DEATH OF THE REPUBLIC

JULIUS CAESAR

How Rome's infamous ruler seized power in the name of the people

MARY BEARD SPEAKS

BUILDING THE BIG APPLE

The rise and rise of New York's skyline

TAMERLANE'S REIGN OF TERROR

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Welcome

If you visit the ruins of the Roman Forum today, it is easy to be awed by the faded glory of the crumbling columns, weather-beaten bas-reliefs and spared of former civic buildings. But if you look past the better-preserved relics in the main square, you may notice a mound tucked behind a low wall. You’ll know if you’ve found it because on any given day the sycamore sap is plied high with bouquets of flowers, like a fresh grave.

In fact, the keepers of our guides will tell you that it’s Caesar’s grave, but the Roman ruler was just cremated there and his ashes were buried in his family’s tomb. Rather than a grave, this mound is what is left of the Temple of Caesar. This is where Romans would gather to worship their former leader as a god.

That is a man who seized control for himself, ending democracy in favour of imperial power, can be so revered that people still leave offerings 2,000 years later might seem odd. However, as celebrity classicist Mary Beard -- fresh from filming hit new BBC series Civilisations -- explains in our in-depth feature, Caesar was a skilled politician who knew how to win over the people with slick sound bites and populist policies. Turn to page 32 to learn more!

Jack Parsons
Editor

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DARING TO DREAM

Martin Luther King Jr. delivers a speech to a crowd of 7000 in Berkeley, California. A staunch advocate of nonviolent protest against civil injustice, the Good Shepherd of the Hills leader led the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and the March on Washington in 1963, where he made his famous ‘I Have a Dream’ speech. In 1964 he won the Nobel Peace Prize. This month marks 50 years since King’s assassination by a sniper in Memphis on 4 April 1968.
SUMO SMACK DOWN
Japanese heavyweight wrestlers face off in a rare glimpse of the country’s pre-1945 rapid industrialisation. The image was taken by Shiroh Itano Hokucho, who was one of the world’s first war photographers. He shot the Crimean War and rebellions of India and China before going to Japan. It was here that Itano also learnt hand-colour film images by applying Japanese watercolour painting and pencil drawing techniques.

1877
WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

As part of Hitler's "final solution," Polish Jews were confined to one walled-up district in Poland's capital city to await transportation to death camps. However, from 19 April 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto chose to fight back. It was ultimately a one-sided battle but rather than killing the 3,000 inhabitants in three days as planned, they held out for 28 days, inspiring similar rebellions in other ghettos and concentration camps.

1943
DEATH OF FRANCO
A small boy waves the far-right Estelada flag at the funeral of Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco, who died on 20 November 1975. The authoritarian leader was buried at the Valley of the Fallen mausoleum — a colossal memorial built on the orders of the Generalísimo by political prisoners, many of whom died in the process. Franco ruled Spain for 36 years, coming to power after the Spanish Civil War.
1975
DAWN OF THE TANK AGE

Armoured tanks were first used during World War I. While these early models were extremely slow and prone to break down, their increased mobility eventually took the advantage of trench warfare. The first 'tanks' were deployed by the British at the Somme in 1916 and the tank played a key role at the 100th anniversary of the first tank-in-action battle, when the British Mark IV clashed with German Panzer at the Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, pictured.
“Right action is better than knowledge; but in order to do what is right, we must know what is right.”

Charlemagne

This warrior chief united Medieval Europe and presided over a cultural revival, but slaughtered Saxons and imposed his will at sword-point

Face a Caroline Cavalryman

Explore the Palatine Chapel

Battle of Roncavaux Pass

Holy Roman Renaissance
Life and times of Charlemagne

From Frankish prince to Holy Roman Emperor, the so-called Father of Europe reshaped the continent.

BIRTH OF A KING
Charlemagne was the son of Frankish king Pepin the Short. The date of Pepin's marriage to Bertrada of Laon has been reported as 741 and 745, so there is a possibility that he was illegitimate.

RISE TO POWER
Charlemagne ascended the Frankish throne jointly alongside his brothers Carloman, after the death of their father. Their first son, Pepin the Hunchback, was born the same year.

RECONQUERING AQUITAINE
By crushing the rebellion led by Harold I, the son of the former Duke of Aquitaine, Charlemagne kept control of the duchy. Carloman refused to participate, leading to mounting hostilities between the two rulers.

RULING ALONE
After Carloman's sudden death, Charlemagne became the sole King of the Franks. Carloman's demise was convenient as the brothers were close to all-out war.

EXPANDING THE EMPIRE
Charlemagne began his campaign against the Saxons, conquering the region of England first. However, his attention was soon diverted two years later with his invasion of Lombardy in northern Italy.

FURTHER CONQUEST
Growing concerned that he needed to secure the eastern border of his empire, Charlemagne successfully battled the Avars and conquered their land along the Danube River.

MONEY MATHS
12 DENARR = 20 SOUS made up one pound of silver.
240 DENARR = was equal to one pound.

THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE
Charlemagne instigated a series of educational reforms across his expanding empire. He insisted that bishops open schools at cathedrals, while he built a palace school at Aachen for his family.

DIVIDING POWER
The king decided to promote his sons to positions of authority. Charlemagne named his two youngest sons, Carloman and Louis, as the kings of Italy and Aquitaine respectively.

A RARE DEFEAT
Charlemagne invaded Northern Spain but failed to beat the armies of the Muslim rulers. Eventually forced to leave, the king's forces were infamously ambushed at the Battle of Roncesvalles.

LENGTH OF CONQUESTS
Charlemagne's successful military campaigns against Lombardy and Boston only took 1 year each. He spent 5 years of the Americas. The Spanish War was the Frankish's longest-ever campaign.

SAVING THE DAY
When King Desiderius of the Lombards began invading the papal cities of Rome, Charlemagne not only stopped him but successfully conquered Lombardy as well.

CROWNING GLORY
Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne the first Holy Roman emperor in Rome. The pontiff hoped to restore the Western Roman Empire, while the coronation supported Charlemagne's imperial ambitions.

CHARLEMAGNE'S FAMILY
At least 4 illegitimate wives during his lifetime. He supposedly fathered 18 children.

BYZANTINE BREAKTHROUGH
The emperor in the East, Michael I, mostly acknowledged Charlemagne as an emperor 12 years after his coronation. However, Michael refused to recognize him as a Roman emperor.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
Charlemagne crossed his only remaining legitimate son, Louis the Pious, as his co-emperor and King of the Franks. Louis had been the king of Aquitaine since the age of three.

DEATH OF AN EMPEROR
After his death, Charlemagne was buried at Aachen. He died just over 45 years after ascending the throne as King of the Franks and was subsequently buried in the Palatine Chapel.

IMPERIAL STATS
- Doubled: 20 million
- Estimated to have lived in the empire at its height
- 30 years before Charlemagne died, 14 of his grandchildren were still alive.

Charlemagne's laurel crown is a symbol of the second European Empire in 774.
How to CONQUER THE SAXONS

USE CHARLEMAGNE’S TACTICS TO CRUSH YOUR HEATHEN ENEMIES AND BUILD YOUR MAGNIFICENT EMPIRE SAXONY, 772-804

Charlemagne expanded his empire through a series of successful military campaigns, with the conquest of Saxony one of the most crucial. The ruler believed it was his duty to spread Christianity across Europe and the Saxons continued to cause his borders to conduct raids on his lands, provoking his anger.

Charlemagne defeated a number of rebellions from those who resisted the conquest, led by the rebellious Saxons under Widukind. At the same time, he issued administrative reforms to bring Saxony into the Frankish Empire. As a total, it took him over 30 years to fully consolidate his control over the region.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED...

- Christianity
- Army
-Treaties
- Persuasion

1. INVADE SAXON TERRITORY

In retaliation for a raiding party crossing your border to attack and burn a church in Dover, march on Saxony in January 732. Bring as many men as you can muster, so that you can quickly capture and subjugate the region of England. Once this is secured, use this as a base of operations while you continue your military campaign up to the Weser River.

2. PREPARE FOR THE LONG HAUL

While the Carolingian force is militarily superior, the Saxons won’t accept defeat easily – this campaign will take three years to win. Take Saxons to your capital as you make your way through the territory as well as build your own fortresses, just as Charlemagne captured Egenburg, the Saxons’ largest refuge castle, in 772 and later established Karlstadt.

3. CONVERT TO CHRISTIANITY

Before they can conquer the Saxons, they need to convince them to convert. Charlemagne found that the Saxons were more receptive to Christianity when they were under pressure. He used this to his advantage and converted many Saxons to Christianity.

4. MASSACRE THE REBELS

Every time you think you’ve successfully conquered the Saxons, they will rise up again. Charlemagne found that they had to grow over time to suppress the rebels, shifting from taking a few ad hoc hostages in 772 to slaughtering 4,500 rebel prisoners of war in 788. Consider being merciful from the beginning to prove you mean business.

5. BUY A CHEIFTAIN’S ALLEGIANCE

When a Saxon leader agrees to be baptized, grant them land and a title. This will lead them to join you financially while they act as your local enforcer. This worked so well for Charlemagne that the last Saxon uprising, the Saxon rebellion, was put down by Saxons.

6. PAX CAROLINGIA

With the rebels either dead or defeated, and the nobility on your side, you will finally have a reign of peace. To cement your rule and integrate the Saxons into the empire, implement their laws and customs. The Treaty of Frankfurt was a series of laws that renounced the Saxons’ customs while remaking pagan practices and proclaiming the rights of the Church.

4 FAMOUS ENEMIES OF CHARLEMAGNE

AQUITAINES
- Charlemagne conquered Aquitaine in 789 when the latter led a revolt in an attempt to regain the duty of Aquitaine, which once belonged to his father.

LOMBARDS
- Charlemagne was involved in the conflict between the King of the Lombards and the pope. In the ensuing war, he conquered Lombardy in 772.

ANDALUSIAN MUSLIMS
- Seeking to spread Christianity, Charlemagne campaigned against the Moors in Spain in 777 but was eventually forced to retreat.

AVARS
- To secure the frontier of his empire along the Danube river, Charlemagne fought a long and devastating war against the Avars in 757 and 788.
A CAROLINGIAN CAVALRYMAN

THE ANATOMY OF

WARRIORS, WESTERN EUROPE, 8TH-9TH CENTURY

CHAIN MAIL SHIRT

BATTLE NEEDS

Mail hauberk were the most common form of
body protection between the fall of Rome and the
emergence of the Middle Ages. Contemporary
similar armors, such as the Oettinger
Pattered, also suggest that cavalrymen wore
carapace- or even cuirass-style cuirasses.

EXPENSIVE SWORD

A CUT ABOVE

While it is likely that regiments would
use local blades when charging, more
Carolingian cavalry were equipped with
a three-pronged weapon to defeat their
enemies. The large, sharp-edged tip
pointed downward, while the two
shorter edges were angled outward, to
protect during charging. As a result, the
sword’s weight turned the fighter
into a terrifying weapon.

CIRCULAR SHIELD

ALL-ROUND PROTECTION

Carolingian cavalry carried circular
wooden shields that protected the
entire body from the back to
the thighs. All were important
for their defensive strength,
with the enemy
sometimes seen
in leather and
worn as an extra
sleeve of armor.

ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

FINESSE OR FIGHT

Chariot units are depicted
wearing a two-piece coat of
chainmail that extends
below the knees, and
armor that covers the
arms and shoulders.

IRON HELMET

HEADS UP!

Carolingian cavalrymen wore
helmeted with a visor to
provide protection for
the eyes and face. This
helmeted also
an extra layer of
protection.

NOBLE BIRTH

WELL-BORN

Carolingian cavalry were
acknowledged as well-born
citizens and were often
employed in the highest
civil and military
positions. This was
recognized by
their exclusive
access to
golden
armor.

FIGHTING FORCE

HEROIC NATURE

The Carolingian army was
fearless and feared, with
their skill and
aggressive tactics
earning them the
title of “The
Carolingian
Cavalry.”

Leaving the way
with History.
PALATINE CHAPEL

AACHEN, GERMANY, 792

While Charlemagne ruled from a number of cities and palaces, he spent a significant amount of time in Aachen, a city in western Germany. From the 790s onwards, he set about making it his imperial capital. Aachen was ideally suited because it was at the heart of his mighty kingdom with important roads connecting it to the Rhineland and northern Gaul. The city was also a former Roman settlement with its own traditional baths, symbolically conflating Charlemagne’s rule with that of the ancient emperors.

To establish his seat of power, Charlemagne built a royal complex covering 50 acres that included a palace, a law court and the Palatine Chapel – the latter of which was designed by Frankish architect Odo of Metz. The king’s own private chapel, it was a domed octagon with a 16-sided ambulatory, an imperial box containing a marble slab throne, and two wheeling staircases that led up to the twin towers.

Considered one of the best examples of Carolingian architecture, it fused ideas from Byzantine basilicas, Roman ruins and Jerusalem. In fact, Charlemagne even bought materials and craftsmen from these distant lands to build his grand church. Its vaulted interior was the highest in northern Europe for centuries.

In 805, Pope Leo III officiated consecrated the palace and Charlemagne was buried underneath it in 814. While the first Holy Roman emperor wasn’t crowned there, it was the venue for the coronations of 30 German kings spanning almost 600 years between 936 and 1531.

Although the Palatine Chapel is one of the best-preserved Carolingian buildings that survives today, it has been altered over time. For example, a stained glass window was added in the 15th century and the structure now forms part of the larger Aachen Cathedral.

Art on display
Connecting the Palatine Chapel to the imperial palace was the pontic, a type of porch. Inside it, Charlemagne exhibited all the treasures he collected from the provinces he conquered during his rule. Many of these can be still seen on display today thanks to the Aachen Cathedral Treasury.

Religious decoration
The chapel’s original ceiling mural was supposedly a depiction of Christ enthroned, with purple robes and surrounded by the 24 elders from the Book of Revelation. Foreign artists, brought to Aachen by Charlemagne, most likely made this mosaic, although it doesn’t survive today. Instead, the mosaic that now decorates the chapel’s 19th-century re-creation by Antoni Salver is, following the designs of Belgian architect Jean-Sébastien de Béthune.

Under fire
When it was built, the chapel’s dome was the largest north of the Alps. In 1556, a fire destroyed the entire roof and when the dome had to be completely rebuilt, it was made taller than before. But under three centuries later, the cathedral was heavily damaged as a result of artillery fire by Allied forces during World War II. Thankfully, the main structure survived and many of the treasured objects had already been moved for protection – however, it took over 50 years to restitute the building completely.

Imperial inspiration
There are eight supporting pillars within the chapel. Made from porphyry marble, Charlemagne imported the expensive material from Ravenna, Italy, emphasizing the influence of the city’s basilica of Saint Vitus. He based his design on the design of the Palatine Chapel, as well as from Rome. Porphyry marble was purple, the expensive colour of royalty, aiding further symbolism to its use in the construction of the chapel.

Byzantine influence
The octagonal shape of the chapel was influenced by the Byzantine style found at the basilica of San Vitale and remains at the heart of the cathedral. Although many of the additions to the chapel are from a later date, the octagon is the original structure from the time of Charlemagne.

Charlemagne’s bones
The Prosepalta sarcophagus, which is currently displayed at the Aachen Cathedral Treasury, is not original dating Charlemagne’s lifetime. Made from marble, it was created during the early 13th century (c. 1220) in Rome, around 500 years before the death of Charlemagne. However, it has been argued that he was possibly interred in the sarcophagus after his death in 814.
The Battle of Roncevaux Pass has gone down in history as one of the few defeats of Charlemagne’s reign. Returning from the failed invasion of Spain, the Carolingian army was retreating through the Pyrenees when they suffered a surprise attack by the Basques. It was a disaster for the king, as his rearguard was cut off from the rest of the army and slaughtered as they fought back. The battle has gone down in Medieval legend thanks to the epic poem The Song of Roland which romantically recites the tale of the military commander Roland, and his heroic battle.

The Long Stretch
Charlemagne and his men reached the Roncevaux Pass and began to make the long, arduous walk across into France. The rearguard had been placed at the back to protect the rest of the troops and supplies. The path was narrow and heavily wooded, so the journey was likely uncomfortable for the soldiers as they made their way through the cramped conditions.

Under Attack
When the army continued through the mountain pass, they were ambushed by Basque tribes. The Basques had been left unattended after Charlemagne had damaged Pamplona and a number of other cities belonging to them and had followed the Carolingians to seek revenge. The king and his troops had not anticipated such a bold attack and were consequently unprepared.

Deadly Chaos
Having gathered in the dense woods of the mountains, the Basques quite literally had the upper hand. Trapped in the confined pass, the Carolingians scrambled to escape the enemy and save themselves from the ambush. Charlemagne attempted to organize his army in order to get them out as quickly as possible, aware that they were at a great disadvantage.

Lone Wolves
In the midst of the chaos, the Basques had managed to completely isolate the rearguard from the rest of the army. To save the king and the rest of the most time to escape, the rearguard, led by noble military commander in waiting Roland, held the Basques off for as long as possible—not an easy feat in the evening darkness.

A Heroic Sacrifice
Charlemagne and his troops just about managed to get out of harms way but at a great cost. Every single member of the Carolingian rearguard was brutally massacred and the Basques looted their supplies before escaping under the cover of night. It was a humiliating defeat for the king, who consequently did not attempt another Spanish invasion for several years.
Hall of Fame

HOLY ROMAN RENAISSANCE

From abbots to architects, meet the great minds who were responsible for Charlemagne’s cultural revival

PAULINUS II OF AQUILEIA
ITALIAN (629–683)

Paulinus joined Charlemagne’s court around 768, after the king defeated an uprising in Frisia, Lombardy. Despite the king’s conquering of his native home, Paulinian proved to be a loyal and trusted follower of Charlemagne. In 787 he was appointed as the archbishop of Aquileia, a role he remained in until his death around 15 years later. As an archbishop, he promoted the spread of Christianity around the empire as one of the fundamental aspects of the Carolingian Renaissance.

ALCUIN OF YORK
FRANKISH (735–804)

Alcuin was a scholar and leading figure of the Carolingian Renaissance. He was originally a deacon at York Cathedral before accepting an invitation from the king to join his royal court, after the pair met in Italy. Alcuin became the master of the palatine school at Aachen where he set up a magnificent library. He was personally responsible for training Charlemagne’s children and other members of the court for years and developed a close relationship with the king. Alcuin played a crucial role in the formation of the Carolingian Renaissance before becoming the abbot at Saint Martin’s monastery in Tours.

SAINT ANGILBERT
FRANKISH (740–814)

Born into a noble family, Angilbert was educated at Charlemagne’s court, most likely by the eminent scholar Alcuin. He displayed incredible talents as a poet, which led to his role as court and Charlemagne’s personal secretary, earning him the title of “Master”. Some of his verses – including a poem created for the king, Ad Carolam regem – provide an understanding of the royal court that remains useful today. A prominent supporter of Charlemagne’s education reforms, he established a school at the monastery of Saint Riquier. He encouraged the Carolingian Renaissance and the flourishing arts were a testament to his success. He was later canonised in the 11th century.

PETER OF PISA
ITALIAN (1469–1540)

Peter was originally a member of an intellectual circle at the Lombard court during the reign of King Denis. Later, after its arrival, Peter had the distinction of becoming Charlemagne’s personal grammarian and Latin teacher during his time at the Carolingian court. As a tutor, Peter helped to develop the use of grammar that later became standardized with the creation of Carolingian manuscripts. Peter returned to Pisa in 796, where he spent the last three years of his life.

ODO OF METZ
FRANKISH (742–804)

As the architect for the Palatine Chapel at Aachen, Odo of Metz was responsible for the most iconic building of the Carolingian Renaissance, influenced by the style of the Byzantines. Odo’s design ushered in the Romanesque school of architecture. He is known for his work on Odo’s Chapel – in fact, he is only known as the chapel’s architect thanks to a reference in Einhard’s Vita Karoli Magni and the last inscription inside the building itself.

THEODULF OF ORLÉANS
SPANISH (760–819)

Theodulf was one of Charlemagne’s principal advisors and leading theologians, having joined his court during the late 780s. He worked closely with Alcuin and his works are considered to be a key contribution to the Carolingian Renaissance. Charlemagne himself patronized a number of Theodulf’s treaties, including the De Spiritu Sancto and the Liber Generis. After Charlemagne’s death, he took part in a failed revolt against the late monarch’s son, Louis the Pious. He had imprisoned in the monastery at Angers.

EINHARD
FRANKISH (770–840)

Einhard was a Carolingian scholar and historian, who produced a number of written works that still exist today. He was recruited for Charlemagne’s court around 798, at a time when the king was seeking capable scholars for his education reforms. Einhard became involved in architectural projects, such as the construction of the Palace of Aachen, as well as becoming a notable poet. However, he is best remembered for creating the Vita Karoli Magni, also known as the Life of Charlemagne. It is a largely accurate biography of the king and emperor, with valuable insights into life at the Carolingian court.

RABANUS MAURUS

Educated as a boy at the monastery of Fulda, Rabanus was sent to Charlemagne’s court before moving to Tours, where he studied under Alcuin of York. He then returned to Fulda, becoming the abbot there, and later was appointed to the monastery of Saint Riquier. His fame was widespread across the empire – he created a number of different works, including poems, letters, treatises, scriptural commentaries and treatises.
HISTORY ANSWERS

Did Charlemagne speak French?
Matthew Brown

Though it is a French king's name, the name Charlemagne is actually German, a language that goes way back to the modern Teutonic tongues. Apart from its Nordic language, the early Roman empire also spoke Latin, which was the official language of the Church and government. It was only when Charlemagne conquered a lot of German, though, that the word it is uncertain. He was unable to offend and his ability to read it has also been questioned.

What is Carolingian minuscule? Harry Tobin

Carolingian minuscule was developed in the late 9th century under the influence of Charlemagne and was named in his honour. As it was clear, refined and easy to render, Carolingian minuscule became an instrumental part of Charlemagne’s educational reforms. By the early 10th century he had established it as the standardised script across the region and spread throughout Europe, remaining popular until the 12th century. By 976, it had already replaced the older Carolingian in the Western Church. Carolingian minuscule not only revolutionised the writing of localised letters and improved legibility between words, but it also allowed the use of the brevity of Carolingian and formed the basis for writing systems today.
Julius Caesar was born in July 100 BCE, although the month “July” was not yet named after him, and was called Quintilis. Carthage had been destroyed in 146 BCE, and the power of the Greek city had cowed into submission, leaving the Roman Republic dominant all around the Mediterranean, but all was not well. A few months later, political unrest led to a massacre in the Roman Forum. However, this was not the first outbreak of such violence. In 80 BCE, a popular political movement by the name of Tiberius Gracchus had been brutally beaten to death along with many of his supporters.

Wrote was to follow. When Caesar was 12 years old, a disgruntled general by the name of Sulla turned his legions on Rome and installed control of the city, killing his opponents and anyone who dared to resist in his way. Sulla then departed to fight a war against Mithridates, king of Pontus in northern Turkey. Barely a year later, Rome found itself being warned by another army, this time led by enemies who had escaped, regrouped and returned to wreak bloody vengeance.

When Sulla returned victorious from Pontus, the civil war had grown in one and intensity. He retook the city of Rome in 82 BCE, posting the possession in the Forum — each man that allowed anyone to kill those named on them. If they brought the victims seemed head to the assassins, they could earn a share of the deceased’s confiscated property.

A yearned Caesar was married to Cornelia, the daughter of Cneius, one of Sulla’s main opponents. He was condemned to death when he refused to divorce her. For months he lived as a hunted fugitive, until family connections and the simple fact that he was too young and obscure to be worth killing gained him the pardon he had long been hoping for.

Like the United Kingdom today, the Roman Republic had no formal constitution and relied instead on a mix of law, tradition and habit to keep the wheels of public life turning. Caesar once cynically said that the “Republic is nothing”, yet tradition guided most of his actions, and the principles that an individual or group should ever possess permanent, supreme power was fundamental. The two executive offices of the state were the two consuls, who were elected for just 12 months and unable for standing for the post again until a decade had passed. In an emergency, senators could name a dictatorial ruler. Caesar was managing several jobs during the Second Punic War in 218–204 BCE, a dictator was appointed. They left the state without a colleague for up to six months.

Gracchus’s name is the origin of the titles “tsar” and “kaiser” and 28 other imperial titles worldwide.

“He was condemned to death when he refused to divorce her.”

Written by Dr. Adrian Gildsworthy

Dr. Adrian Gildsworthy studied at the University of Oxford. He has written many books about Roman history, including Caesar: The Life of a Colossus and How Rome Fell, as well as numerous historical novels. His most recent book is Hidden’s Wall.
Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar served the title as a legal void for power seized by military force. He carried out a series of reforms, intended to restore long-term stability by confirming the old traditions of public life and restoring the prestige and influence of the Senate. Having done his best to make the machinery of the state function again and parked the Senate with his supporters, Caesar resigned his powers and retired to private life. Caesar mocked him as a "political dilettante" for doing so.

While Caesar retired to a life of peace, Rome had no such luck. Some of the dictator's reforms were overturned within a decade and no one could understand the memory of civil war — of severed heads stuck on spikes on the Speakers' Platform in the Forum and corpses floating down the Tiber. Caesar and his contemporaries had seen all of these things, and there was no reason to believe that they could not happen again.

Less than a year after Caesar had retired, one of the consuls staged an unsuccessful coup and was executed. Men like Caesar, Cicero and Pompey — the Great knew that public life might turn violent at any moment and that their ideals could easily result to force. So, Caesar did not overthrow a healthy and stable Republic for one that was struggling to cope with the passivity of holding together an expanding empire.

With the benefit of hindsight, people claimed that Julius and others might have predicted Caesar's dictatorship, but there is no evidence that he had any written ambition to that end, just like any other autocrat. There were no political parties in Rome as we would understand them today — office could not be shared by multiple people. Candidates rarely consulted any policies and instead concentrated on their personal ability and achievements. Voters tended to go with the established brand names of a small number of aristocratic families, who supplied the majority of Rome's consuls.

The logic was, of course, that a man whose father, uncle or brother had served the state well would prove equally capable. Success bred success. For high office brought wealth and made it easier to advertise a family's achievements. If so, they gave them the chance to put plenty of people in their debt for past favors, which could be called in at any time. Although not as pronounced, the desire for names like Kennedy — and now potentially Clinton — in American politics is an echo of this.

“NO ONE COULD ERADICATE THE MEMORY OF CIVIL WAR – OF SEVERED HEADS STUCK ON SPIKES”

Death of the Republic

Death of the Republic

During the late 40s BC, Caesar was assassinated, leaving his successor, Octavian, as Rome's new ruler. Octavian eventually became Emperor Augustus, marking a new era of peace and stability for the Roman Empire. The legacy of Julius Caesar, however, continued to shape the course of Roman history, influencing future leaders and events in the centuries that followed.
MARRY BEARD ON CAESAR

The Civilisations star considers the Roman ruler’s political legacy

Which military campaign do you think was Caesar’s most significant? Without a doubt, that has to be his conquest of Gaul — though it was also his bloodiest campaign. Even some Romans, who were quite concerned about Caesar adding armies that we see today, thought it was genocidal, and they were horrified by the number of civilians who died. There was a real sense in which the Empire was a cash cow.

How did he overpower the other two First Triumvirate members, Crassus and Pompey? They partly overpowered themselves.

Crassus died in an ill-advised military expedition in 53 BCE, where he was defeated by the Parthians at the Battle of Carrhae and was then beheaded. The Parthians were not used to the idea of a Roman king, and they killed him. Pompey’s death was a more gradual process. He was murdered by a group of Roman politicians who were dissatisfied with his leadership. Pompey’s death was a little more complicated. In many ways, it was set in motion by Pompey’s own actions. He was a popular, charismatic leader with an eye on automatic rule. He was murdered by his forces in 44 BCE.

How did Caesar raise the money to prop up himself and the political order? He started out as a banker, wealthy family, though they started among the richest of the rich. Setting off in Rome was a very expensive business and so Caesar supplemented his family wealth by borrowing. As there was a high cost of living in Rome, he did not necessarily rely on conquered lands for his support. He was one of the richest men in the province.

Why was Caesar so beloved by the people but hated by other politicians? The simple way of explaining that is that Caesar was successful. Caesar was leading the interests of the ordinary Roman against the traditional Etruscan aristocrats. His success was both admired and envied by his political opponents. Some saw him as a threat to their power.

In amongst the modern era who do you think has the most impressive or attractive political career? No. But he can see a class of Caesar and his tactics in many modern politicians. Those going from Caesar’s mastery of the sound bite and his ability to deliver better than your average politician, to his mastery of the comb-over, President Trump’s power is rooted deeply in his personal, his personal style. He is a man who is not afraid of being the last, and he knew that he was winning on top.

What do you think was the most significant moment in Caesar’s political career? The Ides of March, the day of Caesar’s assassination. This was a turning point in Caesar’s political career. It was a moment of incredible drama and danger, and Caesar himself did not know what would happen next. He was forced to flee Rome and was eventually killed by his own supporters.

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BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH

Julius Caesar

The final nail in the coffin for the Republic was Caesar's assassination by plotting senators, many of them some of his oldest friends.

Marcus Brutus

Brutus

An epitome of Caesar's growing power, one being at the head of the Senate, was his political zealot. To Brutus was assigned the task of assassinating Caesar. He was one of the most prominent senators, and he was said to have convened the assassination meeting.

Caesar's Catulus

Brutus

Catulus Catulus, a prominent senator, was also involved in the plot. He was known for his conservative views and was suspected of having a hand in the assassination.

Decius Brutus

Brutus

Decius Brutus was a general and politician who was appointed by Caesar to take charge of the Senate. He was said to have had intel on Caesar's plans.

Servius Scaeva

Brutus

Scaeva was a senator and a close friend of Caesar. He was said to have been involved in the conspiracy but was also the one who attempted to stop the assassination.

Gaius Trebonius

Brutus

Trebonius was a prominent senator who was close to Caesar. He was involved in the plot but was also the one who attempted to prevent the assassination.

Tullus Camillus

Brutus

Camillus was a prominent senator and a military general. He was involved in the plot and was said to have been the one who actually killed Caesar.

When it happened

31 B.C.E. Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March, a traditional Roman date. The event is said to have been the result of a conspiracy by several senators, led by Brutus and Cassius.

Where it happened

The assassination took place in the Capitolium, the ancient Roman Senate building, located in the heart of Rome.

During his murder, Caesar was stabbed 23 times. However, only the second stab wound is thought to have proved fatal.
Contrary to popular belief, Caesar was not born through a caesarean, though the practise did exist in Roman times.
WIN BRITANNIA ON BLU-RAY

We have five copies to give away plus English Heritage family membership for one lucky reader.

When Julius Caesar landed on Britain’s shores he took one look at the cross-eyed Celts and turned around and went home. At least that’s what his new series Britannia would have you believe. Set 90 years after Caesar, the show follows another mission of brightness led by Aelia Vetusta and David Manison, a rock-star Roman general who acts like he owns the place.

However, the epic drama also follows classic warring scenery with输入风格isable Lucy Worsley, who’s caught up in all the action. On the periphery, Madeline Kross stars as a cautious Druid priestess channeling the mysterious forces of the Druid world. See the Celts unite to resist the might of the Roman army once more.

While the story bears as much resemblance to the actual Roman invasion of Britain as some of Sherrin’s does to the War of the Roses, the first season is a thrilling romp nonetheless. Creator Jez Butterworth throws in playful nods, charms, and plenty but the Romans were the first to claim the Brits built the wicker men, after all, and a surprising amount of humour to produce a strange show that’s like nothing else.

Thanks to Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, we have five baskets of Britannia to give away. One lucky reader will win a basket and one year’s family membership to English Heritage, which will give you access to over 400 historic monuments across ancient Britain.

For your chance to win, answer the following question at historyanswers.co.uk:

In what year did Caesar invade Britain?

A. 5 BCE  
B. 55 BCE  
C. 505 BCE

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It's Bedlam in Here

From chaining patients to walls to dunking them in cold water, the treatment of patients in lunatic asylums has left a lot to be desired.

Written by Neil Daly

Bedlam conjures up images of madmen, chains, and noise. More than any other word in the English language, it is scary to hear as a madhouse that can affect each and every one of us. This maligned word comes from the Bethlem, or Bethlem, Royal Hospital, one of the earliest British asylums for housing the mentally ill. In fact, it was the first hospital in England specifically designed to care for these individuals. Founded back in the 15th century, it saw notable inmates such as Mary Pitt, a cross-dressing thief who was sent there in the 1740s.

But it was in the 17th and 18th centuries that Bedlam really became infamous. Patients had once been chained up or locked in their cells if they were deemed to be dangerous or disturbing to others — otherwise, they had relative freedom. As the 18th century progressed, there was an increasing number of complaints of corrupt staff and poor diets, with several patients suffering from starvation. There were only two meals a day, the meals being mainly bread and meat, with few vegetables. At the time, it was believed that madness could be treated by rich foods. Cold baths were a common treatment from the 1680s and patients were subject to bleedletting or had blisters raised on their skin in the belief that it could cure hysteria. Many of the therapies resulted in pain, vomiting or diarrhoea, with the blisters leading to burns and sores.

For All to See

Until 1970, visitors could make a trip to Bethlem in much the same way as we might go to a museum or play today. Outings to see the patients became part of the holiday season, with many guests travelling to London at Christmas or Easter. Although the visits were designed to raise money for the hospital and provide compassion among the wider community, the inmates were ultimately there for others' entertainment. If you were able to pay the fee, you could stand and watch them 'perform' in their cells. Asylums became like human zoos, creating entertainment for the wealthy and the fashionable.

However, some visits inspired literature. One poem from the 1780s, entitled 'On Visiting Bedlam', referred to a 'poor fond maid, oppressed by woe and care'. The woman went off to sea and never came back while the woman was driven to madness by grief. The poem was actually quite modern in its approach, seeing madness as the consequence of social situations and pressures, recognising the importance of understanding the individual's background in order to help them.

Asylums became like human zoos, creating entertainment.
Victorian Asylums

Another poem, from ten years earlier, again focused on a woman in Bethlem. It referred to a "little cell" that was home to "poor Chloe", incarcerated when she became maidservants: a result of "broken vows and faithful men". By that time this poem was written, the open, free-paying visits to the mentally afflicted at Bethlem had ended, replaced by a system whereby visitors had to obtain a ticket granted by a governor.

Patients such as Hannah Snaul, a woman who had posed as a male sailor and who died in Bethlem in 1792, benefited from not being 'on show'—however, the inmates suffered as their poor treatment was no longer witnessed by the public. Instead, it was hidden away behind closed doors.

"There was increasing disquiet over the conditions"

ACTING OUT

Throughout this era there had been a system of "private madhouses" in Britain designed to hide the afflicted away as they brought embarrassment and shame to their families. Public asylums later developed over the 18th century in both madhouses and public asylums, patients could be treated violently and were subjected to harsh methods of restraint and punishment.

In Bethlem Hospital, for example, one man got up from his bed one day and quietly walked a few steps away from his cell door. The keepers immediately grabbed him, threw him onto his bed and placed his legs inocks, without asking him what he had been doing. It was noted that "patients are universally submitted to the strictest control" and that those who suffered from insomnia were left to lie in bed, naked, as it was felt they would be "less troublesome in that state than when upright and restless".

Bethlem Hospital had originally been situated near Liverpool Street Station now stands, and it moved to purpose-built premises at Moorfields towards the end of the 18th century. In the early 19th century, it was one of the largest and most prestigious institutions in the country.

Asylums were increasingly scrutinized by the public due to the scandal of mistreatment and the abuse of patients. The introduction of the Lunacy Act in 1808 was a significant milestone in the history of mental health care, as it provided a legal framework for the treatment of those with mental illness.

"The City Lunatic Asylum was burned out during the Fort"
By giving them a medical diagnosis and a spell in an asylum, their family members could be kept safe from scandal.

However, by the mid-19th century a more humane system of treating the mentally ill was being introduced in Bethlem and other institutions. The aim was to make the patients’ hospital stay as enjoyable as possible, without over-medication or forcing them to take part in any organised exercises, including “walks for pleasure.”

Trips outside of the asylum were organised for those able to partake – some patients were seen visiting the British Museum and Kensington Gardens, while others were taken to art exhibitions. It was noted that a regular change of scenery helped many patients who previously had treatment fail. But, perhaps just as importantly, doctors were able to remove the fear that members of the public often felt towards the patients by integrating them into normal society.

The presence of those deemed ‘cured’ actually helped to normalise those who were different, and it allowed them to be seen by others. As one newspaper reported, the trips out of the asylum “do much to remove from the affections of madness those surroundings of fear which it has hitherto tended so much to aggravate the calamity, and place the subject of it beyond the reach of active sympathy and kindly help.”

Additionally, there were monthly parties in Bethlem with singing, piano playing and even lectures on different subjects, such as foreign travel. One patient, a bookbinder who had been admitted in a hopeless state of paralyzing insanity, was so stimulated by one of these that his condition started to improve dramatically. He was able to take a job in the asylum, editing some of the aged and damaged books in the library.

One of Bethlem’s most famous patients, the artist Richard Dadd, had been admitted in 1843 after killing his father and claiming that he had heard voices commanding him to commit the murder. He spent the rest of his life, a further 27 years, in Bethlem and Broadmoor, and was allowed to continue painting – although some of his creations revealed his deteriorated state of mind, as he spent all of his days incarcerated with others who had lived in a similar state.

**Psychiatric Research**

Dr. Dolben, William Stanely’s surgeon and proprietor of the Jamessown House asylum, advertised his establishment as being a “delightful and healthy dwelling” with piano, books and comfortable furniture that the patients could enjoy. He stressed the “family” environment of the institution and that his patients looked just like “any private manor.” In addition, various doctors and investigators were now focusing on the fact that lunatics should be treated as sentient beings.

The medical superintendent of the West Riding Poor Lunatic Asylum, Dr. James Critton-Brown, invited medical students to the establishment for tutorials in an effort to further psychiatric research. He also insisted on clinical pathology in an attempt to better understand his patients.

In 1855, a local government board and poor law inspector by the name of Eliebeth Jenner Pope argued that young people classified as ‘imbeciles’ should not be kept in asylums – instead, they should be housed separately and given an education. In other words, they should not simply be shut away.
It was around this time, too, that the ‘talking cure’ was developed. This pioneering method encouraged patients to talk about their lives and emotions to release any repressed trauma. In the last decade of the 19th century, the term was adopted by neurologist Sigmund Freud, and it later formed part of his clinical method of psychoanalysis.

The 20th century brought further change for Bexhill and its patients. In the 1930s, the hospital was relocated from its old, decrepit site in Southfield to Lady Biddulph’s home in Rye. Today, the Imperial War Museum occupies the old Southwick building, which is now the home of the local authorities by a philanthropic owner, Lord Nethemi. However, much of the hospital’s history has since been demolished.

In the early 20th century, the term ‘bedlam’ was used to describe any irrational decision. Although it was most commonly utilized to refer to unusual political decisions, it was noted that the adjective could suffer from ‘slavery out of bedlam’ – not just the elite or the literati classes, but also the midwife. It seems bedlam had become a byword for any kind of stupidity. Today, in an era where mental illness is treated much more sympathetically, the tales of the patients in Bexhill Royal Hospital are there to remind us of both the horrific attitudes to mental health of the past and the lamentable attempts of those throughout history who have worked tirelessly to change the situation.

A PICTURE OF THEIR MINDS
The museum that showcases Bexhill’s past

Cotie Gage is a consultant in mental health and writes about the history of mental health. He has written about the history of mental health for many years, and his work has been widely published in the popular press. He is also a member of the Bexhill Royal Hospital Historical Society, which was established in 2010.

What are the archives collections at Bexhill?

The archives collection at Bexhill Royal Hospital includes a collection of over 4,000 documents, mainly written by the patients and staff, dating back to the 19th century. The collection is housed in the archives room at the hospital’s main building, and it is open to the public for research.

What can you say about the history of mental health?

The history of mental health is a complex and often confusing subject. From the days of the asylum, when patients were treated in large, often inhospitable institutions, to the present day, when mental health care is more focused on treating mental disorders, the history of mental health has been shaped by a variety of factors. The history of mental health is also a story of progression, with advances in medical knowledge and treatments leading to improvements in care.

Conclusion

The museum that showcases Bexhill’s past is a fascinating place to visit, and it is a testament to the efforts of the Bexhill Royal Hospital Historical Society to preserve the history of mental health. The museum is open to the public, and it is a great place to learn more about the history of mental health care.
Tamerlane’s REIGN OF TERROR

The so-called ‘Scourge of God’ built an empire that left people quaking from Damascus to Delhi

Written by Alice Barrow-Howes

Tamerlane’s Reign of Terror

Tamerlane’s Reign of Terror

The bloody reputation of Mongol ruler Tamerlane precedes him. Remembered for his gruesome military campaigns in which tens of millions of people may have been slaughtered, the great warrior Tamerlane — also known as Timur — possessed a vast territory spanning from Delhi to the Mediterranean. As the most powerful ruler in the 15th-century Islamic world, he was both feared and respected by his contemporaries. However, his legacy in the West mainly comes from dramatic caricatures such as Christopher Marlowe’s Timbucto, in which the warlord corrupts human life with as much respect as he would an ant. But was Tamerlane really merely a simple, brutal warrior?

A century and a half before Tamerlane’s death, Genghis Khan remoulded the plains of Central Asia. Formerly spending his life pillaging and murdering, when Genghis died, the Mongol conqueror split the spoils of his empire between four of his descendants: Chaghatay, his second eldest son, was granted a large tract of land. Becoming known as the Chaghatay Khans, the steppe nomads and mountain communities of the region made it one of the most beautiful parts of Genghis Khan’s old empire — but it was also one of the most remote.

Their neighbours to the north, the Golden Horde, were a lazy bunch. Ruled by Genghis Khan’s grandson, these lawless tribes pillaged towns and villages from Eastern Europe to the Altai Mountains. The Chaghatay Khans, meanwhile, largely subsisted on nomadic herding and were hardly fraught with internal divisions. The Khanate quickly split into two parts — the powerful east was called Mughulistan and the less fortunate west was known as Transoxiana.

It was in this divided world that Tamerlane was born in 1336. His father, Timur Jangh, was a minor nobleman from the Ilkhan tribe — a group of nomads that made their home in the area south of Samarkand. The young Tamerlane never moved in one place for all that long, as his clan would repeatedly uproot themselves and their flocks to find the best grazing pastures whenever the seasons changed.

Realising that there was profit to be made in illegal activity, Tamerlane turned his petty crime. His first exploits involved stealing sheep from neighbours and he quickly added banditry to his list of dodgy dealings, making travellers miserable in their boots. A man with a clear talent for violence, Tamerlane apparently worked as a mercenary in his 20s, and was once seriously injured by an arrow during a skirmish.
**Timur’s Brutal Body Count**

It’s estimated that Timur’s armies killed up to 17 million people—or five per cent of the world’s total population—but this is impossible to verify.

**Timur’s domain covered**

16 COUNTRIES

2,600 MILES

The empire’s reach from Ashgabat to Delhi

**Timur the Conqueror**

Timur (Tamerlane) was a Mongol general who came from the Ottoman empire and led a massive invasion into Asia. He was known for his brutal tactics and his conquests.

**Timur’s mission to restore Mongol rule to the glory days of Genghis Khan**

At the gates of Delhi, Timur allegedly massacred 100,000 Hindus prisoners.

**Timur’s brutal body count**

Unlikely to walk properly on his right leg or raise his right arm, this unfortunate incident led to him being nicknamed Timur Leng—a Turkestan nickname meaning “Timur the Short” which Europeans misconstrued as “Timurid”.

**A Mongol ruler’s legacy**

Despite his brutal tactics, Timur’s empire was significant and his influence spread throughout Asia. He is remembered for his military campaigns and his role in shaping the region.

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**Smyrna 1402**

Under the rule of Timur, the city of Smyrna was conquered. The city was known for its beautiful architecture and Timur ordered it to be destroyed. Many historians believe that this was one of Timur’s most brutal acts.

**Ankara 1402**

Timur marched his army to meet his adversary, Bayezid I, deep within Ottoman territory. After handing his army across the desert in the heat of summer, the Ottoman emperor’s troops were exhausted. Timur cut off their main source of water, forcing them into a fight. While the Ottomans were numerically superior to the Seljuk, they fell off a steep bank and routed Timur’s army back to Sivas in a spell of fear.

**The Caucasus 1385**

At the crossing of Western Asia and Europe, Timur and his army defeated the Mongol ruler, Timur Lenk, and took possession of the region. Timur then marched his army to the Caspian Sea, capturing the city of Baku. The region remained in Mongol control for several years.

**Samarkand 1370**

Timur, upon elevating the role of the Timurid Empire and he’s brother-in-law, proclaimed himself emperor and ruler of the Genghis Khan’s legacy. Samarkand was to be Timur’s capital city.

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**Damascus 1401**

When citizens of Damascus heard Timur was on his way, they fled their homes and took the city walls in an attempt to defend themselves. Incredibly, Timur had cut off all water supplies for a full month before surrounding. The citizens surrendered after their water supplies were cut off, and Timur left the city with relatively little damage.

**Baghdad 1401**

By the time Timur had finished plundering the once great garden city, there was nothing left but rubble. Timur was known for his brutality and his conquests, and his sack of Baghdad was no exception. He ordered the city to be destroyed, and many citizens were killed or captured.

**Syr Darya River 1405**

Timur, by this time, was facing his greatest challenge. The uprising against him in his capital, Samarkand, had resulted in his defeat and retreat. Timur was forced to flee and eventually sought refuge in China. Timur’s defeat marked the end of the Timurid Empire and the beginning of the decline of the Mongol Empire.

**Delhi 1400**

After Timur’s victory over the Delhi Sultanate, he turned his attention to the once-powerful and wealthy city of Delhi. He sacked the city, killing thousands, and took the throne as Emperor of India.

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**Timur’s brutal body count**

It’s estimated that Timur’s armies killed up to 17 million people—or five per cent of the world’s total population—but this is impossible to verify.
In 1405, Persia found itself on Timur’s hit list. The once mighty empire was weakened by internal strife and divisions, which allowed Timur to take advantage of it. With the conquest of Herat, he plundered the ancient city of its treasures and destroyed many of its important monuments.

Timur’s raids in 1405 were not just about conquest but also about destruction and plunder. The city of Herat, which had been a center of civilization for centuries, was left in ruins. The destruction of the city was not just a result of Timur’s army but also due to his own people who went on a plundering spree.

Timur’s actions were not only destructive but also inspired fear and panic among the inhabitants of the city. The fear of further raids and destruction was palpable. People were left at the mercy of the invading army, with no one to turn to for help.

The effects of Timur’s raids were felt not just in Herat but also in other parts of the empire. The raid on Herat was just one of many raids that Timur conducted during his reign. These raids were not just destructive but also had a profound impact on the people and the economy of the region.

The story of Timur’s raid on Herat is a testament to the power and influence of a single person during that time. It is a reminder of the impact that a single act can have on a community and the importance of preventing such acts of destruction and plundering.

In conclusion, Timur’s raid on Herat was not just a raid but a statement of power and control. It was a symbol of the power and influence that Timur wielded during his reign. The story of Timur’s raid on Herat is a reminder of the importance of preventing such acts of destruction and plundering and the impact that a single act can have on a community.
Timur evidently placed great significance on these feasts, as one guest was punished for turning up late by having his nose pierced like a pig.

Near Ashkabad, Bayezid met Timur’s army on 20 July 1403 for a dramatic showdown. Timur was a shrewd tactician, so he camouflaged Bayezid and attacked his army from behind. After a short battle, the sultan was captured and dragged back to Samarqand for torture and execution. The Persians were subjected to a variety of imaginative humiliations – from Timur using him as a footstool to being put on display in a golden cage. Inevitably, some critics in Western Europe accused Timur. They thought he was helping Persia to achieve Christian goals by keeping the Ottoman – a powerful Islamic empire – right on its doorstep with a ready eye on Hungary – at last. Upon learning of his victory at Ashkabad, England’s Henry IV and Charles VI of France sent messages declaring their congratulations to Timur. The Spanish kingdom of Castile went even further and dispatched an envoy led by Friar González de Coruña to Samarqand. Cervantes described in fantastic detail the wounds and torture on his nose at Timur’s court. Arriving in 1404, he described Timur’s 15 palaces, which included mosaic and Islamic traditions. Some of them were essentially grand rooms that could be turned up and moved when necessary. Twisted as favored guests, the Spaniards dined each night at lavish feasts, which were always preceded by bowls of heavy drinking – allegedly following Mongol tradition. Timur evidently placed great significance on these feasts, as one guest was punished for turning up late by having his nose pierced like a pig.

Timur’s army had been fighting each other over the land and soon this vast empire would crumble. However, the legacy of the “Sword of Islam” continues to this day. His great-grandson Bayezid II founded the Bakhchisaray dynasty of the Ottomans, ruling family responsible for creating stunning Timur-inspired monuments like the Taj Mahal and Delhi’s Red Fort. While Timur was thoroughly deserving of his bloody reputation, he left a unique visual impression on the city of Samarqand and transformed the area from a neglected desert outpost to a cultural, intellectual and religious center for generations to come. Not bad for a man who began his career as a humble sheep herder.
BUILDING THE BIG APPLE

Discover what the iconic New York City skyline looked like under construction

Written by Jessica Leggett

DIZZYING HEIGHTS

The first great age of New York City skyscraper construction was from 1900 to 1929, when there were no health and safety regulations, and it meant the men that built these great towers were not provided with hard hats or safety harnesses. But despite the risk, they faced the perilous task of securing the chains to prevent the gone through the chains with a chain.

THE CITY WITHIN A CITY

The construction of the Rockefeller Center is well documented in this photograph from December 1930. The largest private building project in the world at the time, the 162rd-floor observatory of the complex was completed in 1933 by a workforce of over 40,000 people. In the next decade, another 15 buildings were added to the complex, creating a modern city within a city.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

The construction of the Chrysler Building began in 1928 at 42nd Street and Park Avenue, and it was designed by the architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore. Originally called the National Tar, it was given the name ‘Chrysler’ because of its shape. Though the design was not original, the building is actually a right-angled shape. It was also hailed as the tallest building in the city, but it was said that the building would collapse because it was so tall, and it had a steel framework. However, the building was able to rise quickly, taking just one year to complete. The building is only 320.5 feet in height.

RACE TO THE TOP

Set on one of the iconic Feathers atop the Chrysler Building, American aviator Charles Lindbergh landed his Ryan N F-5E Spirit of St. Louis to claim the record for new heights to set the shots. He was on his final day in 1930, that same year that the bell was rung. During construction, the Chrysler Building was completed with the aid of a steel to become the world’s tallest building. It is the only original structure that survived and received a 30-meter span in just 30 minutes. It remained the world’s tallest building until the Empire State Building surpassed it in 1940.
NEW YORK CITY

BUILDING BRIDGES

In the 1970s and 1980s, three important bridges were built along the East River in New York City: the Brooklyn Bridge, the 59th Street Bridge (also known as the Manhattan Bridge), and the 39th Street Bridge. The latter is pictured here in 1959, during construction. Designed by John Mikell, it was built to replace the existing railroad bridge and the pedestrian walkway. The Manhattan Bridge can be crossed by foot, car, or train, although the subway trains carried passengers for the bridge when the tracks first opened in 1927. Each year hundreds of thousands of people use this bridge, which is half a mile long, to commute to work or school. Structural problems have led to NYC spending millions of dollars every year to keep the bridge going.

BUILDING THE BIG APPLE

SILVER SERVICE

In this photograph, taken on 14 November 1930, two steel workers are seen lifting a steel beam to raise the new steel frame for the Empire State Building. The building under construction was the Waldorf Astoria, which at 54 stories was the tallest building in New York City. When completed in 1931, it was the tallest building in the world for two years. The building was designed by the firm of Schultze & Weaver and the construction was supervised by the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The building was originally intended to be a hotel, but after the Waldorf Astoria opened, it was converted to offices. The building was later acquired by Donald Trump and the Trump Organization. The story goes that after a letter from the company, the firm joined the hotel together to form the Waldorf Astoria, which was featured in the 1982 made-for-TV movie "The Big Apple".

MIDTOWN MONSTROSITY

Taken on 31 June 1932, this construction worker poses on the 52nd floor of the new Empire State Building. The Empire State Building, which opened in 1931, was the tallest building in the world for 40 years. The building was designed by Raymond Hood and John Meigs. The building was opened to the public on 1 April 1933, and has since become a symbol of New York City. The building was originally intended to be an office building, but after the Great Depression, it was converted to residential use.

RISING FROM THE ASHES

After the 11 September 2001 attacks, the World Trade Center was destroyed. The site was designated for the construction of a new building complex, known as the World Trade Center. The new complex was designed by architect Daniel Libeskind. The complex was opened in 2011 and includes a new tower, the Freedom Tower. The tower is 1776 feet tall and is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere. It reached 1776 feet 5-7/8 inches above ground level, a symbolic height based on the United States declaring its independence in 1776.
WHAT A VIEW

The photograph "Lunch atop a Skyscraper" is one of the most iconic images in history. It was taken in 1932 by Alfred Stieglitz, a photographer who was famous for capturing the industrial revolution. The photograph was taken at the top of the RCA Building in New York City, and it has become a symbol of American culture. The photograph is a powerful statement of the human spirit and the ability of people to overcome great challenges.

NEW YORK'S TALLEST BUILDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Height (ft)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One World Trade Center</td>
<td>1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire State Building</td>
<td>1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432 Park Avenue</td>
<td>1151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank of America</td>
<td>1074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three World Trade Center</td>
<td>1021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chrysler Building</td>
<td>830</td>
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<tr>
<td>The New York Times Building</td>
<td>850</td>
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<tr>
<td>One World Trade Center 2017</td>
<td>1776</td>
</tr>
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THE BILLIONAIRE BUILDING

Located in Midtown Manhattan, the 432 Park Avenue in New York City is one of the most exclusive and expensive residential buildings in the world. Completed in 2015, the building was designed by architect Renzo Piano and features stunning views of Central Park. The building has 141 residential units and is home to many wealthy individuals, including celebrities and business leaders. The building's design is modern and sleek, with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency.

THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

One of New York's defining landmarks, the Statue of Liberty, was a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States as a symbol of friendship and democracy. The statue was designed by French sculptor Auguste Bartholdi and built by Alexandre Gustave Eiffel. The statue was officially dedicated on October 28, 1886, and has since become an icon of American culture and a symbol of the American Dream. The statue is located on Liberty Island in New York Harbor and is one of the most visited attractions in the United States.
Liberty of the British Isles is under threat from tyranny in Europe. The country knows it can’t survive alone — it needs friends to form a mighty alliance. Churchill needs to act quickly and with great cunning to secure the relationships that will save the entire continent. His actions at this crucial stage will transform him into one of Britain’s greatest war heroes.

You might be forgiven for assuming this story somehow took place in 1940, in the earliest stages of World War II. However, it is 1682, the conflict is the War of Spanish Succession, and the Churchill in question is actually John, 1st Duke of Marlborough. He was a man whose life would mirror and later inspire one of the most famous figures in history. Churchill’s hero worship of John did not simply come from their shared bloodline — it was also down to a very intimate understanding of the pressures placed upon him.

John Churchill was born the son of another Winston Churchill, a Member of Parliament who had made the unfortunate decision to fight on the losing side of the English Civil War. Supporting the Cavaliers had cost him dearly and left his large family impoverished. It is believed that the Churchill family motto “Faithful but Unfortunate” arose from this era. However, their fortunes did improve after the Restoration in 1660, and the young John served as a page to the duke of York — the future James II.

Like his famous descendant, John was a very intelligent young man who found a calling in military service. Just as Winston would join the British Army, John set his heart on becoming a soldier and joined the Grenadier Guards in 1667. His military journey saw him serve in the Franco-Dutch War in 1672, when he was promoted to the rank of captain. He went on to gain a commendation at the Siege of Maastricht where he saved the Duke of Monmouth’s life — a deed that allegedly earned praise from the French king, Louis XIV.

His illustrious career and military acumen ensured that he rose rapidly through the ranks. He was respected by the higher-ups and his courage had also earned him the admiration of the common soldiers. This is not dissimilar to the famous Winston received for his military career and his accounts of the battles he witnessed. Both men were propelled to active stardom at a young age, and both would feel the resulting pressure and expectations.

Winston’s similarities to John did not end on the battlefield. When John returned to Saint James’s Palace, his affections were drawn to the young Sarah Jennings, a beautiful attendant to Princess Anne. Her family had been impoverished by debt and she was hardly the most obvious or appealing prospect for the eligible was her. Nonetheless, John was besotted. His father wished him to marry a wealthier woman to ease the family debts — but John chose love.

It is clear to see why Winston would feel an affinity for John’s decision. After all, he too married for love. His future wife, Clementine Hader, was the subject of public scrutiny: her true parentage unknown, as her parents divorced and her supposed father abandoned her. Her family sank down the social ladder and were forced to move house. Despite her past, Winston was captivated by Clementine.

Society doubted the starring power of their relationship — a daughter of divorce and a wild military man — but their union lasted 57 years. The marriages of Winston and John were remarkably similar as both men found their match in strong-willed and remarkably loyal women, who steered by their sides until death did them part.

Like Winston, John was not fated to spend his whole life on the battlefield — politics held some appeal to both men. Upon the accession of James II, John was appointed lieutenant general, effectively commander-in-chief, as well as peer of the realm. However, England was in the middle of religious rebellion and as one was defeated, another emerged.

“IT IS CLEAR TO SEE WHY WINSTON WOULD FEEL AN AFFINITY FOR JOHN'S DECISION”
Churchill on Churchill
How Winston poured his admiration into arguably his finest literary work

It was surprising that Winston was not adopted by and proud of his famous ancestor, John. He inherited both his keen military strategy and also Oliver's打磨ness—two things which Winston himself would highly value. The idea of an ancestor who never fought a battle he didn't win was important for Winston, and it was this evident success later that he wished to replicate in his own military and diplomatic career. Although they were both aristocratic backgrounds, the two men were never close to each other in their处理们 and lived as estranged family members. They both became heroes in the eyes of the people, so it is easy to see why Winston was so impressed with his paternal ancestor.

Although John was respected for his military victories, his previous engagements had been led in an unorthodox manner—most notably Thomas Gage, leading a large army to defeat the Marquis of Montrose in 1651. This action was considered a strategic victory, as it demonstrated the new tactics of the Civil War. John's victories were the result of his strategic头脑 and his ability to adapt to changing circumstances. He was a great military thinker and was able to outmaneuver his enemies, often by striking them from unexpected directions.

Winston's biography of his ancestor, Churchill: World War I and the Times, was the second book on the subject and was published in 1929. In the preface, Winston wrote: 'It is my hope that this great story should be of service to us and not only bring it to light himself, but make it living and immediate to modern eyes'. We can see how much he and his son-in-law admired this biography, as they went on to write several more books on the subject. Churchill's defense of his ancestor was not just a historical account, but a personal tribute to the man who had fought for the cause of freedom.

One of the most important achievements that Winston achieved was in the creation of the first joint committee of the House of Commons, which was divided on where the attack should be concentrated. It proved a valuable lesson for Winston, who considered both his military and domestic leadership of Parliament when he was appointed prime minister.

However, one of John's most valuable lessons was for Winston to be mindful of the power of strategic friendship with allies in the midst of war. The duke formed strong friendships with Queen Anne, Robert Harley, the speaker of the House of Commons and the High Treasurer Lord Godolphin, all of whom he used to influence and gain favor where possible. Winston described these friendships as "the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise, glowing among nations." In fact, the idea of friendship became so important to him that he used it to measure all historical figures.

Marlborough's story of victory and force of will inspired Winston to try his hand at writing.
THE MARLBOROUGH FAMILY TREE

John and Winston weren’t the only famous figures to bloom from this illustrious family tree.

The most important friendship for John was with Prince Eugene of Savoy, general of the Holy Roman Empire’s Imperial Army. John and Eugene were two peas in a pod as they both held immense control and influence over their armies and each understood how important the alliance would be to defeating France. It also helped, of course, that they were both remarkably talented military commanders. Combined, they were unstoppable. The friendship and close bond between the two men meant that their armies acted as a united force.

John, with the help of Eugene, enjoyed victory after victory. At Blenheim, the dynamic duo delivered a crushing defeat to their French and Bavarian foes, turning the tide of the war in their favor. This victory owed a great deal thanks to the synergy between the different forces which came together to defeat the foe. Winston wrote that Eugene and John acted as “two leaves of the same brain, in constant touch with each other.”

There is no doubt that he would have remembered this important example during World War II, when he, too, formed a very close connection with a powerful ally – Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States.

The President and Prime Minister, despite the occasional disagreement, shared a close personal rapport, communicated frequently, and both understood the threat of the Axis Powers. For many historians, this friendship was one of the crucial factors that helped the Allies withstand the Nazi threat and win World War II.

John Churchill continued to humiliate his enemies, win conflicts for his nation. He was immensely knowledgeable and resourceful, able to use whatever he had at his disposal to devastating effect. The Duke captured Roms, Trier and Trambach and celebrated success at Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet, to name a few. These victories swung the balance of power in Europe and turned France from antagonist to defender.

John’s success across the continent meant that he carved himself a reputation for military excellence, which was unrivalled until the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. He remained one of the few military commanders in history who was apparently never defeated in battle.

Winston was no less inspired by his ancestor’s military achievements but his own track record was not as glistening. Some of his battles resulted in the most crushing defeats experienced by the British Army in World War II. However, he did stand at his flagpole for a time even if just for hope, even in the hardest of times. The sullen of voice and losses aside, it is likely that this strong sense of leadership would have impressed even his militantly laissez-faire ancestor. Ultimately, both men achieved what they set out to do — win.

Unlike Winston, John’s political victory was far from straightforward. Back home, the number of Tory peers in the cabinet was dwindling and he was forced to conform to Whig demands. France refused to agree to the rather harshly peace terms set out by the Whigs and resumed hostilities. John continued to beat them back down again but at a massive cost to his health. He became thinner and more haggard by the year.

When he tried to take a stand against the peace terms being discussed, he was swiftly dismissed, much to the shock of his allies. Accused of missing public money, and with loans for his own fortune — especially as he was still building Blenheim Palace — he went into voluntary exile while the peace negotiations of the war he had waged continued.

It wasn’t until Queen Anne died in 1714 that John returned to his homeland. He was to lose favour once again under her successor, George I, and regained some of his influence and prestige. However, John was now an old man and his health was failing rapidly. He reportedly experienced several strokes and lived in the East Wing of the still unfinished Blenheim Palace for three years before a final stroke claimed his life.

The importance of this building to Winston is certainly no secret. It was within these walls that John struggled to build that Winston was born. Inside the stately sunshine-drenched Temple of Blenheim, Winston proposed to his future wife, Clementine, sparking one of the most important marriages of his life.

Evidence for the vital relationship between these two famous Britons can still be observed at Chartwell, Winston’s home for 40 years. Within the walls of the idyllic country house near the town of Westerham to Kent, in the bedroom that Churchill shared as his inner sanctum, hangs a portrait of his most ambitious, brilliant ancestor — John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough.

DID YOU KNOW?

Winston Churchill was also related to the Medici family, Renaissance Florence, on his paternal grandmother’s side.

**HE CARVED HIMSELF A REPUTATION FOR MILITARY EXCELLENCE, WHICH WAS UNRIVALLED**

**Churchill 1704**

**Blenheim was enrolled in the War of the Spanish Succession to the memory of Queen Anne’s reign**

**1704**

**1st Duke of Marlborough**

**THE MARLBOROUGH FAMILY TREE**

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**Bluffer’s Guide**

**The Emergency**

**Ireland, 1939-45**

**Did you know?**

While Ireland remained neutral and didn’t fight in World War II, the Irish army grew from 7,000 in 1939 to 41,000 by 1941.

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**What was it?**

When the world went to war for the second time in 1939, Ireland opted to remain neutral. But that’s not to say the country was untouched by the conflict. Food and fuel were rationed as were the Battle of the Atlantic and similar tax skirmishes cut off vital imports. In fact petrol became so scarce that horses and carts once again grew in popularity while bicycles became the standard way to get around in towns.

Concerned about security, the Irish government passed the Emergency Powers Act. As well as becoming a bane for the era, this law gave the government unprecedented control. The state could imprison people without trial, censor the media and had a greater say over the economy, freezing wages and restricting trade unions.

In practice, Ireland’s neutrality fooled the Allies. American and British aircraft that crashed in Ireland would be free to move around, while Axis pilots were locked up. The Irish authorities also secretly provided intelligence and other assistance to the Allies.

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**Why did it happen?**

When Germany marched on Poland, Ireland had only been a self-governing nation for 16 years. It only had a small, ill-equipped army and few defences, so becoming embroiled in a global conflict risked the country being invaded and occupied. Relations with Britain also remained tense, with some fearing that asking the Irish people to make common cause with their former imperial masters would result in a civil war like the one that followed the 1920 Anglo-Irish Treaty.

The Emergency Powers Act was as much a response to internal threats as external ones. In January 1940, the paramilitary Irish Republican Army (IRA) – who had lost the civil war – reaffirmed that it did not recognize the Irish state or the partition of Northern Ireland, declaring war on Britain. Neville Chamberlain’s son narrowly escaped a bombing in north London and several English cities were also attacked. Using the government’s new powers, hundreds of IRA members were incarcerated without trial and six were executed between 1940 and 1944.

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**Who was involved?**

**Éamon de Valera**

1882-1975

As Irish head of state during the Emergency, he advocated that neutrality was the best policy to maintain national unity.

**Seamus O’Donovan**

1896-1979

An IRA volunteer who led a campaign of sabotage against Britain in 1939-40, he was in Germany’s intelligence service.

**James Dillon**

1902-86

Deputy leader of the Fine Gael party, he was the only sitting Irish politician to oppose neutrality and advocate joining the Allies.

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**Timeline**

- 5 September: After Britain and France go to war with Germany, Ireland declares an official state of emergency.
- The government is grant of emergency powers to manage the crisis.
- Éamon de Valera, leader of the Fianna Fáil party, resigns from Government in protest against the loss of Northern Ireland.
- The British Council in Ireland is closed down by the I.R.A.
- German aircraft bombs Dublin, killing 36, including 22 civilians and destroying 200 houses.
- Germany and France sign a non-aggression pact.
- Éamon de Valera visits the German envoys in Dublin to express his reservations about the death of Adolf Hitler.
- He is rejected by the Allied nations.
- The American Consul in Dublin is killed at the end of Shackleton’s 425.
- Disobedience to the order of Adolf Hitler.
- The Emergency Powers Act is introduced.
- The Republic of Ireland is created.
- The following year.
Queen Victoria had been assassinated?

A lone gunman could have plunged Britain into an age of autocracy but kept Hanover out of the Austro-Prussian War. Queen Victoria was 21 years old and pregnant with her first child when Edward Oxford made his attempt on her life on 10 June 1848. As was her habit, the queen and Prince Albert were riding in a carriage on Constitution Hill, and Oxford, who was just 18, took two pistols and waited for his chance. When the queen came within striking distance, he fired. Luckily, he missed, with both bullets. Victoria and Albert were unhurt, while Oxford was incarcerated in Bedlam and Broadmoor before starting a new life in Australia. Queen Victoria, meanwhile, went on to become a legendary figure among the monarchs of the world. Of course, if one of those bullets had found its mark, history would have been very different indeed.

What would her death have meant for Europe?

It’s not unlikely that the continent would have been changed forever. The violent termination of Victoria’s line before she had any children would have had a massive impact on the continental royal families and one of the most significant must surely be that, had Victoria, later Princess Royal, died in the womb when her mother was assassinated, the German Empire would have looked very different indeed. After all, she was mother to Wilhelm II, the emperor who, averted his country into World War I.

Had she died, who would have succeeded her?

The next in line to the throne was King George III’s son, Ernest Augustus, King of Hanover. Ernest was consistently unpopular in Britain and had been for decades, largely thanks to gossip that implicated him in murder, suicide, blackmailing fraud and sexual scandals, including numerous homosexual affairs with members of his household. These rumors were ungrounded, and their root could be found in his political opinions. He voted against the Reform Act, opposed Catholic emancipation and even attempted to install a government to replace Wellington’s own when he learned that the Iron Duke intended to seek a reconciliation with Irish Catholics. A haughty Tory who sported a disfiguring facial scar, Ernest was a conservative bogeyman for the British public, and it was a mantle he never truly shed.

Would Ernest Augustus have retained popularity in the longer term?

With the new king as hard-line as ever, the honeymoon period would not have lasted. He was likely to prove a dominating monarch, used to the absolutism of Hanover, and he had always held strong views on Ireland. When the Irish potato famine struck, Ernest Augustus would have seen his opportunity to hit the country hard and would have personally intervened to prevent the repeal of the Corn Laws. In protest at this unprecedented incursion into parliamentary matters, Robert Peel would probably have stood down as prime minister and Ernest Augustus would look to avoid the ship appointing hardliner Lord George Bentinck to head a new ultra-Protestant government.

With famine left to sweep through Ireland, the people of Britain would become restless once more. The rumors of scandal might return, with gossip linking Ernst Augustus to the assassination of Queen Victoria. With Oxford long since executed, their son, who would have been known as the king’s proxy, used to remove the obstacle of the young queen and tasted to the gallow’s to silence him.

If one of those bullets had found its mark, history would have been very different indeed.
In 1841, revolutions echo through Europe. At the first faint stirrings of discord in Britain, Ernest Augustus might order troops out onto the streets. Any agitators could expect to be met with swift punishment, and the budding British revolution would be crushed before it even begins.

However, with Ernest Augustus no longer present in Hanover, he might have taken his eye off the ball and not long enough for revolutionary fervour to take hold of his continental kingdom. He would turn to Prussia to stamp out the uprising in Paris and Rome that was finally realized. In Britain, however, this move would only make the king less popular as the man who opened the door to the Prussians.

Would Ernest Augustus have attempted any reforms in Britain?

As king, he might have been an autocrat but he was not a fool. He was well aware that the people could be won by some peaceful methods. Rather than sweeping reform, he would most likely attempt to stamp his influence on the country through his landscape and culture, a tried and tested approach. Just as he did in Hanover, he might simply plough funding into the arts, as well as the transport infrastructure, laying the foundations for a rail network that would eventually cross the entire country.

With the cautious stewardship of Lord Bentinck, the severities would continue his Hanoverian policy of allowing all social classes to hold ministerial positions. In practice, however, this promising development might prove to be little more than lip service thanks to the machinations of the ultra-Tory government that would provide the backbone of the monarch’s influence. Of course, Carlborough would be barred from holding any office regardless of class or party.

When Ernest Augustus dies in 1851, what would become of his territories?

Ernest Augustus’s two crowns would be inherited by his son, George V of Hanover and Britain. Like his father, George was a believer in absolutism. Aware that many considered him an unlikable monarch, in monarch since he was briefly married, he determined to make himself known as a hard and uncomprising king and to make his mark on the land.

If his father ascended to the British throne thanks to Hanover’s assassination of the heir apparent, George V would have been 21 years old when he became heir to the throne. The young crown prince had neither the legs nor the strength for the longnames success in duty. With a quick marriage to a woman of beauty, the eldest candidate for the crown would have been Princess Augusta of Cambridge. As daughter of Prince Adolphus, she was George’s cousin, and they would be expected to set to work on producing the much-needed heir and a spare.

Far from a progressive monarch, in a changing Europe, George V would have been seen as a dinosaur, embodying a royal dynasty that was swiftly becoming a thing of the past. From his home in England he might attempt to rule both his territories but the reins of power would never be held firmly, and when the Austro-Prussian War broke out, it would prove a fatal conflict for King George V.

Would George V have brought Britain into the Austro-Prussian War, or would British influence have kept Hanover from becoming involved?

Since George V de facto was now ruler of Hanover and Britain, plunging into the war of 1866 would be easier said than done. The EPU Act of Settlement included a provision stating, “This nation be not obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominion or territories which do not belong to the Crown of England, without the consent of Parliament”.

George V, however, was a man who passionately believed in the absolutism of the monarch, and in Hanover it was a power he enjoyed. In Britain, he would find things to be considerably more difficult.

Reminded of Prussia’s part in putting down the Hanoverian revolt, George V would appeal to Britain to enter the conflict on its side. Parliament was unhappy, however, Britain must remain neutral. With any efforts to dissolve Parliament and force British involvement in the war proving fruitless, George V would be faced with a difficult choice. Constitutionally, the personal union of Hanover and Britain was now hanging by a thread. In all of Britain, there was not a monarch to be won in one realm and neutral in another. The answer, of course, was that he could not.

Ultimately, it’s unlikely that George V would have been willing to abdicate the powerful British throne in favour of the Hanoverian one. Having said that, he probably wouldn’t have been willing to fight Hanover, which his family had ruled for centuries, to Prussia either. Instead, Hanover’s best path would have been to allow Britain and France to continue fighting the Austro-Prussian War. This would have carried the implicit understanding that any settlement that chose to include Hanover’s crown might somehow allow the two nations to form an alliance to support the Hanoverian cause. It’s also possible that the British would allow George V to continue ruling Hanover, perhaps even allowing him to share the throne with his cousin, Prince Charles.

If the events of 1841 had taken place, would the British have gone to war in support of the Hanoverian crown?

Not likely. While Hanover had been a loyal ally of Britain in the Napoleonic Wars, it was clear that Britain no longer viewed Hanover as a vital strategic asset. The British government was also mindful of the cost of war and the impact it would have on their own economy. Additionally, the prospect of fighting a war on two fronts would have been daunting for the British, given their recent experience with the Crimean War.

How would the Hanoverian succession have affected the British monarchy?

If Hanover had been ruled by the Hanoverian line, it’s possible that the British monarchy would have become more firmly entrenched in Hanover. The Hanoverians had a long history of military service to Britain, and it’s possible that the Hanoverian crown would have continued to play a role in British military affairs. However, it’s also possible that the Hanoverian line would have become more isolated from British political life, and that the Hanoverian crown would have remained a relatively minor player in British affairs.

What if... Queen Victoria had been assassinated?

The assassination of Queen Victoria would have had a profound impact on British history. Without her in power, the course of British history might have been very different.

The Hanoverian succession would have remained in power, and the Hanoverian crown would have continued to play a role in British military affairs. However, it’s also possible that the Hanoverian line would have become more isolated from British political life, and that the Hanoverian crown would have remained a relatively minor player in British affairs.
Mary Magdalen

The prostitute turned Apostle to the Apostles is an enduring icon of Western civilisation, but we know surprisingly little about who she really was.

**Defining moment**

Death of Jesus

When Jesus was crucified, all of the men left his entourage: Mary was the one who stayed. She was a witness to his death, and was present at his burial.

For many years, she has been depicted as a distant relative of Jesus, but recent scholarship suggests that she was more closely related to him.

“Mary Magdalen”

“This is a wonderful story, extraordinary intimate, at first achingly sad and then, even in its triumph, a scene of poignant renunciation.”

**Defining moment**

Independent woman

Mary was a woman who provided for herself and her family through her own means. She was a businesswoman, and her income supported her family.

“Mary Magdalen”

“Mary must have been a highly independent woman, especially for the time. ‘Magdalen’ may simply mean ‘woman from Magdala,’ a term that implies being a ‘woman of substance.”

**Defining moment**

Hero or Villain?

Mary Magdalen

Mary Magdalen is often depicted as a heroic figure, but recent scholarship suggests that she was more complex.

**Defining moment**

Apostle to the Apostles

Mary was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection, and was given the task of spreading the message to the other Apostles.

“Mary Magdalen”

“This is a wonderful story, extraordinary intimate, at first achingly sad and then, even in its triumph, a scene of poignant renunciation.”
It is hard to know though it is widely accepted that Magdalene was a real historic figure, there are very few sources about her. A whole biography of Mary has been written from almost nothing. She was allegedly a prostitute who came to Jesus to ask for or acknowledge his forgiveness, who knelt before him, washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair and then anointed them with ointment and perfumed oil. This is a startlingly sexual scene. No wonder John’s text was exorcised.

Once assured of Jesus’ forgiveness, she became one of the women who travelled with Jesus and provided for him out of their own means. Our Christian ancestors will have believed more about this Mary Magdalene. If we combine all the four gospels’ distinct narratives into one story, Jesus is anointed not once but three times. First by the prostitute, then by his friend Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Martha was the more active, Mary the more contemplative of the two sisters. Mary anointed Jesus to help their brother Lazarus who had died and Jesus—in his climactic miracle—raised Lazarus from the dead. Then Mary anointed Jesus feet with an expensive perfume. In Luke’s account, it was Mary, Jesus’ own mother. And finally, just a few days later, an anonymous woman anointed Jesus feet, but his head. This is an odd series of overlapping stories. At the end of the 6th century, Pope Gregory the Great tried to bring all their ambiguities to an end. All these stories, he insisted, involved just one woman: Mary Magdalene, the penitent prostitute. First she had wash over Jesus’ feet in sorrow and repent, then she had anointed his feet again in honor of his impending death and then she was considered worthy enough to anoint his head. No wonder she came to the tomb on Easter day with a jar of ointment, ready to anoint him yet again. But the burden body was not there and she is granted an incomparably greater honour in the first sight of the risen Lord.

This Mary Magdalene was no longer just an individual in Jesus’ entourage. She had become a symbol of all Christians, men and women alike, sinful, penitent, forgiven, restored, and finally to be blessed with the sight of Jesus himself. And so she remained in Christian teaching and imagination for over 1,000 years. However, there were flaws in this story. The persistent prostitute in later gospel is anonymous—Lilie does not link her with the Mary Magdalene whom he introduces. In his next see, there is no reason to identify Mary Magdalene with Mary the mother of Martha and Lazarus. Mary was simply a common name, shared by Jesus’ own mother and at least two of his friends. The Mary Magdalene of the Christian Middle Ages is dissolve before our eyes. This Mary, seen out of the four gospels’ different narratives, may have preceded a moving story of divine grace and human restoration but it seems to have been very bad history indeed.

We should probably go further. That story of human fall and restoration is inspiring but it also portrayed the paradoxical sexism as a woman whose sin was sexual. In churches dominated all through the Middle Ages by celibate men, this manifested a terrible homophobia that the most dangerous of all temptations for a woman’s sexual power. Churches, fully with asceticism, closed her for their fear and anger. One need not be a revolutionary to be glad that the medieval Magdalene has been left behind. In 1896 the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged that the Mary and the remaining women should no longer be redefined as a simple woman.

Where does this leave Mary Magdalene herself? Within a century of her death there were groups on the fringes of the principal churches who saw in Mary a heroine of insight and faith, and she was the leader favored above all others by Jesus after his resurrection. It may well have been the embodiment of his teaching in Jesus’ day and in their own, which led to the suppression of these called Gnostics and their texts.

For such Gnostics, Mary represented the human soul, always seen as feminine, yearning for union with her spiritual Lord. This was intense and intimate but as often not involved, for these Gnostics who hated the ideology of the physical world, a real asexual experience of any sexual contact on earth. The rediscovery of this privileged Magdalene as long been view, has become an icon of religious women’s liberation in our own time from centuries of misogynistic patriarchy.

The Gnostic Mary Magdalene was largely created out of John’s Easter story. Spiritual tradition states that we can draw our eyes when we began, with the mysterious story of that Easter scene. John’s entire gospel is a story of the new creation. In God’s Garden, God created light on Day One; “completed” creation on Day Six and put Adam in the Garden of Eden to be its gardener and to name all God’s other creatures. Adam is finally given Eve as his companion, According to John’s gospel, Jesus ‘completed’ his work at Day Six (Good Friday). On Day One (Easter Sunday) of the next week, Mary comes to the tomb before this lights. She mistakes Jesus for the gardener, but he calls her by her name, revealing his true identity.

“She had become a symbol of all Christians, men and women alike; sinful, penitent, forgiven, restored and finally to be blessed!”

Despite deep-rooted misogyny, a series of women has portrayed June’s story. Jesus’ mother at beginner and end. Mary and Martha right at the centre. Mary Magdalene is the last and appears in the greatest of these stories. She is the leader of disciples who returned to a cave five into the Garden of Eden to meet the Jesus who firs trudged any Adam. The new creation is complete. The light is shining in paradise.

HEROINE

In a new world, Mary was a brave, independent woman who supported Jesus through the most times and the world.

VILLAIN

May be an entirely misrepresented, better and for better. She has become a scapegoat figure in any Christian or post-Christian culture.

LEGACY

Mary has been entirely misrepresented, better for better. She has become an unrecognizable figure in any Christian or post-Christian culture.
THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

Dos & don’ts

- Practise your religion. The Dutch are famed for their religious tolerance, with the Republic providing sanctuary for persecuted Jews and Anabaptists. However, Calvinists still dominated and public practice of Catholicism was illegal.

- Build a windmill. The iconic Dutch windmill took off in the 17th century, with over 60,000 dotted across the Netherlands. The city walls of Amsterdam were even crowned with a row of them.

- Try the herring. White ships bring back exotic colonial goods. Dutch trading companies are built on North Sea herring, readily available wherever you go. The seafood is an emblem of national pride.

- Sling a spijkerboor. From 1613, “Tulip Mania” saw speculators trade the flowers’ bulbs for extraordinary sums of money — the most expensive selling price for the price of a well-appointed house. However, this spending frenzy couldn’t last and the market collapsed unexpectedly in 1637.

- Cross the city watch. A military militia guards the city gates, polices the streets and punishes our free. Companies are grouped by district and the weapons they need, bow, crossbow or gun.

- Green ostentatiously. It’s a contradiction of the age that while the wealthy rich merchants enjoyed flaunting their cash, out of religious devotion they always dressed humbly in thick wool with broad hats and their wives wore bonnets.

WHERE TO STAY

AMSTERDAM

The Hague

WHO TO BEFRIEND

Frans Hals
White留言板er van Hals is the most famous artist of the Dutch Golden Age, well-regarded for his portraits of Old Masters. Frans Hals was an architect as well as a portrait painter, and is best known for his portraits, such as the famous "The Laughing Cavalier." He was also a skilled etcher and printmaker, and his work has had a lasting impact on the development of Dutch painting.

WHO TO AVOID

Jan van de Wijck
As Grand Pensionary, Jan van de Wijck was the most famous artist of the Dutch Golden Age. He was a prolific painter, and is well-known for his portraits of Dutch nobility, as well as his landscapes and religious paintings. His work is characterized by a realistic and detailed style, with a strong emphasis on light and shadow.

Helpful skills

Shipbuilding

Dutch shipbuilding was a major industry during the 17th century. The Dutch had a strong tradition of shipbuilding and were known for their high-quality ships. Amsterdam was a major shipbuilding center, and Dutch ships were known for their speed and durability.

Banking

During the 17th century, the Dutch developed a sophisticated banking system that helped them to become the leading financial center of the world. The Dutch East India Company was one of the most successful trading companies of its time, and the DutchBank was one of the most influential banks in the world.

Sugarcraft

Thanks to the Dutch and their sugar plantations in the Caribbean, the Netherlands became a major producer of sugar. This led to the development of a unique sugar-based cuisine that included dishes such as sugar-syrup-tampered waffles, sugar-coated cookies, and sugared almonds.

Sugarcraft

Thanks to imports from the colonies, Amsterdam and its neighbors began to thrive on sugar. They developed a unique sugar-based cuisine that included dishes such as sugar-syrup-tampered waffles, sugar-coated cookies, and sugared almonds.
**Greatest Battles**

**Custer’s last fight**

Armstrong Greely shows the charming, desperate figure of the commander of the 7th Cavalry in a painting of the battle. The artist had a license in providing the soldier in the painting with paintbrushes and genitals that gradually were not verified at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

**The winding river**

The Little Bighorn River winds in the distance near the Indian encampment on Custer's line. Fighting the river means the men were divided into numerous groups. This painting otherwise is an interpretation of the event.

**Mounted warriors rush forward**

At 3 p.m. Custer and his troopers were to continue through the Indian camp on the river, and the 7th Cavalry Detachment moved east to the Little Bighorn. Although this painting shows a division of soldiers in the river, the impression is that thousands of Indians were drawn into a small band of them.

**Firing his colt**

A wounded trooper of the 7th Cavalry raises his Colt Model 1873 Single Action Army revolver for a point-blank shot at an attacking warrior. In addition to the bow and arrow, war club and lance, the Native American warriors at Little Bighorn were armed with more than 80 different types of firearms.

**Taking a scalp**

Scalping of the enemy dead was a common practice among Great Plains tribes. The practice was to show that they were brave and strong. While troopers were certainly scalped at Little Bighorn, claims that Custer was scalped or his body otherwise mutilated are unsubstantiated.

**Battle of the Little Bighorn**

**Montana Territory, 25-26 June 1876**

As the United States expanded westward, it inevitably clashed with the indigenous people who lived there. Native Americans were usually moved to reservations, where they were isolated from the rest of the world. Fighting the river meant the men were divided into numerous groups. The impression is that thousands of Indians were drawn into a small band of them. Although this painting shows a division of soldiers in the river, the impression is that thousands of Indians were drawn into a small band of them.

**Custer was killed in the fighting**

As the United States expanded westward, it inevitably clashed with the indigenous people who lived there. Native Americans were usually moved to reservations, where they were isolated from the rest of the world. Fighting the river meant the men were divided into numerous groups. The impression is that thousands of Indians were drawn into a small band of them. Although this painting shows a division of soldiers in the river, the impression is that thousands of Indians were drawn into a small band of them.
Greatest Battles

US 7th Cavalry Regiment

Troops C.700

01 The fateful decision to attack
On the morning of 25 June, 1876, Custer is informed that a large Sioux village has been located at the mouth of the Little Bighorn River, 24 kilometers from his command. Although he initially intends to attack the following day, he decides on an immediate attack when a subsequent report that some Native Americans have possibly observed his cavalry columns, compromising the element of surprise.

02 Formidable enemy forces await
Custer’s experienced Fammers and Crow scouts report that the Native American village, which includes over 2,000 Cheyenne, Lakota Sioux, and Arapaho warriors, is larger than the village from the south. Rather than withdrawing, the Native American warriors have chosen to stand and fight.

03 Ill-advised division of troopers
Leaders of the 5th Cavalry, including Custer, divide the regiments into smaller groups, each of less than 200 troopers. One of these, the 7th Cavalry, is detailed to protect the 7th Cavalry’s regimental baggage trains.

04 The battle joined
As a consequence, Tens, Major Marcus Reno leads his troopers and scouts across a small creek. With orders to proceed as rapidly as he deems proper and attack, Reno opens the Battle of the Little Bighorn with an assault on the village from the south. Rather than withdrawing, the Native American warriors have chosen to stand and fight.

05 Hard-pressed, Reno falls back
Custer and Custer are confused and confronted with overwhelming forces. Reno withdraws his troopers from the south, but they are absorbed in additional fire from the Native American village. Under steady increasing pressure, Reno manages to hold his command together as casualties mount.

06 Benteen is summoned
Captain Benteen leads another column of troopers to the northeast into the valley, finding fewer Native Americans. He receives a scrambled message from Custer ordering his force towards the sounds of Reno rifles.

07 Custer commits his column
With Reno heavily engaged, Custer attempts to gather his scattered and depleted forces, creating a column to meet the second threat. Crazy Horse leads a war party a short distance downstream along the Little Bighorn and then double back to attack Custer. The result is a classic engagement of Custer’s command.

08 Reinforced but pinned down
Benteen pins the ambushed forces in better defensive positions along the edge of the hill, and the combined forces hold to ground with determination. After hours of fighting, from the afternoon of 25 June until dusk the following day, the remnants of the two cavalry contingents manage to escape to safety.

09 Custer in dire straits
Faced with overwhelming odds, Custer’s command is pushed northward toward the Indian village, a decision to make matters worse, and the combined forces hold to ground with determination. After hours of fighting, from the afternoon of 25 June until dusk the following day, the remnants of the two cavalry contingents manage to escape to safety.

10 The road to defeat
After receiving a victory, the Custers, Custer and Benteen, advance to the village, despite that the battle has cost Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer’s 7th Cavalry at the Little Bighorn, the most famous battle of the Great Sioux War, the Native American’s cause prevailed against the growing strength of the US Army. Within a year, the town of the Northern Plains is formed to requisition and subsequently settle on reservations.

11 Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne & Arapaho

2,000+

Warriors

12 Crazy Horse

Ledge

Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and others led the attack on Little Bighorn.

Strengths: Crazy Horse was an inspiring, creative, courageous and inspirational leader.

Weaknesses: He was willing to engage in a war against the allies.

13 Tribes

Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors joined the 7th Cavalry in battle.

Strengths: They were courageous with great endurance.

Weaknesses: The warriors were often outnumbered and outnumbered, though not at the Little Bighorn.

14 Rifles

Key Weapon

Winchester Repeating rifles proved great firepower.

Strengths: Rapid rate of fire compared to the single shot rifles.

Weaknesses: A shorter range compared to the single shot rifles.
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From the notorious serial killers of the Age of Aquarius to the ruthless mob bosses of the Jazz Age and beyond, Real Crime is the first high-quality true crime magazine on the newstand. Every issue of Real Crime reveals the untold stories behind the world’s most gripping cases, the breathtaking experiences of investigators and survivors, and blow-by-blow accounts of how lawbreakers were finally brought to justice.

SAILOR’S FAVOURITE SUBSTITUTE

GREAT BRITAIN, 18TH CENTURY

Dont worry, were not cooking the melancholic little creature from Atanks Adventure in Wonderland. Rather Lewis Carroll’s creation was an elaborate part on a common Victorian dish, one that actually had to meet in the 1800s. British sailors brought green turtles back with them from the West Indies and they quickly became a table sensation that was in demand. But catching and importing the animals from the Caribbean was expensive, so only the upper rich could afford it. Instead, mock turtle soup was created as an economical substitute.

The main ingredient was a cat’s head, which supposedly had a texture similar to turtle meat. However, part of the allure of exotic dishes was that different cuts of the animal supposedly tasted like veal, beef, fish, ham and pork. So chefs would try a mix of ingredients to try and replicate the various tastes on a budget, throwing in oysters, ham and even fried trusses. The recipe is based on one from the earliest recorded in Hannah Glasse’s 1747 The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy.

**METHOD**

**00** Depending on how good a butcher you have, you might have to prepare the cat’s head yourself. To do this, dispose of the hair, eyes and tongue before cutting the head and carefully removing the brains. Rinse the brains in the fridge overnight in salt water.

**02** The next day, slice the cat’s head into thin strips and poach them in cold salted water for an hour. Take this opportunity to shock your oysters, poach the onions, turnips and mushrooms, then peel and shred the lemon half.

**03** Having been thoroughly soaked, the membrane around the flesh should have toughened. Once correctly, it should peel off without breaking to reveal a white meat underneath.

**04** Dice your pickled trusses, cut up the cat’s head thinly as you can, then fry it up with the brains.

**05** When the head has colored, drain it and add the meat, vegetables and lemon that you’ve just prepared along with the gravy — lamb gravy will do if you can afford mutton. Stir in the wine, lemon juice and a pinch of salt.

**06** Add water if the meat is not completely covered by the gravy and slowly bring it to a simmer. Stir any sauce that has run to the surface of the water, then cover with a lid and stew everything until the meat becomes nice and tender.

As to what the sailors usually werent enough, its now time to cook the forcemeat — a blend of chicken, pork or even fish with peas and herbs, seasoned at similar to stuffing.

**08** Before serving, boil two eggs. When they’re ready, simply put the yolk and use them to garnish the dish along with the forcemeat and a sprig of parsley.

**09** Traditionally, the soup would be served in the shell of a green turtle, which would be lined with a few mint leaves and served in the oven. But, as our 18th-century source reassures us, “a china soup-dish will do as well.”
TERRACOTTA WARRIORS

The inside story on the imperial funerary statues that came to captivate the globe

Author: Edward Burman
Publisher: Weidenfeld & Nicolson
Price: £25

In China Terracotta Warriors have enthralled the world since their initial unearthing in 1974, which revealed the ambition of the country’s very first emperor in ensuring his protection in the afterlife. Millions of people have trod this ancient site at Xi’an in Shaanxi Province in the decades since, global archaeological excitement on a scale surely only comparable to Howard Carter’s discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922. With a much-anticipated exhibition exploring the warrior now open at Liverpool’s World Museum, author Edward Burman has published his take on their mysterious story.

The first work for the general reader to assimilate the most recent analysis, the book aims to engage its audience in this remarkable chapter of China’s history in just 220 pages — and succeeds it does.

Terracotta Warriors is divided into three parts, corresponding to its title: history, mystery, and latest discoveries.

First is a fascinating journey documenting the rise of the Qin dynasty, who generations transcended their origins as a feudal state to rule all of China. The reign of Qin Shi Huang as the first emperor was short but will be remembered in poverty thanks to his creations. The book really gets going as we delve into the mystery of why and how the warriors were created as part of the emperor’s grand mausoleum complex, believed to have covered about 300 square kilometers. They were discovered by chance by farmers in 1974 and we now know that there are more than 6,000 soldiers, 120 chariots with 520 horses and 150 cavalry horses in the Terracotta Army alongside other figures including archers and ministers. Yet despite this knowledge, much of the warriors’ existence is still enigmatic. Could the influence of Greek thought and art in nearby regions have inspired these life-sized figures, unprecedented in China? And was their purpose not to defend their immortality-seeking emperor in the afterlife, or was the intent for them to be used in rituals and ceremonies? Whatever the truth, this is an absorbing account, presenting a compelling insight into ancient Chinese culture. Burman not only explores how the Qin ancestors planned the way for Qin Shi Huang – both in terms of his empire and his panorama – but also examines how they saw the world and interacted with it.

‘The tales and theories are perfectly complemented by archaeological evidence, with the book rounded off by discussions on the latest research and what else archaeologists trying to discover in the coming years. Readers new to this period – or who are perhaps not usually drawn to works focusing on ancient era – should not be put off as Burman presents complex ideas and processes in an accessible style, and indeed his incisive book may even encourage you to read more about China’s empressively rich history.’

“Yet despite this knowledge, much of the warriors’ existence is still an enigma”

YORKSHIRE

A leisurely stroll through Vikings, Civil War and Industrial Revolution

Author: Richard Morris
Publisher: Weidenfeld & Nicolson
Price: £25

With his background in archaeology, Richard Morris is at his strongest when he’s talking about places rather than people. He contains an epic tale from the geography of shifting continents and coastal erosions, the subterranean secrets of burial mounds and Roman sewers, and the scars left by 18th-century earthworks and long gone collieries. Furthermore, Morris makes a great case for the significance of Yorkshire as one of the many farflung around which a certain amount of British — and even world — history pivots.

This is also a very personal journey and for an archaeologist like Morris, places are deeply personal. His unique perspective and decades of experience in the field bring to life the cold stones of the iconic Whitby Abbey, the crumbling cliffs of Holme Moss and the windswept moors that inspired the Brontës. But then the personal also means people, whether Yorkshire cultural touchstones like historic Anne Lister, poet Ted Hughes or novelist MR Praterley, Morris’s own extended family history or lesser-known stories of quiet innovators and revolutionaries who have been largely forgotten outside of their little niches or cheaper than Lincoln. It’s where Yorkshire: A Brief History of England’s Greatest County seems to slip in. Neither translation, go and one and fast translation (mass around) and ultimately leave feeling somewhat cold with little more than comments of company.

There’s plenty to enjoy and plenty to savor for further reading but little sense of purpose or momentum in it. Some of the tangents read especially tenuous as Morris labour’s to connect locations where he is familiar, where it is not. That’s not a criticism of Morris but simply comes from the impoverishment of World War I consciousness and objects art of family members overseas to wider pattern of migration. It’s as lyrical as promised, but not in portraying a single history, Morris falls short.

RETROGRAPHIC

This coffee table collection brings history back to life

Editor: Michael D Carroll Publisher: Carpet Bombing Culture
Price: £19.95

“With war, sacrifice and noise, time is not just a constant, it’s a cascade. It sets the rhythm for the rest of life. We know that war is the mother of invention, of progress, of change. But we forget that war is also the mother of destruction, of death, of loss.”

“for an archaeologist like Morris, places are deeply personal”
Have you ever wanted to change the past? Maybe assassinate Hitler? Or save Abraham Lincoln? Well, hop into your time machine and give it a go in Chrononauts, the history-based card game from the makers of Tzolk'in: The Mayan Calendar. The aim is to change the past and get yourself back to the right timeline.

All the start of each game, you’ve been given an ID that details what happened in your version of history and it’s your job to make it happen by turning over time cards.

An interesting mechanic is that changing these also creates ripple effects through time by flipping so-called "triplexion" cards. However, these cause paradoxes and it’s your job to either get them flipped back or patch them up, depending on your end goal.

Each player also has a mission card, listing artifacts that are collected from the main draw pile. These can range from the Mona Lisa to an alien from the future. Collect these or face and you can win the game.

To expand your timeline, expansion packs are available. For instance, if you’ve won some more recent cards then you can purchase The Cool War, which goes up to Obama’s inauguration in 2008. Or you could change the course of American history with the Early American Chrononauts, which is set in the 1960s. You don’t even have to play with other players as the game comes with a set of rules for a single-player mode.

This game is ideal for fans of Back to the Future, Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure or even All About History’s own regular What if section. Though it may require a knowledge of history—or even alternative history—it is not required, only a penchant for playing fantastic strategy games. Chrononauts is a fun, fast-paced way of exploring what happened in the 20th century—and how differently the world could have turned out.

The Death of Stalin

Amando Iannucci has a gift for lacerating political satire, crowning Westminster send-up The Thick of It before hopping over the Pond to take down the White House with Veep. He is able to find the humor in the humdrum era of incompetent authority figures as well as tear them down with some bonhomously foul-mouthed insults. However, until now the stakes his characters have had to face were no higher than being fired, not at an election. In his latest feature film, The Death of Stalin, characters are as likely to be met with a bullet to the head as they are striking both.

Set in 1953, in the paranoid world of totalitarian Russia, Stalin officials gather ostensibly to decide how to maintain control of the Soviet Union after the titular dictator dies from a stroke. However, what actually happens is the group is set to forcibly re-fighting and bloody backstabbing as they each try to appoint themselves as Stalin’s successor. This confederation of chancers is made up of all-star cast, Steve Buscemi, Nikolai Khrushchev is a waxy politician, who doesn’t hold his architect: Jeremy Tamber is Georgy Malenkov, the heir apparent who doesn’t have a clue what he’s doing; Simon Russell Beale is Lavrentiy Beria, the absolutely vile chief of the NKVD secret police; and Michael Palin plays a diplomat with a dash of life of Brian silliness. As the group’s vying for power intensifies, the ensemble cast is rounded out by Simon Hughes as Field Marshal Zhukov.

That none of these transatlantic actors adopt a Russian accent is never an issue—and perhaps a boon. Then again, the fact that Iannucci actually puts on a Sean Bean-style Yorkshire brogue to play the head of the Red Army is, for better or worse part of the reason he steals every scene.

While the plot is broadly lifted from the French graphic novel by Fabien Vehlmann and Thierry Noël, Iannucci and co-writers David Schneider and Ian Martin ramp up the cynicism, corruption and double-cross that made the French film and show required watching.

Having said that, The Death of Stalin is as entertaining as it is illuminating. The horrors of Stalin’s regime, as brutal as it was bureaucratic, form the backronym to all the bickering and scheming. As well as name-checking real events and offering glimpses inside a gulag, gutwrenching laughter can quickly turn to a shuddering gap as slapstick buffoonery gives way to senseless violence. The last ten minutes of the film are particularly hard to watch as the most successful power play reaches its harrowing endgame.

For the most part, Iannucci successfully walks this tricky tightrope so that it never feels like one of the darkest parts of modern history is being treated glibly. If anything, the film speaks to a deeper truth about totalitarianism, in which any situation where so few people have so much power is as terrifying as it is absurd. Disappointingly, however, the Blo and EFD special features are limited to interviews with the cast and crew and deleted scenes instead of anything a little more.

This comedy odyssey doesn’t dismiss the horrors of Stalin’s reign but it does serve as a reminder to laugh in the face of trumped up authoritarians.
Hacksaw Ridge
Director Mel Gibson
Starring Andrew Garfield, Sam Worthington, Luke Bracey, Samuel Small

What liberties did Hollywood take with the surprising story of a pacifist medic serving in Japan?

01 Hacksaw Ridge is based on the true story of Desmond Doss, a combat medic in the United States Army and the only conscientious objector to receive a Medal of Honor during World War II. He saved 75 men during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945.

02 In the film, Doss meets Dorothy, his future wife, at a hospital where she was a nurse before World War II. However, this is fictional as Dorothy died in 1916. The film’s Dorothy is a nurse and the couple originally met in church.

03 In reality, Doss did refuse to take a gun, as he didn’t want to use a weapon. He was called a coward by his fellow soldiers, who frequently teased and made fun of him. However, the main bully in the movie, Tandy, is a fictional character.

04 The Americans did use a cage to help them climb Hacksaw Ridge, and Doss was one of the men to man it. Although this isn’t shown in the film. The on-screen ridge was also a lot safer than the real-life ridge the men had to climb.

05 The final assault at the ridge was delayed so that Doss could read his Bible, as depicted in the film. This is because the assault took place on Saturday, the day of Sabbath, which is sacred in Seventh-day Adventists like Doss as they usually refrain from secular work.
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