russia's first Romanov tsar. Historically, the story was a most dramatic one, for Mikhail Fedorovich had not seized Russia's crown in battle, nor had he merely inherited it. Instead, the 16-year-old had been elected, at the end of a decade of civil war, by an assembly of Russian citizens. The delegation that travelled from Moscow to the Volga town of Kostroma to invite him to rule had found their hero less than eager to accept the throne, but his subsequent coronation marked the end of an era that Russians still think of as their archetypal Time of Troubles.

The twenty-first-century Romanovs have an official website, and in 2013 this declared Mikhail Fedorovich's election to have been 'a great deed by Russia's long-suffering people,' placing emphasis on the collective genius of the nation itself.[1] In the same tone, Grand Princess Maria Vladimirovna, the self-styled head of the imperial house, appealed to Russia's faithful to remember martyred rulers of more recent times by giving money to the poor. Plans to renovate a string of tsarist-era monuments were hastily approved. The celebrations also gave a welcome boost to tourism in Kostroma and several other Volga towns around what Russians call the Golden Ring.

Jubilees say far more about the societies in which they are staged than they do about historical events. The celebrations of 2013 were generally low-key, their flavour markedly commercial. Crucially, too, there was no tsar to play the leading role; the latest tale of Mikhail Fedorovich, like every reference to the Romanovs since 1918, was haunted by the bloodstained images of his murdered successors, their bodies riddled with bullets. The contrast with the 1913 jubilee, then, could scarcely have been starker. A hundred years ago, a group around Russia's last tsar, Nicholas II, seized on the Romanov tercentenary as an opportunity to foster patriotic unity in a country troubled by rapid change and deep social division. Unaware how murderous the future was about to be, however, neither tsar nor people played their parts with any real grace. Far from bringing citizens together, the ceremonial events of 1913 served mainly to underscore the very problems they were meant to ease. No one sleepwalked, perhaps, but it was a textbook case of a court that managed to dance, fulminate and gossip its way along a path that ultimately led to tragedy.

Russians had an impressive list of reasons to celebrate in 1913: the revolutionary wave of 1905-6 had been contained, the economy had been growing at a healthy average annual rate of six percent since 1907, consumption was booming, and even the peasants had seen improvements in their living standards, though the 50th anniversary of their emancipation, in 1911, was one jubilee that the Romanovs

The Romanovs. From left to right: Olga, Maria, Nicholas II, Alexandra, Anastasia, Aleksei, and Tatiana. Pictured at Livadia Palace in 1913.

chose to overlook. A new class – industrialists, lawyers, doctors and other urban professionals – now took an active part in civic life, and Russia's first constitution, granted in 1905, suggested that the nation itself was beginning to acquire a voice. But any celebration of all this called for a basic acceptance of the desirability of change, and Nicholas II regarded progress as anathema. To this weak man, perpetually horrified by the wilfulness of ministers and the strange demands of urban crowds, the jubilee of 1913 became a chance to reassert the spirit of divinely-ordained autocratic rule. Official events that year acquired an air of disconnected fantasy as the real Russia was ignored in favour of a dream of changeless mystical union between the tsar and the most simple, the most historic, of his people.

All pageantry, of course, involves a measure of collective myth-making. Nations are not united any more than crowds speak with one voice, but for a time an illusion can be maintained if there is minimal consensus and a common goal. One problem with 1913 was that the gulf between the saint-like tsar the court tried to project and the beleagured but intransigent man himself was just too great. Whatever myth his retinue might try to propagate, the facts spoke for themselves. Russia was in turmoil; its elite was divided over constitutional reform, its workforce was alienated by successive moves towards repression, and the court itself quivered with scandal, not least about the monk and healer Rasputin. Nicholas might dream of mystical unity, and his treasury had diamonds enough to dazzle any crowd, but the jubilee left many influential sections of the population cold, and in return the tsar and his elegant consort, Empress Alexandra, repaid their audience with grudging and lacklustre shows.

Ironically, it was the very economic change that Nicholas deplored that gave the celebrations their popular flavour. The coronation of 1896 had inspired the production of limited quantities of souvenirs, but by 1913 Russia's modern factories could turn out cheap stuff by the cartload, while twentieth-century mass-media in the shape of books, illustrated magazines, postcards and even film brought the tale of the Romanovs to new life. The jubilee was marked by the issue of the first stamps ever to bear a protrait of Russia's tsar, though there were problems with the mail when postmasters refused to deface the iconic images by franking them. Less controversially, medals were struck, bearing the twin portraits of Nicholas and Mikhail Fedorovich on one side and a double-headed eagle with '300' emblazoned above it on the other, and shops filled with cups, brooches, tablecloths and even scarves. The imperial authorities were so shocked by the commodification of it all that they felt moved to rule that the scarves at least should not be 'of a size suitable for use as handkerchiefs.'[2] But the civic ebullience continued. Whole towns were emblazoned with posters, portraits, flags and banners for the events themselves, while gala streets were brightened by the copious lengths of mass-produced ribbon, in the Romanov colours of yellow and black, that were twisted

A stamp of Nicholas II printed to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Romanov royal family, c.1913.

round their new street lamps.

But this was not a people's holiday in any modern sense. The tone was set by the official biography of Nicholas II (another first) that Professor Major-General Andrei Elchaninov was graciously permitted to issue at the start of the celebrations in February 1913. Here Nicholas appeared as a pious, hard-working paragon, a saint in a succession of flawless military uniforms. He was not a politician, certainly, for his task was way above mere compromise and as autocrat he was subject to neither Duma nor nation. Briskly marching past the memories of 1905 – military defeat at the hands of the Japanese, violence and mass protest on the streets, concessions wrested like drops of heart's blood from the government – Elchaninov focused on the tsar as father to good Russian people of all kinds. 'Through all its misfortunes and trials the august pilot has steered the Russian ship of state back to calm and clear waters,' he explained. Readers saw how much Nicholas valued peasants, frequently entering their huts 'to see how they live and partake of their milk and black bread.' And though the real tsar was known to hate the universities and fear their radical ideas, Elchaninov's imaginary one 'considered himself the Father of all those who are commencing their studies.' It was all part of the 'high service' this superman performed, the burden he accepted at his coronation, a duty to Russia's destiny for which he would answer only to God.[3]

A good deal of this stuff might have raised eyebrows at court, but worse was to come. In tones that call to mind Vladimir Putin's much more recent exploits, Elchaninov's book praised every aspect of the tsar's manhood, including his physical strength and endurance, his marksmanship and even his ability to swim under water. Lest his readers fear for the succession, the Professor also added a long section on the Tsarevich, Aleksei. Here they learned how much the boy enjoyed clean-living manly sports: 'In summer, bicycling, bathing and rowing; varied by walks and picking mushrooms and berries; in winter, tobogganing, snowballing, making snow-men and snow-castles.'[4] A section of the book that mentioned the prayers the imperial family had recently offered for the heir's recovery from illness was censored at Nicholas' request, so readers could glean no hint of the lad's poor state of health. But the spectacle of Aleksei's evident frailty during public engagements in the jubilee year would soon have everyone talking.

The committee that organised the celebrations themselves, headed by the former Minister of the Interior, Alexander Bulygin, chose to mark the election rather than the coronation of Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov, which meant staging a series of events in the freezing, wet and perpetually gloomy setting of St Petersburg in late February. A Te Deum service in the Kazan Cathedral was intended as the centrepiece of the first day, but though a public holiday had been declared the people who had gathered on the boulevards were unenthusiastic. 'There was nothing in the feeling of the crowd but shallow curiosity' was how the Prime Minister, Vladimir Kokovtsov, later remembered it, and in return the royal party appeared icily reserved.[5] For Mikhail Rodzianko, a leading member of the court administration at the time, the most notable part of the proceedings was an altercation with Rasputin, who had assumed, mistakenly, that he might have a front-row seat.

The balls and soirées were no more lively than that half-hearted Te Deum. Indeed, the gala performance of Glinka's opera, *A Life for the Tsar*, which told the story of Ivan Susanin, a peasant who saved Mikhail Romanov's life during the Troubles at the cost of his own, provided further opportunities for the royal family to give offence. The Mariinsky theatre was at its flawless best, and the management had made spectacular efforts with the production, which featured Feodor Chaliapin (on loan from Moscow) and the dancers Mathilde Kshesinskaya and Anna Pavlova. But the Empress Alexandra sat stony-faced through the first act and then left early, as if ill. The following night, at the ball the court had organised for the imperial couple, she fainted after putting in a brief, unsmiling appearance. Whatever the reason, St Petersburg experienced the coldness as a snub from a foreign woman who had not exactly hidden her scorn for the place she regarded as 'a rotten town, not an atom Russian.'[6] But Nicholas was hardly more vivacious at this jubilee, and everyone remarked that the tsar and his consort seemed preoccupied, remote and almost listless through the entire week.

The second round of celebrations, in May, was certainly an improvement on February's chilly scene. This time, the entire royal family took part in a journey that was meant to trace Mikhail Romanov's route from Kostroma to the Kremlin. It was an opportunity for Alexandra to tour the Russian countryside she yearned to see, and a chance for Nicholas to make contact with some of the simple souls that he viewed as his truest subjects. Unlike the seventeenth-century hero they were celebrating, however, these Romanovs travelled in style, taking the imperial train from St Petersburg to Vladimir and Nizhnyi-Novgorod before boarding the luxurious steamboat *Mezhen* for a four-day cruise along the Volga. Three other steamboats made up the flotilla, including one that was equipped with enough crystal, silverware and china to throw a full-scale banquet for a 100 guests.

This time, at last, there were adoring crowds. Indeed, the riverbank was lined with them, and it seemed that anyone with access to a raft or small boat had packed it with neighbours and taken to the water. Grand Duchess Olga, the eldest of the Romanov daughters, would recall later that in Nizhnyi-Novgorod she noticed workmen falling to the ground to kiss her father's shadow. She saw no irony in the fact that the building the city had asked him to open in honour of the occasion was a new branch of the state bank. Alexandra used the tour to make a pilgrimage to some of Russia's most historic monasteries,

A celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov royal family in Nizhny-Novgorod, Russia, 1913.

Cortège of Emperor Nicholas II at the Triumphal Arch in Moscow, 1913.

though several town authorities intruded on her contemplation by asking her to open their commemorative hospitals. She did this with cautious reserve, but mercifully overlooked the looming factories nearby, the evidence of change that marred the pristine world of peasant fields. The dream of timelessness was finally within her reach; it was delightful to wake, aboard that voluptuous boat, and view the Volga in the limpid light of summer dawns. Even the big events held reassurance, joining so many hands in prayer and voices in pure gasps of joy. In Kostroma the crowd sank to its knees when the strains of the tsarist anthem began to play, and everywhere there were those simple peasants in traditional dress, the women bearing salt and giant loaves of gleaming bread, an illusion of holy truth that seemed as changeless as an icon.

The last call on the tour that spring was the historic capital, Moscow. This time, the royal party arrived by train, stepping from their carriage at the Alexander station to the strains of a military orchestra. They made their journey to the Kremlin, citadel of the first Romanov tsars, by the original horse-power, with Alexandra in a state carriage and Nicholas riding at the head of a procession. Before them lay a religious ceremony in the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, tomb of Russia's pre-Petrine rulers, and then more celebrations in the Grand Kremlin Palace. The setting was as urban as St Petersburg, but the Kremlin was a favourite with Nicholas and Alexandra. As Nicholas had written to his mother in 1900 after celebrating Easter there, he and Alexandra had 'spent the best part of a day' visiting the Kremlin's holy places and 'deciding which church

A celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov royal family in Kostroma, Russia, 1913.

we shall attend for Morning Service or Mass or Evensong … We also read a good deal of history about the "Times of Moscow" [i.e. Time of Troubles].' 'I never knew I was able to reach such heights of religious ecstasy,' he added. 'I am so calm and happy now.'[7]

Religious ecstasy was on his Moscow menu in 1913 as well, but so, at the official banquet that the city's nobles put on, were celery consommé with assorted pastries, crab mousse with burbot and Oxford sauce, chicken, grouse and quail, Romaine lettuce with oranges and a dessert of hazelnut parfait.[8] While Nicholas toyed with some of that, the Kremlin shone with lights thanks to the discreet electricity generating-station that had been installed there 20 years before. But history took centre stage. A special exhibition had been mounted in the Armoury Museum, featuring 147 rare pre-Petrine icons as well as valuable documents from the early Romanov age. Not to be outdone, the nearby House of the Romanov Tsars put Mikhail Fedorovich's cradle on show, as well as his exquisite chess set. In the midst of its commercial boom, Moscow as a whole seemed ready to enjoy an interval of nostalgia.[9]

Ecstatic moments apart, however, even this portion of the jubilee was marred by tension and misunderstanding. In Kostroma, the problem was a speech by the Provincial Marshal of Nobility which provocatively mentioned the Duma. Nicholas was so enraged that in place of gracious thanks he could only mutter 'Are you finished?' Representative government, after all, was something he had abjured in 1904 'because I consider it harmful to the people whom God has entrusted to me,'[10] and he resented any reminder of what had followed less than a year later. He also feared the effects of gossip about his wife and son. The crowds must all have noted that the tsarevich could barely stand. For much of the time, indeed, the boy was carried by a serviceman. But no one was allowed to offer sympathy, still less to ask about the cause. Nicholas' pride, and perhaps also his wife's shame (for she now knew that she had passed the haemophilia to their son), created yet another barrier between his world and Russia's modern, machine-age reality.

History was his watchword, then, but the poignant truth was that Nicholas also managed to ignore the message of his royal ancestor's accession. By 1913 there were plenty of historians who might have put him straight. The previous year, as part of the build-up to the jubilee, the most prominent of them, Sergei Platonov, had published an essay about Mikhail Fedorovich.[11] Platonov was no firebrand, and he did not suggest that the fact of Mikhail's election had limited his power as tsar. The accession was treated as a sacred act, 'blessed by God', and the role of the people came across as the collective manifestation of nationhood rather than a democratic, lightly revocable choice. But act the people certainly had, and their right to some form of expression within the Russian state was integral to the Romanov tale. The moral was a simple one. If the people could make one tsar in a bid to save their land, they could also save it, in a different age, by unmaking another one.

Whether the protesters of Petrograd remembered that or not in 1917, Nicholas had barely five more years to live. Within a decade, the Bolsheviks had also destroyed many newly-built 1913 memorials. In Kostroma, an elaborate tercentenary chapel-monument was eventually modified into a plinth for the local Lenin statue. In Moscow, an obelisk near the Kremlin turned into a memorial to Marxist thought. Many of the rest were simply razed. Among the few survivors was a metal railway-bridge, a miracle of twentieth-century engineering, that spanned the mighty Volga at Yaroslavl. A harbinger of change when it was opened in 1913, this structure could have prompted Nicholas to ponder the future. His political programme, however, was little more than indulgent nostalgia. Professor Elchaninov had spelled it out. 'The tsar in all matters loved tendencies and ideas of a purely Russian character,' he had written, 'and likes matters to be directed in accordance with the traditions of our glorious past.'[12] Nicholas turned his back on steam and steel. But his tragedy was that he also failed to think about the past, preferring the comfort of fables. It was escapism, not history, that brought the final curtain down on the Romanovs, and with them went the dream of Holy Russia and its timeless peasant world.

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2 Cited in Slater, Wendy (2007) *The Many Deaths of Tsar Nicholas II,* Abingdon: Routledge, p. 153.

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9 For more on this, see Merridale, Catherine (2013) *Red Fortress: the secret heart of Russia's history*, London: Allen Lane, pp. 232-34.

10 Quotation from Lieven, p. 136. See also King, p. 400.

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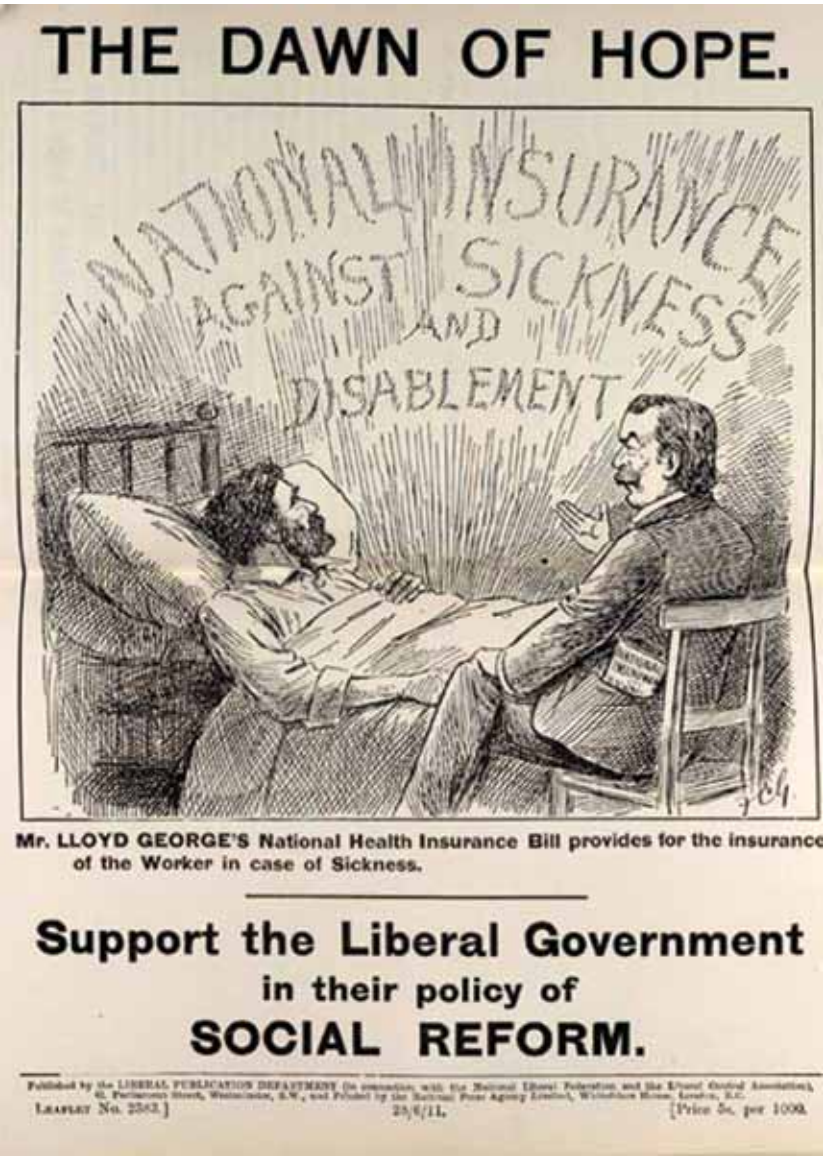
Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia Nikolaevna of Russia in captivity at Tsarskoe Selo in the spring of 1917. One of the last known photographs of Tsar Nicholas II's daughters.

One of the last photographs taken of Nicholas II, showing him at Tsarskoye Selo after his abdication in March 1917

The world in 1913:

friendly societies

Daniel Weinbren



1911 Liberal election poster. Lloyd George is portrayed as a friendly society sick visitor, explaining his National Health Insurance Bill (enacted 1911) to an ill member. In place of the member's membership certificate on the wall, the Chancellor has conjured up the words 'national insurance'.

Friendly societies were designed to help members to cope with the illness, death or unemployment of a household's breadwinner. Each month members, mostly men, paid into the society, often at a meeting in a pub and in return payments from the pooled funds were made to ill members and to members' widows. The societies also developed myths and rituals (including funeral rites) and provided regalia, badges, certificates, charitable activities, parades, communal singing and feasting. While these activities were sometimes presented as extravagant, subversive or financially unsound, they helped the societies to be seen as trustworthy and beneficial by potential members, members and patrons.

The societies were embedded in Victorian and Edwardian society. Estimates vary but something like 80% of male workers were members at one time or another and there were between 6.3 and 9.5 million members in 1910.[1] In that year the world's largest friendly society, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity with over one million members, celebrated its centenary. Its chronicler at that time claimed that 'the hundredth anniversary will be but the starting point of renewed youth and fresh triumphs' and, feted by politicians, the society negotiated to become an administrative arm of government. By the time that the First World War was over, however, thousands of friendly society members were dead, many societies had closed and the remaining societies had been transformed. The cause of this change was not simply the war. As the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society and an Honorary member of the Oddfellows, Charles Loch, said, with pardonable exaggeration, Lloyd George's National Health Insurance Act, 1911, was, 'the death warrant of the friendly societies'.[2]

Societies performed many functions besides risk-sharing through the organised transfer of money. One of these was to maintain identities. The Friendly Society of the Three Choirs was for choristers from Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, there were societies for Highlanders new to the lowlands of Scotland, the Irish National Foresters was open only to men who were 'Irish by birth or descent', the William the Fourth Society of Deptford, London excluded all Irish people and the main objective of the Philanthropic Order of True Ivorites was 'to preserve the Welsh language in its purity'. Other societies had broader ideals. The objectives of the Independent Order of Rechabites Friendly Society (which was open only to teetotallers) were 'to improve the morals of our brethren, and to promote brotherly love, to relieve the distressed'.[3] The Manchester Unity Odd Fellows

Foresters before a parade, wearing their sashes, with two members in Foresters regalia mounted on horses, outside the Bleeding Wolf, Hall Green, Scholar Green, nr Stoke, c.1900/10.
Image courtesy of The Foresters Heritage Trust

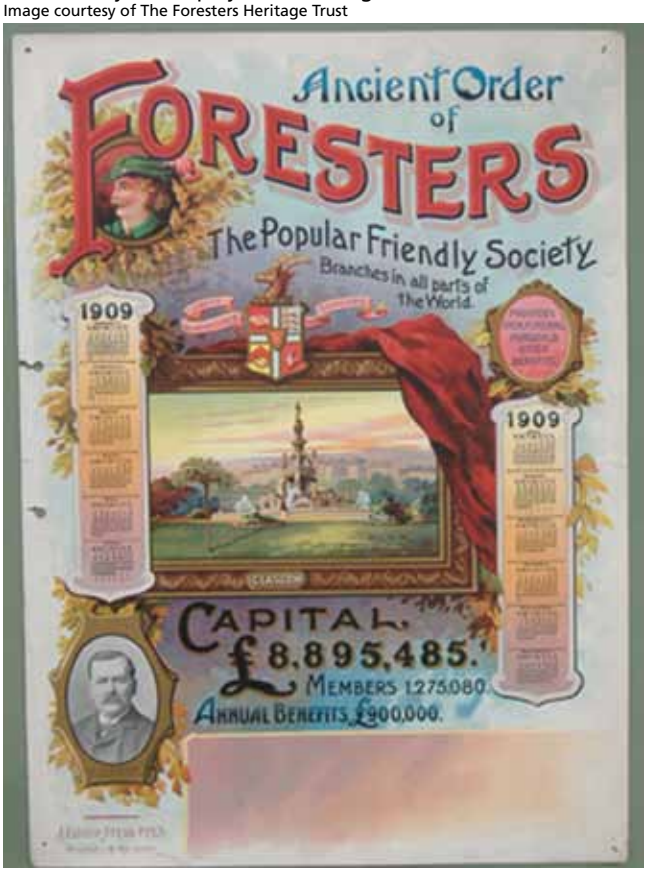
reminded members of 'the first friendly duty to mankind – Charity'.[4] It also claimed that 'hundreds have joined our order, knowing as has been eloquently observed, that the MUOF [Manchester Unity Odd Fellows] has higher and holier ends than mere pecuniary recompense'. The charter of the Merthyr lodge of the Ancient Order of Britons, aimed 'to provide for sickness' but only after indicating that it sought to 'raise our nation to note in the world by teaching men to act as men, husbands as husbands, fathers as fathers and to make all those who unite with us better members of society'.

Many societies had interests beyond the sale of insurance. The Free Gardeners of Redcar provided a lifeboat house with reading room and accommodation for the coxswain and a lifeboat, named the *United Free Gardener.* The Crewe Co-operative Industrial and Friendly Society ran a dentist and sick benefit club for employees and donated to local people, famine relief in India, locked-out engineers in 1897 and the local hospital, to which it also recommended patients. Members of the larger friendly societies could appeal to their local branch for help beyond that which was expected, and then their region and finally the national organisers. At its annual delegate meetings the Ancient Order of Foresters decided on which members were worthy of additional, charitable, help from its funds. Many societies donated to local hospitals and some acquired the right to determine which patients were admitted for care.

In order to create and maintain their identities and to bolster loyalty and trust the societies organised initiation rites, elaborate rituals and parades. Members could be taken back (for example to ancient Egypt) to be reborn before entrance to a hierarchical branch through which they could progress, measured by 'Degrees' and 'jewels', into positions of authority. Members could also travel to other towns and countries. A system of passwords and cards enabled a member to be provided with a night's lodging while seeking work in another location. This support for the unemployed regulated the supply of skilled labour and enabled men to travel. Information was passed around and potential blacklegs could be dispersed in times of industrial dispute. They might also look forward. After marching beneath banners to hear, sometimes defiant graveside orations, a member could imagine his own well-attended funeral (some societies fined members who did not attend the funeral of a brother). He could look beyond it to when his grieving widow would benefit from the support of his respectful brothers.

By 1913 the larger national and international ones had acquired vast funds which enabled them to provide for members through epidemics or periods of unemployment. Although there were dishonest members, divisions, disputes and local difficulties, the system of quasi-autonomous branches enabled men both to rely on local men whom they knew, and if necessary call upon thousands across the globe. Many of these societies, despite the word 'independent' which appeared in the names of several of them, attracted the support of wealthy patrons. This was particularly the case among those societies designed for people living within defined localities

Many opportunities were taken to reinforce the idea of financial solidity and global reach. Pride in membership could be indicated by the display of branded goods
Image courtesy of The Foresters Heritage Trust



or for workers in particular trades or members of specific religious groups. In many villages vicars acted as secretaries and treasurers. In 1906 the Henry Flowers Manchester Unity Odd Fellows lodge, Salthouse, Norfolk, the treasurers of which had been vicars between 1894 and 1900, started a distress fund to which all members contributed and from which those in need of additional help received payments. In some places the squire, perhaps out of a sense of Christian duty or possibly recognising that the cost of provision for the needy might otherwise rise, supported these efforts to ensure that the poor paid for their own health care. The Southill Female Friendly Society in Bedfordshire received substantial contributions from the local landowner, Samuel Whitbread, and the vicar also supported the society.[5] Victorian Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone was a member of the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds, Ashton Unity while on the outbreak of the First World War the Bishop of Winchester was an Oddfellow and Lord Baden Powell was President of the Scouts Friendly Society. These societies were not only for respectable working men, they crossed class boundaries and, by 1913, many had women members as well.

One reason for the popularity of friendly societies was that the alternatives were often worse. From the time it had first opened in 1861 until 1914, the Post Office Savings Bank invested savings in consolidated annuities which paid a fixed rate from which savers received an annual rate of interest of only 2.5 per cent. In effect, for many years, savers subsidised the government. Moreover, in order to prevent impulse purchasing, a delay of several days was enforced on withdrawals made by Post Office Savings Bank depositors. Relying on charity, kinship and community networks was risky and companies which offered life insurance had a reputation, which they were beginning to lose by 1913, of being run in order to benefit short-term shareholders. The state would provide but there was the prospect of dissection by medical students and a pauper's grave. Ownership of the corpse and many commemorative rites were denied to paupers' next of kin. Some Poor Law Guardians, that is local officials, replaced coffin nameplates with chalked numbers and forbade mourners from throwing soil on the coffin, entering the cemetery chapel or providing headstones. Stretford Burial Board stipulated that ownership of private graves reverted to the municipality if owners failed to install a headstone within six months of the first interment.[6] By contrast, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity had its own plot in Pimlico. There was a seven-foot high sculpture of figures representing Faith, Hope and Charity and the symbol of the order 'Friendship, Love and Truth'. Funerals were often well attended and poems were composed about some dead brethren.

The survival of the societies was based on continual renewal of membership. The younger, healthier members' payments often went to the older members. In addition, those who were expelled or who left having made payments but who were unable to sustain further payments, did not get their money back. This money also swelled the societies' funds. In the 1890s one in eight Oddfellows lapsed within a five-year period. Another estimate indicated that half of all members lapsed. By 1913 members were dying at a significant older age than half a century earlier. Moreover, these older men were very likely to become ill prior to death. Largely due to the reduction in infant mortality life expectancy rose from just over 40 years of age in the 1860s to more than 50 by 1912. Friendly society members tended to live even longer, by maybe three or four years. During the Boer War some friendly societies paid the contributions of those serving in South Africa and found the sick funds so severely depleted that they had to raise an additional levy on members. Although state pensions, introduced in 1908 helped the societies, state intervention also undermined them. Public attitudes towards poverty were changing. Increasingly, state aid was seen as a right.

Some societies were run by companies, subsidising the administrative expenses and paying annual contributions or fines and stoppages into the clubs. While these schemes may have encouraged owners to develop safety at work, miners in Lancashire went on strike to protest about the owners' control of the society's funds and in 1897 the London India Docks Company informed its 4,000 workers that they had to join the company scheme or lose their jobs.[7] Some funds were raided by employers and if a company failed the funds could disappear. In such circumstances members, particularly those whom other societies scorned because they were deemed to be in a dangerous trade or too old to join, were in desperate straits.

The attractiveness of the friendly societies also fell when contrasted with wider recreational possibilities, such as the

music hall. Growing up in Salford in this period Robert Roberts (1905-79) recalled his mother's story of the complaint of the burial club collector. 'Some of 'em are reading mad!' he grumbled. 'They buy paper after paper, but won't pay the weekly penny these days, to bury their dead!'[8] In 1913 one London-based friendly society official contrasted current 'lodge nights', that is meetings of the society, which were 'in some cases a bore' with 'the happy period' when the local secretary 'was wont, little caring for musical accompaniment, to lead off with a catchy chorus song. Taking their cue from their chief brother [members] threw themselves heart and soul into the fun and happiness ruled supreme'. Such activities helped 'to develop the higher intellect and mould our social character.' It was also reported that one lodge with a membership of over 200 had to count a visitor to make the quorum of five.[9] In 1913, initiation, it was argued in the *Oddfellows Magazine,* had the effect of 'creating a feeling of nervousness'. In the same year the Grand Master, that is the President, told the annual delegate meeting of the society that in some branches 'Ritual has fallen into utter disuse'. It had become less attractive to join an organisation such as the Nottingham Imperial Oddfellows', the regalia of which included full-length medieval costumes.

A more immediate problem for the societies was the National Health Insurance Act, 1911. This provided compulsory health insurance for lower-paid employed people. These workers selected a government-approved society through which this scheme would be administered. These 'approved societies' included some friendly societies and trade unions and also commercial companies. Through this scheme between 11 and 12.4 million people were provided with health insurance in 1912, the first year of its operation. Employers paid 3d into fund, male workers 4d (women 3d) and the government 2d a week. Women whose husbands were also insured qualified for double benefit. Employers purchased stamps at the post office and fixed them to the workers' contribution cards and deducted the workers' portion directly from wages. These cards were returned to the member's approved society, which returned them to the ministry as proof of contributory income. The process of audit was expensive and reduced the autonomy of friendly society's branches. Unpaid branch secretaries had to keep track of nine different account books, 21 different categories of insured people and 22 different items of information

Banners were used as reminders of the benefits of membership. Above: Parading a lavish, heavy banner demonstrated pride in collective, orderly, male endeavour. Below. A man paid into a society and, when ill, his brethren paid his spouse from the funds.

about each member. The secretaries sent the books to the ministry as proof of income which was then credited to the society twice-yearly in arrears. This was after the ministry had checked on claims and certification and, if appropriate, had withheld payment for 'improper' expenditure. The Oddfellows lamented that 'We never dreamed… we would be so governed by regulations. We had no idea that the Treasury grant would be bound up in so much red tape.'

The 1911 scheme was open to workers but not their spouses or children, reflecting the idea that women depended on men for survival. Be that as it may, women joined the scheme in large numbers, as domestic servants. The Act forbade meetings to be held in pubs which left many friendly societies with a problem as school-room meetings were not as popular. By contrast, commercial approved societies, notably the Prudential, favoured collecting door-to-door. Through their weekly visits to working-class households, the commercial insurance sales teams offered an alternative to friendly societies for those who wished to save, sold other financial products and shifted control of the household economy towards women.

Whereas in the past collecting contributions, processing claims and policing against fraud had been balanced by the pleasures of voluntary thrift, proud parades and democratic self-government, the Act shifted their focus. The Act specified that an approved society had to be subject to the 'absolute control of its members including provision for the election and removal of the committee of management'. This requirement was satisfied when a dozen clerks who worked for the Prudential held a meeting in its London office. In January 1913 the *Oddfellows Magazine* complained that 'the amount of the contribution, the amount of the benefit, the handling and investment of all the funds, the administration of the medical benefit have all been taken from us… they are no longer in the control of the working men'. The Society's Grand Master, Walter Wright, claimed that the legislation marginalised the need 'to build up character as well as to build up health' and to educate 'men and women in the virtues of self-denial and self-help'. He felt that the Oddfellows was veering towards being 'a mere commercial undertaking', that 'social and educational gatherings are becoming a rarity', there was less ritual and there was a danger of 'creating a nation of spoon-fed puppets instead of a nation of free and independent men and women'.[10]

Prior to the legislation many doctors were employed by friendly societies some of which had well-organised systems of attendance and certification. Medical officers provided certificates and in some cases members could make what might otherwise have been deemed clinical decisions. There were tensions over clinical judgements, professional status and pay. These were exacerbated following the legislation as doctors were paid per approved society patient, not for treatment. Some recruited the maximum number and spent little time treating them, perhaps because the costs of some elements of treatment, for example laboratory tests, were not covered by the scheme. Mutuality rested upon local, democratic supportive lodges in which the government was not interested. It imposed a system on the friendly societies which was efficient only in its terms. New medical techniques and medications had increased the cost of medical care. The main cost when a breadwinner fell ill ceased to be the loss of his income and became the payment of medical bills. Commercial insurers were able to offer products to cover these larger sums while mutual organisations found it difficult to adapt. The societies ended up running a scheme over which they had little control and which produced mediocre results for members.

The legislation signalled another shift in the image of the societies. The Labour Party, founded in 1900, was unenthusiastic about all non-state organisations being involved in health care, particularly commercial insurance companies. In 1913 one of its leading theorists, Beatrice Webb, argued that no approved societies should be allowed to make a profit. The approved societies were increasingly seen as unable to provide for the working class and as being linked to the Conservative Party. The distrust grew between the wars. Sir George May, whose report on the changes required to counter the economic crisis was widely held to have led to the fall of the Labour government in 1931 was the Secretary of the Prudential; Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative Prime Minister during the 1926 General Strike, was also a Forester and an Oddfellow while his successor as PM, Neville Chamberlain, was a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters.

In 1913 the friendly societies had a reputation for respectability and efficiency. Many members enjoyed conviviality, ceremony and the balance of economic, material, ethical and educational considerations. The notion of increasing security through social networks remained popular. None the less, the societies were challenged by other ways of saving, medical advances, wider recreational and political opportunities, longer lives and greater social mobility. Those approved societies which administered national insurance on behalf of the state felt undermined and overwhelmed while those which were not approved faced closure. There were unresolved demographic issues. Interest in the core values and in the structured reciprocity built at the intersection of civility, commerce, charity and community, was waning.

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Daniel Weinbren has written widely about the history of friendly societies, the Labour Party and of a number of businesses. His next book, to be published in 2014, is to be a history of his current employer, The Open University.

The President's Column

As 2014 starts I am conscious that I am entering the last few months of my time as President. The past two and a half years have flown by for me, partly because I have really enjoyed meeting so many of our members at my talks and finding out what makes each branch 'tick'. In December I was delighted to speak to the Nottingham and the Cheltenham and Gloucester branches followed by a Christmas buffet.

I have noticed that these social events always seem to be particularly well attended. Having tea and biscuits (or cake!) after talks or organising a special buffet once a year seems to be a very successful strategy for making the HA feel like a friendly club, especially for new members. My 2014 diary is also very well stocked with HA talks during the next few months and I am looking forward to speaking at the Central London, Warwick and Richmond branches in February and March.

This term I will also be giving some special talks to schools for the Canterbury and York branches. It is always such a pleasure to meet enthusiastic school students, who might well become our future historians and HA members. In October the HA's Education Officer, Mel Jones, organised a fascinating schools event at the Banqueting House in Whitehall, where I was able to talk to a lot of the teachers and their students.

The afternoon started with a brilliant demonstration from Andrew Wrenn about the nature of historical significance. Edward Vallance, Joel Halcomb and I then talked about whether the execution of Charles I, the offer of the Crown to Oliver Cromwell or the 'Glorious Revolution' should be presented to visitors as the most significant event associated with the site.

After a vote, the result was a tie for the regicide and the accession of

Photograph © Alexander Keene

William and Mary, with Cromwell in third place, but with a respectable number of votes. Talking to the participants during this event, I was not surprised to hear that learning about the past in a historical setting had made the whole experience highly memorable. This is a format that branches might like to adopt and I hope that the Mel will organise similar events in future.

2014 sees the start of the commemorations of the outbreak of the First World War and and the HA will be taking a lead in showing how the Great War can be remembered in a sensitive and reflective way. Many branch talks will be held on topics ranging from the causes of the war, to war memorials and the viewpoints of conscientious objectors.

An HA Great War Centenary Tour of sites in England associated with war poets and artists, and with seven young officers who died in battle, will also be held from 24 to 27 June 2014. The tour will be led by Anthony Fletcher and Niall Campbell and will include visits to the Stanley Spencer Museum in Cookham and T. E. Lawrence's retreat at Clouds Hill.

So many people today still have family memories of the personal impact of the war that there is bound to be a huge interest in extending our knowledge of the events of 1914-18. We are, therefore, currently conducting a survey about memories and knowledge of the war and you can take part on the HA website.

The HA's 2014 annual conference will be held in Stratford-upon-Avon on 16 and 17 May and it will provide the opportunity to hear about many other subjects of historical interest from the medieval to the modern. With the Shakespeare connection in mind, I am looking forward to talking about puritan objections to plays and other leisure pastimes in the Tudor and Stuart period.

We are also delighted to welcome Dr Anna Keay, Director of the Landmark Trust, as a keynote speaker this year. Dr Keay is a wonderfully engaging lecturer and the author of *The Magnificent Monarch: Charles II and the Ceremonies of Power*. She has also published a history of the Crown Jewels and is currently working on a study of Charles II's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth.

I hope to meet many of you at the conference, and if you have not attended before, do consider coming, as it is a truly enjoyable event with plenty of history on offer for everyone.

With best wishes to all our members for the New Year ahead.

Jackie Eales

Franz Ferdinand

Ian F. W. Beckett

Archduke Franz Ferdinand with his wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg and their three children, Princess Sophie, Maximilian, Duke of Hohenburg and Prince Ernst von Hohenberg in 1910.

The Kapuzinerkirche (Church of the Capuchins) in Vienna's Neue Markt is one of the more curious attractions of the city, housing as it does the Kaisergruft crypt in which the Habsburgs are entombed, or rather in which their bodies are entombed: the hearts are usually kept in the Loreto Chapel of the Augustinerkirche (Church of the Augustinians), and the entrails beneath the Stephansdom (St Stephen's Cathedral). A total of 148 sundry Habsburgs lie there, from Empress Anna (1585-1618) to Archduke Otto (1912-2011), the son of the last Emperor of Austria-Hungary, Karl, whose reign was terminated by the overthrow of the empire in 1918.

Like those of Karl's Empress, Zita of Bourbon-Parma, and Archduke Otto, the most recent of the Habsburg tombs are in the so-called Crypt Chapel. That, in turn, lies off a chapel constructed in 1908-09, now known as the Franz Joseph Chapel, containing the tombs of Karl's predecessor and great-grandfather, Emperor Franz Joseph (1830-1916), his great-grandmother, Empress Elizabeth (1837-98), and the heir who should have succeeded to the imperial throne, Crown Prince Rudolf (1858-89). As is well known, Rudolf died – almost certainly by his own hand – at Mayerling in the company of his young mistress, Baroness Mary Vetsera: she was buried discreetly in the cemetery of the Holy Cross (Heiligenkreuz). It was one of a long series of family tragedies, for Elizabeth ('Sisi') was then assassinated by an Italian anarchist while she was visiting Geneva in 1898. One of Franz Joseph's brothers, Archduke Karl Ludwig, had already died after drinking contaminated water on a pilgrimage to Palestine in 1896. Another, Maximilian, had been executed by the Mexicans in 1867 after the failed French attempt to establish him as Emperor there.

While Zita lies in the Kaisergruft, the space reserved for Karl remains vacant: his body still rests at Funchal on Madeira, where he died in exile in 1922. There is another notable absentee, however, represented by a simple wall plaque in the 'New Crypt', which was constructed only in 1960-62 in order to house coffins moved from more crowded parts of the crypt. It is to Karl Ludwig's eldest son, and Franz Joseph's nephew, who was nominated as presumptive heir when Karl Ludwig died in 1896 and formally acknowledged as the definitive heir in 1898. Of course, this was Franz Ferdinand, who had been born in 1863. In the interval between Rudolf's death and his preferment, Franz

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, descend the steps of the City Hall, Sarajevo to their motor car, shortly before they were assassinated on 28 June 1914.

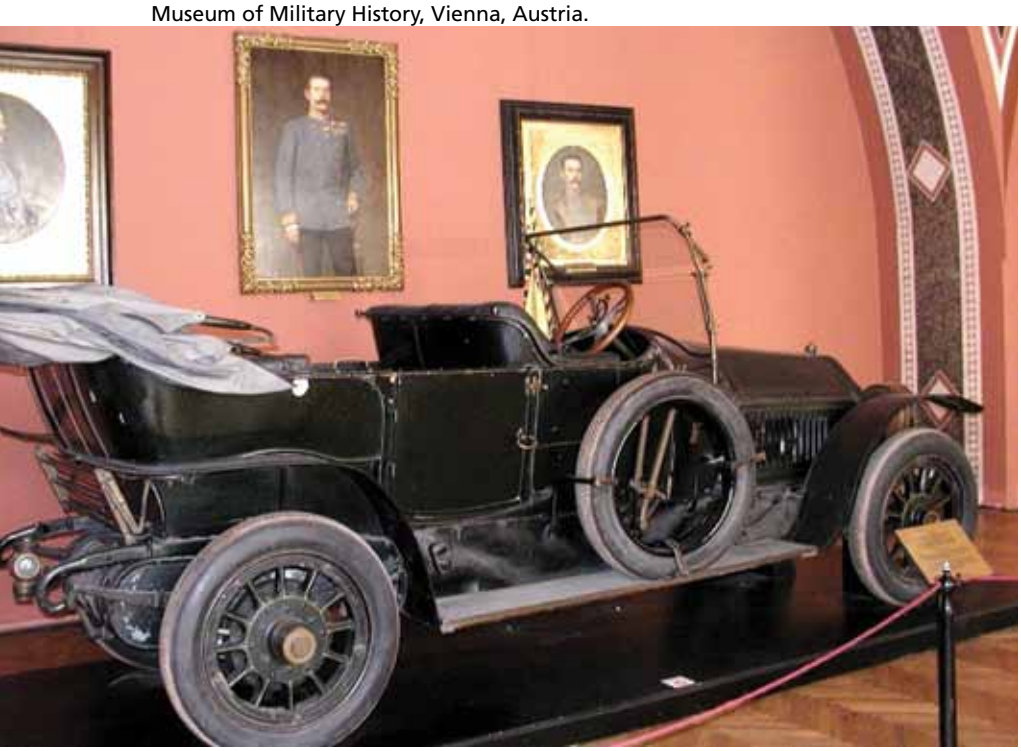
Ferdinand had himself fallen dangerously ill with tuberculosis in 1895, and had not been expected to live. Franz Ferdinand, who had been close to Rudolf, married an impoverished Czech aristocrat, Sophie Chotek von Choktova und Wognin, on 1 July 1900 against the express wishes of Franz Joseph, as she was not deemed a suitable match. Sophie, who was five years younger than Franz Ferdinand, had been a lady in waiting to Isabella, one of the daughters of Archduke Friedrich, whom it had been anticipated Franz Ferdinand would marry. It took a prolonged campaign on the part of Franz Ferdinand, in which he enlisted the support of the Pope and Kaiser Wilhelm II, to persuade the Emperor to allow the marriage. Sophie was given the courtesy title of Duchess of Hohenberg but afforded no honours. She was not allowed, for example, to occupy the royal box with her husband at the opera or ride in a ceremonial coach with him; she had to sit at table below the youngest archduchess. Moreover, immediately prior to the marriage – on 28 June 1900 – Franz Ferdinand had been compelled to renounce the right of any of his children to the throne. It was a rare honour for Sophie to be allowed to accompany Franz Ferdinand to Sarajevo following his attendance at army manoeuvres in Bosnia. When Franz Ferdinand and Sophie were assassinated by Gavrilo Princip at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, Karl became the heir. He was the son of Karl Ludwig's younger son, the dissipated Otto, who had died in 1906: he was thus Franz Ferdinand's nephew and the aged Emperor's great-nephew.

Sophie's lack of precedence ensured that Franz Ferdinand's funeral was low key, the bodies only arriving back in Vienna at 10.00 p.m. on 2 July 1914. The coffins lay in state in the Kaisergruft for just four hours on the following day. Franz Ferdinand's was placed higher than that of his wife. His carried the expected honours of an Archduke, but Sophie's had only a fan and a pair of white gloves signifying that her status was no greater than that of a lady in waiting. It was suggested that the 84-year-old Emperor must be spared any elaborate ceremonial, and there was only a short afternoon requiem mass. Knowing that Sophie could not be buried in the Kaisergruft, Franz Ferdinand had expressed a wish that he and Sophie be buried at the castle of Artstetten, north of the Danubian town of Melk, which he had been given by his father in 1889. The bodies were despatched there at 10.00 p.m. It had been decreed that there should be no military honours and no formal procession. In the event, 100 or more members of the aristocracy turned out to follow the cortège on foot, and several regiments lined the streets as regimental commanders had been given discretion to do so should they wish. The train arrived at the nearest station to Artstetten around 2.00 a.m. on 4 July, and the bodies had to be ferried across the Danube in a sudden thunderstorm, which almost led to the hearse falling into the river when one of the horses was startled by a thunderclap. That morning there was a brief service, which Karl and Zita attended before they returned to Vienna.

There was some criticism of the undignified way in which the funeral had been handled but Franz Joseph publicly thanked the Court Chamberlain, Prince Albert Montenuovo, for the arrangements. He also expressed his appreciation of the services of General Oskar Potiorek, the Military Governor of Bosnia responsible for security in Sarajevo. Montenuovo had been a particular foe of Sophie, despite his own illegitimate birth. On first hearing the news of Sarajevo, the Emperor reputedly remarked to his aide, Count Eduard Paar, 'A higher power has restored that order which I myself was unable to

Franz Ferdinand's blood-stained uniform.
Museum of Military History, Vienna, Austria.

The 1910 Gräf und Stift 'double phaeton' automobile in which Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated.
Museum of Military History, Vienna, Austria.



maintain.' This may be apocryphal, and he was certainly shocked by the event itself. His daughter, Marie Valerie, however, also recorded that while Franz Joseph was sorry for the three children of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, 'he was not personally stricken', and said of Karl's elevation, 'For me it is a great worry less.' Indeed, it would appear that few mourned the death of Franz Ferdinand, viewing the assassination instead as a unique opportunity to force conclusions with Serbia. Ironically, what had made Franz Ferdinand a target for assassination by Bosnian Serbs of the Young Bosnia (*Mlada Bosna*) movement – linked in turn to the Serbian Black Hand (officially known as *Ujedinjenje ili Smrt*, or Union or Death) secret society – was that the unlamented Archduke had led those advocating a peaceful solution to Austria-Hungary's relationship with Serbia. He had wanted to give the Slavs within the empire the same autonomy enjoyed by the Hungarians in the 'dual monarchy' since 1867. As it happened, apart from the anniversary of Franz Ferdinand's renunciation of the throne for his children, 28 June – St Vitus's Day – was also the 525th anniversary of the destruction of the old Serbian kingdom by the Ottomans on the 'Field of Blackbirds' in Kosovo: a battle in which both Prince Lazar of Serbia and the Ottoman Sultan, Murad I, had perished. It was additionally the first anniversary of Kosovo being re-incorporated back into Serbia as a result of Serbian successes in the Second Balkan War.

Franz Ferdinand has not had a good press. His one redeeming feature has invariably been taken to be his marriage to Sophie, to whom, and to his three children – Sophie (b. 1901), Maximilian (b. 1902) and Ernst (b. 1904) – he was absolutely devoted, and the manner of his death. As he and Sophie slumped in their seats after Princip had fired the two fatal shots in rapid succession at Sarajevo, the Archduke's aide-de-camp, Count Franz von Harrach, heard him say, 'Sopherl, Sopherl, don't die. Stay alive for the children.' Hit in the stomach by the first bullet, which had gone through the side of the car, Sophie had exclaimed to Franz Ferdinand, 'In God's name what has happened to you', then slid on to the floor. Initially, Harrach thought she had only fainted. Hit in the neck by the second bullet, which severed his jugular vein, Franz Ferdinand was trying to hold her as she collapsed against his knees. Harrach asked Franz Ferdinand if he was in pain, to which he replied, 'It's nothing', repeating this six times, ever more faintly, before what Harrach described as 'a convulsive rattle in his throat'.

The Italian paper *Domenica del Corriere*, July 1914, depicting the killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

For the rest, the tall but paunchy Franz Ferdinand tends to be seen as a dour, grim-faced, humourless, bad-tempered, and unpopular autocrat. Even one of his political allies, the future Foreign Minister, Count Ottokar von Czernin und Chudenitz, characterised him as a 'good hater', and it is clear that he was slow to trust individuals. He appeared primarily interested in slaughtering all manner of wild life, particular at the Blühnbach estate near Salzburg that he acquired in 1908. His game books show that he despatched 274,511 animals or birds in the course of his life. The last creature he shot was a hapless cat that strolled past his car on 21 June 1914 at his Bohemian estate of Chlumetz just before he set out for Bosnia. On the other hand, Franz Ferdinand was not uncultivated. He collected art although his taste tended towards the Baroque, and he especially disliked the modernism associated with *fin de siècle* Vienna. He lavished money and attention on the gardens of Arstetten – especially the roses – and his other house at Konopiště in Bohemia. He was also devoutly Catholic, on one occasion publicly berating the indifference and failure to attend Mass of the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff, Baron Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf.

The manner of Franz Ferdinand's demise did strike some sympathy among ordinary Austrians if not Hungarians, especially as aspects of his home life with Sophie and the children now became public knowledge for the first time. Few men could have appeared so different in their public and private spheres. Moreover, despite his reputation so far as posterity is concerned, even those contemporaries most opposed to him recognised that he was energetic, and would have rejuvenated the power structures within the empire had he lived. Largely ignored by the Emperor, Franz Ferdinand had steadily built a kind of alternative court in Vienna's Lower Belvedere. Having been made Inspector General in 1906, Franz Ferdinand was instrumental in the appointment of both Conrad as Chief of Staff, and also Count Alois Aehrenthal as Foreign Minister. Franz Ferdinand's ideas were developed and disseminated through the auspices of the Military Chancellery. Franz Ferdinand's own chief of staff, Alexander Brosch von Aarenau, kept him well informed of the currents running within the empire. Principally, Franz Ferdinand believed that the Hungarian elite wielded too much power within the dual monarchy, and courted the national minorities within Hungary, hence the prospect of a triple monarchy that did so much to make him a target for those fearing that this would eclipse Serbian claims to any leadership of the Balkan Slavs. By 1914, Franz Ferdinand was toying with the idea of an even wider federal structure that might see the empire divided into as many as 15 states. Beyond Austria-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand wanted to cultivate closer links with Russia and Romania, but was also violently anti-Italian, and displayed some anti-Semitic traits. He got on well with Wilhelm II, and had suggested to the Kaiser that young Maximilian might be given the title of Duke of Lorraine, Alsace and Lorraine having been taken by Germany from France in 1871. King George V was also scheduled for a visit to Franz Ferdinand in the autumn of 1914.

Such radical internal reform as Franz Ferdinand intended precluded, in his view, an aggressive foreign policy. Increasingly, therefore, Franz Ferdinand had found himself out of step with the exceedingly warlike Conrad, notwithstanding Franz Ferdinand's appreciation for Conrad's habitual politeness towards Sophie. Quite erroneously, many contemporaries believed that, like Conrad, Franz Ferdinand was of the 'war party'. Franz Ferdinand was also considerably keener on building up the Imperial Navy than Conrad, who wanted all available resources for the army. Thus, Franz Ferdinand had opposed Conrad's desire for war with Serbia at the time of the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia in 1908. Conrad was dismissed as Chief of Staff in December 1911, following his attempt to force a war against Italy during the Italian conflict with Ottoman Turkey in Libya. When Conrad was reinstated in 1912, Franz Ferdinand at once reminded him that it was the government's duty to maintain peace. Aehrenthal, too, proved too aggressive for Franz Ferdinand's taste and, following his death in 1912, his successor as Foreign Minister, Count Leopold Berchtold von und zu Ungarschitz, Fratting und Pullitz, was much more acceptable. Berchtold and Franz Ferdinand had known each other since childhood. Berchtold's wife and Sophie had similarly known each other since they were children. In part, this may well explain how the normally cautious Berchtold became such an early convert to a course of events leading to war following the assassination.

The chance nature of that assassination in Sarajevo is well known. There is some suggestion that Franz Ferdinand, who was said to be superstitious, had had second thoughts about the trip, and that either Sophie or young Maximilian had tried to persuade him not to go. Franz Joseph had supposedly told Franz Ferdinand he could do as he wished. There were apprehensions, and warnings of an assassination attempt, but Franz Ferdinand was notoriously lax about his own security. He and Sophie had almost come face to face with Princip while they were shopping in Sarajevo's bazaar a few days before the official visit. Of the seven assassins, the first hesitated from throwing his bomb and the procession passed. The bomb thrown by the second bounced off the back of the splendid 1910 open-topped Gräf und Stift 'double phaeton' motor car now preserved (with Franz Ferdinand's bloodstained uniform) in

Soldiers arrest one of the conspirators, thought to be Nedeljko Čabrinović after the assassination.

Sarajevo trial in progress, October 1914. Gavrilo Princip is seated in the centre of the first row.

Vienna's Heeresgeschichtliches (Military History) Museum. Its explosion injured Potiorek's adjutant travelling in the car behind. Three more of the assassins lost their nerve, as did a fourth who had wandered off from his agreed position, and also failed to act when the procession passed him. Having reached the town hall for the official welcome, Franz Ferdinand managed to control his temper. He and Sophie then decided to visit Potiorek's adjutant in hospital rather than proceed with the rest of an official itinerary that Potiorek now considered unwise. Franz Ferdinand's driver had not been fully informed of the change, and when he began to take a wrong turn into Franz Joseph Street rather than continue along Appel Quay, the car was halted in order to be pushed back as there was no reverse gear. Princip happened to be standing on the corner by Schiller's store, and used his pistol rather than try to take out and prime his bomb. By the time the car had been driven back to Potiorek's official residence at the Konak Palace, Sophie was already dead, and an unconscious Franz Ferdinand died soon afterwards.

It is impossible to assess what kind of emperor Franz Ferdinand might have become – he intended to take the title of Franz II – just as it is hard to suggest what might have been the course of European events if he had not been assassinated. The Austro-Hungarian Empire might well have survived as a triple monarchy albeit that the projected reforms would not have been without controversy, and would have generated particular internal opposition within Hungary. Clearly, Franz Ferdinand almost certainly would not have engendered the same affection as Franz Joseph, whose sheer longevity in the face of so many personal tragedies provided such an important unifying factor within the fragile construct of Austria-Hungary. The empire was already an unlikely survivor amid the growth of nationalism as the dominant ideology in Europe, but it might have struggled on under Franz Ferdinand. As for the consequences of the assassination, the debate on the causes of war is an enduringly complex issue. The outbreak of what might be termed the 'Third Balkan War' in 1914 was the responsibility of Berchtold, Conrad and the other policy-makers in Vienna. Responsibility for its transformation into the First World War lay with those in Berlin. Sooner or later, to use A. J. P. Taylor's analogy on Sarajevo, the loosening of some other pebble would have unleashed the avalanche of German ambitions.

Further reading

The only biography of Franz Ferdinand in English is Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *Archduke of Sarajevo: The Romance and Tragedy of Franz Ferdinand of Austria* (London, 1984). There are two German-language biographies, Robert Kann, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand: Studien* (Vienna, 1976), and Wladimir Aichelburg, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand von Österreich-Erste und Arstetten* (Vienna, 2000). The first detailed study of the events of 28 June 1914 was Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo* (New York, 1967). Since then, there have been two more for general readers by Lavender Cassels, *The Archduke and the Assassin: Sarajevo, June 28th 1914* (London, 1984), and David James Smith, *One Morning in Sarajevo: 28 June 1914* (London, 2008). For scholarly assessments of Austria-Hungary's role in 1914, see R. J. W. Evans, 'The Habsburg Monarchy and the Coming of War', in R. J. W. Evans and Harmut Pogge von Strandmann (eds), *The Coming of the First World War* 2nd edn, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 33-57; Samuel Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (London, 1991); Fritz Fellner, 'Austria-Hungary', in Keith Wilson (ed.), *Decisions for War, 1914* (London, 1995), pp. 9-25; and Graydon Tunstall, 'Austria-Hungary', in Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig (eds), *The Origins of World War I* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 112-49.

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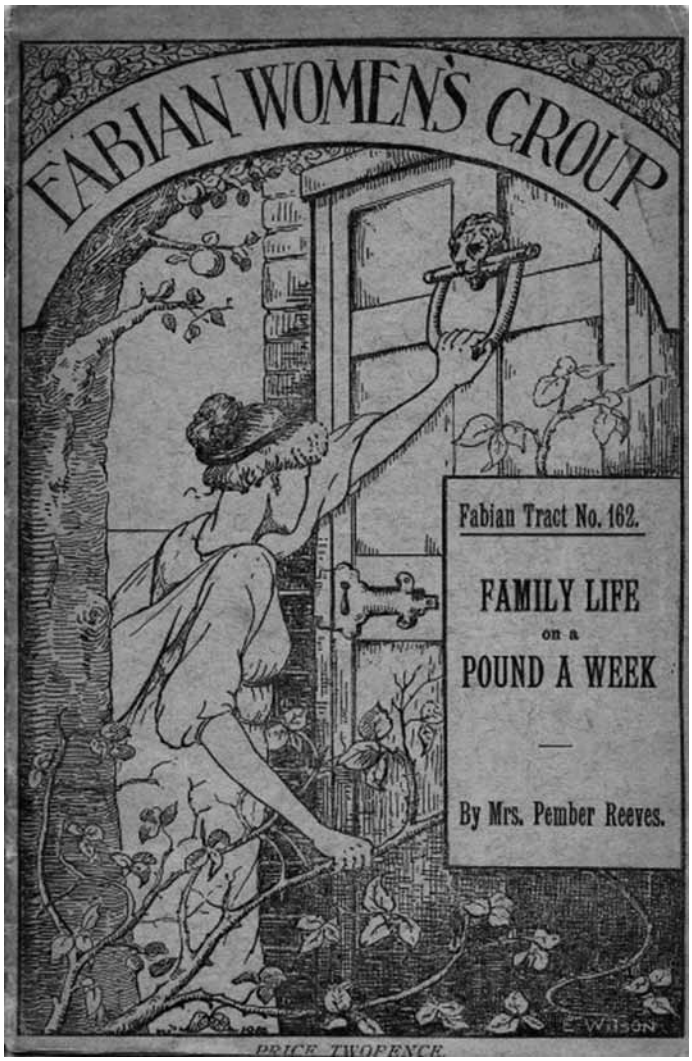
Round About A Pound A Week

In this edition, we begin a new occasional feature, where we explore a classic text that had a major impact both at the time it was published, and since. **Alf Wilkinson** discusses a book first published in 1913, and still in print, and explains why he thinks it is as relevant today as when it was published.



In 1908 the Fabian Women's Group was set up, partly as a response to the women's suffrage movement, but also as a response to the agitation about poverty and old age. From 1909 to 1913 they carried out a detailed study in Lambeth, targeting a relatively small group of pregnant women and women with young families, not among the poorest of the poor, but those whose men were in regular employment, in jobs such as policemen, dustmen and bus conductors, where they earned from 18 shillings to 24 shillings a week. The aim was to explore infant mortality. They expected to find feckless families, money wasted on beer and 'luxuries' instead of being spent on necessities. The common belief at the time was that poverty was the fault of the poor, and if only the families showed better management of resources, poverty could be eradicated. Education would help. Once people, especially the all-important housewives, knew how to budget better it would be much easier to manage. They were determined not to preach to the poor, but to listen and learn how they managed to live. The families were required to keep detailed budgets and were regularly visited by members of the Fabian Women's Group.

What they discovered, of course, is more or less the opposite. Women knew full well how to manage their limited resources. Rent often took 33-40 % of income, for one or two rooms in a run-down house. Food took most of the rest. And then there was the Burial Insurance Fund – 1d a week per child in order to avoid the ignominy of a pauper's funeral. The breadwinner was given most of the food, women often depriving themselves of sustenance, because everything depended on the weekly wage being enough to get by. The biggest problems came when the wage-earner could not work, or work was irregular, putting great strain on already overstretched budgets.

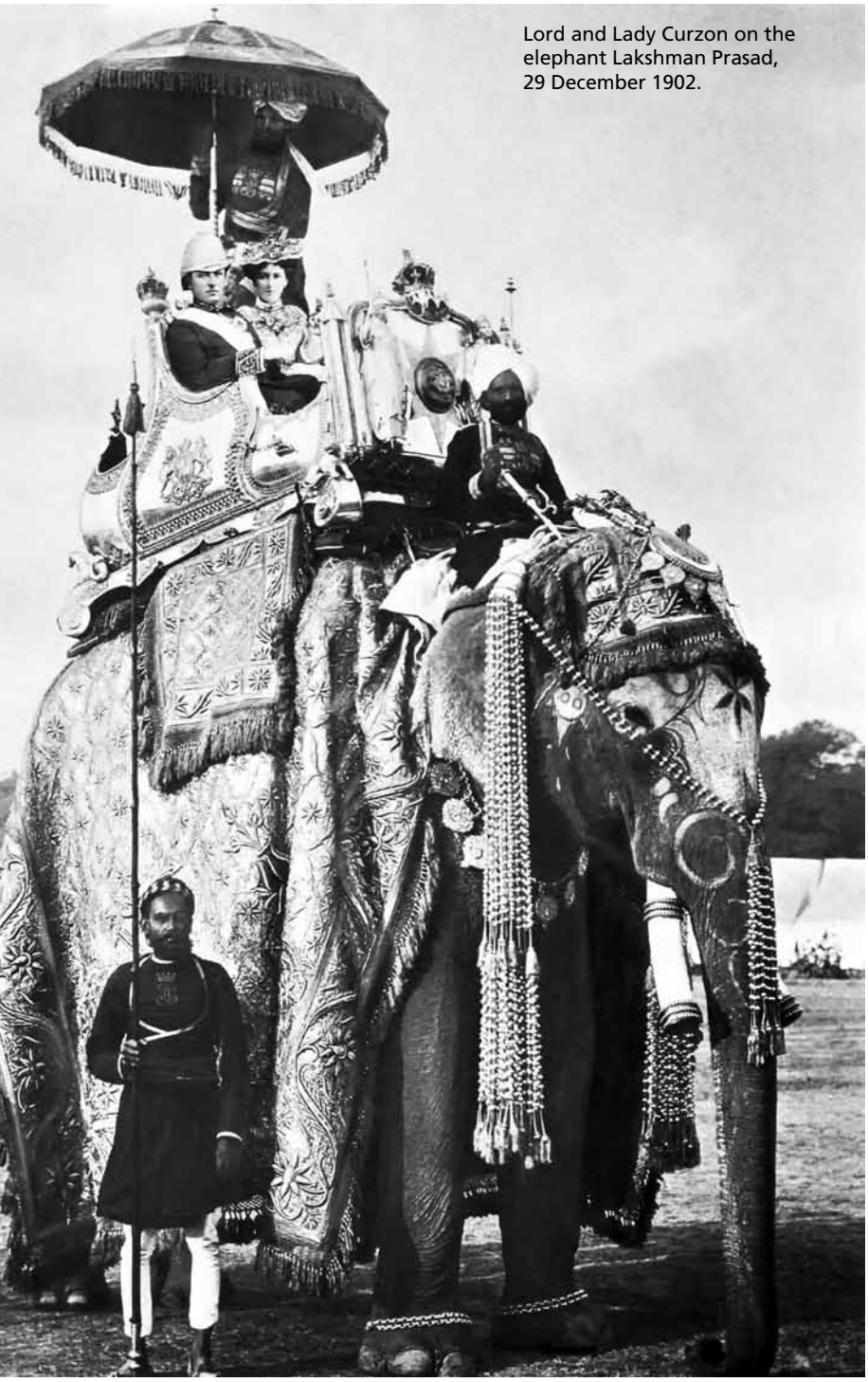
In 1913 when first published, *Round About A Pound A Week* was clearly a socialist political pamphlet, arguing that state help was essential because wages were far too low. It avoided the 'do-gooder' approach to the poor, telling it like it was, and reaching the conclusion that most of the families studied were decent, hard-working and independent, who performed miracles in remaining financially afloat on wages that were barely sufficient for survival, let alone luxuries. It provides us with a unique snapshot of lives, budgets and survival strategies adopted by these families under very difficult conditions. It argued for a legal minimum wage, of at least 25 shillings a week, reckoned to be the absolute minimum required to live on. The other main recommendation was for the state to become a 'guardian' of all children, to provide school lunches, medical inspections, baby clinics and basic care that was beyond the reach of most working people.

All of these arguments will immediately be recognised today. Poverty – and the so-called feckless poor living on benefits – is a live political debate. Poverty is in many cases still very much regarded as the fault of the poor. It is thought that we can no longer afford the Welfare State, and a wide range of benefits are under threat. Our whole response to poverty throughout the twentieth century is under question. Even the Labour Party no longer automatically supports benefits for all. Maud Pember Reeves must be turning in her grave, after spending four years of her life discovering that the truth about poverty was very different to the political dogma being bandied around. Her book is very much as relevant today as when it was first published.

If you would like the opportunity to discuss your classic text in a future edition of *The Historian*, in about 700 words, please email alf.wilkinson@history.org.uk

India in 1914

Seán Lang



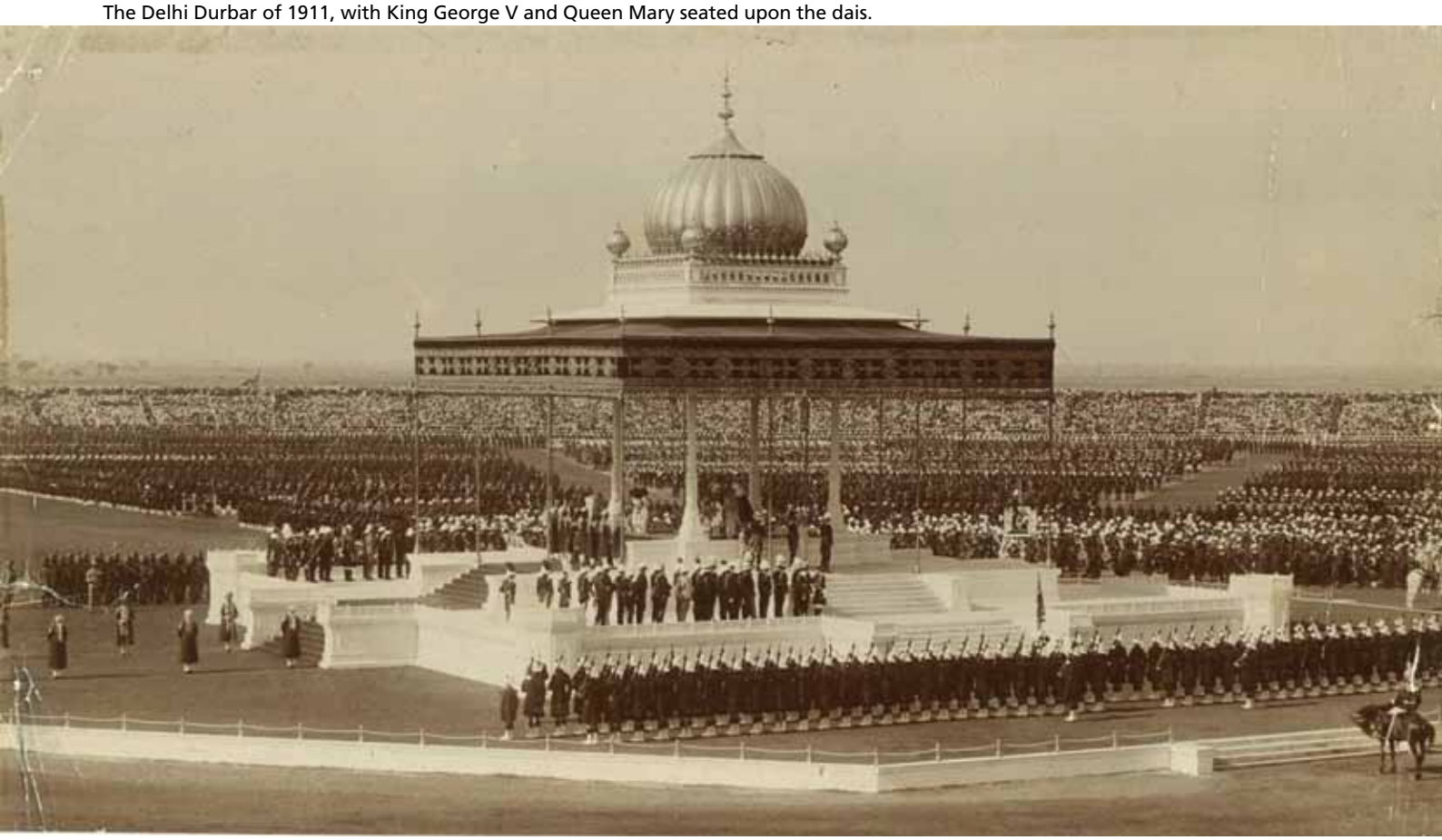
Lord and Lady Curzon on the elephant Lakshman Prasad, 29 December 1902.

Rather as Queen Victoria was never as 'Victorian' as we tend to assume, so British India in the years leading up to 1914 does not present the clichéd spectacle of colonists in pith helmets and shorts lording it over subservient natives that we might assume. Certainly that sort of relationship existed: the British in India lived in a world of clubs, bars and garden parties from which Indians were often rigidly excluded. However, the image of an all-powerful Raj was profoundly misleading, not least to those British at the time who believed in it; many of the factors that would fuel Gandhi's nationalist movement in the inter-war period and would lead to the violent trauma of Partition in 1947 were well established in the pre-1914 Raj.

India's agriculture and rural way of life had hardly changed in centuries, so that the overwhelming majority of India's vast population lived and worked in ways that would have looked familiar to their medieval ancestors. On top of this the British had constructed an extensive hierarchy of European-style administration and law, though outside India's towns and cities for most Indians the sight of a European was still relatively unusual. More visible was the railway system, which connected the different regions of the subcontinent more effectively than had ever been possible under the Mughals. Western influence was also evident in the increasing numbers of public institutions – schools, colleges, hospitals, museums, law courts – which were springing up in even relatively modest-sized Indian towns.

Having said that, British investment in India stopped short of giving India all it needed to operate as an independent unit in the modern world. India's relationship with Britain was complex but at root India was a British colonial possession, and various rules and restrictions served to remind Indians of this. Some of these became notorious later when Gandhi challenged them: for example, Indian cotton was picked and then shipped off to Lancashire to be turned into cotton cloth, which was then re-exported back to India as a British product. India might have competed by setting up its own cotton mills and undercutting the Lancashire prices, but this was forbidden by command of the imperial power, specifically in order to protect the British home market. Similarly, the British maintained a very profitable monopoly on the manufacture of salt,

The Delhi Durbar of 1911, with King George V and Queen Mary seated upon the dais.



an essential for survival in India's hot climate. The oft-repeated claim that British rule brought prosperity to India was increasingly being challenged by critics like Dadabhai Naoroji, author of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* or the British economic commentator William Digby in *"Prosperous" British India*.

India was therefore in the curious position whereby British rule both modernised Indian life but also distorted it and held Indian economic development back. This is also illustrated by the curious social profile of the British who lived and worked in India. Roughly half were either in the military or in civil administration; in both, the higher ranks were reserved exclusively for Europeans. Indians were not allowed to hold commissions in the Indian Army until after the First World War and even then they were not supposed to be placed in charge of European troops. Other Europeans in India were also usually to be found in positions of command or leadership: school-teachers and principals, missionaries and clergymen, doctors, surgeons, university professors and so on. The only extensive European presence in India which could be called working class was that of the ordinary British soldiers, and even they enjoyed a social status above that of the ordinary Indian simply by virtue of their race. The British therefore enjoyed a monopoly of positions of leadership in India similar to that enjoyed by the French aristocracy before the Revolution, and with similar results.

The defining example of this colonial glass ceiling was the celebrated case of Surendrenath Banerjea, who in 1869 became the first Indian to sit the Indian Civil Service (ICS) entrance examination but who, despite coming top of his class by some margin, was first prevented from joining the ICS on a trumped-up technicality and then sacked within a short time of his finally being admitted. It is no surprise to learn that Banerjea went on to become a leading figure in the rapidly-growing Indian nationalist movement and twice served as President of the Indian National Congress (INC). The INC was an annual event rather than a political party and it attracted liberal-minded Europeans as well as Indians; its inaugural meeting was even attended by the Viceroy. In fact, for a colonial ruling power the British were surprisingly tolerant of criticism, often expressed in the most vituperative terms, from the extensive vernacular and English-language nationalist press. However, they read the Indian press in order to gauge public opinion, not to follow it.

Indian nationalism was closely modelled on the example of Ireland. Like the Irish, the INC argued for home rule (*swaraj* in Hindi) rather than independence; its expressed wish was to find a way whereby Indians could play more of a role in the administration of the British Raj. This was the spirit evoked by pioneer figures like Banerjea and also by the next generation of nationalists, led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, himself a graduate of the British-founded Elphinstone College in Bombay. Gokhale's philosophy was one of non-violent campaigning for change; he also recognised the need to address the inequalities and injustices within Indian society alongside putting pressure on the British for swaraj. Gokhale's moderate approach appealed also to European sympathisers with Indian nationalism, like the leaders of the newly-arrived Theosophist movement, the British social reformer Annie Besant, and the decidedly eccentric Russian mystic Madame Blavatsky.

Gokhale's moderate approach to Indian nationalism was challenged by a more militant wing of the INC headed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Tilak placed himself at the head of a major Hindu revivalist movement similar to the Gaelic cultural revival developed by the nationalist movement in Ireland; for example his movement revived and refined such features as the annual Ganpati festival, in which brightly

coloured statues of the god Ganesh are still carried through the streets and taken into the sea. To Tilak and his followers, this sort of brash, confident Hinduism challenged the widespread assumption, enthusiastically encouraged by the British, that western technology, culture and manners were all inherently superior to anything India had to offer. Among India's professional classes, for example, it was increasingly common to encounter high-class European tailoring, furnishings and even tastes in food and entertainment (the Nehru family is a good example, as indeed is the young Gandhi).

Tilak's more assertively Hindu form of nationalism alienated those like Gokhale, who thought it unnecessarily provocative, and thoroughly alarmed India's Muslim community, who feared they would be marginalised and victimised in the sort of Hindu India Tilak had in mind, in much the same way that Ulster's Protestants feared that Home Rule would mean 'Rome Rule' for Ireland. Muslims had attended the annual INC since its inauguration in 1885 with no thought of their needing any sort of separate organisation; by 1906 Tilak's assertive Hinduism and anti-Muslim rhetoric had alarmed the Muslim community sufficiently for a delegation led by the Aga Khan to petition the Viceroy for separate Muslim representation in any elections the British might be planning to introduce, and for the formation in 1906 of a breakaway Muslim League headed by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.

The splits within the nationalist movement were brought to a head in 1905 by the announcement by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, that the ancient kingdom of Bengal was to be partitioned. To appreciate why this apparently necessary and benign administrative rearrangement should have provoked such anger in nationalist circles, one would need to imagine the reaction nowadays were, say, London and the South East to be partitioned off, or the Highlands separated from the rest of Scotland. Bengal was an ancient Indian kingdom, the first to pass into British hands, and its partition was seen as an arrogant move disregarding the kingdom's age-old borders and territorial integrity. Tilak led protests against the move, starting with a national day of mourning and proceeding to a massive boycott of British-made clothing. This was a particularly effective means of forcing India's westernised middle classes to make a public statement about where they stood on the issue. British clothes were thrown on to huge public bonfires; in what became known as the *swadeshi* (home-produced goods) movement, to wear Indian-produced clothing, however rough and imperfect its finish might be, was a patriotic act; to continue to wear European suits and hats was to support Curzon's dastardly act.

However, Tilak and his militants by no means had everything their own way. Gokhale and his followers within the INC, as well as the 'old guard' of activists like the elderly Banerjea, were strongly opposed to the way Tilak was using the boycott to promote a more militant campaign and at the 1907 Congress, held at Swat in the Northwest Frontier Province, the split between the two wings came out into the open. Tilak and his followers were excluded from the Congress and went on to take ever more militant action against the British, including acts of assassination; in 1911, for example, the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, who had in fact reversed the partition, was badly injured in a bomb attack.

Tilak's opposition to the partition of Bengal had also alarmed the Muslims, for whom it had in fact seemed very good news. Eastern Bengal was home to a large population of mostly very poor Muslim peasants, and they regarded the prospect of separation from their richer Hindu neighbours as a major blessing. The more the Hindus campaigned against the partition, the more attached to the idea Muslims became. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan openly attacked the nationalists' boycott campaign and it was specifically in response to the Hindu hostility to the partition that he founded the Muslim League in 1906. However, the Muslim League was also to be disappointed: the outcry against the partition enabled Curzon's enemies – and he had many – to use it as a means of criticising him. Hardinge's act in reversing the partition in 1911 was intended in exactly the way in which it was generally received: as a deliberate slight to Curzon and a rejection of his policy. Muslims understandably felt they had been betrayed by the British, who had, it seemed, caved in to Hindu militancy and their own internal rivalries.

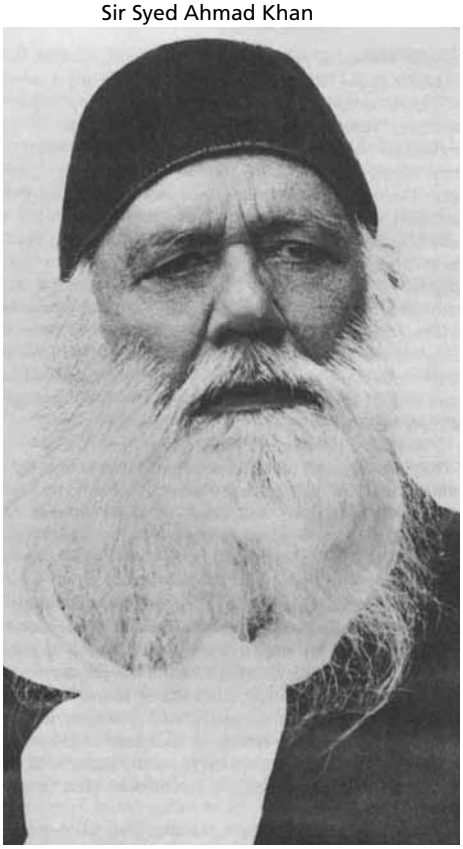
Jawaharlal Nehru

By 1914, therefore, India displayed many of the features that would characterise it by 1939: a nationalist movement split between Hindus and Muslims and a deep division within the Indian National Congress between moderates espousing non-violent protests and militants prepared to undertake terrorism and assassination. One can add on top of that a British administration which, while maintaining an outward show of control, was in fact rapidly imploding.

In ceremonial terms, the British Raj was at its most visually gorgeous in the years before 1914. This was vividly illustrated in the spectacular Coronation Durbar ceremony of 1911, in which George V as Emperor of India, sweating in full coronation regalia, received the public homage of India's ruling princes. Afterwards the Emperor and Empress stood in their finery at the balcony of Shah Jehan's Red Fort to show themselves as successors of the Mughals, before taking their seats on thrones prepared on the fort's flat roof. It was a breathtaking spectacle

India was therefore in the curious position whereby British rule both modernised Indian life but also distorted it and held Indian economic development back.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan



Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

of pomp and display, in a specially-constructed artificial town of tents and pavilions which, fittingly for an event largely created for media consumption, gave the event the feel of a film set. Ominously, for such a symbol of British imperial power, a number of the tents on the Durbar ground burned down. Moreover, the nationalist press criticised the opulent display as a gross waste of money that could have been devoted to more deserving causes. Even the ceremony itself carried a hint of the changing political climate: the Maharajah of Baroda, third most senior prince in India, in what was widely perceived as a public snub to the Emperor, turned up in frockcoat rather than full regalia, briefly nodded his head rather than bowing, and walked away smiling and twirling his cane.

The whole point of Britain's presence in India was to provide government and administration which, it was assumed, the Indians could not provide for themselves. In 1883, for example, the liberal Viceroy Lord Ripon had provoked a storm of controversy when he put forward a measure to enable Indian magistrates to hear cases with European defendants: to Europeans who only grudgingly accepted the idea of Indian magistrates at all, the idea that they should sit in judgement on Europeans was self-evident nonsense and the measure was duly withdrawn. However, this attitude enshrined a paradox: if British-founded institutions in India could provide Indian graduates, doctors, surgeons, nurses, teachers, lawyers and administrators, then at some point, it was reasonable to suppose, these people would rise to the top of their professions and be able to run them without further help or leadership from Europeans. In other words, Britain's policy of westernising the Indian professional classes in effect put a sell-by date on the Raj itself.

The weakness of Britain's claim to exclusive control of India was first revealed in the prosaically-named Indian Councils Act of 1892. This allowed for an indirectly-elected Indian presence on the ruling councils of India's provinces. Put like that it sounds a very minor concession to the INC's calls for greater participation in the administration of the country and it prompted splits between moderates and radicals over whether or not to have anything to do with it. However, limited though it was, the Indian Councils Act enshrined a principle of enormous consequence for British India. British rule was predicated on the notion that Indians, by their very nature, could not rule; the Act flatly contradicted that by conceding that some, albeit in a limited role, could. Once this was conceded, it would be almost impossible to reverse the policy; indeed it was more likely to accelerate.

Accelerate it did in 1909 when the Liberal Secretary of State for India, John Morley, produced with the Viceroy, Lord Minto, a set of proposals for reforming

Surendrenath Banerjea

the government of British India still further: still more Indians were to be elected to the provincial councils, which themselves would grow in size to accommodate them, while for the first time Indians were to be appointed to the Council of the Viceroy himself. If Indians were not debarred by race, creed or education from sitting on the Viceroy's Council then what, in due course, was to debar them from sitting in his chair? Well in time for the outbreak

Indian artillerymen on the Western Front, 11 June 1918. ©IWM (Q 8909)

of war in 1914, without realising it and in such a way that they could perfectly well pretend not to realise or to see it, the British had set in motion the process of handing power over to the Indians and rendering their own continued presence redundant.

The outbreak of war took India by surprise: like people in Britain, Indians had been expecting to see civil war break out in Ireland rather than a full-scale European war. Indian troops were enthusiastic about the prospect of serving their Emperor in battle and understandably interested to set eyes on the fabled land of Britain. In the early months of the war Indian troops, divided into two divisions named 'Meerut' and 'Lahore', played an important role on the Western Front: they were crucial to British success at Neuve Chapelle, for example, the nearest 1915 provided to a British victory in the trenches. Be that as it may, gradually Indian sepoys were disillusioned by the fighting in France, which was horrifyingly different from the type of fighting they were used to. The British authorities were aware of the danger to Indian morale and did what they could to improve it: George V provided the Royal Pavilion in Brighton as a hospital for Indian troops, thinking, perhaps somewhat naively, that it would make them feel at home. Instead, by 1915 increasing numbers of Indian troops were deliberately getting themselves wounded, usually in the hand, in order to get out of the trenches and the Indian Army units were finally redeployed to the Middle East.

The position of India's Muslim troops was more problematic. The British retreat over the partition of Bengal had disillusioned the Muslim League and a series of other developments, such as the Italian attack on Tripoli in 1911 and the attacks by the Balkan states on Turkey the following year, encouraged the belief among many Muslims that Islam itself was under attack from the West. A movement calling for a worldwide Caliphate – known as *khilafet* – took hold among many Muslim soldiers and it was fuelled when Turkey joined the war in November 1914 by a call from the Turkish Sultan for a Holy War against the infidel British. Muslim princes generally took no notice of the Sultan's call to arms – one is supposed to have made a paper dart of it: they were well aware that the Turkish government was actually in the control of the decidedly secular-minded Young Turks and that the impetus for the call came from the un-Islamic figure of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Nevertheless it did resonate among some Muslim soldiers in the Indian army, and there were sporadic instances of mutiny, including a very serious one among Muslim soldiers at Singapore, in which the Europeans had to be rescued by the crew of the German raider *Emden*, who were making their way back by a rather tortuous and adventurous route to Germany after the destruction of their ship.

In political terms, the outbreak of war seemed to provide Indian nationalists with an opportunity to gain concessions from the British by a very public demonstration of loyalty and commitment to the Empire. By 1916 the INC and the Muslim League had joined forces to campaign for Home Rule and a visit by the Secretary of State the following year appeared to suggest they might get it. The way in which the nationalist hopes of 1914 were to be dashed at the end of the war would take the British Raj into its bloody and traumatic endgame.

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The Yeomanry, 1913

Timothy Bowman

The Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars in Aylesbury Market Square c. 1912
Courtesy of the Buckinghamshire Museums Trust

The Territorial Force, as formed in 1908, had 54 cavalry regiments organised in 14 brigades and known collectively as the Yeomanry. This meant that the Yeomanry consisted of 1,168 officers and 23,049 other ranks in September 1913 out of a Territorial Force which numbered 9,390 officers and 236,389 other ranks. This is a massive figure when we consider the modest increases in the size of the current Territorial Army under the 2020 reforms. The failure to extend the Territorial Force to Ireland meant that two other auxiliary cavalry regiments, the North Irish Horse and South Irish Horse, were formed as units of the Special Reserve. This meant that, unlike Yeomanry regiments proper, they had a longer summer camp and undertook to serve overseas in the event of war. Indeed, it was squadrons of the North and South Irish Horse which were the first non-regular units of the British army to serve overseas in the First World War, forming part of the original British Expeditionary Force. Of the 54 Yeomanry Regiments only the men of the Northumberland Hussars had undertaken the Imperial Service Obligation committing themselves to overseas service in the event of war.

Originally formed in 1794 during the French Revolutionary Wars many Yeomanry regiments had been used in aid of the civil power throughout the early nineteenth century, most notably in the so-called 'Peterloo Massacre' of 1819 at St Peter's Fields in Manchester. A sizeable Yeomanry lobby in Parliament meant that the force continued into the later nineteenth century even when the establishment of regular police forces and the development of a proper railway network, enabling regular troops to be moved quickly to disturbances, rendered their service in aid of the civil power obsolete. The invasion scare of 1859, which saw the establishment of the Rifle Volunteers, brought about something of a revitalisation of the force and Britain's experience in the South African War justified the maintenance of a large force of auxiliary mounted infantry. Indeed, while the performance of cavalry in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars had been far from decisive the experience of the South African War saw the expansion of the Yeomanry in Britain. Some of the most famous Yeomanry regiments, such as Lovat's Scouts and the City of London Rough Riders, had been formed during the South African War.

Members of the Yeomanry undertook a number of evening drills, a series of weekend and Easter camps and a two-week training period in the summer. For this commitment men received very limited army rates of pay and a small annual bounty; few troopers would have received more than £3 a year for their Yeomanry service. However, the attraction of splendid full dress uniforms (the County of London Territorial Association found that £2 14s.9d. to £3 3s.9d. was needed to clothe a yeoman in 1908 as opposed to £1 3s.½d. to £2 2s.3d. for an infantryman), a rather glamorous mounted role and the opportunity to take part in a number of prestigious social events meant that the Yeomanry recruited much better than the Territorial Force as a whole, which was 22% under-strength on the outbreak of the First World War. The Yeomanry in 1913 had an establishment of 24,343 and were just 5% short of this.

Some Yeomanry regiments fitted the stereotype of the 'feudal force' raised by a great landowner from his servants and tenants who brought their own horses to camp; the newly raised Lovat's Scouts and Scottish Horse seem to have fitted this description; the Marquess of Tullibardine commanded the latter. Others were noted county 'class' units where members were proposed and seconded for membership and paid an annual subscription. Others were metropolitan corps where members, while normally middle class in background, had little experience with horses and relied on riding schools organised by their regiments to teach them to ride and horses hired by their regiment to provide them with training during camp.

With regard to the officer corps in the Yeomanry, some units retained a definite link to landed society. Indeed, in 1913, 57 members of the peerage were listed as officers in the Yeomanry. Of these, 28 were Honorary Colonels but this position should not be simply viewed as a meaningless local honour. For example, the Duke of Beaufort, who was Honorary Colonel of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, had served as an active officer in the regiment for almost 40 years, 17 as lieutenant colonel before resigning in 1904. In the Lanarkshire Yeomanry, where unusually the regimental history published in 1911 provides a detailed list of officers and their occupations, seven officers in the 1902-10 period owned large estates in the regimental area. However, the Yeomanry could not rely on traditional landed families for its entire officer corps. The Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars could count among their officers in 1913 a cloth manufacturer, a stockbroker, a solicitor, a barrister, a civil servant, a banker and an Oxford don along with Viscount Churchill and the then Major Winston Churchill. The Yeomanry seems to have attracted a lot of former regular officers, certainly in comparison with the numbers serving in infantry TF units; in August 1914, excluding honorary colonels and adjutants, the Yeomanry contained 57 former regular officers, 42 of them from cavalry regiments. By 1913, a few OTC products were gaining commissions in the force. For example, F. A. Mitchell of Oxford University OTC received a commission in the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars in February 1913 and the Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry received two second lieutenants from the Oxford University OTC in January 1913. The brigading of Yeomanry regiments on the formation of the Territorial Force in 1908 did little to increase the promotion prospects for Yeomanry officers. Only two of the 14 new TF mounted brigades were commanded by officers who had spent their entire military careers in the Yeomanry. Three other Yeomanry commanding officers were appointed to command mounted brigades but they all had previous service with the regular army.

The Yeomanry is often portrayed as some sort of 'feudal force', the officers being landed gentry and the other ranks their tenants and retainers. In fact, just as the officer corps was more diverse than expected, so was the rank and file. Some units seem to have managed to maintain a largely rural recruiting base. Lovat's Scouts and the Scottish Horse, formed in 1902, seem to have obtained most of their men from the tenants, keepers, stalkers and other retainers from the Highland estates. The adjutant of the North Irish Horse claimed, in 1913, that about 90% of the men were farmers or farmers' sons.

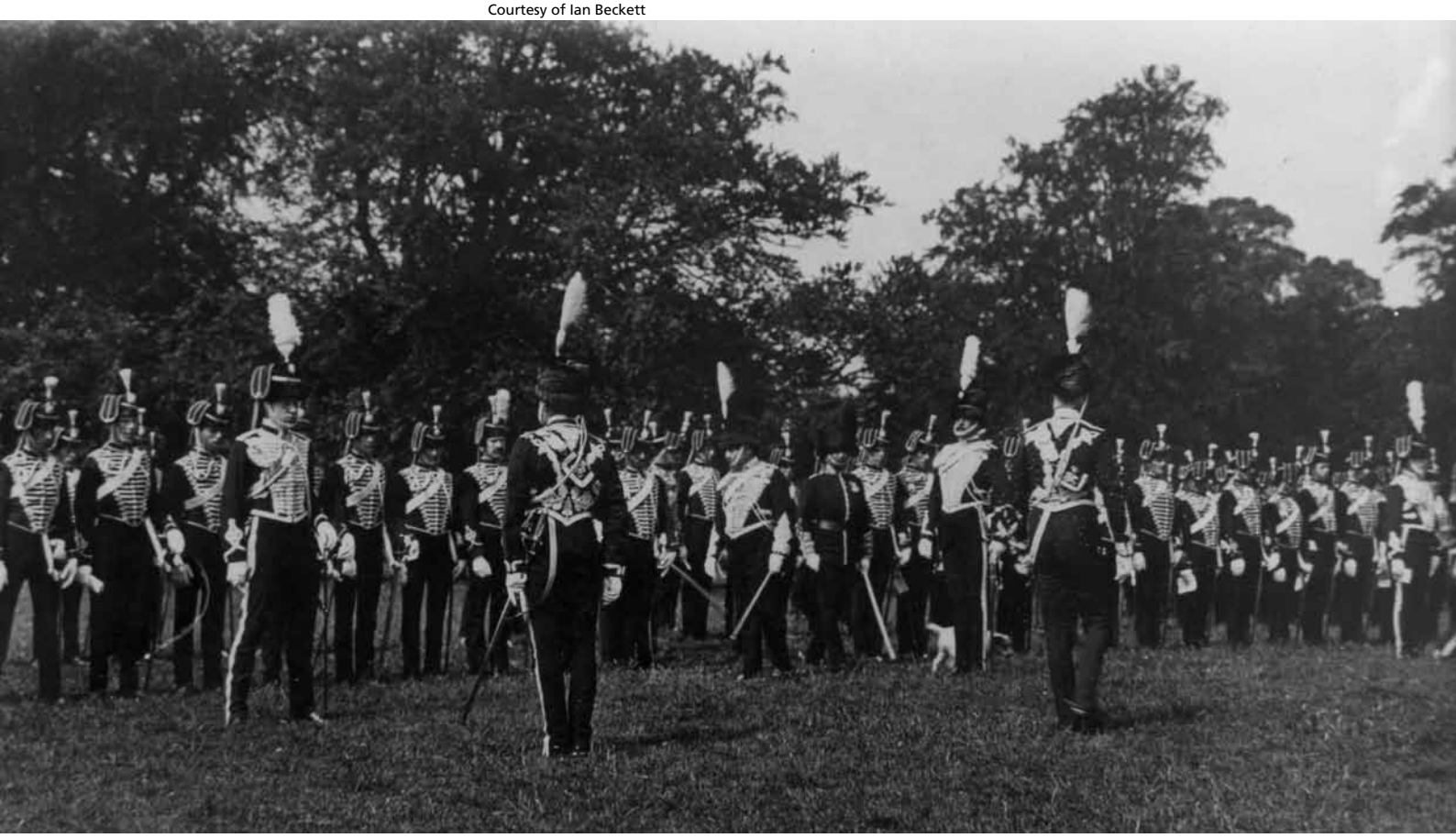
Elsewhere the social profile of Yeomanry regiments was more disparate. Colonel Lord Annaly of the Northamptonshire Yeomanry stated, 'We do not take anybody but choose principally farmers' sons and respectable young men from the towns. We have found some very fine recruits in the towns.' In 'A' Squadron of the Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry, where unusually a muster roll providing occupations survives, the numbers of farmers and non-farmers serving in the unit between 1902 and 1914 were almost evenly divided; 135 farmers to 132 in other occupations. The other occupations included traditional rural trades, such as shoeing smiths, blacksmiths and grooms but new professions and trades were also represented, there being, for example, an architect, three dental assistants, an electrician and a telegraphist. Regimental histories tended to make a point of emphasising how many members of the regiment owned their own horses, as a guide to the social pedigree of the regiment. Lieutenant General Sir Ian Hamilton, inspecting all 13 Yeomanry regiments in Western Command in May 1906, reported that around half of the other ranks owned their own horses.

Some Yeomanry regiments fitted the stereotype of the 'feudal force' raised by a great landowner from his servants and tenants who brought their own horses to camp

What is noticeable is that the Yeomanry, like other elements of the TF, had a high turnover of personnel. While men enlisted, in theory, for three years in the first instance, the so-called 'housemaid's clause' meant that any member of the TF could resign in peacetime giving two weeks' notice. The Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry tried to resolve this problem by introducing a series of graduated fines, designed to reimburse regimental funds for the cost of damage to uniforms and equipment by those who left before their minimum of three years' service. This meant that a man leaving within one year of enlistment would have to pay £6, which would fall to £4 within two years and £2 within three years. While this may have prevented men leaving before completing three years' service, the numbers re-engaging were not particularly good; in 1911 in the regiment there were still 54 discharges to balance against 69 recruits, which suggests that the personnel remained transitory. In 1913 only 34% of yeomen had more than three years' service in the force as a whole.

The rather *ad hoc* expansion of the Yeomanry during the South African War, with limited War Office supervision, meant that the force was not distributed throughout the country evenly, even with the formation of the new regiments in Surrey, Norfolk, Sussex, Glamorganshire, Lincolnshire, City of London (Rough Riders and Westminster Dragoons), County of London (Sharp Shooters and King's Colonials, later King Edward's Horse), Bedfordshire, Essex, North of Ireland, South of Ireland, Northamptonshire, the East Riding of

The Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars at Church Parade at their annual camp at Stowe in 1912.
Courtesy of Ian Beckett



Yorkshire and Scotland (Lovat's Scouts and the Scottish Horse). Cornwall, for example, did not have its own Yeomanry regiment, despite possessing a long and vulnerable coastline and the traditional social structure which one associates with the Yeomanry, although a squadron of the Devon Hussars was based in the county. Similarly, the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars recruited a squadron from Monmouthshire, the Denbighshire Hussars had a squadron in Caernarvonshire and a troop on Anglesey and the Northumberland Hussars had a squadron in Durham.

Yeomanry regiments organised a number of social events. Some of these had a definite military air, such as the large number of shooting competitions which were held. As an example, troopers in the North Irish Horse could compete, annually, in a rifle competition where the first prize was £5, a considerable sum at 1913 prices. Otherwise the Northamptonshire Yeomanry's annual sports day was a fixture for county society, with crowds reported in excess of 5,000 attending. In 1913 alone the East Kent Mounted Rifles organised a sports day, dinner, concert and ball. Around 120 members of the Canterbury Troop of the Regiment attended the Yeomanry Ball held in the County Hotel. The local press does not record the reaction of hotel guests to this event which went on to 2.30 am!

The Regiment's sports day, held on the last day of their summer camp, in June 1914 was evidently a popular event, with many spectators present. The programme offered was very varied, with a number of serious sporting events, such as a relay race, and humorous events such as the potato sack race and musical chairs, the latter given a military flavour by using bareback horses instead of chairs. The regimental band played throughout the day and clowns drawn from the 3rd Hussars also entertained the crowd.

A major problem for the Yeomanry, and the Territorial Force as a whole, by 1913 was the supply of horses. In some regiments drawn from rural areas, troopers were still able to provide their own horses. Though the adjutant of the North Irish Horse noted that many men, eager to gain the War Office allowances, had brought horses that were too heavy for cavalry work. Other Yeomanry regiments borrowed horses from regular cavalry regiments. This was the case in Easter 1913 when the East Kent Mounted Rifles borrowed horses from the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers) who were quartered in the cavalry depot in Canterbury. Otherwise the East Kent Mounted Rifles often turned out on bicycles rather than horses to weekend camps. The London Yeomanry Regiments appear to have relied on horses from the omnibus companies on a large scale, though presumably they were too heavy for proper cavalry training. Indeed by 1913 only one of the three London omnibus companies had not motorised, which severely limited the supply of horses available from this source, in time of war.

Therefore in peace time Yeomanry training must have verged on the shambolic on many occasions, due to the limited number of horses available. Anything above regimental training, often carried out at the stately homes of regimental colonels, seems to have been unusual. Although, with the introduction of the brigade system in 1908, there seems to have been a desire to see Yeomanry regiments camping in brigades one year in every three, this seems to have been frustrated on cost grounds and the desire of many local Yeomanry officers to hold their annual camps locally. The South Midland Mounted Brigade and 1 South West Mounted Brigade did take part in manoeuvres against each other at Salisbury Plain during their annual trainings of 1909 and 1910, possibly as the local G.O.C., Lieutenant General Sir Ian Hamilton, was a strong advocate of the Yeomanry. An attempt to form the four Welsh Yeomanry Regiments into a brigade for training purposes in Breconshire in Summer 1906 ended in farce, when it was found that the area selected for the camp was a peat

The Hertfordshire Yeomanry in the 1890s.

bog necessitating rushed regimental arrangements with local landowners in other parts of Wales. The experience of the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry seems more typical. It met for its annual camp every year between 1904 and 1914 at Lowther Park near Penrith, the home of the regiment's Colonel, the Earl of Lonsdale.

Opportunities for Yeomanry regiments to engage in training with regular cavalry regiments were even more unlikely. A rare case occurred in September 1903 when the Gloucestershire Hussars, Royal Wiltshire Hussars and Dorset Imperial Yeomanry furnished a squadron each to join the 2 Army Corps for the autumn manoeuvres. A 'blue' force comprised of the South Nottinghamshire Hussars, Sherwood Rangers and Derbyshire Yeomanry felt that it had performed well against a 'red' force, which included the Scots Greys in their annual camp at Salisbury Plain in 1910.

The place of the Yeomanry in the so-called *arme blanche* controversy concerning the use of cavalry in their traditional role as shock troops in a future war, is a rather confused one. When the Yeomanry was expanded in 1901 the decision was made not to issue the force with swords, although at least three regiments contrived to continue to carry swords for ceremonial purposes. The South Nottinghamshire Hussars, at their annual camp at Aldershot in 1903, made a point of parading in full dress uniform, without rifles and drilling as cavalry. Surprisingly though, in 1904 in the Mounted Scouts competition organised by the National Rifle Association, the Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry team won first prize, with the Westminster Dragoons coming second and the regular 18th Hussars coming third. This suggests that, at least in some Yeomanry regiments, the 'mounted rifle' training was of a very high standard. In 1909 the short magazine Lee-Enfield rifle was issued to the Yeomanry, but without bayonets. This meant that the Yeomanry had no offensive weapon beyond their rifles and so removed the possibility of shock action from their training. By 1912, the situation was no clearer. The Army Council noted that in the event of war, the Yeomanry would be utilised in a home defence role, 'in a country the nature of which practically precluded any possibility of the employment of shock tactics' but then stated that swords would be issued to the force on mobilisation.

Yeomen were more likely to attend annual camp in 1913 than the TF as a whole. In 1913, 92% of yeomen attended camp as opposed to 89% in other TF units. The attractions of holding camp in local stately homes was a marked one. For example, the local press reported on the experience of the Northamptonshire Yeomanry at Castle Ashby in 1904, remarking that it was, 'as acceptable in a military sense as it is picturesque and pleasant from a social standpoint.' However, the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars had a turnout of 458 men for their training at Salisbury Plain in 1909, as opposed to 449 at Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe in 1908, suggesting that attendance at normal military camps was still high.

Peacetime training did little to prepare Yeomanry regiments for war and while the Northumberland Hussars and Oxfordshire Hussars were serving with the British Expeditionary Force in France by the end of October 1914 many keen and enthusiastic yeomen found themselves relegated to boring home defence duties in the South East of England and East Anglia for much of the war. They were much luckier than the Yeomanry units which were sent to Gallipoli to serve as infantry, or 'Yeofantry' as they dubbed themselves, forming the 74th 'Broken Spur' Division. Most Yeomanry regiments were broken up to provide reserves for the infantry in France and Flanders in late 1917 but a number of regiments retained a mounted role, notably those who served in the Palestine campaign.

I would like to thank my former research student, Dr George Hay, for his help and advice in preparing this article. His Ph.D. thesis, 'The British Yeomanry Cavalry, 1794-1920' (University of Kent, 2011) is currently being revised for publication.

Further Reading:

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Bowman, Timothy and Connelly, Mark (2012) *The Edwardian Army: recruiting, training and deploying the British Army, 1902-1914*, Oxford University Press.

Mileham, Patrick (1994) *The Yeomanry Regiments: 200 years of tradition*, Edinburgh: Canongate Academic.

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Each man's life was worth 1sh 1d 1/2d!

Alf Wilkinson explores Britain's biggest coal mining disaster, at Senghenydd Colliery, in South Wales, in October 1913.

At ten past eight in the morning of Tuesday 14 October 1913, just after 900 men had started work underground, an explosion ripped through Senghenydd Colliery, near Caerphilly, killing 439 miners and, later in the day, one of the rescuers. Not a single house in the mining village was unaffected by the explosion. This was the biggest colliery disaster ever in Great Britain. The mine manager was fined £24 for breaches of the mines' safety code, and the owner just £10, with 5 Guineas' costs, for failing to fit reversible ventilation fans. Amazingly, this was not the first explosion in the pit – on 21 May 1901, 82 of the 83 men, and 50 pit horses, working underground at the time were killed in a similar explosion.

In 1891 when work began to sink a mine shaft in Senghenydd, it was just a small rural area – it does not appear in the census as a separate settlement. A row of corrugated tin huts was built to house those employed sinking the shaft, and these were still being lived in by some of the miners and their families in 1914. By 1897 there were rows of terraced brick houses clustered around the pit. In 1894 a three-and-a-half-mile branch line of the Rhymney Railway opened from Aber Junction, allowing the coal to be exported down the valley to ports such as Cardiff for export. The demand for Welsh steam coal was world-wide at a time when most ships were coal-burning. Coal was sent to bunkering ports throughout the Empire. The railway was closed by Dr Beeching in the 1960s.

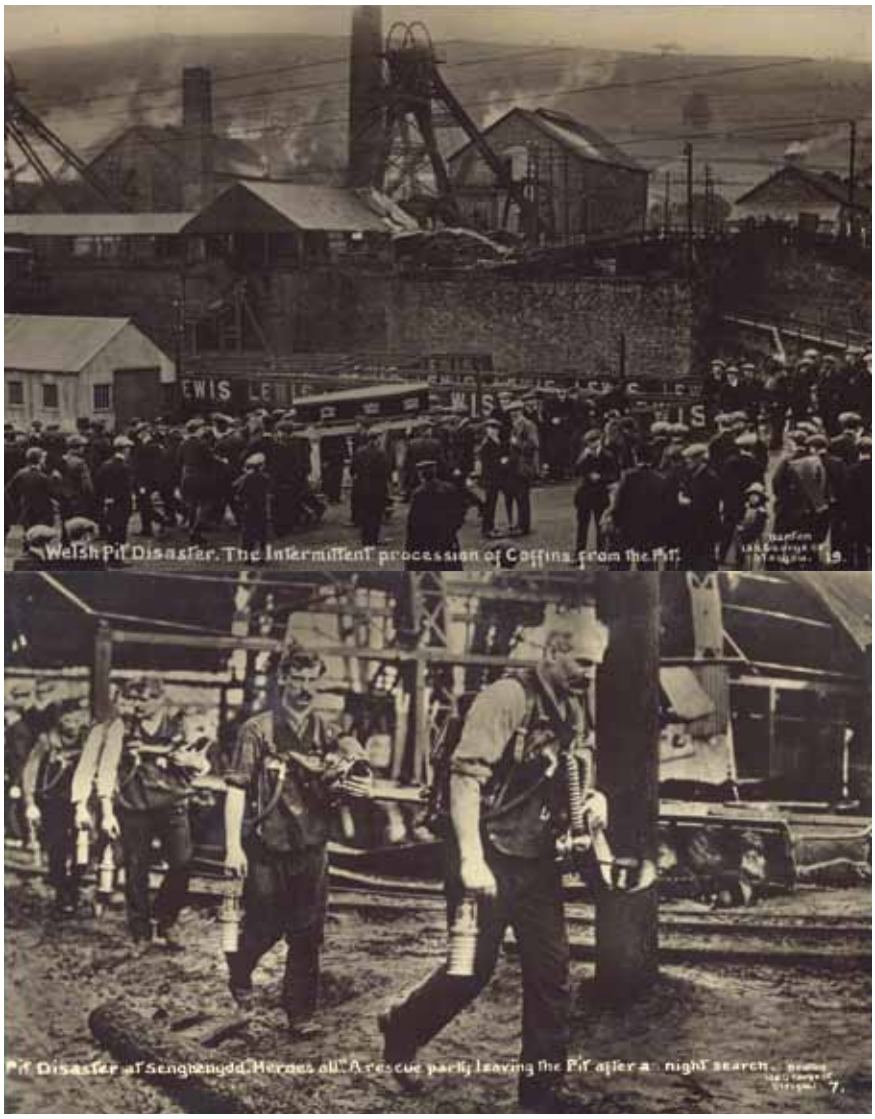
The Universal Steam Coal Company had started the colliery in 1891, and production began in 1896 when two shafts – Lancaster and York – stretched almost 2,000 ft underground. By 1900

the colliery was producing nearly 200,000 tons of coal per year. It was worked by the long wall method, and coal was removed to the shaft by horse-drawn tubs on rails. In some parts of the pit compressed-air-powered engines powered the coal tubs. Coal was then brought to the surface in the cages by winding gear. Senghenydd had a reputation as a 'gassy' pit.

When coal is removed from the seams, often, in 'gassy' pits, there is a build-up of 'firedamp' or methane, which is why effective ventilation is so important. In Senghenydd air was pumped into the pit at 200,000 cubic feet per minute via the Lancaster shaft and the stale air was exhausted from the York shaft. Each miner had a Cambrian Safety Lamp, although it appears the glass surrounds were not of the required standard. The 1901 explosion had been blamed on an explosion caused by 'firedamp' and the enquiry into the 1913 explosion suggested a similar cause, ignited by an electrical spark, probably from the signalling system.

The explosion occurred while nearly 950 men and boys were working underground, just after starting the morning shift. It was so powerful that the cage of the Lancaster shaft was blown up the shaft and lodged in the winding gear. The banksman, who controls the winding gear, was decapitated by a splinter – such was the force of the explosion. Nearly all those who died were working in that part of the pit – those eventually rescued, some more than two weeks after the initial explosion, were in the east or York part of the mine. There were several more explosions as the initial explosion lifted coal dust off the floor of the pit into the air thus generating more explosions and fires. Many were killed instantly, others died from 'afterdamp' – a combination of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen released by the explosions and fires.

Eventually 489 miners were rescued, leaving a death toll of 439 workers and one rescuer. Of those who died, many were so badly disfigured it was impossible to identify them. One, a boy, was only identified when his mother recognised a patch she had recently sewn on his vest. Another, Aaron Manders, was identified by his new pair of boots which he had worn for the first time that day. Another was identified by a champagne cork used in his water bottle that had been given to him by a friend. Of the dead, 63 were teenagers, of whom 23 were aged between 14 and 16; 162 were in their twenties. Ten were members of the village rugby team. In total, 542 children were left without a father, and over 200 women became widows. Scarcely a house in the village was unaffected by the disaster.



The Court of Enquiry, reporting in March 1914, suggested there was a strong possibility that the explosion started in the Mafeking face of the mine where heavy falls of coal and rock liberated a large volume of gas, and that this gas had been ignited by sparks caused either by the rocks falling or, more likely, by the signalling equipment. (Paragraph 112, Enquiry Report.) The lead Inspector, R. A. S. Redmayne, Chief Inspector of Mines, found it strange that, in a pit noted for large quantities of gas, naked sparks were used in signalling, suggesting this was tantamount to negligence on behalf of the owners, and against General (Mining) Regulation 132 which stated that in a pit with high gas levels naked sparking should not be used. He did say, however, that the only other possible sources of sparks could have been safety lamps or matches, but could find no evidence to support this being the cause of the explosion. Several other breaches of the Coal Mines Act 1911 were commented on – many trivial but, in the opinion of the Enquiry, 'taken in the aggregate they point to a disquieting laxity in the management of the mine.' (Paragraph 134, Enquiry Report.)

The findings of the enquiry into the 1913 explosion echo, to a surprising degree, the report into the 1901 explosion, which again said the explosion was caused by firedamp. This time, the direct cause was supposed to be a blasting shot prepared by two of the miners which ignited the gas and set off subsequent explosions and fires among the coal dust raised by the initial explosion. The report recommended better watering of the coal and coal dust, as a way of minimising the danger of explosion. The owners were given an extended deadline of 1 January 1913 to introduce improvements – a target, even when extended to 30 September 1913, they failed to meet. On top of this, new safety regulations set out in the Coal Mines Act 1911 had, as the enquiry discovered, not been fully implemented. Is this a case of profit before safety?

The mine began work again in November 1913 and reached full output

in 1916. The mine closed in 1928 – workers being given only one day's notice of closure. The colliery buildings were demolished in 1963 and the shaft was finally filled in 1979.

We often think that safety in coal mines improved after 1815 when Humphrey Davy invented the safety lamp and, increasingly throughout the nineteenth century, as Parliament enacted mining legislation limiting hours and improving safety. But as pits became deeper and bigger, employing more and more men, quite often the danger increased. Senghenydd might be the biggest mining disaster in British history, but in just that one year, 1913, 1,752 coal-miners died in accidents at work.

On 16 October 2013, one hundred years after the disaster, a Memorial Garden was opened to commemorate it. It contains a bronze statue, paid for by public donations, commemorating all Welsh coal miners who died digging coal. The Memorial Garden marks the spot where so many lost their lives in what might have been an avoidable tragedy.

There is a permanent exhibition about the 1913 explosion in the pit head baths at Big Pit National Coal Museum, Blaenafon, Wales.

There is also an online gallery at the Museum of Wales website:
www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/industry/images/?action=browse_category&category=2269
You can find a roll call of all those who died at:
www.healeyhero.co.uk/rescue/pits/Universal/Universal4.htm#top

Alf Wilkinson was born in a Durham mining village and has an abiding interest in the social history of the Industrial Revolution.

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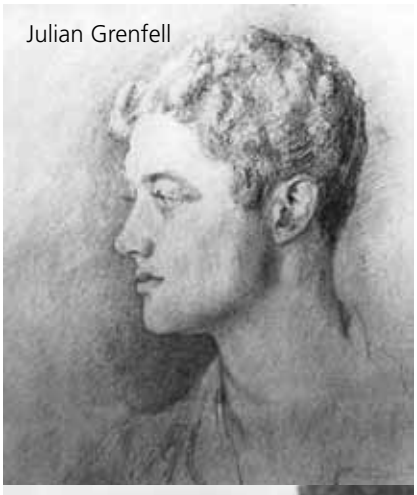

Julian Grenfell

Headstone of Yvo Charteris

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3 The last years of the outstanding Great War poet Edward Thomas, traced on a walk in the Hampshire countryside around Steep that inspired his verse, with readings from his poems.
4 The artistic achievement of Stanley Spencer, illustrated by a presentation on the cycle of paintings at the Sandham Memorial Chapel, and considered through a visit to the Stanley Spencer Museum at Cookham followed by a guided walk in the village were he lived and worked.

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An innovative tour to the Northern and Eastern areas of Sri Lanka [off-limits to tourists for nigh-on 30 years] will be led by the Johnstons using well-respected Executive Travel Group of St Johns Hill, London, SW11.

Denied to visitors for so long,experienced English-speaking guides will happily introduce Sri Lanka's 3,000 years of history, with its important strategic position,its diverse religions and languages,united with the common thread of British heritage. Even those who know Sri Lanka will find this a wholly-captivating experience in an ambitious programme of exploration of its two ancient capitals,Polonnaruwa and Anuradhaoura, the former RN Trincomalee dockyard, the Jaffna Penisula,Kanniya's seven hot springs and the great Jetavana Dagoba pyramid, taller than all but two of Giza's. For those unfamiliar, there is the possibility of a reasonably-priced three-day add-on in the south.

This is, for example,the second day of the Jaffna Town tour on Friday, 5 September 2014: we shall visit most of the main highlights of this atmospheric town;it is also justly famous for its food, lunch being included in an excellent restaurant to sample wholesome Tamil food. Traditional-walled houses around courtyards with notable ornate decorations lead to the Rosarian Convent (try the sisters' wine!) St Mary's Cathedral, the Vaddukoddal Portugese church and the war-scarred fort are only equalled by the numerous Hindu temples. There we shall visit the Nallur Temple to make puja [prayer] before pausing at a justly-famous ice-cream parlour.

Due to the limited amount of hotel accommodation in the northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka, early application should be made within a month of the publication of *The Historian* to Philip Johnston, preferably to philip@johnston1962.co.uk as soon as possible. Cheques made out to the Experience Travel Group (£444 per person) should be sent with an Application form to him, at his home: Town Head House, Long Preston, Skipton. North Yorkshire BD23 4QH

Cost is £2,342 for Dinner, Bed & Breakfast for 16 days and an additional cost of £383 per person (B&B) for add-on for three nights.The number of single rooms is strictly limited, dependent upon numbers, and preparedness to share would be both cheaper and appreciated!

The holiday is organised by Experience Travel Group. Your contract is with Experience Travel Group, a member of ATOL, AIT and ABTOT

Northern Ireland

23 September to 29 September 2014

Join Edward Towne and Charles Linfield for a seven day tour to Northern Ireland, based at Belfast's Europa Hotel, including an initial orientation tour of Belfast, visits to the City Hall and Opera House, the Cathedral Quarter and the newly opened exhibition called 'the Titanic Experience'. We shall also see Glenarm Castle with its walled garden, the Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Old Distillery. Further visits will be paid to the Ulster Museum, to Mount Stewart House and Gardens and to Hillsborough Castle (subject to availability). Beyond the Belfast area we will also see Castle Coole and Florence Court in the Enniskillen region, Armagh with its two cathedrals, and the walls and murals of Londonderry. On the final day we shall enjoy the Linen Hall Library in Belfast before flying home.

The provisional price of £725 (single supplement £150) includes six nights' bed and breakfast accommodation, two dinners, one lunch, all coach transport within the Province, guides in Belfast, Armagh and Londonderry and all entrance charges. Flights to Belfast are not included.

For further details please contact Charles Linfield at: 'Southfields', Bakers Road, Wroughton, Swindon, SN4 ORP, Tel: 01793 812464, email: linfield245@btinternet.com

Heritage Group Travel of Bath hold the contract and are fully protected by AITO and ABTOT.

My Favourite History Place

Beamish, the living museum of the north

Hopping off a tram at Beamish Museum, you're stepping straight into life in Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian times. What I really love about Beamish, the Living Museum of the North, is that it not only shows how communities in the region used to live – but also gives you a chance to experience it. You can hear the hiss of the steam engines, taste traditional fish and chips cooked on a coal-fired range, smell the carbolic soap in the Co-op and get a sense of life underground in the drift mine. Objects aren't encased in glass, there are no 'please don't touch' signs (which, as a parent, I really appreciate) and the whole family can enjoy discovering their history by spending time in it.

Beamish, in County Durham, opened in 1970, and was the brainchild of Dr Frank Atkinson. Frank, keen to preserve the north-east's heritage at a time when traditional industries were disappearing, had a policy of 'unselective collecting', meaning 'you offer it to us and we will collect it'. Years of collecting had resulted in an amazingly rich archive of items, which have allowed Beamish to bring the past to life across its 350-acre site.

I have very happy memories of coming to Beamish as a child, on school trips, and I now love visiting with my own family. The ever-expanding museum is visited by about 500,000 people each year and has exciting plans for the future including a 1950s town, upland farm, and overnight accommodation. I think it's wonderful that many of Beamish's buildings – such as the school, church, Co-op, pub, terraces of houses and band hall – have been moved from their original locations across the north east and rebuilt at the museum, preserving them for future generations. It's always fun travelling around the site on the 1.5 mile-long Tramway, which boasts a home fleet of eight trams and is an exhibit in itself.

I always think that walking along **The Town** street feels like you've wandered straight into life in Edwardian times – whether it's popping into the Co-op store (with its grocery, drapery, and hardware departments), or Ravensworth Terrace, home of the dentist, solicitor and music teacher. There's a sweet shop, Masonic hall, printer's workshop, garage, bank and pub. A bakery, making bread, cakes and other treats from traditional recipes, will open this summer. The Town stables and carriage house represent a jobmaster's yard, supplying horses and vehicles for a variety of tasks. Rowley Station, which was moved to Beamish from a County Durham village, usually offers steam-train rides during weekends in main season.

The Pit Village recreates life in a colliery community in the years before the First World War. It's fascinating to discover how mining families lived in Francis Street cottages, with their coal fires, outside 'netties', tin baths and proggy mats. Spot the communal bread oven in the back lane. You can go back to the classroom, under the watchful eye of the stern teacher, at the Beamish Board school, and visit the Methodist chapel. The newly-opened Hetton Silver Band Hall, originally built in 1912, was donated to the museum by the brass band. The building has been moved to Beamish and restored to its former glory. Another popular exhibit is Davy's Fried Fish Shop. I can definitely recommend the fish and chips, cooked in beef dripping on traditional coal-fired ranges!

In **The Colliery Yard**, you can take a trip down the drift mine and discover the reality of life underground. In 1913, the year of peak coal production, there were more than 165,000 men and boys employed in 304 mines in Durham. Visit the

lamp cabin, where miners collected their safety lamps, the wooden heapstead building and screens. The engine house has a steam winding engine, built by J&G Joicey & Co, of Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1855. It is the sole survivor of an engine type once common in the northern coalfield.

Visitors can travel back to Georgian times at **Pockerley Old Hall**, with its medieval strong house, which has roof timbers dating back to the 1440s, and the newer hall, built in about 1720. Take a trip through the Georgian landscape, representing the era that saw the birth of the railways. **Pockerley Waggonway** is home to replica locomotives Puffing Billy, Steam Elephant and Locomotion No.1. See the medieval Eston Church, which was saved from demolition and brought to the museum from its original site on Teesside. **Home Farm** represents the early 1870s, when Victorian farming was reaching its technical and industrial peak. Once part of the Beamish Estate, it was a highly-mechanised 'model farm'. After meeting the farm's animals, including cattle, pigs and poultry, and seeing its machinery, visitors often enjoy taking a seat by the fire in the cosy kitchen.
Throughout the museum, costumed staff bring the past to life, sharing their heritage and happy to chat and answer questions. It's all of these things that make Beamish my favourite history place. Not only are you learning about history, but you're connecting with it and immersing yourself in it, in a way that's truly unforgettable for people of all ages. Find out more at www.beamish.org.uk.

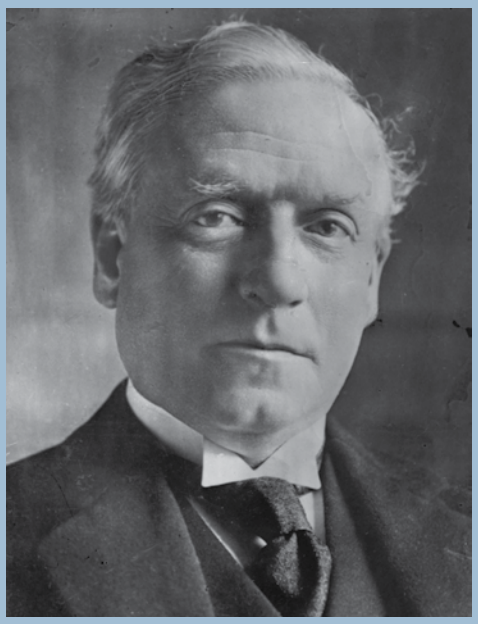
Julie Wilson is lucky enough to work at Beamish Open-Air Museum.

If you would like to tell us about your history place in a future edition of *The Historian*, in about 700 words, please email: alf.wilkinson@history.org.uk

H H Asquith in ten tweets

The Liberal Prime Minister in the years leading up to the First World War and until 1916

Summarising an event or person using ten statements of only 140 characters (including spaces!). Compiled by Paula Kitching



- Herbert Henry Asquith born in Morley, W Yorks 12 Sept1852. Studied at Oxford, then became a lawyer and in 1886 Liberal MP for East Fife.
- 1892 Gladstone appointed him Home Sec. 1906 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. 1908 he became Prime Minister.
- After a challenge to a budget to support welfare change & military spend he ended the H of Lords veto on finance, the 1911 Parliament Act.
- While most Liberals were in favour of women's suffrage Asquith opposed it and was a hate figure for many women.
- Asquith needed the support of Irish nationalists and supported Home Rule for Ireland nearly leading to civil war in 1912.
- In 1914 with the support of the King, Asquith declared war on Germany and entered WWI sending troops to France.
- His role as a wartime PM is mixed and he was ousted by Liberal MP Lloyd George in 1916 citing leadership failures at home and abroad.
- He married twice and had 7 surviving legitimate children. His son Raymond was killed in the Battle of the Somme 1916.
- He never held office after 1916 but continued to be involved as an MP and leading member of the Liberal party.
- In 1925 he became Viscount Asquith of Morley in the West Riding of the County of York and Earl of Oxford and Asquith. He died in 1928.

Follow the HA on Twitter @histassoc

Obituary – Eileen Castle

Mrs Eileen Castle graduated from Bedford College, University of London in 1959 and proceeded to a postgraduate Certificate of Education at Birmingham University. She achieved an MA in the Philosophy of Education and dedicated much of her life promoting historical knowledge and enquiry, encouraging enthusiasm and excitement in the learning of history. Eileen Castle set up various archive courses in Coventry Record Office which were supported by Warwick University Open Studies Department. She was a guest lecturer at the University of Warwick in the postgraduate education department and in the undergraduate history department, demonstrating the use of historical documents.

As Advisory Teacher for History and Archive Education in the city of Coventry she supported and researched various civic projects. Mrs Castle enabled a broad spectrum of the community to access the historical process from infant school children through to Ph.D. students, pioneering the use of local archive documents in teaching history. She demonstrated the richness and diversity of the Coventry Archives and in a project supported by English Heritage she brought to life characters from Elizabeth I's visit to Kenilworth Castle in 1575. She co-ordinated various living history projects with schools from Coventry and Warwickshire, involving specialist groups to create authenticity and atmosphere, and staff at the record office were more than a little surprised when individual children turned up with questions long after the events.

Mrs Castle did not allow teachers to be phased by the introduction of the National Curriculum for History, but

helped all to navigate through it in all key stages and for all abilities. Mrs Castle's academic rigour combined with enthusiastic approaches for studying history opened up history for all. She encouraged enquiry-led approaches and advocated the use of local resources to tie in with the bigger picture, as is evidenced by her setting up a history group in the village of Barby where she lived for some years.

Mrs Castle had been a highly-regarded secretary of the Historical Association Coventry Branch for many years, organising outings and socials and the local branch newsletter. Her contribution to both history and the Historical Association was recognised in 2006 when she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the association, at The Banqueting Hall, London, along with 23 professors of history and Lady Antonia Fraser.

In the final year of her life she was particularly delighted when her great-nephew graduated in history at Oxford University.

Eileen John
Coventry & Mid Warwickshire Branch

Out and About

in Letchworth:
A Social Experiment

Trevor James

Letchworth domestic architecture

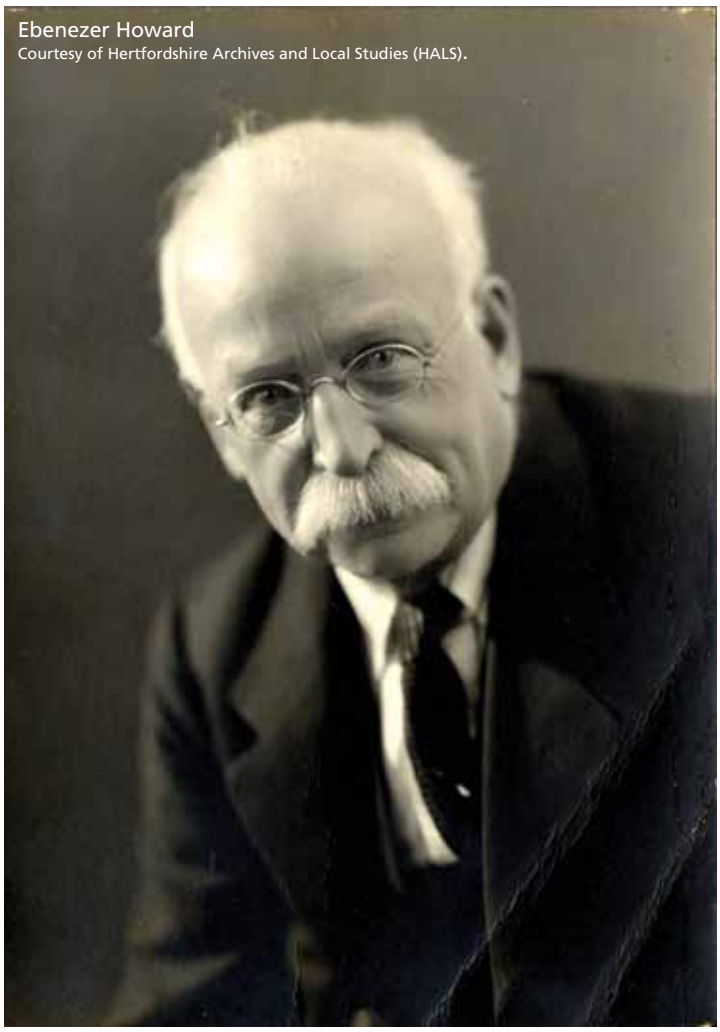
Ridge and Furrow at Norton Common in the middle of Letchworth

In a previous edition of *The Historian* (110, Summer 2011) we highlighted the mid-nineteenth century achievement of the industrialist John Dodgson Carr in creating the holiday resort of Silloth as a place of resort and recreation for his workers, and the wider workforce in Carlisle. So the seeds of trying to alleviate the living conditions of working-class people on a large scale had already been sown.

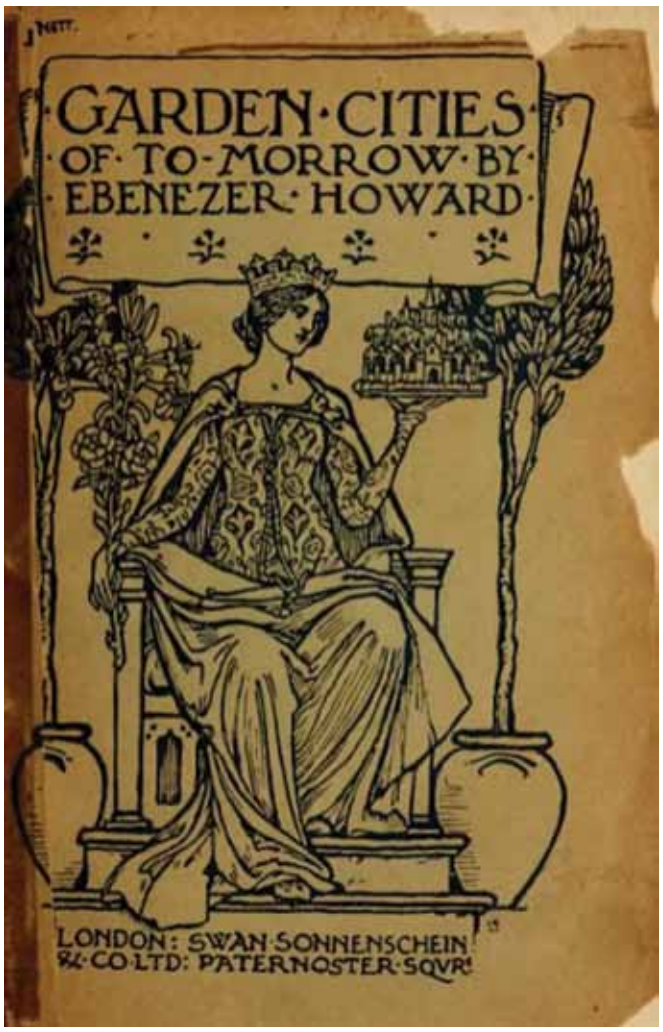
Towards the end of the nineteenth century well-motivated, and immensely wealthy, industrialists began to focus their attention specifically on the day-to-day living conditions of working-class people. Very specifically the Cadbury family created Bournville, on the edge of Birmingham, and William Hesketh Lever created Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, both as planned settlements to house workers in spacious and healthy living conditions. Planned villages around London were created, among which one was at Ilford with accommodation for 6,000 people.

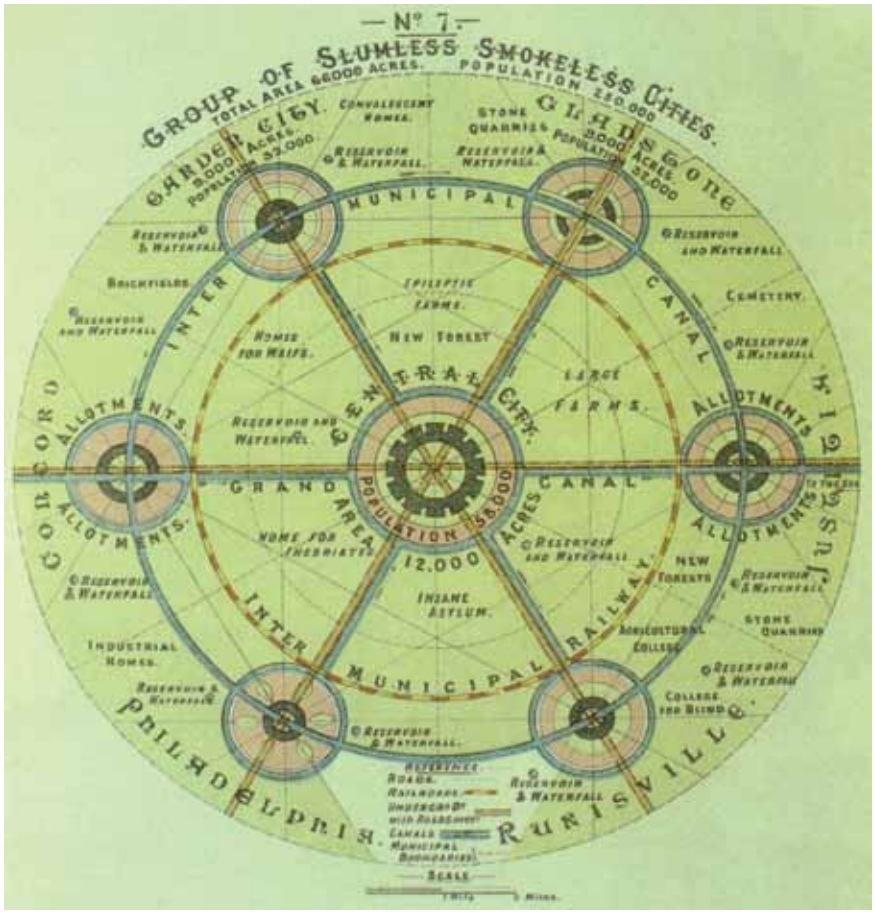
In the midst of these thoughtful and creative developments in 1898 Ebenezer Howard published his *Tomorrow: a peaceful path to real reform.* Its popularity and potency led to it being republished in 1902 under its now more familiar name of *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. Howard was not like the Cadburys or William Hesketh Lever; he was by occupation, by that time, a Hansard clerk in Parliament, and we would now label him a social theorist. The basis of his theory was that large-scale urban development would lead to social unrest unless ways of relieving the pressure of urban population growth could be achieved: his idea was new planned settlements in low-population-density rural areas. He believed that a concentrated effort with a specific target was needed. With the publication of his ideas Ebenezer Howard became the dominant figure in this form of social innovation and remained so until his death.

Under Howard's influence the Garden City Association was formed in 1900 and from this emerged in 1902 the Garden City Pioneer Company, later to be superseded by the First



Ebenezer Howard
Courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS).





Garden City. In line with Howard's thinking they purchased 23,000 acres of largely open countryside in North Hertfordshire in the parishes of Letchworth, Norton and Willian, thereby demonstrating their determination that their development would be well away from any hint of suburbia. The area to be developed only had a combined population of 566 at the 1901 Census but it was about to be transformed into Letchworth Garden City.

At its heart Letchworth Garden City was to be comprised of 1,250 acres of development, surrounded by a protective ring of 2,500 acres of farmland. The architects employed were Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, each of whom demonstrated long-term commitment to this project. They provided a plan which involved wide tree-lined avenues, with narrower tree-lined side roads, mostly with 'greens' as part of their provision. The main axis was Broadway which linked the newly-built railway station with Town Square. It was a proud boast of Unwin that in the whole of the initial construction work at Letchworth only one tree was felled.

People were attracted to Letchworth Garden City through 'Cheap Cottages Exhibitions' sponsored by the *Daily*

'Exhibition Cottages' Eastholm Green. An example of the original Garden City houses of 1905.

The northern wing of the Grade II-listed Spirella Building.

Howgills Friends' Meeting House, Garden City. Designed by architects Bennett and Bidwell, and built in 1907.

Mrs Howard Memorial Hall. Letchworth Garden City's first public hall was opened in 1906 in memory of Lizzie, first wife of Garden City pioneer Ebenezer Howard. It was designed by Parker and Unwin.

First Garden City Heritage Museum, Letchworth

Mail, where people could see what affordable housing might be like and what was available. Everything, such as all forms of utilities and leases, initially was managed by the First Garden City Company. There was no public house, indeed the prohibition of the sale of alcohol prevailed until 1958.

The houses were designed by Unwin and Parker and they are described as being loosely Art and Crafts, in cottage or Tudoresque style, with exterior rough cast, dormer windows and steep gable roofs, with low eaves, sometimes tile-clad. Inside they generally had three bedrooms, with a bath in the scullery and an external lavatory. Gardens were provided front and rear, thereby preventing them being overlooked.

Businesses were attracted to Letchworth, most notably the Art Deco-designed Spirella Corset factory which opened in 1920. Growth of the Garden City was relatively slow, with its population reaching about 10,000 by 1921.

For any sceptic who just wonders about the claim that Letchworth was planned to occupy a previously agricultural landscape, in their highly recommended *Hertfordshire: a landscape History* (2013) Anne Rowe and Tom Williamson provide a photograph of what they describe as well-defined 'ridge and furrow' which survives on Norton Common in the middle of Letchworth. This surviving fossilised landscape survived enclosure because it was land set aside for grazing by minor landowners, and so it is an unexpected survival in an unexpected place.

Why is Letchworth Garden City so significant? It developed its own culture and still celebrates its own 'special' and unusual status. A visit to the First Garden City Heritage Museum reveals aspects of its life and expectations, in for example a tapestry created locally to celebrate the original foundation of the Garden City. Also Niklaus Pevsner commented that, while winding streets, open areas of grass and retention of mature trees have become part of normal town planning practice since the early days at Letchworth, 'it should not be forgotten that they were for the first time systematically followed at Letchworth'. Letchworth is also the model for similar developments abroad and countless visitors continue to arrive to see the original formation of the 'Garden City' concept.

Letchworth Garden City was not the only achievement of Ebenezer Howard. He is equally celebrated elsewhere in Hertfordshire at Welwyn Garden City, of which he was also the inspiration, and indeed that is where he died in 1928.

Further reading

Rowe, Anne and Williamson, Tom (2013) *Hertfordshire: a landscape history*, Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press. ISBN 978-1-909291-00-3.

Useful websites

www.ourletchworth.org.uk
www.ourwelwyngardencity.org.uk

The
Historical Association

The voice for history

Annual Conference

Friday 16 May – Saturday 17 May

Holiday Inn, Stratford upon Avon

history.org.uk