

SGS



HISTORIAN

A magazine produced by the Lower Sixth at Stockport Grammar School
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Did Princess Anastasia survive the Romanov murder?

Book review of the Man in the High Castle

Was Edward VIII a Nazi?

The truth behind the infamous "unsinkable ship"



8 of the Greatest Conspiracy Theories

Who actually assassinated JFK?

History's biggest unsolved mysteries explored inside

The unpacking of many more mysteries inside



A note from the Editor

A Conspiracy Theory: a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators.

It felt fitting to start off with a definition from Merriam-Webster, as many great classic rhetorics do. Conspiracy theories are sometimes based on fact, sometimes sprung from hatred and always manage to capture the minds of humankind. I think this last thought helps to explain why our team decided to run with the theme of conspiracy theories. They manage to entice people in a fascinating way; we are collectively drawn to the idea of multiple scenarios disproving the government or other such 'powerful' organisations. We love the idea of scandal, we love the hope of somebody not actually being dead, but faking it, and we love not to trust something wholly just because the establishment says it's so. It is in our nature to second-guess, and thus the whole being of conspiracy theories is birthed. In this issue, you will find a plethora of Theories from one on the Princes in the Tower to one on the Mona Lisa. There are also some alternate history book reviews which may even encourage some further reading. We hope that you are tempted by this issue of the SGS Historian as much as I am, rather hopefully, guessing that you will be. I would like to thank everyone that helped and submitted a piece, after all a magazine isn't one without its writers. This is only the second issue of the SGS Historian and so I hope it inspires younger readers to get involved when they get into Lower Sixth, and you don't even have to study history. Read with an open mind and remember, there may be more to something than meets the naked eye.

Happy reading!

Persephone Hotchkies



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Cover – Finley Nolan

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Grand Duchess Anastasia: Dodged a bullet?

Over the past 30 years we have managed to piece together the events of the 1918 civil war in Russia. By doing so we have collated evidence of what happened to the Romanov family as the Tsar fell from being supreme leader, chosen by god, to one of the 1.7 million casualties of the war, buried in a nearby woodland.

The 1991 excavations of a mass grave near Yekaterinburg gave us huge insight into the brutal events that surrounded the fall of the Tsar's reign as the remains of the Tsar, the Tsar's wife (Tsarina Alexandra) and their three eldest daughters were uncovered, leaving the whereabouts of the youngest two siblings; Anastasia and Alexei (the Heir) a mystery. Could Grand Duchess Anastasia have escaped from the grasp of the guards and survived to live a lifetime or just as little as a few extra months? Is Anastasia the beloved lost Princess of Russia or just fiction, an elaborate chapter of Isheviks' plan to keep the facade of a living Romanov family alive?



As the First World War came to an end, Russia was in the midst of a revolution led by the common people of Russia, striving for social change. The workers and peasants were desperate, unable to survive on the scraps of food left for them as the war took its course. Spontaneous revolts broke out in the major cities, with strikes occurring throughout the February of 1918. By 2nd March the elite had lost faith in their Tsar forcing him to abdicate, letting temporary governments (including the Soviet) seize control. It was this temporary Government that placed the Romanov family under house arrest at Alexander Palace. They were later moved to Ipatiev House, a highly secure facility where the once royals were kept as prisoners, unable to leave their rooms or peer through the windows without being shot at. At this time the Bolsheviks had a significant influence over the Soviets and, on the 24-25th October, seized key positions in St Petersburg and it was in this period of Red Terror that the orders were sent for the Romanov family to be killed.

The events of the night were told through "Yurovsky's Note", the head of the Ipatiev House, Yakov Yurovsky's account of the events, submitted to his Bolshevik superiors. This coupled with the guards' accounts let us build up a timeline of what exactly happened to the Tsar's family. At around Midnight of the 17th of July 1918 the family were told to dress and make their way down stairs to the basement for a family photo. It was here that the family were shot one by one, in age order. When the time came for the younger siblings, the room was full of smoke as the shots were fired at such close proximity. Most of the executioners' shots at the girls were unsuccessful as they ricocheted off

their corsets, with their crown jewels sewn into them, in order to hide them from their captors.

Could Grand Duchess Anastasia have escaped from the grasp of the guards and survived to live a lifetime or just as little as a few extra months?

Whilst it was accepted that the rest of the family were brutally murdered, the same cannot be said for Anastasia. Reports of the night's events differ from guard to guard, making us unsure and unable to be certain of the true course of events. Reports of sightings of Anastasia are recorded up to September 1918 and women claiming her name have come forward worldwide. Is it possible on the night of the murders that Anastasia could have escaped? The night was officially recorded by Yurovsky, but other sources contradict his series of events. Yurovsky states that all the family members were only shot but Guard, Peter Ermakov told his wife that they were attacked at the end with bayonets. Another source states that when the bodies were carried out of the basement one of the girls cried out and was clubbed on the head. The contradiction between the sources could hint at a cover up as many of the stories fail to match up.

Although the plan of the night was carefully composed, it was not fool proof and many confounding variables skewed the night's events: the bullets ricocheted off the girls corsets, posing as protection; and the room filled with smoke as shots were fired from older

Story continued overleaf

rifles, leading to the need for the doors to be opened and the shooting to halt as the racket could be heard from a while away. The sympathetic guards were left with the bodies, some still alive, and the supposed corpses were later left alone in the van straight after the shootings. These problems for the Bolsheviks posed as opportunities for any surviving family members able to escape, like many believe Anastasia did.

The Bolsheviks actions solidified the views of those who thought Anastasia was alive. Reports emerged after the killings, of Bolshevik soldiers and the Secret Police searching train carriages and houses for Grand Duchess Anastasia and stories emerged of the Tsarinas visiting relatives, locked up in cells. When the Germans demanded “the safety of the princesses of German Blood” the Russians replied that they had been moved to a safer location. In September we see the last sightings of what could have been Anastasia, alive. At siding 37, a railway station North West of Perm, 8 people stood as witnesses to a young woman, recognised as Anastasia by all, being captured by Bolsheviks. The physician who treated her in the Cheka headquarters, Dr Pavel Utkin, stated that she had told him “I am the daughter of the ruler, Anastasia”. Many see these sightings as propaganda, spread by the Bolsheviks in order to keep the facade of a living royal family alive. At this time the Bolsheviks did not have complete control and total support of the Russian people. They were known to be keeping the Romanov family in a secure facility, by sharing that one of the princesses had escaped would definitely be seen as a weakness. Why admit a failure?

The story of the Lost Princess of Russia has been dramatized in books and films (including Disney’s “Anastasia”). In addition the press have widely reported the women who came forward claiming to be Anastasia. The most famous being Anna Anderson who publicly surfaced in 1921. She claimed to have feigned death and escaped with the help of a sympathetic guard. Anderson’s campaign and legal battle for recognition is still, today, the longest running case ever heard by German courts, spanning from 1938 to 1970 when it was officially ended as the court was not supplied with sufficient supporting evidence. Upon Anderson’s death in 1984 a DNA test was carried out. If the DNA that was compared with that of Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh was truly Anderson’s then it can be concluded that Anna Anderson had no relation the Romanov family. Many other stories emerged, one being that two young women posed as Anastasia and Maria and

were kindly given refuge in the Ural Mountains. These girls acted as Nuns for the rest of their lives and were buried as the two Princesses.

In 2007 the burial site of a woman of the estimated age of 18-23 and younger male of age 10-13 at death were discovered by amateur archaeologists nearby to where the rest of the Romanov family were buried. Further forensic analysis and DNA testing has confirmed that these were the remains of the remaining Romanov sister and her younger brother Alexei. Many questions are still unanswered, one being; why bury the youngest children in a different place to the rest of their family? Some speculate that this is deliberate, the Bolsheviks baffling any that found the corpses; the product of a huge miscalculation of the disposal of the bodies; or making the burial more discrete, harder to find, which they succeed in doing.

Although we can now be certain that the women who came forward throughout the twentieth century cannot be the lost Princess, we are still unaware of what exactly happened on the night of the Romanovs’ murder, and the months that followed. The body of the woman found in 2007, presumed to be Anastasia, is estimated to be older than Anastasia would have been in July 1918. Could it be possible that those sightings were not mistaken and that she could have survived, escaped and been later captured and buried near the grave of her elders? We will never know for sure.

Robyn Clements



Great Fire of London: Was it really an Old Maid?



This is one of the most well-known events in English History and is said to have been the demise of the Plague in England, which despite the damage can only be seen as a good thing. Yet, rather ironically, it is also an event which is hardly known at all. It is shrouded in mystery due to the lack of information about the events that occurred, especially the confusion over how it ended. As a result, in recent years there has been a great emergence in conspiracy theories surrounding this topic.

One of the main accusations was that it was the work of the Freemason group, a secretive religious foundation at the time. The evidence for the accusation pins on Christopher Wren who, following the Fire was appointed to rebuild St Paul's Cathedral therefore profiting himself. The Freemasons within weeks were planning to rebuild the city with Christopher Wren and Sir Isaac Newton being at the forefront of this, however the plans seemed too quickly drawn up to be so spontaneous leaving the group very suspicious to outsiders. The fact that it was planned is further supported by the fact that the Fire was one of Nostradamus' more correct predictions suggesting 'The blood of the just will be demanded of London Burnt by fire in the year '66 the ancient Lady will fall from her high place and many of the same sect will be killed'.

At the time, there were also conspiracies based on rumours that, whilst the fire was spreading, there was a foreign influence on the event. Their belief was that, having just started wars with both the French and the Dutch only weeks earlier, they had sailed to England to commit this act of arson to send a message to the King. The rumours resulted in a witch hunt for foreigners with French, Dutch and Irish being murdered on the streets despite any proof of involvement. The Coldstream Guards were so caught up in this hunt that there were more of them participating in this unfounded rumour rather than actually putting an end to the fire, proving the heavy influence that whispers can have.

Even the King was accused of involvement. The argument is that due to London's support of Parliament during the Civil War this was Charles II's revenge for the actions of his people and served as a warning to any others who were questioning whether to commit treason. Evidence possibly supporting this accusation is that the fire spread across the River Fleet but stopped just short of his court at Whitehall suggesting that he had control over it, however this could've just been the wind changing direction.

Overall, we believe that it is a tough decision to decide what really happened during the Great Fire of London due to such little information supporting the widely-believed traditionalist idea that it was started by a maid at Pudding Lane. In a modern-day person's opinion, there was likely some form of foreign influence due to the fact that it seems too much of a coincidence that wars were only just started with France and the Netherlands when this attack occurred.

Josh Doyle & William Spendlove



11/22/63: What really happened?

In short, god only knows. However, if one extensively researches for a few weeks, some surprising coincidences revolving around the 35th president's death can be found. There will be no attacking of the 'bulldog man' or 'umbrella man' in this article but instead it will simply lay out motives, facts and theories to help the reader make up their own mind. Let's dive right in.

John F. Kennedy goes down in some people's books as one of the most honorable presidents in history. He was far from perfect, but the ideas that he birthed in order to release the USA from its debt, and ultimately cut the chain between government and federal reserve were revolutionary, although never enacted upon. JFK wanted to abolish the federal reserve system, (this system is criminal in its own sense, a documentary named Zeitgeist is recommended to help explain) as JFK saw this system forever enslaving the American people. This system prints worthless money that is backed by nothing, only to charge interest on that very same money, thus making the US a forever-debtor nation. JFK wanted to introduce a new currency that would counter the Fed.

On June 4th, 1963, Executive Order 11110 was signed by Kennedy, giving him power as President of the United States to create 'true' money that belonged to the American people and eliminate the need for the Federal Reserve Bank. In fact, by the time of his death, he was issuing 'Kennedy Bills' that were free of debt to replace those issued by the Federal Reserve. These notes were headed with "United States Note" instead of "Federal Reserve Note" and the former was quickly withdrawn from circulation swiftly after Kennedy's death. Nearly all of the issued \$4,292,893,825 (almost \$4.3 Billion) worth of "United States Notes" were withdrawn within 5 months of his assassination. What's more, a mere one day after his assassination, all money created by Kennedy was sent out of circulation and all the money issued by Kennedy was going to be destroyed.

It's clear the Federal Reserve and Kennedy were not on good terms. After all, would you be on good terms with someone if you controlled all the money in the U.S. and that someone was trying to strip that power from you? Some could view this as almost a motive to kill.

In 1962, Kennedy was presented with a rather disturbing proposition by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This proposition was 'Operation Northwoods', an operation in which the U.S. Government would carry out terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and blaming it on enemies of the U.S. in order to justify wars and political assassinations. Kennedy reasonably rejected it. He also planned to abolish the CIA's right to conduct Covert operations and eventually dismantle it- made relatively obvious by stating he would "splinter the CIA into a thousand

pieces". Kennedy's intent to abolish the reserve bank, rejection of operation Northwoods and plan to abolish the CIA gave a common enemy to three of the most powerful organizations in the U.S.

JFK wanted to introduce a new currency that would counter the Federal Reserve [...] almost a motive to kill

The most popular-thought suspect is Lee Harvey Oswald, who was involved with every group that had a reason to remove Kennedy from power. In the years before 'The Big Event', Oswald worked as a marine radar operator at U-2 spy plane bases, before defecting to the Soviet Union. While in Russia he married the niece of a KGB colonel and lived in luxury (likely in exchange for false or already outdated information on the U-2). Interestingly however, Oswald allegedly was still working with the CIA in this period as a double agent. On returning to the U.S. Oswald propagandized for Castro's Cuba out of a New Orleans building he shared with a CIA/FBI agent trying to overthrow Castro named Guy Banister. A lady named Delphine Roberts worked for Banister and said that Mr Banister had been a special agent for the FBI and CIA and she saw her CIA agent boss meet with Lee Harvey Oswald in September 1963, this story was supported by her daughter, who also met Oswald during this period. Oswald also distributed Pro-Castro leaflets in New Orleans in 1963, with the address of his CIA contact Banister stamped on them.

There was also a three-page letter from CIA Director John McCone to Secret Service Chief James Rowley in which McCone acknowledges

Oswald worked for the CIA and was in Russia for that purpose, not as a defector. It discussed how this information should be withheld from the Warren Commission. Allen Dulles' advice to other members of the Warren Commission was that CIA operatives consider it their patriotic duty to lie under oath if necessary to protect "Company" secrets. A Dallas deputy sheriff, Allen Sweatt, was quoted as saying that Oswald was being paid \$200 a month by the government at the time of the assassination, and had been assigned an informant number. In October 1963 Oswald moved to Dallas where he got a job in the Texas Book Depository for \$1.25 an hour boxing and shipping books. It's a strange coincidence how someone who was so clearly connected to the CIA would just happen to get a job working at an advantage point in Dallas, by which the President's open motorcade would just happen to pass a few weeks after he started working there. With this information in mind, can we conclude Oswald was set up to be the fall guy?

On November 22, 1963, at the book depository, around 12:15, secretary Carolyn Arnold saw Oswald in the second-floor snack room, where she said he went for a Coke. He was sitting in one of the booths alone, as usual, and appeared to be having lunch. She testified: "I did not speak to him, but I recognised him clearly. I remember it was 12:15 or later. It could have been 12:25, five minutes before the assassination, I don't exactly remember." At the same time, Bonnie Ray Williams was on the sixth floor until 12:20, and he saw nobody. Down on the street, Arnold Rowland saw two men in the sixth-floor windows, presumably after Bonnie Ray Williams finished his lunch and left.

Kennedy's motorcade was running late. He was due at the Trade Mart at 12:25. If Oswald was one of the assassins, he was nonchalant about getting himself into position. Later he told Dallas police he was standing in the second-floor snack room. A maximum 90 seconds after Kennedy was shot, patrolman Marrion Baker ran into Oswald in that second story lunchroom. He asked Oswald's boss, "Do you know this man? Is he an employee?" He told Baker that he was. As Baker moved on, he told Oswald, "The President's been shot!" Oswald reacted as if he had heard it for the first time.

What the Warren Commission would have us believe is that after firing 3 bolt action shots in 6 seconds, Oswald then left three cartridges neatly side by side in the firing nest, wiped the rifle clear of fingerprints, stashed the rifle on the other side

of the loft, sprinted down five flights of stairs, past Victoria Adams and Sandra Styles, who would have, but never saw him, and then showed up cool and calm on the second floor in front of Patrolman Baker within 90 seconds of the shooting the president. Was he out of breath? According to Baker, Oswald was in a normal manner. Was Oswald a "patsy", as he claimed? Maybe. Whatever can be said of Oswald, one thing is logical to conclude: he either knowingly or unknowingly was a pawn for those responsible for assassinating Kennedy.

After all of this, one can still not be entirely sure what went on that fateful day, although one can be relatively positive in saying that it was not a lone person wanting revenge on capitalism. There are simply too many coincidences and conveniences for this to be the case. However, there are many other views surrounding the whole situation.

Max Jackson



What secrets does Mona Lisa hold?

With over six million visitors a year, each swarming to catch a glimpse of the most renowned Italian Renaissance painting in the world, the Mona Lisa has become an icon of the art community. Yet many visitors have little clue as to what makes the painting, that they are so eager to see, so famous. The Mona Lisa is undeniably painted with remarkable skill and technique; however, it appears to be more striking and eerie than beautiful. Therefore, many agree that it is the mystery surrounding the Mona Lisa and the hidden story that captivates the people's attention.



The Earlier Mona Lisa

One of the most asked questions about the Mona Lisa is, 'Who is she?'. There are many theories of the identity of the Mona Lisa ranging from a Florentine merchant's wife to even Da Vinci himself. The most widely known idea is that the portrait is of Lisa Gherardini, the wife of Francesco del Giocondo who was a silk merchant living in Florence, not far from where Da Vinci grew up. This perhaps provides an answer as to why Da Vinci, who by then was growing in popularity, took time to paint a lesser known merchant's wife. A historical account made by Franck Zöllner states that, '*Leonardo was relatively free of commitments from the end of 1502 to the summer of 1503, so he could accept Francesco del Giocondo's request to paint a portrait for his wife*'. Evidence shows that the two families did indeed know each other as Da Vinci's father often did business with the silk merchant. Considering this, it then appears strange when Da Vinci never delivered the Mona Lisa to Giocondo but instead took it with him in 1506 upon leaving Florence. It was not until 1516 when King Francis I of France invited him to work in Amboise that the Mona Lisa was documented again. After Da Vinci's death in 1519 King Francis bought the painting and from there it worked its way from various French palaces to end up at the Louvre following the French Revolution. However, many speculate that the painting in the Louvre is not the only version of the Mona Lisa and perhaps not Lisa Gherardini del Giocondo at all.

There are many theories of the identity of the Mona Lisa ranging from a Florentine merchant's wife to even Di Vinci himself.

There are three historical accounts, spread decades apart, of well regarded artists, historians and writers seeing the Mona Lisa. However, each of

these accounts vary from each other describing the Mona Lisa but with key differences in her features. There is certain proof that Leonardo da Vinci did paint Lisa Gherardini from a note made by Agostino Vespucci in the margins of one of Cicero's letters. The translation reads, '*In this way Leonardo da Vinci makes it in all his paintings, for example the head of Lisa del Giocondo and of Anne, the mother of the Virgin.*' Further conformation appears in a book written by Giorgio Vasari about the Renaissance painters of his era. Both these accounts and Zöllner's conclude that this painting was commissioned by Lisa del Giocondo's husband. Conversely, another account made by Antonio de Beatis in 1517, when Leonardo was said to be in France, holds mention of a portrait of a Florentine woman painted by da Vinci for Giuliano de' Medici, who was Leonardo's patron in Rome between the years he left Florence and arrived in France. This could suggest that two portraits were created, each commissioned by two different people. Furthermore, in an article written by Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo entitled, '*Pictures, Sculpture and Architecture*' he talks of two similar paintings by Leonardo called, '*Gioconda*' and '*Mona Lisa*' concluding that it is possible two versions of the Mona Lisa were painted as were many other of da Vinci's masterpieces.

The supposed second version of the Mona Lisa was rediscovered in by a man named Hugh Blaker in 1913. It is known as both the, 'Earlier Mona Lisa' and 'Isleworth Mona Lisa' after Blaker brought it back to his studios in Isleworth, now the painting is owned by a private collector in Hong Kong. The two portraits bear a considerable amount of

resemblance with both showing the all famous mysterious smile, however it is clear that one is not a direct copy of the other. The earlier Mona Lisa looks younger and sits on a balcony looking out at a background different to the barren landscape of the Mona Lisa in the Louvre. It is also interesting to note that the Earlier Mona Lisa is almost identical to a sketch done by Raphael in 1504 whilst studying under Leonardo. Perhaps this provides the evidence that the Earlier Mona Lisa is in fact the portrait of Lisa Gherardini del Giocondo as Raphael would have been likely to work from the same subject as da Vinci. If this is indeed true, then the question still remains as to who the woman is in the Louvre Mona Lisa.

It is thought, but not proven, that the Louvre Mona Lisa was begun to be painted when da Vinci was in Rome in 1513 under his patron Giuliano de' Medici, who allegedly also commissioned a painting. Perhaps the Earlier Mona Lisa was used a template to create the older looking Mona Lisa and maybe da Vinci intended it to be that way as he imagined what Lisa Gherardini would have looked like almost a decade later. Some also speculate that the portrait is of da Vinci's mother or Giuliano de' Medici's dead wife, which would explain his interest in the portrait. Both paintings would have travelled with him to France and upon his death the Louvre Mona Lisa would have gone to King Francis I and the other to da Vinci's pupil, Salai. From there records of the paintings became extinct resulting in the hidden story behind the Mona Lisa's. Perhaps that is the irony in the all famous smirk of the woman as only the paintings themselves know the truth of their origin.

Millie Johnson



The Louvre Mona



Raphael's sketch

Gunpowder Plot and Reichstag Fire: Government behind the flames?

Jacobean England, 1605. Weimar Germany, 1933. These two years, over three centuries apart, both harbour matters in which their specifics are still to this day unclear to historians. These events were The Gunpowder Plot and The Reichstag Fire and one can draw very close parallels between the two. It is still debated nowadays whether they were both 'inside jobs' in an attempt to secure more power and in this article, it shall be debated whether each of the conspiracy theories behind them are likely and why both of them succeeded even though arson didn't succeed in one.

The Gunpowder Plot in 1605 remains one of the most famous pieces of English History, partially as it's rather unusually celebrated every year on the 5th November by setting a effigy of a man on fire. It is widely believed that it was the work of Guy Fawkes and thirteen other Catholics to blow up the House of Lords and King James I, James VI of Scotland. Fawkes claimed he wanted the 'blow the King back to the Scottish Mountains' and this view was universalised to the rest of the English Catholics. Yet it is debated that the government was actually involved to turn England against the Catholics or whether this reoccurrence of hatred was a happy coincidence for them. There are many unsolved puzzles which support this theory. For example, this plot had supposedly begun over a year before and the barrels of Gunpowder had been planted under the building since the 20th July .

as Parliament was meant to open on the 28th, but was delayed due to an outbreak of the Plague; how then, after eighteen months altogether was the plot foiled so very easily? Moreover, Gunpowder was only allowed to be distributed by the government so why would they give thirty-six barrels, a significant amount, to a group of Catholics if they didn't want to 'catch' them doing something treasonous? It is all too possible that the government put their monarch's life at risk to turn him against the Catholics. The letter sent to Lord Monteaagle advising him not to attend Parliament was what allegedly gave the whole Plot away, even though even this is debatable as it did not explicitly warn of an explosion.

Story continued overleaf

Between the receiving of the letter and the search underneath Westminster there were nine days, but surely if one wanted to assure there would be no explosion they'd start looking in the cellars much earlier? The Catholics may not have been conspiring with the government yet the government may have known about everything and just let it run its course for their own advantage.

This concept can easily be applied to the Conspiracy Theory of the Reichstag Fire. This Fire occurred on the 27th February, 1933 just roughly a month after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany.

All the blame was placed on a Dutch brick layer Marinus van der Lubbe who was associated with the Communists, the biggest opposition threat to Hitler and the Nazis. But how did Lubbe manage to spread flammable liquid everywhere without being caught? Surely he can't have done it all himself like he claimed. There is a well-known theory that Lubbe was not acting alone but was in fact paid by the Nazis to start the fire. This is believed because of all the consequences which rather coincidentally worked out in the Nazis favour. For example, the arson managed to turn lots of, mainly middle class, people against the Communists which were the biggest threat to Hitler's party meaning now he gained more support. It also allowed Hitler to suspend the freedom of press, expression and public assembly and justify it- meaning he could do whatever he wanted including arresting and executing who he pleased, a definite positive in his opinion. Also, less than a month later the Enabling Act was passed which gave Hitler the power to pass laws without the Reichstag, in effect making him a dictator. Was this all just luck or was it planned? The burning down of the stark symbol of democracy in Germany helped to push forward Hitler's impending rise to autocracy, something which he planned to happen? After this, Hitler was almost in total control, all he had to do was wait for President Hindenburg to die.



Is ABBA right in saying the 'history book on the shelf is always repeating itself'? In the end, both cases were successful in turning the public against a supposed 'common enemy', forming 'negative cohesion' and setting an example by killing the blamed ringleaders. It is thought that it was necessary for the fire to occur in Germany whilst it wasn't in England. Maybe this is because the situation was more extreme in Germany 1933 with the economic depression and failing of democracy and the extremity of actually burning down of a significant building was needed to provoke an equal reaction whereas just the scare of the English Parliament being blown up was all that was needed in a period where there wasn't such turmoil.

Persephone Hotchkies

Food for thought?

After reading five articles, are you viewing these historical events in a different light? What do you think actually happened?

Did Anastasia survive?

Who is Mona Lisa?

How reasonable are these Conspiracies?

Over the next few pages more mysteries are unravelled and some great books are reviewed.



Sunken mysteries: The Titanic or RMS Olympic?

On April 10th 1912 the ship that purportedly couldn't be sunk, the RMS Titanic, set sail from Southampton with a grand total of 2,240 crew and guests on board. Following stops in Cherbourg, France and Queenstown, Ireland the ship set sail for New York. History believes that on April 14th at approximately 11.30pm a lookout spotted an iceberg up ahead, rang the warning bell and telephoned the bridge. At this point the engines were reversed and the ship grazed up along the side of the iceberg. The iceberg however had done much more damage than was realised as it had slashed a 300-foot gash well below the ships waterline. In about an hour and a half the unsinkable Titanic had sunk, sending 1500 people to a watery grave.

However, some theorists have suggested that the ship that sank on that fateful day was not actually the RMS Titanic. It is well documented that the RMS Titanic was constructed as one of three Olympic Class ocean liners in the Harland and Wolff shipyards in Belfast, the other two being the RMS Britannic and the RMS Olympic. The RMS Olympic was launched 11 months prior to the Titanic and unfortunately it suffered several misfortunes. It was involved in two immensely damaging collisions, the second collision being with the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Hawke and this led to it suffering serious structural damage at the keel and to the steel beams. It would have cost millions of pounds for the owners, the White Star Line, to repair the ship and it would probably have been much more cost effective to simply scrap the ship and salvage any useable parts. So, it has been suggested that the Olympic was swapped with the Titanic and then sunk in a staged accident for the shipping line to claim the insurance monies. This theory may initially appear to be rather farfetched however the supporting evidence is somewhat compelling.

The first piece of evidence to support the theory that the ships were switched comes from the disparities in the number of portholes on each of the ships. Photographs of the Titanic in dry dock show it clearly had 14 evenly-spaced portholes running along its side, but photographs taken of the ship which departed from Southampton showed that this ship had 16 unevenly-spaced portholes along its side, two more than the Titanic had. These photographs taken from the time when the Olympic was active showed that the Olympic actually had 16 unevenly-spaced portholes along its side, suggesting that this ship that departed may have indeed been the RMS Olympic.

The next piece of evidence comes from an examination of the RMS Titanic's list to port.

Following the collision with the Hawke, the RMS Olympic was noted as having had a 2° list to port whilst the RMS Titanic had no such thing. Yet a second-class passenger, Mr Lawrence Beesley, who survived the disaster, claimed that the ship he was travelling on had a 2° list to port, suggesting that he was actually travelling on the RMS Olympic.

The Olympic was swapped with the Titanic and then sunk in a staged accident for the shipping line to claim the insurance monies

Due to the 1912 nationwide coal strike, there were thousands of desperate men out of work at the time the RMS Titanic was due to set sail. However, the owners of the RMS Titanic struggled to staff the ship as many men refused to work on it despite the offer of what were, for that time, particularly high wages. It has been suggested that the reason for this was that rumours were circulating amongst the workers at the Harland and Wolff shipyards that the ships had in fact been switched as part of an attempt to swindle the insurance company and the workers believed that the RMS Titanic was setting sail but that it would never return. The negligence of the chance to work on the greatest cruiser of all time suggests the rumour that they believed could well have been true. Furthermore, the ship that set sail from Southampton was only half filled with passengers, suggesting either the rumours that the ships had been switched had spread outside of the shipyards, although there is no actual documented evidence to suggest this, or perhaps that the White Star Line intentionally only half filled their ship in order to minimise the number of potential casualties in a collision that they knew was going to happen. This is clearly pure speculation but it is worth considering.

Story continued overleaf

Another fact to back up this conspiracy theory is that many rich and prestigious individuals cancelled their reservations to sail on the RMS Titanic at the last minute. For example, JP Morgan, an international financier and owner of the parent company to White Star, cancelled his reservation just a few days before the departure of the ship claiming that he was too ill to travel. However, a New York Times reporter spotted Mr Morgan enjoying a day out with his mistress in France on the very same day that the ship sank. Was Mr Morgan deliberately avoiding travelling on the ship as he was already aware of its fate? This theory is compounded further by records which show that the Industrialist Henry Clay Frick and his wife, the billionaire George Washington Vanderbilt and the high-profile banker Horace J Harding, three men who were all associates of Mr Morgan, each cancelled their reservations on the ship in the days before it set sail from Southampton.

Mr Morgan also owned other passenger ships, including the SS Californian. Whilst the RMS Titanic was on its fated voyage it was reported that the SS Californian was stationed in an area of the ocean approximately 12 miles from the spot where the RMS Titanic was soon to collide with the iceberg. This passenger ship was not carrying any passengers but was carrying 3000 woollen blankets and jumpers. The seemingly inexplicable actions of the SS Californian could be explained if the ship was intentionally stationed there with rescue supplies so that it could speedily rescue the passengers and crew of the RMS Titanic. This theory is supported by the fact that Edith Russell, a survivor of the disaster, claimed that the officers aboard the Titanic assured her that the SS Californian was on its way to rescue them during the time of the actual collision. Author Robin Gardiner reported that there were serious navigational issues on the SS Californian and therefore the ship stopped 12 miles away from the site of the sinking and if these navigational issues had not arisen then it would have reached the actual site far sooner and as such, the number of casualties would have been far fewer.

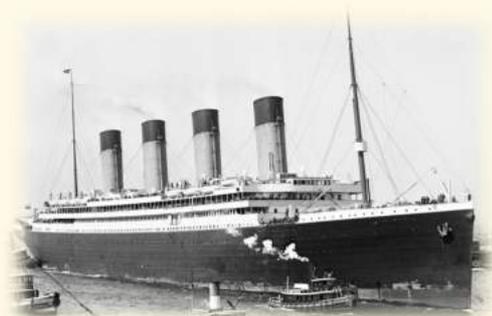
Further evidence in support of this theory that the ships were switched is derived from the actual shipwreck itself. Robert Ballard discovered the wreck in 1985 and he found a somewhat compelling piece of evidence. On the side of the ship, the letters "M" and "P" were clearly visible. This could be part of the original 'OLYMPIC' nameplate that would have been covered by the 'TITANIC' nameplate before it set sail. In addition, the wreck clearly shows that grey paint was used as

an undercoat on the sunken ship. Records show that black paint was used to undercoat the Titanic and that grey paint was used as the undercoat on the RMS Olympic. Finally, the wreck did have the stamp 401 on its propeller and this was the ID number used for the RMS Titanic at Harland and Wolff. However, it has been suggested that the Titanic's propeller could have been fitted to the Olympic during its repair after its collision with the Hawke. All of these discrepancies between the Titanic and the wreck found suggest that it was actually the RMS Olympic ship resting at the bottom of the ocean.

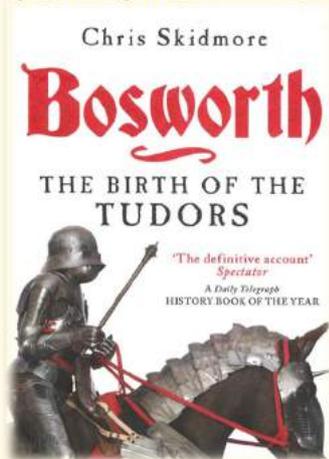
Insurance scams and maritime fraud were common at the time of the RMS Titanic's doomed departure and the lack of media scrutiny and coverage in 1912 makes the possibility of this scandal having happened much more credible. Only one film survives of the Titanic and the photo record is scant which means that at the time the switch could have gone under the radar, without the investigators being able to assemble enough evidence to argue that there was a switch.

The final piece of evidence, if true, confirms the theory. A man called James Fenton worked as an engineer on the Titanic. Before boarding the ship, he had heard the rumours that the ships had been switched, but dismissed the idea as nothing more than a rumour, until the ship sank. He survived the ordeal but claimed the following to a man whose father wrote to the Northern Star newspaper on July 31st 1996. He said that Fenton told his son that "When the surviving crew got to port they were all taken aside and met by two men; one in a high position in the company, the other man was in a very high position in the Government. The Government man read the crew the 'Official Secrets Act' explaining that if they told of the real reason for the sinking, or the rumours of an insurance scam, they would serve a minimum of 20 years in jail and would never get a job when they got out." If this is true, it confirms that the switch did actually take place and sources claim that Fenton repeated his beliefs on his death bed.

Alex Grant



Bosworth - the Birth of the Tudors: A book review



One unescapable reality of reading history books is that more often than not the outcome is not in doubt. Whilst Richard Curtis ensured the *Blackadder* series began with an alternate outcome to this pivotal battle in English history with a victory for Richard III, Chris Skidmore has kept to the script in this thorough examination of the causes, chronology and consequences of the events at Bosworth (or Redemore...) field on 22nd August 1485. Written alongside undertaking his duties as an MP and minister (much like Kwasi Kwarteng, Tristram Hunt and others), *Bosworth – the Birth of the Tudors* is one of four books written to date by this Oxford historian; largely focussing on the Wars of the Roses and the beginning of the Early Modern period.

The complexities of the dynastic struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster, which commenced in the narrow streets of St Albans in 1455, are neatly summarised in the early part of this book. Skidmore sets the scene to what is the most complex of plots, placing the key players into position and introducing the reader to the Tudor family; a minor branch of the Lancastrian house only by virtue of the Beaufort line and Owen Tudor's marriage to the widow of Henry V. As the story unfolds with kingmakers such as Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, coming and going, Skidmore is careful to place Jasper and Edmund Tudor (Henry Tudor's uncle and father) in the context of the wider conflict; paying particular attention to the actions of Henry's mother Margaret Beaufort. As the epitome of a strong, powerful medieval woman depicted by Philippa Gregory, Margaret combined political nous and personal good fortune to work to secure her only son's safety and advance his weak claim to the throne. Skidmore does much to support and reinforce this interpretation, reflecting on the significance of her marriages to Henry Stafford and then, most importantly, Thomas Lord Stanley following Edmund Tudor's premature death from the plague in 1456.

Henry's role as a pawn in the wider European realpolitik of the late fifteenth century after the defeat of the Lancastrian forces at Tewkesbury in 1471 forms the focus of the middle section of the book. Whilst most readers will be familiar with the subsequent consolidation of power by Edward IV and the next decade of relative peace, Skidmore's review of a range of Breton and French contemporary sources enables him to reflect on the significance of a sizeable population of English exiles. Henry's band of disaffected Yorkists (angry

at the influence of the Woodville family) and defeated Lancastrians found themselves reliant on the patronage first of Duke Francis II of Brittany and latterly on King Charles VIII of France.

Charles' support was to prove crucial in providing the necessary naval and military support for Henry's invasion of 1485. Whilst convention suggests that the Norman Conquest was the last conquest of England by an invading force, the army that stood with Henry at Bosworth though swelled with the addition of Welshmen who joined him on his march was predominantly made up of French and European mercenaries. Skidmore's examination of the Crowland Chronicler, the writings of Polydore Virgil, ballads of the time, and other contemporary sources leads him to emphasise the pragmatism of the English nobility at a precarious time. Henry's invasion is seen by many as having had a destabilising impact on the relative peace with Edward IV and then Richard III had sought to ensure. This is reflected in the events of the battle itself, where Henry's smaller army was drawn to a location of Richard's choosing. His step-father, Thomas Lord Stanley has yet to show his hand; he now the kingmaker upon whom Henry was dependent if he was to have any chance of success. Skidmore's examination of the sources leads him to highlight Thomas Lord Stanley's inaction as the major reason for Richard's defeat, with the intervention of his younger brother Sir William Stanley proving to be important at the climax of the battle; which saw Henry and Richard come close to hand to hand combat.

Skidmore goes on to consider the actions undertaken by the new king, Henry VII, to heal the wounds of the broken realm in the weeks, months and years after the battle. Alongside the sources already used, he also draws upon the extensive records held by the new king (famed for his prudence) to substantiate his views. Interestingly, Skidmore highlights the caution and patience exercised by Henry VII in the issue of patronage and reward alongside repression and retribution. His initial hesitancy in marrying Elizabeth of York exemplifies this well; the delay causing considerable concern for the Yorkist exiles for whom this marriage had been a non-negotiable part of their commitment to Henry's cause in 1485.

Bosworth – the Birth of the Tudors concludes with a look at the history of the telling of the story of Bosworth, from Bernard Andre's *Vita Henrici Septimi* to Virgil's *Historia Anglia* and William Hutton's *Battle of Bosworth Field*. His surmising of the archaeological finds that have helped historians re-evaluate the chronology of the battle, as depicted by Richard Holmes in the *War Walks* series, leads neatly into a postscript examining the events after the summer of 2012 following the discovery of the remains of Richard III beneath a car park in the city of Leicester; from where he had set off so confidently some 527 years previously.

Mr D J Stone

Edward VIII: An English Nazi?

The Edward VIII ex-King -Emperor of Great Britain, notorious for his libertine and scandalous lifestyle doesn't sound like a likely contender to be a Nazi, who placed family, tradition and contempt for non-Germans at the centre of their politics. And yet it does appear that Edward did have sympathies for nazi policies at the very least and perhaps more sinister links to the Nazi top brass too. Indeed, Adolf Hitler himself, when asked about Britain is said to have replied "I am certain through him permanent friendly relations could have been achieved. If he had stayed, everything would have been different. His abdication was a severe loss for us." So, is this just another case of Hitler's mad delusions or was Edward VIII actually a Nazi?



Before getting into the reasons for Edward potentially having these beliefs ,from a historical perspective it is important to note that at the time in the late 1930's many in the British aristocracy admired what the Nazi's had done to pick up what was the failing German economy since 1933, but also, many wanted to avoid war, after seeing the dreadful affects of the First World War only 20 years before. With the threat of the Soviet Union to the east many also saw the Nazis as a useful counterweight and up until 1940 many in the British government such as Earl Halifax wanted peace with the Nazi's. So why is it then, that Edward VIII gets singled out in particular and what is to explain for what would be a bizarre link between a previous British monarch and a group of German, fascist republicans?

The primary reason why people have claimed that Edward had Nazi sympathies was because of his actions in 1937-only 2 years before WW2 broke out and after the abdication crisis (which will be covered later) he went on a visit to Hitler's retreat Obersalzberg. This proved to be controversial as

the British government had advised against him going and he neglected their wishes, something which was picked up on by the British press, thus even contemporary sources found Edward's actions puzzling.

What is to explain a bizarre link between a previous British monarch and a group German, fascist republicans?

The political implications of the visit were great too, Edward must have been aware that this would have been picked up on in the German media as being a great success for Hitler, but more importantly it appeared to some in Britain that he was undermining the politicians and pushing for a similar regime, like that of the BUF led by Sir Oswald Mosely in Britain, especially as he gave a full Nazi salute, which wasn't even expected of foreigners.

Secondly, many felt that Edward was still bitter about the Abdication Crisis in 1936 that led to his demise from the throne and that his hatred of the British politicians who held him to ransom in effect led to his support for Hitler,

who many historians say would have put Edward back on the throne, should he have conquered Britain. Their may be some weight to these arguments as Stanley Baldwin did force Edward to choose between his wife-Wallis Simpson and the British throne. Whether Edward was willing to rule over a Nazi controlled Britain is something of which we'll never know the answer to, but he did certainly say that "Hitler was the right and logical leader of the German people". Recent images of Edward making the queen do the Nazi salute when she was only a child may also support the theory that he was pro-Nazi.

For what it is worth Edward distanced himself from the Nazi regime after the war, claiming all his actions were done in the name of peace and that he was just pro-German, something which to him wasn't alien as, after all, his family did have German ancestry. However, he never shook off the claims that he leaked the allies battle plans for France in 1940, made by the German ambassador Joachim Von Ribbentrop, who incidentally is rumoured to have had an affair with Edward's wife, Wallis Simpson. Whilst there is no proof to these claims, there is also no logical reason why the Germans would make this up and maintain it even after the war was lost. Alongside Edward's trip to Germany, refusal to leave Spain and Portugal until late 1940(which were under the control of "neutral" fascist, regimes) and his reported praise of Hitler it does appear the claims of a cover up may be true.

Perhaps, the most sinister and most conclusive reason why one might argue that Edward had Nazi sympathies is because of his attitude on race. When Governor of the Bahamas he is said to have remarked about a newspaper editor, Etienne Depuch "It must be remembered that Depuch is more than half Negro, and due to the peculiar mentality of this Race, they seem unable to rise to prominence without losing their equilibrium" This coupled with his view of Jews as being "mischief makers-communists" leaves little room for doubt concerning his racial views. Furthermore whilst in this role, Edward and his wife became good friends with the Swede Axe Wenner Gren, a man who had links to the infamous Herman Göring; thus showing on a personal level Edward did consort with Nazi collaborators.

It is, therefore tempting to argue that Edward was involved with and at least had sympathies for the Nazi's, however in the interests of good history one must remember that at the time such views-both racial, that Hitler was an honourable man and the

desire for peace were not uncommon. Edward's distancing of himself away from the regime post war, where he described Hitler as a "an almost ridiculous figure with his theatrical posturings and his bombast pretentious" does suggest he wasn't fanatical, as many of the English Nazi's were, however his subtle links are undeniable.

Richard Seed



Edward VII giving a Nazi salute, polite or genuine?

Edward VIII

Ascended to throne 20th January 1936

Abdicated 11th December 1936 (not a long reign!)

Served in WWI

Married Wallis Simpson, an American, in 1937

Prime Ministers did not condone this marriage as she had been married twice before, and this is why he abdicated



Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson

The Man in the High Castle: An alternate history book review

“The word “fake” meant nothing really, since the word “authentic” meant nothing really.” This is what the owner of a factory churning out fake antiques philosophises in the early chapters of Phillip K Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*. And, indeed, in this novel lines between history and fiction, reality and alternate reality seem to mingle and blur, reflecting the philosophy of the Tao which so many of the characters in the novel consult and subscribe to: the theory that all things in life are connected, inextricably linked – perhaps even truth and falsehood; there is no single, definite reality.



The Man in the High Castle takes place in an alternate America in 1962 in the wake of the allies losing the second world war. The world has been carved up and divided between the victors with Japan controlling Asia and Germany governing Europe and Africa. In the US, control is split with Germany in charge of the East with their powerbase in New York, and the Japanese having established the “Pacific States of America” in the West. The Rocky Mountain States act as a neutral buffer zone between these two powers. In Germany, Hitler languishes in a psychiatric institution whilst a power struggle plays out between key Nazis such as Goring, Goebbels and Heydrich in light of the failing health of the current Chancellor Bormann. The African continent seems to have been effectively obliterated along with the population of Russia, the Mediterranean Sea has been drained, people of colour enslaved and the holocaust continues in the US.

All these global events, however, happen somewhat off stage, making room for the stories of a collection of very ordinary, common “little people” in San Francisco and the Rockies. Indeed, world events are never explicitly laid out for the reader, instead the author uses interior monologue which allows us to glimpse them in flashes as the characters contemplate their own insignificance and inability to change anything. This is very effective as it draws the reader into the terrifying world of confusion and limited access to information which the characters inhabit. They hear of Nazi atrocities as vague rumours; for example the murder of practically everyone in Africa is mentioned briefly in passing making it all the more disturbing. The characters live in a state of perpetual bewilderment and awareness of their own powerlessness: Mr. Tagomi, an important Japanese trade official notes, “We are all insects. Groping towards something terrible or divine”

whilst all the while “The cosmic process is hurrying on, crushing life back into granite and methane”- the laws of nature, the fundamental way of things are initially depicted as eclipsing even the brutality of the Third Reich. Another character muses that the primary reason for the Nazi’s delusion is that they attempt to “see through the here, the now into the vast black deep beyond. And that is fatal to life”. So Dick never endeavours to end the blindness of the characters or of the reader - at the end of the novel he offers no definitive information as to the fate of the characters or, indeed, the world. Fittingly, there is ambiguity and confusion to the last.

The characters live in a state of perpetual bewilderment and awareness of their own powerlessness

The book follows a plethora of characters blindly and honourably going about their little lives. In San Francisco there is Childan, a seller of “authentic American artefacts” which fascinate the Japanese rulers of the West, Frank Frink a man starting up his own business after leaving the factory where he works, Tagomi, of course, and Mr Baynes a Swedish business affiliate of Tagomi’s. In the Rockies, there is Juliana, Frank’s estranged wife forming a relationship with Joe, an Italian truck driver. However, few of the characters are truly what they seem. Frank Frink is a Jew, concealing his identity. Baynes is not a Swedish industrialist but a Nazi defector, Joe is later revealed as an undercover Swiss Nazi assassin. Even the supposed “antiques” which Childan deals in, rather mundane paraphernalia of everyday America (Mickey Mouse watches, Jean Harlow posters), are mostly fakes, manufactured and artificially aged in factories like the one Frank Frink used to work in. All this serves to further

undermine ideas of truth and authenticity in the novel, something that Goebbels' eventual victory in the leadership struggle crystallises, as he is synonymous with propaganda and so by extension with lying and the manipulation of the truth. The characters are all multi-faceted and well developed, from Childan who both despises and is reluctantly enamoured with the Japanese who now control his city, (something emphasised by the fact that his interior monologue and speech are ironically similar to that of the Japanese characters) to Mr Tagomi who, at the moral centre of the book, wrestles with the spiritual dilemmas of his predicament.

All the characters also share a certain sense of alienation and disillusionment typical of all great American novels of the 20th century – they “sit day after day, declining in morale and hope.” They are also linked, not only by their relationship to one another, but also by the fact that almost all of them consult the ancient Chinese book of divination the I Ching and the book which most of them come into contact with – the biblically titled “The Grasshopper lies heavy”, the author of which is the elusive man in the high castle. Phillip K Dick's ingenious use of a fictional book contributes to the blurring of history and fiction in the novel as “Grasshopper” offers an account of history in which the allies won the war, however its account is distinct from actual events. The fictional book adds a greater structure to the rather fragmented plot of the novel as two characters end up going in search of its mysterious author. It also enables us to glean more about the characters from their responses to it and offers greater complexity to the plot as the I Ching suggests that the account in the book might just be the truth.

Additionally, Phillip K Dick explores the conflict between the Eastern philosophy of the I Ching which champions a perspective very similar to Carl Jung's synchronicity and rather less spiritual Western ideas of simple cause and effect. There is also political intrigue as we glimpse tensions between the victors and learn of a German plot against Japan. Phillip K Dick also offers wonderful insight into the psychology of the Nazis, presenting their twisted ideology as the result of “inflation of the ego to its ultimate – confusion between him who worships and that which is worshipped” describing the fundamentally human desire to be “the agents, not the victims, of history”. Additionally, very accurate summaries are offered as to the characters of many of history's most notorious Nazis. Goring is described as desiring “self-glorification in ancient emperor fashion”,

Goebbels' mind set is described as the result of a “medieval Jesuit viewpoint exacerbated by post-Romantic German nihilism”. There is also a touch of humour as the perfect but somewhat stilted English of the Japanese characters is peppered with very American expressions.

As the somewhat convoluted nature of this review suggests, *The Man in the High Castle* is an extraordinarily complex and multi-faceted novel, where the meaning is far from obvious. This is perhaps reflective of the fact that Phillip K Dick considered himself “a fictionalizing philosopher, not a novelist”. What cannot be doubted, however, is that the novel achieves what all truly great science fiction does in that it holds up a dark mirror which forces us to scrutinize the actual world more carefully, raising questions about authenticity, censorship, racism and the impact of our actions. His work (although underappreciated in his lifetime) also helped to elevate American SF from clumsy pulp fiction into a well-developed and respected literary genre. Where *The Man in the High Castle* really shines for some, however, is in its depiction of ordinary people striving to retain honour and integrity in a time of moral bankruptcy and confusion. In this way, *The Man in the High Castle* is similar to novels based upon actual resistance to Nazi rule such as Hans Fallada's “*Alone in Berlin*” (1947). Perhaps there is no traditional heroism in that there are no obvious results of their endeavours in the grand scheme of things, but there are small lives lived well and attempts to do what is right, and, if we are to put our faith in the Tao or in Jungian Synchronicity this may, by some meaningful coincidence, lead to good. Perhaps if we follow the Tao look for the inner truth things are not as bad as they seem for “when the seed falls, it falls into the earth, into the soil. And beneath, out of sight, it comes to life.”.

Isobel Fraser



Princes in the Tower: A murder mystery?

The Princes in the Tower were the children of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville; Edward V, sometimes referred to as the Prince of Wales, and Richard, Duke of York. Edward IV died in 1483 from typhoid, which left the throne for Edward to take. As Edward was only twelve, and Richard ten, they were too young to rule. The princes were kept in the Tower of London until Edward was old enough to rule.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III), took the throne, and the princes disappeared before either one was old enough to ascend the throne. The princes were last seen playing in the ground of the Tower of London in the summer of 1483. No one knows the truth of what happened to this day, which led to one of the greatest mysteries and conspiracies of all time. What happened to the boys in the tower? Were both princes killed or did one, or both, survive? If they were killed who committed the crime?

The general belief is that Richard was responsible for the murder, even though he showed undying loyalty to his brother and nephews. After Richard ascended the throne, he had it preached that the marriage between Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville illegal, therefore making the princes illegitimate and unable to inherit the throne. This may seem to make Richard innocent by having no need to kill his nephews, however during the period monarchs executed many of their opponents. Edward IV killed his brother, George Duke of Clarence, and probably killed Henry VI, whilst Henry VII and Henry VIII killed many members of the Pole family, which represented the remnants of the House of York. The War of the Roses was filled with conflict, treason and murder, and Richard to murder his relatives would not have been a strange act. Richard could have felt more secure with the princes killed, as they would no longer have a claim to the throne, or be the focus of rebellion. It could be possible for Richard to order a loyal servant to execute his nephews. After rumors of the princes' murder spread, Richard never publicly showed them to prove them being alive, and to counter rumors.

The War of Roses was filled with conflict, treason and murder, and Richard to murder his relatives would not have been a strange act

Did Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII, have a clear motive to make her son King and so was responsible for the murder of the boys? If both the princes were to be killed, then her son, Henry Tudor, would have an even stronger claim to the throne of England. Henry was betrothed to Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, which would have elevated his claim, yet if both princes were to live, they would have greater claims than he had. However, during the summer of 1483, predicted time of the murder

of the princes, we do not know the location of Margaret, she may have not even been in London at all. It was believed that she was also in an alliance with Elizabeth Woodville, who was planning to marry Henry VII to Elizabeth of York, and therefore murdering her ally's sons would not have benefitted Margaret. Would Margaret have taken such a risk, to have a chance of ruined everything she had built, just to make her son's claim stronger?

The future King of England, Henry VII, also had a clear basis for wanting the princes dead, was he the true murderer? His claim to the throne was not as strong as either princes, even if he did marry Elizabeth of York. For Henry, there was a tough situation, as if the family were declared illegitimate Elizabeth had no claim, but if it was legal, then the princes would have a stronger claim than Elizabeth as long as they lived. During Henry's rule, he killed Edward Earl of Warwick and Edmund Earl of Suffolk, both members of the Yorkist family, which was to remove rivalry. Therefore, Henry being responsible for the murder of his wife's brothers would not be out of the ordinary. However, Henry was not in the country during the summer and autumn of 1483, but was instead in Brittany as a fugitive. He could have sent a loyal servant to England to kill the princes, but there is no evidence to support this. Even Margret of Burgundy, aunt to the princes and sworn enemy of Henry VII, who continuously plotted uprisings and rebellions against him, never accused him of the murder of her nephews. The only real chance for Henry to kill the princes would be his accession to the throne in 1485, whilst they were last seen in 1483.

Was the Duke of Buckingham, Henry Stafford who was Richard's right hand man, responsible?

Buckingham was a descendant of Edward III, and being married to one of Elizabeth Woodville's sister he could be after trying to seek his own claim to the throne of England. A Portuguese document accuses the Duke of the murder, saying "the young sons of said king and his brother... turned them to the Duke of Buckingham, under whose custody the said princes were starved to death." It is also thought that Stafford could have murdered the princes to win favour with Henry VII, as he hoped to change allegiance to obtain greater power and influence for himself. However, during August of 1483, Stafford had left the court to travel to his residence, so was not near London during the believed time of the death. In autumn 1483, he led a rebellion in Wales, which may have been aimed at freeing the princes, which would question why Stafford would have wanted to kill the princes. Buckingham was executed on November 2nd 1483, and during his trial Richard would have accused him of the murder if there was enough evidence found, to strengthen his case against him. Was the Duke of Buckingham power hungry enough to commit a crime, which even during the period was shocking?

The bodies of the princes were never found, creating both greater mystery and confusion in the case. Were any of the culprits truly capable of murdering the two young princes? There have been many pretenders that claimed to be Prince Richard during the Tudor period. The most famous was Perkin Warbeck, who led an invasion to conquer England and win back his crown. Warbeck was supported by multiple European rulers, included the King of Scotland and Margret of York. Margret, the aunt of the princes, explained her actions in support of Warbeck, but she was the sworn enemy of Henry VII and had supported many rebellions against him. Margret might not have truly believed he was her nephew; instead she was just supporting the opposition to her nemesis. Warbeck was described as looking similar to Richard, although Richard was last seen when he was 10. Warbeck later confessed to being an imposter, and was executed by Henry, but was this a false confession? Another pretender was a bricklayer in Essex.

Some historians feel Edward V died in the tower not from murder, but from illness. Evidence has been found that possibly diagnoses the elder prince with osteomyelitis, a bone disease, and depression. It is possible that Edward died from natural causes, and this is why the princes were never shown in public again. All pretenders that came out all claimed to be the young prince, Richard, and never

Edward, does this support the theory that Edward died naturally, and Richard III freed the younger prince to his mother, Elizabeth Woodville, as compensation for the death of his brother.

In 1674, during the remodeling of the Tower of London, two bodies were found in a wooden box, 10ft under a staircase. The two bodies clearly belonged to children and seemed to be of similar age to the princes, but their genders were not definitely proven. On the orders of Charles II the bodies were placed in an urn and interred at Westminster Abbey. In 1933, the bones were removed and examined, which revealed the bones had been interred carelessly, with snapped bones, rusty nails, and the bones of chickens and other animals. The examination mainly looked on evidence of suffocation, rather determining the gender of the bones. No further examination has taken place, and no DNA analysis has occurred, leaving us to question whether these were the corpses of the young royals or the remains of members of the aristocracy.

In 1789, workmen were carrying out some repairs in St George's Chapel, Windsor, accidentally broke into the tomb of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, and discovered an adjoined vault. The vault contained two coffins, which named two of Edward's children, George, who died aged 2, and Mary who died aged 13. Both children had predeceased their father, Edward. No examinations were carried out and the tomb was resealed. However, during excavations for the royal tomb of George III, between 1810-13, two lead coffins were discovered, and were labeled George Plantagenet and Mary Plantagenet. The lead coffins were placed in the tomb next to the other coffins, named to the same pair Edward's children, and no investigation into the remains of either coffins. For any investigation to go on today both the Queen and the Church of England, must give consent for any royal tomb to be reopened. We are left in the dark not knowing what truly happened to the princes. Should we reopen the royal tombs and use DNA resolve this mystery, or would this leave us with more unanswered questions?

Finley Nolan



