George III: The Tyrant of America?

History of Royals

Kings & Queens ✣ Dynasties ✣ Great Battles ✣ [illegible]

Queen Christina, Sweden's enigma

An unconventional and cultured liberal or an irresponsible leader?

Victoria's Secret

How haemophilia became the curse of the kings

Also inside

Grand Duchess Vladimir's tiara

Medieval festivals

The Emperor's Northmen

From Blitz to Victory

George VI's last stand

As Hitler's forces devastated Europe, Britain's king became a figurehead for the fight against fascism

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The British royal who hid behind enemy lines

Isabella of France

Scorned and intent on revenge, Edward II's queen tore up his nation

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Welcome

to

issue 12

Few could have predicted the kind of king that George VI would become. A modest, unassuming man with simple tastes and an adversity to opulence, he seemed the very antithesis of what a king should be. Yet it was this humility that proved to be the making of the monarch.

Within three years of his ascension to the throne, Britain was plunged headfirst into World War II. As his nation struggled, George VI suffered alongside them. While the people of Britain bore rationing, so too did their king. As London was devastated by air raids, the king resolved to stay in the city while bombs dropped around him. To his people, George VI became a symbol of resilience. On page 14, discover the brutal reality of George's reign during WWII.

As most British royals played their part during the war, one disinherited duke eschewed his heritage and turned to National Socialism. Over on page 24, uncover the tragic tale of Charles Edward of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and how he became Hitler's favourite puppet.

Philippa

Philippa Grafton

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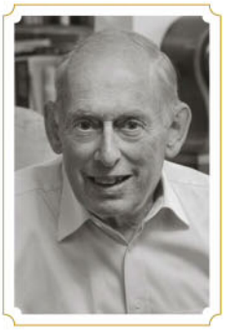
This issue's featured historians include...

Edoardo Albert

Specialising in the Anglo-Saxons, the final volume of Edoardo's historical fiction trilogy, *Oswiu: King Of Kings*, is available now.

● Go to **p52** for more on the Varangian guard



Richard Barber

This issue, **History Of Royals** speaks to Richard Barber, whose latest release explores the forgotten splendour of Medieval festivals.

● Head to **p94** to read this issue's interview

Harry Cunningham

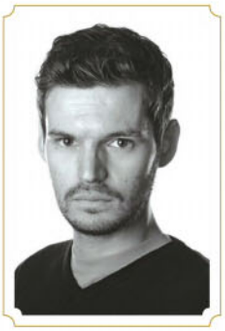
Returning this issue, Harry delves into the world of Charles Edward Coburg, Hitler's favourite royal.

● Turn to **p24** for more on the Nazi duke

Catherine Curzon

An author and historian, this issue Catherine uncovers how a royal disease devastated the monarchies of Europe.

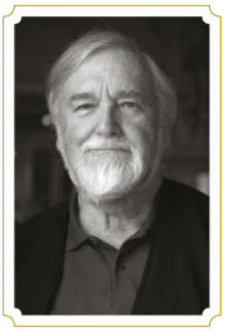
● Uncover the reality of haemophilia on **p70**



Jack Griffiths

History specialist for **How It Works** magazine, this issue Jack explores the Spanish branch of the royal Bourbon dynasty.

● Discover the Spanish monarchs on **p41**



Denis Judd

Renowned historian and biographer, Denis tells the tale of George VI, the unwilling king who fought to save his nation from Hitler.

● Meet Britain's best-loved king on **p14**

Derek Wilson

Bestselling historian and frequent contributor to **History Of Royals**, Derek questions the legacy of Sweden's controversial queen.

● Go to **p60** for more on Christina of Sweden

June Woolerton

Freelance journalist and broadcaster, June recounts the bitter invasion of England led by none other than the Queen herself.

● Discover Isabella's furious revenge on **p34**

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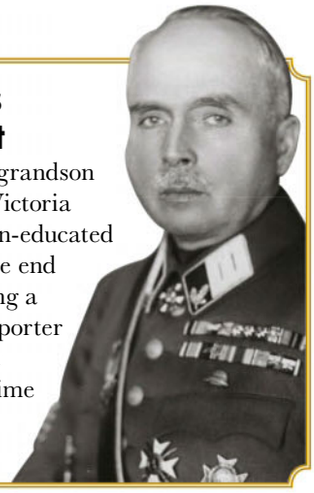
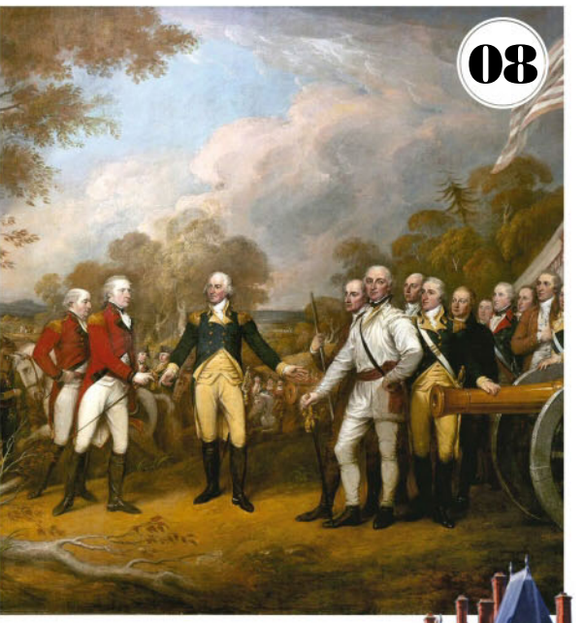
Written by expert historians and brimming with specialist knowledge, our in-depth features delve into the stories behind history's most fascinating figureheads





Inside every issue

Each issue of **History Of Royals** unveils the mysteries behind some of the best-known monarchs, from towering castles and palaces to the interwoven family trees

Royal galleries

A showcase of incredible artwork, our royal galleries provide a snapshot of how monarchs were viewed, for better or worse

GEORGE III: AMERICA'S TYRANT?

Ambitious new Georgian Papers Programme sheds a more considered light on the most notorious of the Hanoverians

The Surrender of General Burgoyne *by John Trumbull depicts the point the Revolutionary War turned decisively against the British*

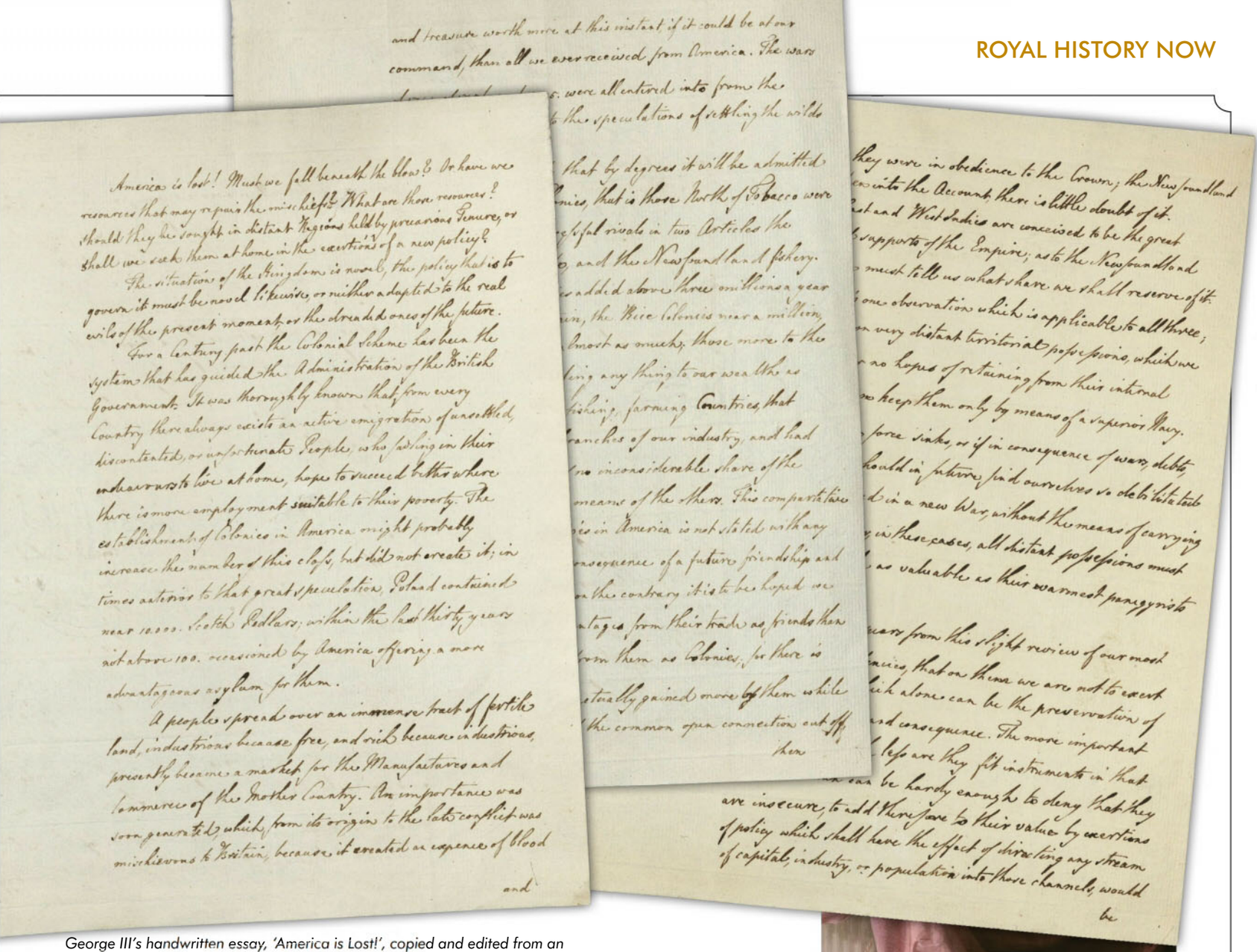
In the minds of many people, the 60-year reign of George III is dominated by two things: his ailing mental health and the loss of Britain's American colonies in the Revolutionary War of 1775-1783.

The Declaration of Independence damns him as a "Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant," but the Georgian Papers Programme reveals a far more complex and thoughtful character than the cliché of the blustering autocrat who denied the colonists their rights and prolonged the war.

Established by King's College London and the Royal Archives, the Georgian Papers Programme is currently digitising more than 350,000 pages of correspondence from Windsor Castle's Royal Archives, with a view to making them all available to researchers at **www.gpp.royalcollection.org.uk**.

Only an estimated 15 per cent of the material has been seen in public before, and among the pieces is a fascinating three-page essay summarised by the King – which was most likely copied from a far longer piece written earlier by agricultural theorist Arthur Young – that shed light on his thinking only one year on from the end of the Revolutionary War.

> "It is to be hoped we shall reap more advantages from their trade as friends than ever we could derive from them as Colonies"


America is lost! Must we fall beneath the blow? Or have we resources that may repair the mischief? What are those resources? Should they be sought in distant Regions held by precarious Tenure, or shall we seek them at home in the exertions of a new policy?

The situation of the Kingdom is novel, the policy that is to govern it must be novel likewise, or neither adapted to the real evils of the present moment, or the dreadful ones of the future.

For a Century past the Colonial Scheme has been the system that has guided the Administration of the British Government. It was thoroughly known that from every Country there always exists an active emigration of unsettled, discontented, or unfortunate People, who failing in their endeavours to live at home, hope to succeed better where there is more employment suitable to their poverty. The establishment of Colonies in America might probably increase the number of this class, but did not create it; in times anterior to that great speculation, Poland contained near 10.000. Scotch Pedlars; within the last thirty years not above 100. occasioned by America offering a more advantageous asylum for them.

A people spread over an immense tract of fertile land, industrious because free, and rich because industrious, presently became a market for the Manufactures and Commerce of the Mother Country. An importance was soon generated by which, from its origin to the late conflict was mischievous to Britain, because it created an expence of blood and

and treasure worth more at this instant if it could be at our command, than all we ever received from America. The wars were all entered into from the to the speculations of settling the wilds

that by degrees it will be admitted nies, that is those North of Tobacco were ssful rivals in two Articles the and the Newfoundland fishery. added above three millions a year in, the three Colonies near a million, almost as much, those more to the ing any thing to our wealth as fishing, farming Countries, that anches of our industry, and had no inconsiderable share of the means of the others. This comparative ies in America is not stated with any nsequence of a future friendship and the contrary it is to be hoped we ntages from their trade as friends than from them as Colonies, for there is etually gained more by them while the common open connection cut off them

they were in obedience to the Crown; the Newfoundland en into the Account, there is little doubt of it. st and West Indies are conceived to be the great supports of the Empire, as to the Newfoundland must tell us what share we shall reserve of it. one observation which is applicable to all three; on very distant territorial possessions, which we no hopes of retaining from their internal keep them only by means of a superior Navy. force sinks, or if in consequence of wars, debts hould in future, paid ourselves so deeply as to d in a new War, without the means of carrying is these cases, all distant possessions must as valuable as their warmest panegyrists

ears from this slight review of our most ries, that on them we are not to exert ich alone can be the preservation of nd consequence. The more important less are they fit instruments in that can be hardly enough to deny that they are insecure, to add therefore to their value by exertions of policy which shall have the effect of thus directing any stream of capital, industry, or population into those channels, would be

George III's handwritten essay, 'America is Lost!', copied and edited from an original essay and written in the months following the loss of the colonies

Through his summary and omissions from the original paper, *America Is Lost!* offers a far more pragmatic – perhaps optimistic – view of Britain's new place in the world. After stressing the wealth of rice, sugar, tobacco and trade emanating from America, George III argues that, "…it is to be hoped we shall reap more advantages from their trade as friends than ever we could derive from them as Colonies."

The more developed colonies become, the more they are at risk of rebellion, but while Young argues that this is inevitable and investment should instead be made in Britain's agriculture rather than Britain's navy, the king asserts that as the Empire grows more fragile the richer it becomes and all is not lost.

He wrote: "The more we are convinced of the vast importance of these territories, the more we must feel the insecurity of our power. If they were of such a magnitude as to be essential to our political existence, it would be no paradox to assert that the misfortune would be yet greater. Our view therefore out not to be to increase but preserve them."

This is only the tip of the iceberg and there are many more documents waiting to be digitised and studied. George III followed the progress of the Revolutionary War keenly in an effort to shape its outcome and only with further study will we understand how this royal 'tyrant' came to believe that friendship with America would trump Britain's ownership of it.

Other papers available to date include notes on the educations of George III's children, a draft of the King's abdication speech, his notes of the Transit of Venus and correspondence between Queen Charlotte and the Prince Regent on the state of her husband's health.

Follow the latest news and analysis at georgianpapersprogramme.com or search the archive online.

George III in his coronation robes by Allan Ramsay, 1765

Upcoming events

Queen Victoria in Paris: Watercolours from the Royal Collection

Until 23 April
www.rammuseum.org.uk
Victoria was a passionate collector of watercolours, which she collected to commemorate her travels. The first visit of a British monarch to Paris in 400 years was commemorated by a beautiful set of 40, 13 of which were a gift from Napoleon III. Now on display at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, more than half have never been exhibited before. Entry is free.

The Allure of Napoleon

Until 19 March
www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk
Celebrating the 125th anniversary of Co. Durham's Bowes Museum, a unique collection from the museum's founders pays tribute to John and Joséphine Bowes's fierce interest in the life of French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. On display are a range of prints, paintings, portraits and medals from the Battle of Waterloo, all of which reveal the rise and fall of the French emperor through themed sections.

Warrior Treasures: Saxon Gold from the Staffordshire Hoard

Until 23 April
www.bristolmuseums.org.uk
Discovered in a field back in 2009, the ornate plunder of the Staffordshire Hoard is a unique window into the power and prestige of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Mercia. Visiting Bristol Museum from the Birmingham Museum, the highlights of the hoard cast a warm glow on the so-called 'Dark Ages' to reveal the spiritual beliefs, family ties and social status of Mercia's warrior elite.

NAPOLEON'S STEED RETURNS TO GLORY

The skeleton of Marengo has been restored for the National Army Museum's re-opening

A grey Arabian horse named after one of Napoleon Bonaparte's earliest battlefield triumphs, Marengo bore the emperor to his victory over the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz and to his defeat at the hands of the British-led Seventh Coalition at Waterloo. After his master's trouncing, Marengo – who'd been wounded eight times in his 15-year 'career' – was captured and taken to England.

When Marengo died in 1831 at the age of 38, his skeleton went on display at the Royal United Services Institute, before eventually winding up at the National Army Museum (NAM) in Chelsea, London. Now as part of a £23.75 million redevelopment, the Emperor's steed has been painstakingly restored with help from the Natural History Museum.

"Marengo's skeleton was in a fair condition with dust, ingrained soiling and staining on the bone surfaces, as well as a number of hairline fractures," explains conservator Vicky Singleton.

"Marengo was Napoleon's horse and we wanted to present him as such; proud and regal," adds curator Sophie Stathi. "This is why we paired up with the expert conservators at the Natural History Museum for the fascinating project of conserving and re-articulating his skeleton. Marengo will be a central part of a display about Wellington and Napoleon, the two legendary commanders at the Battle of Waterloo and will stand opposite the Siborne's model of the battlefield. He will be displayed alongside other objects that are associated with the great Emperor and military commander, such as his coffee urn that was captured at Waterloo, and a lock of his hair."

NAM's bright new building includes more than 2,500 objects, five new galleries, a temporary exhibition space, a three-room learning centre and a play base.

The National Army Museum reopens 30 March. Find out more at **www.nam.ac.uk.**

Marengo, as depicted, in Napoleon Crossing The Alps *by Jacques-Louis David, 1801*

Expert conservators from the Natural History Museum were brought in to restore Marengo

© Stuart Lloyd

Royal Wardrobe

Style tips from history's royal trendsetters by Dr Alison Fairhurst of The Association of Dress Historians

Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (Circa 1775)

01 Ostrich feathers and high hairstyle built up over pads of horsehair and wire frames

02 Fitted, boned bodice

03 Swagged overskirts similar to a polonaise

04 Silk shawl

05 Gold trim at the shoulder, a possible reference to the military themed fashion of the time

06 Elbow-length sleeves

07 White satin shoes with pointed toes, fashionable in the 1770s

RIGHT Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1775-1776. Held in the Devonshire Collection at The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806) was the wife of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire. Her story has become well known through the 2008 film, *The Duchess*, and the fact that she was the great great great great aunt of Diana, Princess of Wales (1961-1997). Like her, Georgiana was well known in her day as a woman of fashion and influence and held great sway in society as she could call the Prince of Wales (later George IV) and Marie Antoniette as close friends.

The 1775 portrait depicts Georgiana in an outfit that was probably not a gown as such. Portraits were intended to give the sitter a more timeless quality. However, there are several aspects that are representative of the time. The way the fabric on the skirt is swagged over a petticoat is suggestive of a polonaise (where overskirts were pulled up with drawstrings over the hips) although this would usually have been worn over a shorter underskirt that revealed the ankles. Georgiana does not appear to be wearing the wide paniers or hoops, and the underskirt drapes easily, a precursor to the simpler design of the chemise dress that she would later promote. Undecorated white fabric (likely silk) was used to convey wealth.

Much commentary was made in the 1770s concerning the heights of hairstyles. Georgiana was famous for taking it to the extreme, with styles reaching up to 90 centimetres, topped with various ornaments such as ships, stuffed birds or fruit and she introduced ostrich feathers, which became so popular that Queen Charlotte was forced to ban them at court.

For more information about dress history, visit **www.dresshistorians.co.uk**.

THE ASSOCIATION OF DRESS HISTORIANS

© Alamy

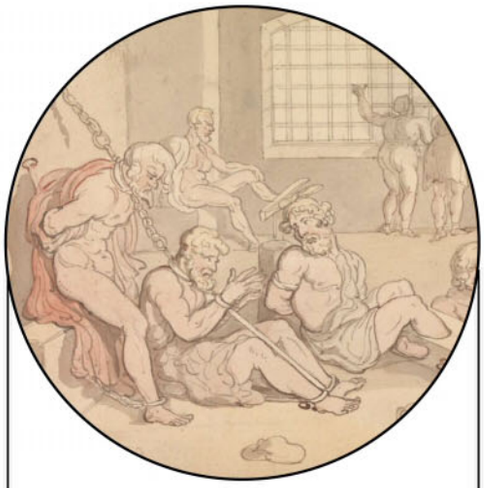
A month in European history

May 1567

Queen of Scots marries – again

15 May, Scotland

Mary, Queen of Scots, marries her third and final husband, James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell. Only three months earlier, Mary's second husband, Lord Darnley, was found dead after an explosion at Kirk o' Field. At the time, Bothwell was assumed to have assassinated the man in order to marry Mary, having divorced his wife 12 days before the marriage. The decision proved highly unpopular with the Earl's peers and just a month later, a rebel army confronted the royal couple, capturing Mary.



The Spanish Inquisition executes reformer

31 May, Spanish Netherlands (now France)

Incarcerated for his Calvinist beliefs, Guido de Brès, publisher of the Walloon Confession of Faith (which was also known as the Belgic Confession) is finally executed at Valenciennes. He had been arrested two years previously as part of the Spanish Inquisition, and at his trial was declared a heretic and sentenced to death. On the day of his execution, he is pushed to his death by the hangman while declaring his beliefs to the crowd.

Birth of a prince

9 May, Germany

Joachim Ernest, Prince of Anhalt and his first wife, Agnes of Barby-Mühlingen welcome their first son, John George I, Prince of Anhalt-Dessau. Born in Harzgerode, Germany, John George I co-ruled the duchy of Anhalt with his younger brother and five half-brothers after the death of their father in 1586. Just 17 years later, the brothers drew up an agreement to split the territories between them. John George I received Anhalt-Dessau under which he oversaw the Reformation and actively pursued the decline of power in the Roman Catholic Church. Between his two wives he fathered 16 children, 12 of which would survive until adulthood.

The king kills his five prisoners

24 May, Sweden

In a bout of madness, King Eric XIV of Sweden kills his five prisoners and some of his own guards in what became known as the Sture Murders. The incarcerated nobles, three of who were from the renowned Sture family, had initially been arrested for conspiring against the king. Having stabbed the five prisoners to death with his own dagger, King Eric turns on his own tutor, Dionysius Beurreus, who had been trying to calm the king, and issues an order to have him killed. The king then disappears in the nearby woods, where he is found three days later, still in a disturbed state.

Frederickstad is founded by the king

Date unknown, Norway

After Sarpsborg was destroyed in a fire during the Northern Seven Years' War, King Frederik II of Denmark, also king of Norway, decrees that the city should be rebuilt, but it is reconstructed 14 kilometres from its original location. This meant that the city, however, was now better located in terms of both land and access to the sea. Over the years, various existing fortifications were reconstructed and after another fire in 1764, it was rebuilt once again.

THE HUNT FOR BRITAIN'S CELTIC KINGS

Archaeologists find evidence that may solve the mystery of the lost Kingdom of Rheged

Thriving in the 6th and 7th centuries, the Kingdom of Rheged was at the heart of what historians call the Old North (Hen Ogledd), the Brittonic-speaking Celtic lands of northern England and lowlands Scotland.

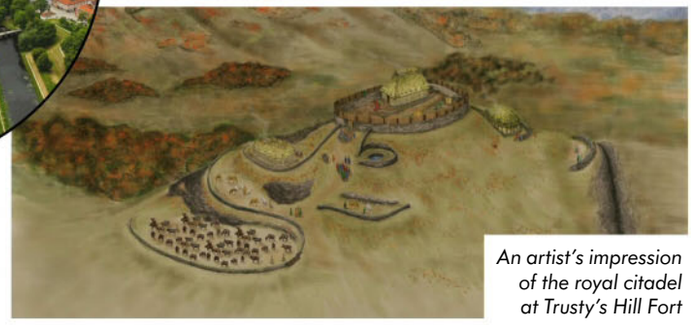
Knowledge of Rheged, which was believed to be centred in Cumbria, and the deeds of its kings, such as Urien, survived primarily through Welsh epic poetry compiled in the 14th century *Book Of Taliesin*.

Urien was prominent in the fight against the encroaching Angles, and according to myth married the sister of King Arthur, Morgan le Fey. By the 8th century, though Rheged had been absorbed the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Northumbria, its language was displaced by Old English and its history was left largely unwritten.

An excavation at Trusty's Hill Fort at Gatehouse of Fleet in Dumfries and Galloway revealed that the lack of archaeological evidence in Cumbria may be because this mysterious realm wasn't centred in England at all, but in Scotland.

"What drew us to Trusty's Hill were Pictish symbols carved on to bedrock here, which are unique in this region," said Ronan Toolis, who led the excavation. "Far from validating the existence of 'Galloway Picts', evidence instead indicates the carvings relate to a royal stronghold and place of inauguration for local Britons. It suggests that Galloway may have been the heart of the lost Dark Age Kingdom of Rheged."

The excavation revealed that the hill was fortified with a timber-laced stone rampart. A rock-cut basin and outcrop adorned with two Pictish symbols form an entranceway – the place of royal inauguration – and the king's hall would be visible at the summit.



An artist's impression of the royal citadel at Trusty's Hill Fort

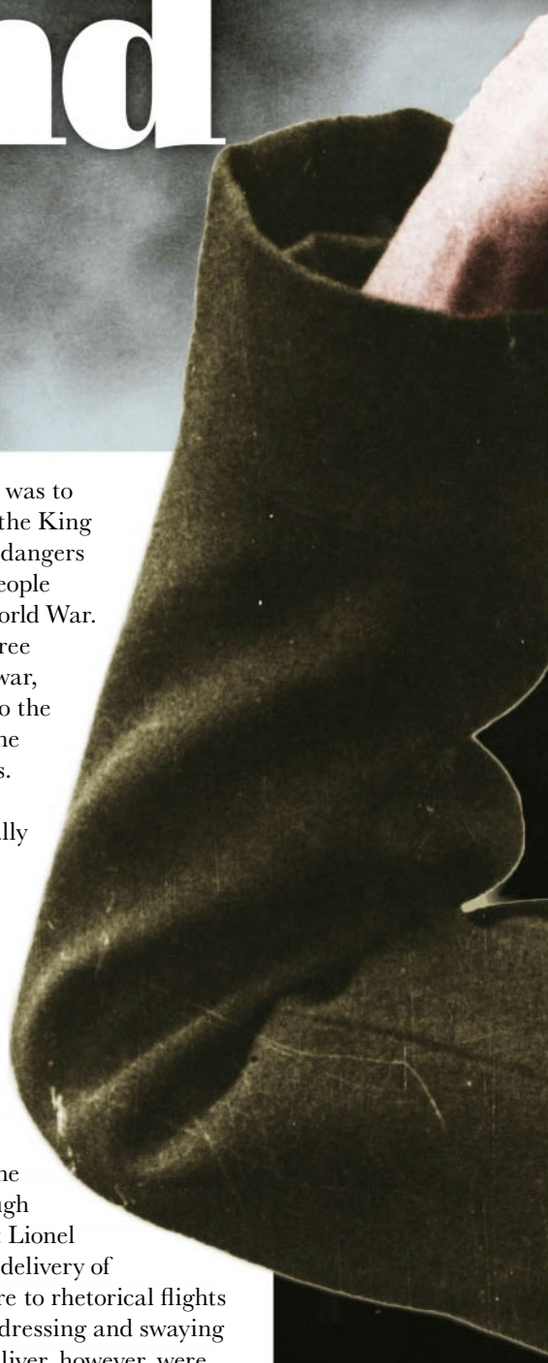
The Lost Dark Age Kingdom Of Rheged by Ronan Toolis and Christopher Bowles is out now through Oxbow Books. Find out more about the Galloway Picts Project at **www.gallowaypicts.com**.

From Blitz to Victory

George VI's last stand

As Hitler's forces devastated Europe, Britain's king became a figurehead for the fight against fascism

Words DENIS JUDD



George VI was an exceptionally committed and active Head of State during the perils and crises of the Second World War, ultimately playing a crucial role in leading the nation and the British Empire and Commonwealth to final victory over the Axis powers of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. When he became King-Emperor after the traumatic abdication of his brother Edward VIII in 1936, however, there were some within the establishment who feared the new King might not be up to the job, even in peacetime. More sensibly, the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin realised that "there is a lot of prejudice against him. He's had no chance to capture the popular imagination as his brother did. I'm afraid he won't find it easy going for the first year or two."

Despite George VI's deep personal misgivings as he ascended the throne, the media, especially in Britain, was quick to come to the rescue. It presented a cosy, reassuring image of the new royal family: a monogamous and loving couple at its head, with their two adored, demure and wholesome daughters, pictured together in the garden, or perhaps sitting round a roaring sitting room fire while reading, chatting, stroking a dog and doing what millions of others might well be doing in countless semi-detached houses or country cottages. The temptation to identify with what appeared, at first sight anyway, to be merely another comfortable, happy and unpretentious suburban nuclear family was irresistible. The image was to be reinforced many times over as the King and his family faced the everyday dangers and disruptions that the British people experienced during the Second World War.

Although he had fewer than three years upon the throne before the war, King George himself was to rise to the exceptional challenges of a wartime kingship with considerable success. Among his best qualities was his capacity to adapt to his dramatically changed circumstances after 1936 and to absorb what was required of him as monarch. No great scholar or bookworm in his early life, George VI proved a very quick learner indeed after his accession to the throne.

He also understood the limitations of his role and influence as a constitutional monarch. Still suffering, despite the vast improvements achieved through his work with the speech therapist Lionel Logue from a sometimes hesitant delivery of public speeches, he could not aspire to rhetorical flights and vivid verbal imagery while addressing and swaying huge audiences. What he could deliver, however, were plain, completely sincere addresses – many broadcast by BBC Radio – which enabled him to connect with his mass audiences at home and throughout the British

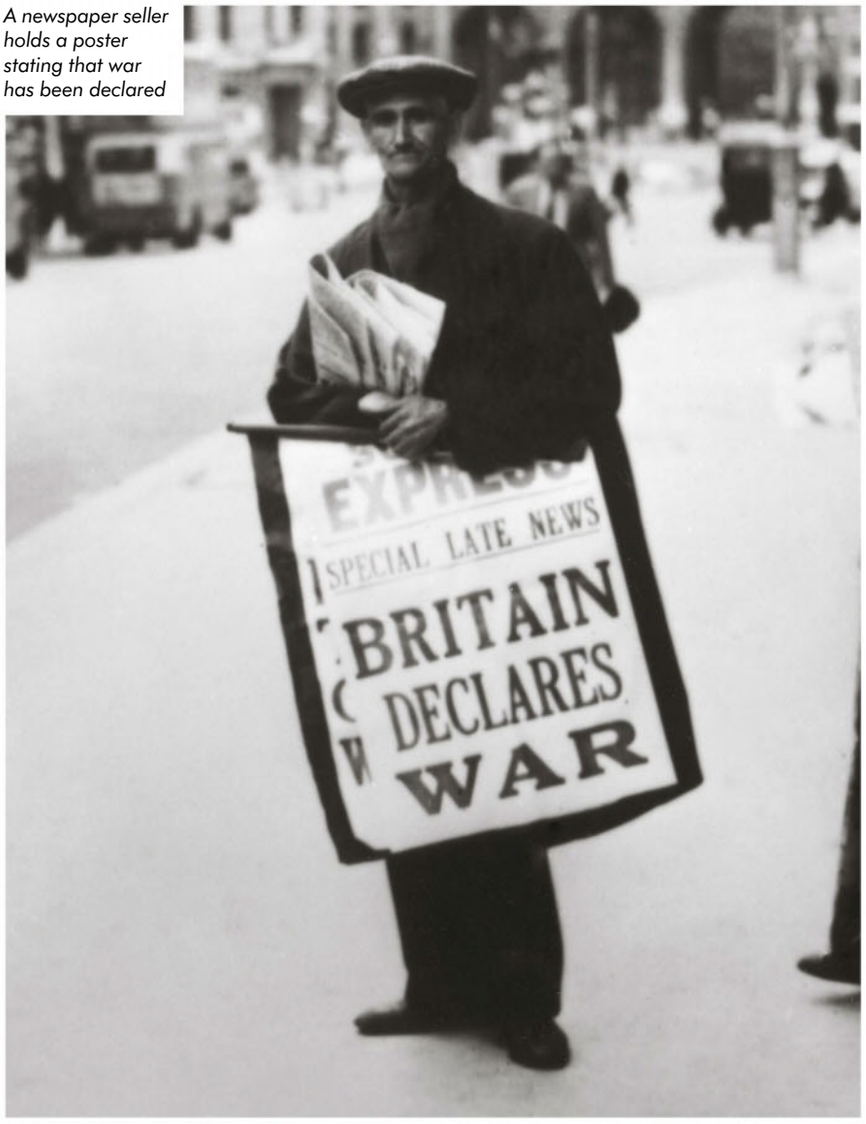
George VI

b.1895-d.1952

1936-1952

Neither expecting nor desiring to become king, Bertie succeeded the throne after his brother's abdication. Nevertheless, he excelled as king, seeing his country through WWII. His death in 1952 provoked nationwide mourning.

George VI with his family and mixture of dogs at the Royal Lodge, Windsor



A newspaper seller holds a poster stating that war has been declared

Commonwealth and Empire in ways eschewed by more flowery orators.

Nor did he waste his time demanding that he got his own way over wartime policy, or in obstructing, either overtly or covertly, developments of which he disapproved. This was not his function or his duty, and, in any case, between 1940 and 1945 he had a Prime Minister in Winston Churchill who was not just fully in charge of momentous policies and strategies, but with whom he forged an exceptionally close and creative relationship as well.

Perhaps surprisingly, George VI had keenly regretted the resignation of his first wartime Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. When Chamberlain, amid the ruins of his pre-war policy of appeasing Hitler, eventually resigned in May 1940 as France was crashing to unexpected, catastrophic defeat, the King was deeply concerned, writing: "It is most unfair on Chamberlain to be treated like this after all his good work". This heartfelt lament partly reflected the fact that the King had strongly supported Chamberlain's high risk policy of appeasement, and partly illustrates how much he relied upon good working relations with his Prime Ministers and became anxious at the prospect of forging new ones.

Somewhat reluctantly, the King invited Churchill to succeed Chamberlain, recognising that "there was only one person that I could send for to form a government, who had the confidence of the country, and that was Winston". Accordingly, Churchill set about creating his wartime coalition government, in which leading Conservative, Labour and Liberal statesmen played vital parts, with the Opposition Leader, Clement Attlee, serving as Deputy Prime Minister.

Why did George VI express misgivings over appointing Churchill? One reason is that he saw his new premier as something of a political maverick; too mercurial and unreliable to be able to trust completely. A man, indeed, who showed little hesitation in changing his fundamental political loyalties, or in defying party policy, as with the progress of Indian independence during the 1930s, or more critically over appeasement. Churchill had also been a strong supporter of Edward VIII during the abdication crisis. The two men were also very different in their personalities, since the King was essentially shy, modest and a chronic worrier, whereas Churchill was ebullient, forceful and apparently sure of his own superior abilities, and, despite his personal struggles with bouts of depression, a leader who exuded complete self-confidence.

In fact, George VI provided the perfect foil to his expansive, eloquent and larger-than-life wartime Prime Minister. Soon the King was "regarding the Prime Minister's audiences with pleasurable anticipation. He had fruitful opportunities for a common unburdening of mind, and by September [1940] the formal audiences had been replaced by regular Tuesday luncheons, at which the King and his Prime Minister serving themselves from a side-table, would transact State business, undisturbed save by an occasional air-raid." In February

> "Perhaps surprisingly, George VI had keenly regretted the resignation of his first wartime Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain"

1941 the King wrote in his diary, "I could not have a better Prime Minister". Their different styles might best be illustrated by an incident in 1942, as the crucial battle of El Alamein was underway in North Africa and Churchill was dining at Buckingham Palace. Conscious of the momentous struggle under way between the Eighth Army and allied troops and Rommel's Afrika Corps, the Prime Minister fidgeted and showed signs of tension, finally excusing himself and leaving the room to telephone 10 Downing Street for news. He returned in a joyful mood, loudly and enthusiastically singing *Roll Out The Barrel*.

As the people of Britain and the Empire-Commonwealth, following France's surrender, braced themselves for the ordeal of 'standing alone', it seemed far better to be led jointly by a Prime Minister who exuded self-belief and who could conjure up support from past triumphs of national history, and by a monarch who refused to move out of London in daytime during the Blitz and who, in the interests of national economy, took the time earnestly to paint lines low inside all the baths in Buckingham Palace to show how deep to make the hot water. The King's generally simple tastes and his disinclination towards luxury fitted admirably with the wartime privations of his subjects. Food rationing was strictly enforced at the royal palaces. Once, offering a visitor a sandwich for lunch, the King remarked, "I don't know what's in these. Sawdust I expect". He drank draught beer from preference, although he did once produce a rare bottle of French wine when meeting with Churchill, while refusing – to his premier's annoyance – to say how he came by it.

ABOVE George VI and Queen Elizabeth entertain First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt on the presidential couple's trip to London, 1942

BELOW On the first evening of war in 1939, George VI issued a radio broadcast to the nation

The King's determination not to be seen as living in conditions unaffected by the privations of war arose not merely from a desire to share in some measure the lifestyle of the majority of his subjects, but from a sense of what was proper and decent. Foreign visitors were sometimes taken aback by royal living conditions. When Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of President Theodore Roosevelt, stayed at a battle-scarred and shabby Buckingham Palace in the autumn of 1942, she wrote with some surprise in her diary, "I do not see how they keep the dampness out. The rooms were very cold except for the smaller sitting-room with an open fire. In every room there was a little electric heater." Mrs Roosevelt also noted that both the King and Queen were suffering from colds and that the food included dehydrated, reconstituted eggs, various pies and jams made from root vegetables. Despite this basic and – for Mrs Roosevelt – surprising wartime fare, the food was served, in telling contrast, on silver and gold plates.

The media also made sure that the British people, amid the stresses and anxieties of the Second World War, did not forget that, as a midshipman in the Royal Navy, the future George VI had served on HMS Collingwood during the 1916 Battle of Jutland, the greatest and most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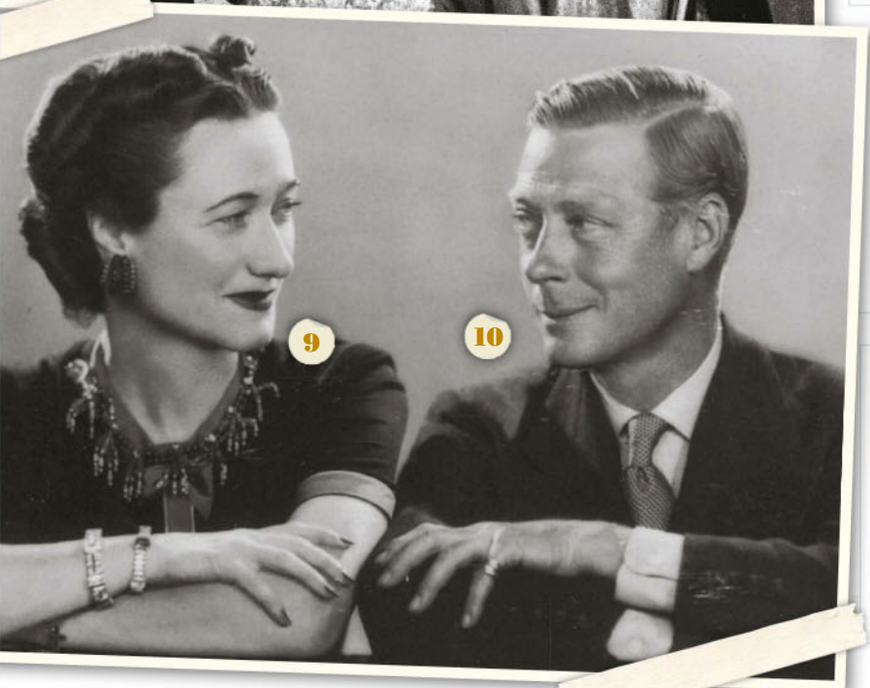


The Windsors at war

George's wartime service is celebrated to this day, but how did his family play their part?

1. Mary, Princess Royal
b.1897-d.1965
Princess Mary, the King's only sister, became Chief Controller and later Commandant of the Auxiliary Territorial Serve (the ATS, to be renamed the Women's Royal Army Corps after the war). She visited units of the ATS as well as various wartime canteens and welfare organisations.

2. Alice, Duchess of Gloucester
b.1901-d.2004
Alice worked with both the Red Cross as well as the Order of St John. She was the Queen's Deputy as Commandant-in-Chief of the Nursing Corps. When war began, she was appointed Head of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (the WAAF), becoming its Director and Air Chief Commandant in 1943.

3. Henry, Duke of Gloucester
b.1900-d.1974
The King's younger brother, Prince Henry had pursued a career in the British Army and was made a Major General in 1937. When the war began, he was appointed Chief Liaison Officer to the British Expeditionary Force sent to France. A proposal made in the House of Commons in 1942 that he be made Commander-in Chief of the Army was quickly squashed.

4. Princess Margaret
b.1930-d.2002
Though too young to join the ATS, Princess Margaret often appeared in various morale-boosting press photographs, like tending the allotment she shared with her sister and learning how to operate a stirrup pump in order to put out fires caused by bombing. She appeared often in family photographs.

5. Princess Elizabeth
b.1926
The current British monarch made a very popular wartime BBC Radio broadcast in 1940 on 'Children's Hour', and was often pictured in the press. In 1945 she became a Second Lieutenant in the ATS where she learned how to drive and service army trucks, becoming especially knowledgeable on the subject of sparking plugs.

6. Queen Elizabeth
b.1900-d.2002
The king's consort's main role during the war was to support the King in his many wartime activities, especially visiting bombed areas and generally showing that the monarchy was as involved as ordinary people in the struggle for victory. Her sunny personality was a powerful factor in maintaining high national morale.

7. George, Duke of Kent
b.1902-d.1942
The King's youngest surviving brother, Prince George was appointed an Air Vice Marshal in the Royal Air Force when the war broke out. George was an effective public speaker, and even went to the United States in 1941 where, for example, he personally addressed aircraft workers in Baltimore, Maryland. Tragically, in 1942 he was killed on a tour of duty when the plane carrying him crashed in the Scottish Highlands.

8. Marina, Duchess of Kent
b.1906-d.1968
Widowed in 1942, the Duchess continued to play an active role in promoting the Red Cross and the First Aid Service. One photograph from 1943 shows her joining a forces sing-song at the United Nations Forces' Club in London.

9. Wallis, Duchess of Windsor
b.1896-d.1986
Thought to have been far too sympathetic towards the Nazi regime before the Second World War began, Wallis, Duchess of Windsor loyally played her part by helping her husband carry out his official royal duties in the Bahamas.

10. Edward, Duke of Windsor
b.1894-d.1972
Despite his ill-judged visit to Nazi Germany in 1937, where he was photographed with the Duchess being warmly welcomed by a beaming Adolf Hitler, the former King wished to serve his country once the Second World War broke out. After spending a largely unprofitable time in Madrid, Spain, he was eventually made Governor-General of the British colony of the Bahamas in 1940, where he served until 1945.

A German bomber flies over the iconic curve of the Thames in London during a raid in 1940

far-reaching naval encounter of the First World War. In keeping with this tradition of royal involvement in the war effort, Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS – the Women's Army – towards the end of the war, becoming a driver of army trucks and knowledgeable on the subject of sparking plugs. There was also a certain symmetry in the bombing of Buckingham Palace at the same time as terraced houses in Stepney, Coventry and Plymouth were being pulverised.

In fact, the royal family's decision not to seek long-term and safe refuge out of London was typical of their determination to share their subjects' wartime ordeals, especially the relentless Luftwaffe bombing of London, other major British cities and national infrastructure. Although the two princesses slept at Windsor Castle for much of the war, the King and often the Queen were determined to stay in London. Twice, German bombs hit Buckingham Place during 1940. On the second occasion, two bombs landed in a quadrangle a mere 30 yards from where the King and Queen were sitting talking to a member of palace staff. The King wrote in his diary, "We looked at each other & then we were out into the passage as fast as we could get there. The whole thing happened in a matter of seconds. We all wondered why we weren't dead." The Queen's response to the attack was straightforward: "I'm glad we've been bombed. It makes me feel we can look the East End in the face."

CHURCHILL WARNS INVASION IS NEAR

SPORTING FINAL
★★★★★★
BID AND ASKED PRICES

The Sun

SPORTING FINAL
Sport Results on Page 40
7th EDITION

VOL. CVIII—NO. 8—DAILY. NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1940. THREE CENTS.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE BOMBED; HITLER READY TO GO LIMIT

AUSTIN ASSERTS TALKS ON DRAFT ARE AT IMPASSE

Says Conference Committee Is Deadlocked on Major Issues.

AGES AND DELAY DEBATED

Sheppard Denies That Hitch Anything More Than Temporary.

KING AND QUEEN VIEW DAMAGE BY BOMB THEY ESCAPED

George VI of England and his Queen stand near Buckingham Palace, London, as they inspect the damage done to a corner on the north side of the building when a delayed-action bomb exploded yesterday. The King and the Queen were not in the palace when the explosion occurred.

KING ESCAPES TIME MISSILE; NAZIS WOULD CRUSH LONDON

Delayed Explosion Watched Two Days Before It Blasts Corner From Building---Germans Threaten 10,000 Planes Daily After Big Raid on Berlin.

By GAULT MacGOWAN.

BERLIN, Sept. 11 (A. P.).—Ten thousand planeloads of German bombs are to be sent daily to the London area in smashing attacks in the next few days, exceptionally well-informed German spokesmen said today.

LONDON, Sept. 11.—Buckingham Palace has been bombed with a time device that fell on Monday and exploded yesterday. Lifting of the veil of censorship today enables one to report that while King George was visiting the gutted homes of his humbler subjects in East London on Monday he knew that the unexploded missile was lying in the garden beneath the north wing of his palace.

The explosion yesterday flung huge masses of m[illegible] like pebbles. It wrecked completely the sw[illegible] pool where the King customarily took his morning s[illegible] Splinters of the bomb and the force of the blast smashed the windows of the bedroom of the royal Princesses. In all it did damage running into thousands of pounds.

Prompt action by a sentry beneath the royal windows in the darkness of Monday morning prevented loss of life. Hearing the bomb fall near his sentry box he called out the Scots Guards. The King immediately ordered evacuation of the entire wing of the palace, and the servants removed to a place of safety the most valuable treasures and protected the heavier pieces with sandbags.

[While Britain was releasing this news, Berlin admitted that the center of the city had been bombed.]

Royalty Back in Residence.

Today the royal standard floats again over the palace, denoting that the King and Queen are refusing to quit their home because, as an old woman in East London told

Continued on Page 3.

SENATOR ASHURST CONCEDES DEFEAT IN PRIMARY VOTING

McFarland Beats Him for Nomination in Arizona—Vandenberg Wins.

Churchill Warns That Hitler Is Assembling Craft and Troops for Invasion of England

He Says Attack Is Being Prepared With All German Skill and Care—Next Week Is Called Crucial Period.

LONDON, Sept. 11 (A. P.).—Prime Minister Winston Churchill broadcast a warning to his beleaguered nation today that Adolf Hitler's long projected attempt at invasion appears to be at hand, and that the next week may be the most critical in England's history.

FRENCH REPORT HITLER HAS TRIED INVASION ALREADY

Letters Received Here Say Result Was Plain Suicide for Troops.

By WILLIAM BIRD.

NORWAY INSTALLS NEW GOVERNMENT

King Haakon Declared No Longer Able to Act.

CAROL SNEAKS OUT OF SWISS HOTEL

But Crowds Cheer ex-King as Train Leaves for France.

In The Sun Today

During the war, the royal couple made many visits to bombed towns and cities, to munitions factories and military installations, appearing before the public as often and as informally as they could. For example, on the day after the first bombs hit Buckingham Palace in September 1940, the King visited the already battered East End of London, where it was reported that he said, "It is wonderful – really wonderful – how brave everyone has been". Mrs Margaret Price was busy scrubbing her floor clear of falling debris that had dropped 90 yards from her house when the King walked by. "Lor," she said. "If it's not the King – and me so untidy." She jumped up and waved to him excitedly. The King smiled back. His Majesty had to climb over a heap of debris to inspect some wrecked houses. "Nice work, mate!" a workman called out to him. A woman broke through the crowds in one street to grasp the King's hand and say, "God bless and save you, Sir, and the Queen and the Princesses". The King, obviously touched, shook the woman's hand and thanked her. In April 1941 the *Daily Mirror* carried a photograph of the King and Queen smiling amid a crowd of East Enders who were smiling joyfully back at them, with the caption, "Look at this photograph – the King, the Queen, the cop, the kids, the crowd – and not a gloomy face among them."

LEFT George and Elizabeth inspect the damage to Buckingham Palace after a bombing

ABOVE The view looking south down Walbrook, London, after an air raid on 10-11 May 1941

> "Two bombs landed a mere 30 yards from where the King and Queen were sitting talking to a member of palace staff"

Quite apart from such morale-boosting activities, George VI worked exceptionally hard in other ways during the war, making many visits to various units of the armed services, both at home and – when the conflict allowed – overseas. He insisted, whenever possible, on decorating all ranks of the fighting forces with the medals they had won in combat. He also tirelessly visited factories, workshops, coal mines, the docks and all the places where the war was being waged through the efforts of the civilian working population – a growing proportion of them women. He paid great attention to detail and was able frequently to astonish managers and workers alike with his knowledge of technical details. On one occasion, learning that there was a serious shortage of parts for anti-tank guns, he had a lathe installed at Windsor Castle and often worked on it at weekends. He also devised a new medal, the George Cross, to be awarded to civilians who had demonstrated gallantry in the war effort.

The King's royal visit of 1943

In the midst of the war, George VI made visits to both Malta and North Africa

Although the King had visited the BEF in France shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, his trip to North Africa in 1943, not long after the Battle of El Alamein had decisively turned the tide of war in that region against Rommel's Afrika Corps, was very different – a rare occasion for celebration. Mixing freely with units of the Eighth Army (known colloquially as the Desert Rats) and other Allied forces, the King was enthusiastically received, often pausing to hear the troops' accounts of their personal experiences. Among the Allied leaders he met in North Africa were generals Alexander and Montgomery, and the leaders of the Free French Forces, generals De Gaulle and Giraud. Commonwealth forces made up an important part of the Eighth Army, chiefly units from India and South Africa. Despite the scorching desert heat and a punishing schedule of nearly 3,000 miles, he also managed to visit the heroic colony of Malta whose wartime resistance had earned it the award of the George Cross for valour. A photograph of the royal visit to Malta shows packed and wildly celebrating crowds lining the battle-scarred streets of the capital Valetta, as the King drives past in a black Austin car. Despite the long and hard road that lay ahead, it was at last possible to believe, especially with the United States and Soviet Russia as crucial parts of the Grand Alliance, that final victory was now all but certain.

King George with General Montgomery of the British Eighth Army in Tripoli, Libya

Wartime brought with it a veritable mass of government-imposed regulations affecting everyday life. As the historian A J P Taylor noted, "The King loved working to rule. The war brought many rules to which he could work." During the blackout he made a point of stepping outside whichever palace he happened to be in to check that no light was escaping from the windows – no small task with so many windows to observe. Although he always appeared in public wearing military uniform, in private he tended to make do with his pre-war stock of clothes, of which there were admittedly a good many. Nonetheless, when his shirts' collars and cuffs wore out, he asked his tailor to make new ones from the shirt-tails.

He also took the possibility of a German attempt to kidnap him seriously, and regularly took revolver practice in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. When being driven in his official car he always had a sten gun at his side and it was understood that he would shoot it out with any enemy assailant. The King also made it clear that, in the event of a German invasion, he would prefer to die fighting on his home ground.

The King also made a profound impact on the wider stage of the war. He proved a real asset to the British government in welcoming and making fruitful contact with the civilian and military leaders of the various nations and factions that were eventually to comprise the Grand Alliance that defeated the Axis powers. Throughout he demonstrated patient and often surprisingly well-informed diplomatic skills. His constitutional position as King-Emperor also made him a vital and inspirational figurehead of a complex and multi-ethnic global Empire.

As crowds gather outside Buckingham Palace on VE Day, George VI, his family and Winston Churchill step out onto the balcony to wave

As someone who had seen active service during the First World War, the King was especially keen to visit British and Commonwealth forces in the various theatres of war. Such trips, for obvious reasons, could not be made during the heat of battle, but one of the most significant royal visits occurred in 1943 when the King visited victorious Allied forces in North Africa, prudently making a new will before he departed. Since it also included a visit to Malta, which had recently been awarded the George Cross for its wartime heroics, the King travelled some 6,700 miles in all, enduring scorching heat and digestive upsets in the process. Typical of his reception by thousands of troops was an account of him "surrounded by hundreds of men, talking to them, asking them about their experiences. Then the men broke into song with *For He's A Jolly Good Fellow*."

> "The King was keen to visit British and Commonwealth forces in the various theatres of war"

As the D-Day landings of summer 1944 approached, George VI found himself in a battle of wills with Churchill over the Prime Minister's determination to accompany the Allied invasion forces over the Channel. The King's wish also to be present was a complicating factor. In the end, George VI had to threaten personally to drive to the place of embarkation and thus prevent Churchill setting sail for Normandy.

For the last few months of the Second World War, the King had to get used to a new Prime Minister following Labour's landslide election victory in July 1945. As in 1940, George VI mourned the loss of a trusted colleague, writing, "It was great shock to me to have to lose Churchill". As before, however, the King was soon appreciating the personal qualities of his incoming premier – the modest, precise and shrewd Clement Attlee – despite some early awkward silences between the two essentially shy men.

Attlee greatly valued the King, saying with words that sum up his wartime contribution to final victory: "The longer I served him, the greater was my respect and admiration… It was his fate to reign in times of great tension. He could never look round and see a clear sky… He was a very hard worker. Few people realised how much time and care he gave to public affairs, and visitors from overseas were often astonished at his close familiarity with all kinds of questions. With this close study went a good judgement, and a sure instinct for what was really vital."

Further reading

- S Bradford, *George VI: The Dutiful King*, Penguin, 2013
- D Judd, *George VI*, I B Tauris 2012
- P Ziegler, *George VI: The Dutiful King*, Penguin 2013
- D Cadbury, *Princes At War: The British Royal Family's Private Battle in the Second World War*, Bloomsbury 2014

The Nazi Duke

How did a grandson of Queen Victoria and an Eton-educated British duke become an ardent supporter of the world's most reviled regime?

Words HARRY CUNNINGHAM

When we think of the links between the Nazi Party and the British royal family, the name that inevitably comes to mind is the former King Edward VIII. Although nothing has ever been satisfactorily proved about the former King's links to the Führer, public interest in him has overshadowed the role of a royal, long since forgotten, who really did do the unthinkable and actively campaigned for Hitler, without shame. Charles Edward, Duke of Coburg's support for both Kaiser Wilhelm II and the most infamous dictator in history would cast an unwelcome light on both the royal family's heritage and the role of the upper classes in appeasing Hitler's appalling crimes.

Prince Leopold Charles Edward George Albert, known by his middle names Charles Edward, was born on 19 July 1885 and automatically inherited the British titles 2nd Duke of Albany, Earl of Clarence and Baron Arklow. This was because Charles Edward's father, Prince Leopold, the eighth of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's nine children, had tragically died only months before his son was born.

The loss of his father would have a profound impact on the way Charles Edward was raised: he would be doted on by women. His mother, Princess Helena of Waldeck-Pyrmont, a German Princess, and his grandmother, Queen Victoria, both played a key role in his upbringing at Claremont House in Surrey. He was also known to be inseparable from his elder sister, Princess Alice of Albany, and as children they had been nicknamed the 'Siamese twins'.

In 1898, at the age of 14, Charles Edward reached the pinnacle of the British establishment when he was sent to Eton College with hopes of attending the University of Oxford – but everything changed in 1899. Charles Edward's uncle, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, was also the sovereign Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, a title that he had inherited through his own father, Albert, husband to Queen Victoria. It was not a very popular title due to the deteriorating relations between Germany and Britain – various members of the British royal family had renounced their claims, and when Alfred had succeeded, he forfeited his seat in the House of Lords. So when Alfred's only son committed suicide

Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha

b.1884-d.1954

The son of Queen Victoria's eighth child, Charles was a minor royal who embraced his German heritage by supporting both Kaiser Wilhelm and the Nazis. He was stripped of his British titles in 1917.

Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha during an official visit to San Francisco in 1934

and Alfred himself died of cancer a year later, Charles Edward unexpectedly inherited the titles.

Although Germany had become a unified country in 1871, the smaller German states still kept their identities and their monarchs. When it became clear that he would inherit the title, Charles Edward was forced to abandon his life in Britain and head to Coburg. Until he came of age, Prince Ernst of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Alfred's son-in-law, would act as regent and oversee Charles Edward's education in Germany.

As the arms race between Germany and Britain gathered pace, Charles Edward – or Carl Eduard, the Germanised version of his name that he increasingly adopted – ignored the growing conflict of interest between his two countries and continued to return home to Britain when he could. But Charles Edward could not be torn for very much longer. In September 1914, World War I began in earnest. Opting for duty over personal preference, Charles Edward decided to offer his support for the Germans.

It was a disastrous decision, and would lead to him being isolated in both his native Britain and on the continent. When Germany lost the war, Kaiser Wilhelm II was forced to abdicate and most minor royals, including Charles Edward, were forced to give up their ducal thrones as well. After all, the perceived arrogance and personal ambitions of the German royals – indeed of royals all over Europe – was seen to have resulted in the needless bloodshed of World War I.

King George V had no choice but to condemn his cousin. Charles Edward was denounced as a traitor, stripped of his titles as well as His Royal Highness status and his property was confiscated. King George realised the very real threat to his own throne, from popular discontent if he did not act. In Portugal republican revolutionaries had shot King Carlos I and his successor Manuel II had been deposed by the same movement in 1910. 1917 saw another cousin, the Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, lose his throne.

So King George began a project to reform the role of the British monarchy and distance his family from criticism. He changed the name of the royal house to Windsor, after the castle, in 1917 and tried to remain above politics as Asquith and Lloyd George brought in sweeping democratic reforms. King George also refused shelter to Nicholas Romanov, the former Tsar, a decision he would no doubt come to regret when the Bolsheviks later murdered him and his family in 1918.

The impact of all of this on Charles Edward was that, although he was allowed to remain in Germany, he was effectively politically isolated. What Charles Edward wanted more than anything was to feel part of something, to feel accepted and to have a place in a new world order. It is perhaps of little surprise, then, that when a little known ex-soldier, an anti-establishment outsider with strong-held beliefs about Germany's place in Europe and the world, began preaching in beer halls about creating a new German empire, Charles Edward would get on board.

> "What Charles Edward wanted more than anything was to feel part of something, to feel accepted and to have a place in a new world order"

It is important to cast aside our own hindsight and remember that, in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, there was a certain level of sympathy for Hitler, even in Britain. Many people felt the terms of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh and the idea of a strong man who could herald in a new era of prosperity and rebuild the crippled country after the disastrous years of Weimar hyperinflation was very appealing.

Another reason that far-right movements appealed to the Duke of Coburg, and indeed many other British aristocrats, was that they aimed to bring back what the upper classes regarded as traditional values at a time of uncertainty and change. In early-20th-century Britain, the House of Lords was instrumental in fighting Liberal prime ministers Gladstone and Lloyd George on progressive policies such as Home Rule for Ireland, the extension of the franchise and political and economic reform. Conversely, in the Third Reich, Hitler's Enabling Act would give him all but absolute power, allowing him free rein to carry out his plan without opposition in parliament, meanwhile the role of women was made abundantly clear, as Hitler's propaganda minster Joseph Goebbels said: "The mission of women is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world."

The idea of a strong national identity was also central to far-right ideology. Some might argue the patriotism of the Third Reich and the way in which Hitler was revered and idealised was not too dissimilar to the early-20th-century view of monarchy by the upper classes: a strong monarch with military credentials, supported by a ruling elite of wealthy aristocrats was seen as a far more effective ruler than a bookish intellectual who strived for peace and prosperity through compromise, philanthropy and extending the franchise to people the upper classes perceived as undeserving of the vote.

As well as supporting Hitler in the 1930s and endorsing the Nazis in the German parliament elections, which saw Hitler appointed chancellor in 1933,

RIGHT *Now a fully fledged German Prince, Charles Edward would soon have to make a stark choice about whether to serve the duchy over which he was sovereign, or return to his British homeland and abandon his royal duty*

BELOW *A postcard momento of Charles Edward's inauguration on 19 July 1905*

The Titles Deprivation Act of 1917

How to get rid of peerages and royal titles that are notoriously hard to revoke

When a royal is gifted a title or a member of the establishment a peerage, it is usually expected they will not only hold that title for the duration of their own life but also pass it on to their descendants for generations to come. Granted by letters patent, which are signed by the monarch, a peerage ordinarily grants the holder a permanent seat in the House of Lords as well as certain other privileges.

Although in recent times laws have been introduced to remove a peer's membership of the House of Lords, rescinding a title of a peer is still rarely done even when a peer – such as Jeffrey, Lord Archer – has been sent to prison because it requires an Act of Parliament.

George V, however, made a notable exception. The Titles Deprivation Act of 1917 gave him the power to appoint a special committee of the Privy Council to "report the names of any persons enjoying any dignity or title as a peer or British prince who have, during the present war, borne arms against His Majesty or His Allies, or who have adhered to His Majesty's enemies."

The report of the committee would then be laid upon the table of both the Commons and the Lords, and if for 40 days neither house passed a motion disapproving of the report, it would be sent back to the King. Any names mentioned in the report would then be removed from the Peerage Roll and all writs, royal warrants and letters patent relating to their titles would be subsequently revoked. The act also gave the descendents of those excluded the right to petition the crown for the restoration of their titles.

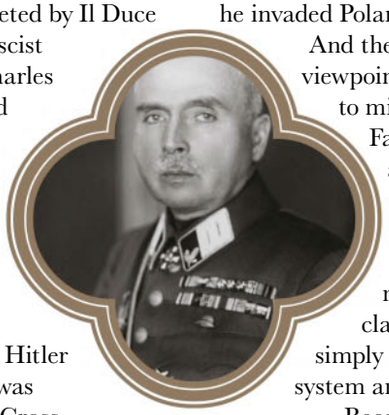
The report of the Committee was laid before the house containing the names of Charles Edward, Duke of Albany, Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, who was a very distant relation descended from George III, and Heinrich Graf von Taaffe, 12th Viscount Taaffe. No objections were made and an Order in Council of 28 March 1919 removed all of them from the roll of the House of Lords.

George V sweeps away the British royal family's German heritage

The Duke, third from the left on the front row, poses with the Thuringian Division in 1915 or 1916

Charles Edward visited Mussolini's Italy several times. Intrigued by his achievements, he brought 70 German friends on one of these trips and was greeted by Il Duce himself, who gifted Charles Edward a fascist dagger. Karina Urbach believes what Charles Edward and even Hitler himself admired about Mussolini was that, "Mussolini integrated the Italian royal family into his regime," though the decision of King Victor Emmanuel III to stay on and attempt to manage or support Mussolini would eventually lead to his downfall at the end of the war.

Because of his admiration for royalty, Hitler was keen to utilise Charles Edward. He was appointed president of the German Red Cross and president of the Anglo-German Fellowship.



Here, Charles Edward is photographed in his SA uniform in 1936

Charles Edward tried and succeeded in some circles to persuade the British aristocracy that Hitler's policies were a means to justify an end: a strong, prosperous Germany. He also reached out to the future Edward VIII, then the Prince of Wales, who was known to be sympathetic to Hitler's aims.

Indeed, contrary to popular belief, many historians believe Hitler did not want to go to war with Britain or Western Europe, at least initially. Rather, his aim was to form an anti-Soviet pact. He did not believe Britain would go through with their ultimatum to declare war if he invaded Poland.

And there was lots of sympathy for this viewpoint. Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts hoped to mimic Hitler and Mussolini in Britain. Famous editorials in both the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* by their proprietor, Viscount Rothermere, entitled "Horrah for the Blackshirts", also offered sympathy for the wider fascist movement at home and abroad by claiming that Hitler and Mussolini were simply trying to fix a broken, outdated political system and appeal to the youth.

Because many people in aristocratic circles privately believed Charles Edward had been treated unfairly, he received a sympathetic ear on his many returns to Britain. This made him incredibly useful to Hitler and he rose to become one of his closest 'go-betweens'. In Britain, Charles Edward hosted informal gatherings. With no estate or formal title of his own, he was forced to rely on the hospitality of his ever loyal sister, Princess Alice, now the Countess of Athlone, who allowed him use of her estate, Brantridge Park, deep in the Sussex countryside.

Charles Edward admired the dictator Benito Mussolini. Here, the two are pictured together in 1938

Hitler was impressed at Charles Edward's ability to network and back channel with the British aristocracy, and Charles Edward was made an informal ambassador for Hitler around the world. He visited Rome and spoke with both King Victor Emmanuel III and Mussolini, and in 1938 made another visit to Italy, this time officially on Hitler's behalf. In 1939, he also visited Poland, where he met the president and laid a wreath on the grave on an unknown solider. He acted like the perfect diplomat, smoothing over the cracks and giving the impression that Hitler had perfectly benevolent intentions.

The relationship between Edward VIII and Charles Edward has been much speculated on. Urbach describes him as "one of the greatest trophies" for the Germans, an assessment that cannot be overstated. Abdication was not a serious prospect until the end of November 1936 so, in the eyes of Hitler, having the king of the largest empire on side would be a huge coup. After all, legally speaking, the king could dissolve parliament and force through new elections.

The way in which the monarchy worked in tandem with the fascist regime in Italy also fascinated Hitler, and his cordial relationship with both Edward VIII and Charles Edward reflects his dreams of one day incorporating the monarchy into the Third Reich. Such an alliance merged traditionalism with National Socialism. The continuity and traditionalism of the old order was not only maintained, but the monarchy could be used as a tool to channel patriotism and cultural superiority. Charles Edward, then, was a concrete link between Britain's 1,000-year monarchy and the relatively new German nation.

"He acted like the perfect diplomat, smoothing over the cracks and giving the impression that Hitler had perfectly benevolent intentions"

To what extent Charles Edward had convinced Edward VIII of the merits of Nazism – perhaps the greatest prize of all, even after he became the Duke of Windsor – and more importantly of stronger Anglo-German ties, however, is debatable. What we know is that Edward hinted on more than one occasion that he would not necessarily uphold the silence on political matters required of a constitutional monarch. In November 1936, Edward visited the Bessemer Steel Works in a Welsh mining village and, remarking on the

The royal protector

While Charlie consorted with the enemy, his sister's home became a safehouse for Europe's exiled monarchs

Charles Edward and his sister, Princess Alice, maintained a close relationship throughout their lives. When Alice was six, she met Lewis Carroll and complained that, "…he was always making grown-up jokes to us," and that she found him, "awfully silly". This incredibly shrewd judge of character showed an independent woman, traits that no doubt shone through in her decision to remain in close contact with her brother, even as it became clear that he was coming down on the wrong side of history.

In contrast to her brother, Alice's husband, Prince Alexander of Teck, gave up his German titles and was elevated to the British peerage as the Earl of Athlone. Their main residence was Henry III tower at Windsor Castle. The couple's second and more discreet home was at Brantridge Park.

During World War II, she and her husband took up residence in Canada, where he was the governor general. While her husband threw himself into the war efforts by visiting troops across the nation, Alice played host to several displaced monarchs, whose countries the Nazis had overrun. Among the sovereigns who moved into the Canadian residence of Rideau Hall were the Crown Prince Olav of Norway and his wife, Princess Märtha; Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and her heir, Juliana; King Peter of Yugoslavia and King George of Greece among others. Princess Alice was a friend to all, regardless of their politics. It was here that Alice and the other royal ladies of the house set themselves to work, making clothes for the families that had lost their homes and all their possessions during the war.

After his support for Kaiser Wilhelm II in WWI, Charles Edward was stripped of his British titles

Hitler with the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha at a meeting of the leaders of the NSKK in October 1935

Photographed here in February 1941, the Duke quickly rose to the rank of Oberbereichsleiter in the SA

poverty he saw around him, said, "These works brought all these people here. Something must be done to find them work." Many saw it as an incendiary statement, particularly since a Conservative government was in power, whose relationship with the mining community has always been rocky. Yet many ordinary working class people lapped it up because Edward epitomised the strong leadership and commitment to prosperity that brought Hitler and Mussolini to power.

The parts played in 1935 negotiations about an Anglo-German Naval agreement by both Charles Edward and Edward VIII – who was then still the Prince of Wales – also highlight the close relationship the two of them had. Such an agreement would help Hitler defeat Stalin. Charles Edward, annoyed at George V's lack of action, allegedly spoke to the Prince of Wales. On 11 June 1935, the Prince of Wales made a speech at the British Legion suggesting British people should visit Germany and, "stretch out their hand."

The British foreign secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, suddenly agreed to the German's demands. Urbach writes, "It seemed obvious that the successful conclusion of the Naval Agreement had something to do with behind the scenes work. The Duke of Coburg certainly saw it as a great success."

Other than speculation and clever guesswork, the extent of Charles Edward's influence on Edward VIII and other senior members of the royal family is difficult to ascertain. Much of the correspondence contained in

> "The secrets that Hitler and the Duke shared seemed to be so important that they needed to be forever hidden from public view"

the royal archives on the matter is embargoed to protect the integrity of the monarchy. We know that George V's wife, Queen Mary, was a regular attendee at Charles Edward's 'gatherings' at Brantridge Park, yet, according to the royal archives, she only sent one postcard to him in the 1930s, and copies of her correspondence to Edward VIII and his younger brothers – George VI, who succeeded him after he abdicated, and the Duke of Kent – is closed after 1918.

One tantalising secret glimpse into the links between Charles Edward, the Nazis and senior members of the British royal family might be inferred from a remarkable telegraph that was intercepted from Hitler's bunker in April 1945. It read, "The Fuhrer attaches importance to the President of the Red Cross, the Duke of Coburg, on no account falling into enemy hands."

Urbach speculates that this could mean one of two things: "Either Hitler wanted his old confidant, the Duke of Coburg, to be whisked to safety or this was a 'Nero order', i.e. he wanted him to be murdered before the enemy could get hold of him. One thing appeared certain; the secrets that Hitler and the Duke shared seemed to be so important that they needed to be forever hidden from public view."

As it did for many people, the war exhausted Charles Edward. He developed arthritis and a tumour on his face. Both his son and son-in-law were killed. Captured by the Americans, he was put in a camp but was judged too ill to stand trial. He pleaded not guilty in abstention and, although acquitted of crimes against humanity, was found guilty of aiding and abetting Nazis by a de-Nazification court in 1949.

Five years later in 1954, after the courts had fined him and stripped him of his property, Charles Edward died in the flat he lived in, just down the road from his old dynastic home, Veste Coburg.

Further reading

- C Zeepvat, *Charles Edward, Prince, Second Duke Of Albany (1884-1954)*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press 2004
- K Urbach, *Go Betweens For Hitler*, Oxford University Press 2015

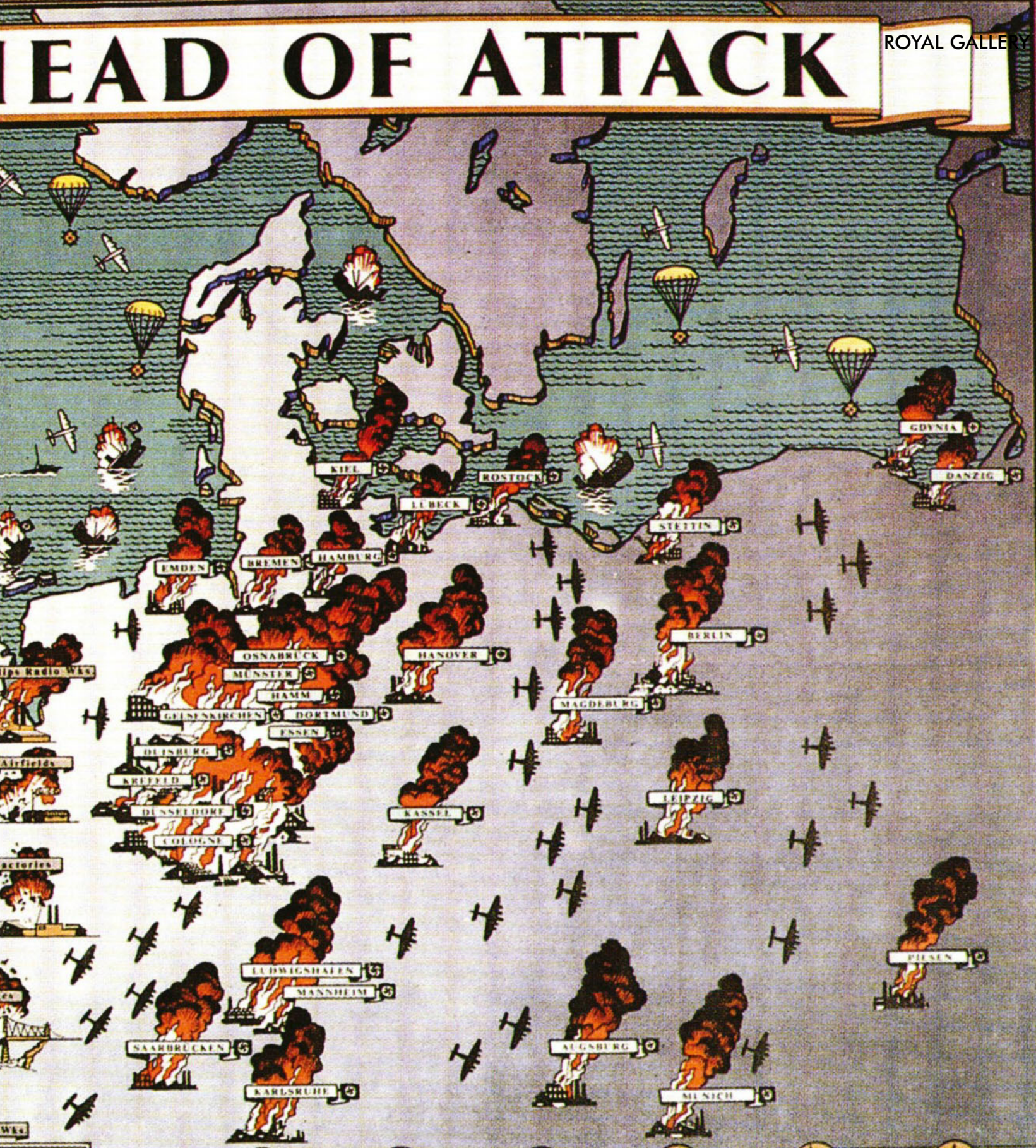
Royal Gallery

1943

Spearhead of Attack

A poster published during WWII showing the variety of production across Britain, from food in Scotland, ships in Northern Ireland, coal in Wales, electric power in the north east of England and tanks in the Midlands. Across mainland Europe, the poster shows Allied bomber offensives and their successful strikes.

EAD OF ATTACK



BOMBER COMMAND | FIGHTER COMMAND | COASTAL COMMAND | COMBINED OPERATIONS | M. T. BOATS | THE ROYAL NAVY

Night and day the bombers of the R.A.F. strike deep into the enemy's war machine . . . Almost daily R.A.F. fighters sweep over enemy occupied territory to strafe communications and strategic targets . . . Coastal Command aircraft strike at U-boats and their bases, stalk and destroy enemy coastwise convoys, sow minefields in enemy waters . . . Combined Operations swoop with sudden and devastating effect, keeping a whole German army on the defensive . . . Coastal forces attack supply ships and their escorts . . . The Royal Navy maintains its blockade stranglehold on the continent while assuring to Britain a ceaseless and gigantic flow of supplies which will give irresistible power to the Spearhead of Attack when the time comes to strike.

Printed in England by Alf Cooke Ltd., Leeds and London. 31-3467.

Royal Residence

Château de Fontainebleau

Château de Fontainebleau

- **Year built:** 1861 (final royal building work finished)
- **Time to build:** 333 years (from first major Renaissance construction to final royal building work)
- **Number of rooms:** 1,900
- **Style:** Renaissance, Neoclassical, Empire
- **Location:** Fontainebleau, Paris, France

Centuries of French royals have left their mark on this radiant palatial complex

Words ROSS HAMILTON

Timeline

1137

Into history
Château de Fontainebleau is referenced in a royal charter. Though no indication is given as to how long the structure has existed, it soon becomes a favourite residence of French royals.

1259

Saintly influence
The famously pious Louis IX, or Saint Louis, enjoys his time at Fontainebleau and establishes a monastery hospital next to the château, to be run by monks of the Trinitarian order.

1528

A Renaissance revival
Francis I begins expanding the château into a lavish royal complex. He employs renowned Italian Renaissance artists to design and decorate the interiors, ushering in the first school of Fontainebleau.

1601

The second school
Henry IV continues the work of his predecessors, bringing in a new generation of artists and architects to leave their mark on the palace, its interiors and its gardens.

22 OCTOBER 1685

By word of the king
Louis XIV signs the Edict of Fontainebleau at the palace, officially bringing to an end state toleration of Protestantism. Many of France's leading minds leave the country as a result.

20 APRIL 1814

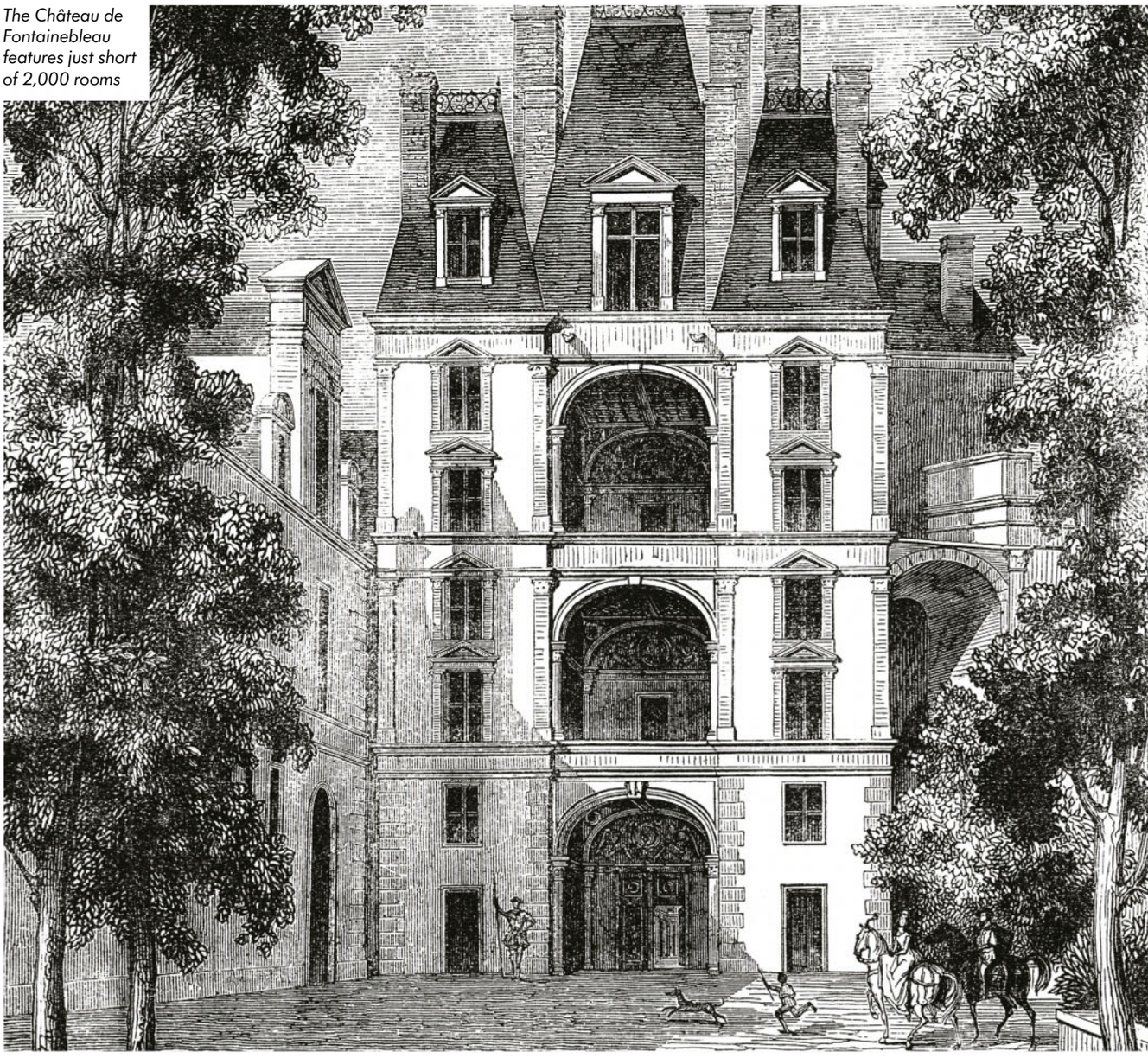
Adieu, Empereur
Napoleon spearheads a major restoration of the palace following the Revolution. From here he makes his final address prior to his exile to Elba.

1940

Nazi occupation
During the Nazi occupation, the château is used as a German military base for over a year. It is finally liberated in October 1941.

1981

Heritage enshrined
After a number of years spent operating as NATO headquarters, the château is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Restoration work continues and the palace is opened to the public.



The Château de Fontainebleau features just short of 2,000 rooms

An imposing labyrinth of turreted annexes and grand courtyards set amid 50 hectares of stunning parkland – there is nothing modest about the Château de Fontainebleau. But in a country that boasts several of the world's most magnificent residences, from Versailles to the Louvre, this sprawling country palace retains a distinct appeal that has captivated the hearts and minds of everyone from Saint Louis to Napoleon Bonaparte.

Fontainebleau has figured consistently throughout France's history, finding favour with kings, queen and emperors since it first appeared as a Medieval lodge around the start of the 12th century. But while its importance as a site of political significance has remained constant, the structure and appearance of the palace has been anything but. Generations of residents, architects and artists have expanded, remodelled, built up and torn down aspects of Fontainebleau so often that its aesthetic has shifted considerably over its lifetime.

As a result, the château presents a unique embodiment of the history of France's artistic sensibilities. Its Medieval core has long since been surrounded and overwritten by ever-more audacious additions in the Renaissance, Neoclassical and Empire styles. Few residences, in France or otherwise, exhibit the same level of architectural craftsmanship and era-spanning interior design, and fewer still can claim to have birthed their own artistic movements – both the first and second schools of Fontainebleau are considered crucial influences in the French Renaissance.

The château today offers an almost unparalleled opportunity to peel back the layers of France's history, whether following in the footsteps of Napoleon while descending the horseshoe staircases, gazing upon the monumental canal that inspired Louis XIV, or wandering the network of galleries and apartments where Francis I once hung *Mona Lisa*. Every inch is saturated with history. It deserves to be experienced.

The Cour Ovale

The historic centre of the palace recalls its Medieval heritage

While Fontainebleau's origins as a fortified Medieval château seem worlds away from the resplendent network of towers and hallways that make up the palace today, its oldest courtyard contains a relic of the residence's humbler beginnings. The Cour Ovale roughly marks the site of the original Fontainebleau, though its façades largely date to the 16th and 17th centuries. The influence of master architect Gilles Le Breton is felt heavily here, with the grandiose Porte Dorée that dominates the southern side of the courtyard one of his most notable surviving works. The Cour Ovale underwent another major remodelling under Henry IV, who added the distinctive eastern gate at the expense of its titular oval shape. Through these changes, however, the towering central keep has remained – a monument to the Medieval craftsmanship of the original château, and an imposing constant in this most fluid of edifices.

The Cour Ovale's keep is the last remaining piece of the Medieval château

The Grand Parterre

Fontainebleau's decadence extends far beyond its palace walls

Louis XIV supposedly spent more time at Fontainebleau than any other monarch and his most significant contribution was typically extravagant. The Sun King's Grand Parterre is the largest formal garden in Europe, an enormous expanse of manicured hedgerows, geometric lawns, and grand, open waterways. The main garden was originally designed during the reign of Henry IV, and it was he who ordered the construction of the magnificent 1,200-metre grand canal around the turn of the 17th century. Louis, however, saw fit to expand upon the work of his grandfather, and brought in celebrated landscape architects Louis Le Vau and André Le Nôtre (the latter of whom was simultaneously working on the gardens at Versailles) to oversee the project. While the Parterre's signature topiary work has long since been removed, it still makes for a stunning landscape, replete with water features overlooked by statues of Roman gods and mythical creatures.

Aerial views give an even greater sense of the garden's scale

The Cour d'Honneur

A symmetrical staircase is the château's focal point

Though it has gone by many names, the Cour d'Honneur has long been the most instantly recognisable element of Fontainebleau. For years, a 16th-century statue gave it the name of Cour du Cheval Blanc (White Horse Courtyard), before it was renamed in the 18th century. The equine theme extends to the courtyard's most iconic feature: the magnificent horseshoe staircase that adorns its eastern façade. Originally built in the mid-16th century, the current version was commissioned by Louis XIII around 1640.

We owe the unobstructed view of the courtyard we have today to Napoleon – the emperor ordered the western Aile de Ferrare to be replaced with a decorative iron fence between 1809 and 1810. And the courtyard's final name, the Cour des Adieux, is another Napoleonic association. It was here that the emperor addressed his troops for the final time before his exile. He would return to the site once, briefly, during the Hundred Days.

Francis I Gallery

Others may have spent more time there, and their changes may have been more sweeping, but few could argue against Francis I as the ruler who made the most important changes in Château de Fontainebleau's long and storied history. The Valois monarch spearheaded the château's transformation from Medieval hunting lodge to stately regal palace by recruiting some of the most renowned artists of the 16th century, and in the process helped usher in the Renaissance in France.

Of Francis's myriad contributions to Fontainebleau, which began in 1528 and continued right up to his death in 1547, the most exemplary and artistically significant is the gallery that bears his name. Overseen by Florentine painter Rosso Fiorentino, the extensive hallway is teeming with ornate stucco and gilded details, all of which frames the outstanding frescoes of mythological scenes, depicting Venus, Ajax and Achilles. Interspersed throughout these paintings on extravagant wood panelling are the arms of the king, as well as Francis's personal emblem: a crowned salamander, a mark meant to symbolise his power as well as an affinity with the divine.

Considered the signature work of the first school of Fontainebleau, the Francis I Gallery is frequently cited as the first outstanding introduction of the Renaissance to France. Almost all the great hallways that would later come to grace the country's palaces – the Louvre's Apollo Gallery, Versailles's Hall of Mirrors – owe a debt to this miraculous synthesis of visionary patronage and artistic innovation.

The Papal Apartment

In the context of the history of Fontainebleau, the Papal Apartment was used as such for only a moment, but it retains the moniker of its most significant tenant nonetheless. Previously known as the Queen Mother's Apartment after Anne of Austria, its gold and scarlet décor and floor-to-ceiling tapestries (part of a major redecoration effort in the 1860s) make it one of the palace's most sumptuous rooms today. But for all its extravagance, the apartment is most notable for being one of history's most lavish prisons. The pope for whom the room is named, Pius VII, was confined to the château between 1812 and 1814 by Napoleon. Only the emperor's exile secured his freedom.

The Marie Antoinette Boudoirs

Few figures are as synonymous with royal excess than Marie Antoinette, and so it's fitting that two of the most opulent rooms in Fontainebleau were commissioned for France's most infamous queen. Built one atop the other, the boudoirs take strikingly different aesthetic directions, but share an air of luxury that is unmatched almost anywhere else in the sprawling palace.

The upper room employs a 'Turkish' style in keeping with the popular period theme of exoticism, while the lower is a gleaming vision of silver panels, golden accents and delicate woodwork. Though removed following the Revolution, some of the room's masterful original furnishings – including the mother of pearl-laden dresser and table – were returned in the mid-20th century.

Gallery of Diana

The Gallery of Diana is the longest room in the palace, running for an astonishing 80 metres. After its original incarnation fell into disrepair, the gallery became one of the most significant beneficiaries of Napoleon's restoration. New frescoes were commissioned, and the great globe that marks the entrance once belonged to the emperor. The work was never finished, however. Instead, it fell to Louis XVIII to complete the revival, who chose instead to hark back to its original décor by commissioning neoclassical paintings of Diana. Its current form, as a sumptuously decorated library, was assumed during the 19th-century reign of Napoleon III, and it remains a breathtaking treat for bibliophiles.

Chapel of the Trinity

One of the three chapels scattered throughout Fontainebleau's complex, the Chapel of the Trinity is perhaps the most spectacular. Completed in the mid-16th century, its exquisite frescoes, designed by French painter Martin Fréminet, didn't arrive until decorative work began in earnest decades later. Fréminet's Mannerist depictions of Biblical scenes are complemented perfectly by the intricate stucco frames and vaults – the work of master sculptor Barthèlemy Tremblay. Notably, this monument to one of Fontainebleau's most decadent and elaborate architectural periods has its origins in a somewhat humbler era. The current chapel was constructed over the foundations of another – that of the Trinitarian monks, part of the monastery that adjoined the château in its early years.

Throne Room of Napoleon

Fontainebleau had played host to kings and queens of France for centuries, but it wasn't until 1804 that it became an imperial seat. With Napoleon's ascension came a new era for the residence, which had been stripped of its furnishings during the Revolution. Extensive refurbishments sought not just to restore the château to its pre-revolution glory, but to exceed it, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the former bedroom of the king.

In this most sacred of royal chambers, which palace residents would salute in passing even in the king's absence, Napoleon elected to create his throne room. The alcove that had held the royal bed now became an elaborate backdrop, with exquisitely embroidered fabric cascading down from a golden crown suspended from the ceiling.

The room's condition today is immaculate – uniquely so in France. The furnishings are ostentatious, the crimson and turquoise accents vibrant and gorgeous, and every gilded surface – from the imposing marble fireplace to the intricate stucco ceilings – glimmers and shines. Imperial eagles perch atop the emperor's monograms, and beneath them sits the throne itself – compact but undeniably luxurious.

As much as this is Napoleon's room, however, it is not the emperor who presides over it from the vantage point above the fireplace. Instead it's Louis XIII, whose portrait sits within the golden floral confines of the spectacular wall mount, as it has done since 1834, when Napoleon's likeness was replaced by King Louis Philippe.

Visit Château de Fontainebleau

» **Entry fees:**
Standard: €11
Concession: €90

» **Opening hours:**
Year-round, except Tuesdays

www.musee-château-fontainebleau.fr

Britsol surrenders to Isabella during her invasion of England

The Royal Lovers' Conquest

Isabella, Queen of England and her lover, Roger Mortimer, risked everything to carry out one of the most daring invasions in English royal history

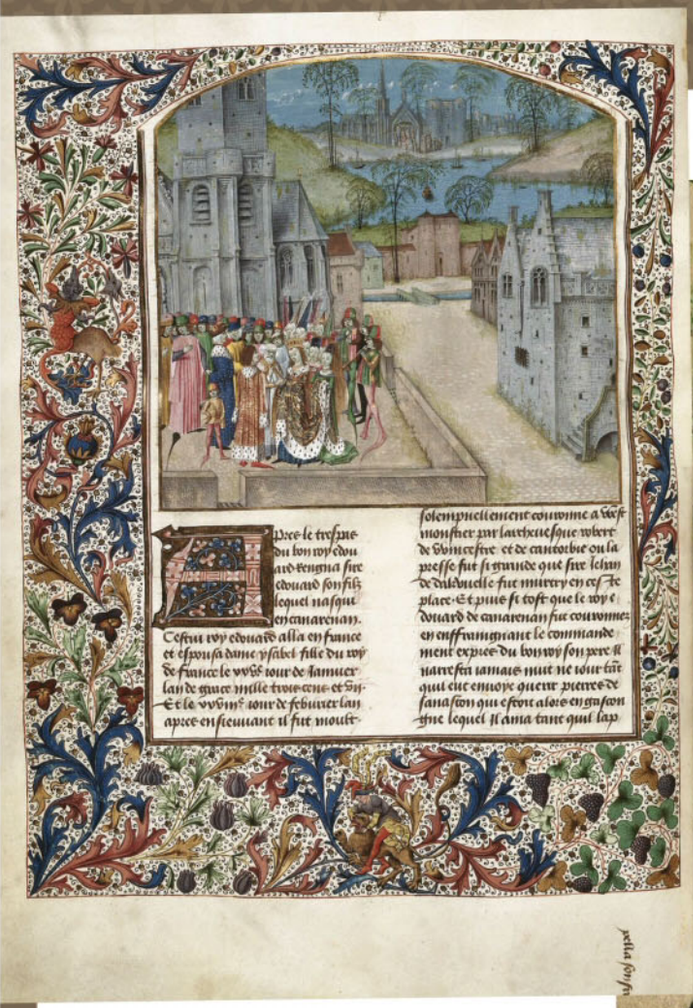
Words JUNE WOOLERTON

On a quiet September day in 1326, a fleet of boats sailed into the River Orwell. Hundreds of men began to disembark, bringing with them horses, provisions and weapons. At their head was none other than the Queen of England, Isabella of France, and by her side was the man acknowledged to he ber lover. He was Roger Mortimer, who'd fled England years earlier in a daring escape to save his life. Together, they came in anger, intent on dismantling the country's government.

Success seemed unlikely. The invading army was small and not even completely sure of where it had actually landed. England's King had the potential to raise a formidable force to oppose it and a huge treasury at his disposal. Roger Mortimer had a price on his head, having been in exile for three years after an earlier revolt against Edward II, while Isabella had committed treason by beginning a relationship with him. An unsteady invasion headed by a traitor queen and an unforgiven rebel sounded like a recipe for disaster. Yet, only weeks later, Isabella and Roger had conquered the country and were on the point of deposing Edward II and taking real power themselves with an ever-growing wave of popular support behind them. One of the reasons this unlikely royal invasion succeeded was their choice of enemy.

When Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer invaded England on 24 September 1326, they had in their sights the Despensers. The family had risen to prominence in the previous eight years, mostly because of Edward II's devotion to Hugh Despenser the Younger. Edward had a habit of taking favourites, with some rumoured to be his lovers, but Hugh Despenser had more power than any before him. Along with his father, Hugh Despenser the Elder, he quickly accumulated land and money as well as exerting influence over the King's policy and government. The Despensers had become so unpopular that by 1321 they were exiled, and war broke out between the King and the barons who were opposed to his favourites. King Edward was ultimately victorious, winning the decisive Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322, and the Despensers were then restored to the heart of his court. With their connivance, the King inflicted harsh punishments on those who had opposed them, and Edward and his favourites were left unchecked. By the time Isabella arrived with her army, the Despensers were the most hated people in England. As her invading force of just 1,500 men unloaded their weapons and provisions, Isabella sat in a makeshift camp, writing letters to the citizens of London to explain that she had come to free England from the Despensers. There was no threat to the King, her husband, in the letters, only promises to save her country. It was enough to start turning people to her side.

But while Isabella played the part of the desperate queen, risking all to rescue



ABOVE The 1308 marriage of Isabella of France and Edward II of England, as depicted in miniature

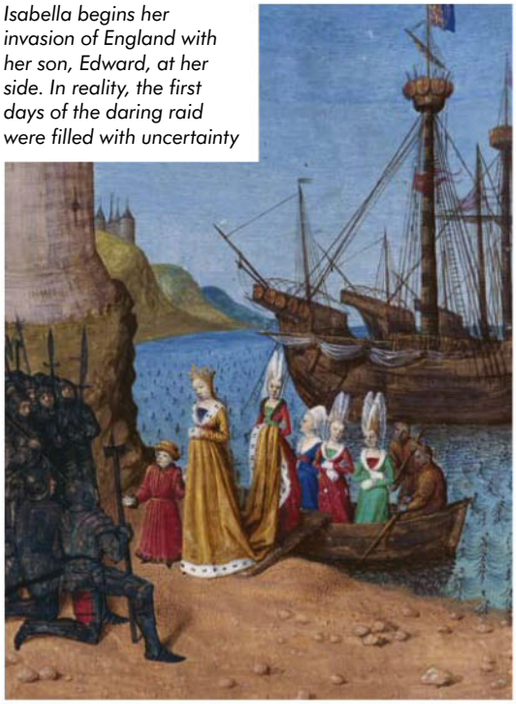
Edward II came to the throne as a popular king but squandered the good will of his people through poor judgement

her people from tyranny, she also had very personal reasons for wanting to see the Despensers vanquished. Though she was known to history as 'the She-Devil of France', Isabella was actually an unlikely rebel. For most of her marriage she was a loyal consort to her king despite his fickle behaviour. Born a Princess of France in 1295, and feted from early on for her beauty, she had married Edward II in 1308 and endured years of humiliation as her husband promoted his then-favourite, Piers Gaveston, ahead of her. Isabella saw lands and jewels meant for her given to Gaveston, but she compromised and learned to live alongside Edward and his favourite. She comforted her husband when Gaveston was ultimately executed by unhappy barons. She had stood by her husband as the Despensers rose to power, and when opposition to them first threatened to spill into war, she gave him a face-saving reason to exile them by pleading on her knees for the family to be sent away. She would help engineer an opportunity for Edward to turn on his enemies just months later, but once the Despenser War was won in 1322, she found herself sidelined again. Just months after his victory at Boroughbridge, Edward suffered a humiliating defeat in his Scottish campaign and fled south with Despenser. Isabella was abandoned at Tynemouth in Northumberland and only narrowly escaped. Two of her ladies-in-waiting died and Isabella's loyalty to Edward wavered. In the coming months, she spent little time with him and refused to swear loyalty to the Despensers. When Edward found himself at odds with Isabella's brother, King Charles IV of France in 1324, the Despensers moved against her, taking her lands, her household and her four children from her.

"Though she was known to history as 'the She-Devil of France', Isabella was actually an unlikely rebel"

Isabella joined a growing band of high-born figures vanquished by the Despensers and in fear of their safety as the King's favourites did as they pleased. The origins of her alliance with Roger Mortimer remain mysterious, but like Isabella he had also been a loyal servant of Edward II who had turned into an enemy because of the Despensers. Roger, Baron Mortimer was the son and grandson of men who had supported Edward's father and grandfather in their Welsh campaigns. He had held land in the Welsh Marches, on the border with England and had made a wealthy marriage to Joan de Geneville. Mortimer was made lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1316, but as the Despensers accumulated land in Wales, he became increasingly unhappy and in 1322 he was on the losing side at Boroughbridge. The death sentence that followed his capture was commuted to life in prison. He was taken to the Tower of London from where he escaped on 1 August 1323. It is possible that he and Isabella were already in contact – the Queen of England had been at the Tower in February 1323 while Roger was captive there and soon afterwards she wrote a letter in support of his wife. Whether Isabella and Mortimer were forming a political or

An engraving of Isabella from the 1890 publication The Queens Of England Volume I *by Sydney Wilmot*



Isabella begins her invasion of England with her son, Edward, at her side. In reality, the first days of the daring raid were filled with uncertainty

personal partnership at this time remains a mystery. They would next meet again in France, where he fled after his famous escape from the Tower. It was here that they became lovers and plotted their invasion.

Queen Isabella's voyage to France was ostensibly to help her husband. Edward, as well as being King of England, was also Duke of Aquitaine, meaning he owed homage for his French lands to Isabella's brother, Charles IV. Edward didn't want to bend his knee to anyone but he was also afraid that if he left England, his enemies would turn on the Despensers. The royal favourites weren't welcome in France and so Edward stayed put. In 1325, Charles confiscated his lands and Pope John XXII suggested Isabella travel to France to negotiate with her brother to try and resolve the situation. She left England meek and mild, promising to bring a resolution to her husband's woes, but as soon as she arrived in Paris, Isabella changed. She negotiated a settlement whereby her eldest son, Prince Edward, would do homage for the lands on his father's behalf, but she refused to go home and held out until the 13-year-old was sent to her. Her son did his homage in Paris in September 1325, meaning Isabella had no reason to stay in France. Her husband sent the Bishop of Exeter, Walter de Stapledon, to bring her home but she refused to meet him. When Stapledon tried to publicly shame her into returning by declaring in front of Charles IV's court that she had to go back to Edward, the meek and faithful Isabella disappeared for good. In front of a shocked audience she told the bishop that she would not go, adding that "someone has come between me and my husband." Her brother backed her up, telling the bishop that "the Queen came of her own free will and may freely return if she so wishes. But if she prefers to remain… I refuse to expel her." Isabella began dressing as a widow to show that she considered her husband lost to her – because of Despenser.

Within months, Edward was letting everyone know he believed his marriage was in jeopardy because of Mortimer, who had arrived in Paris as 1325 drew to an end. The attraction between Isabella and Roger was obvious and their affair became notorious. There are few references to it in the chronicles of the time, but in June 1326 Edward II wrote to Charles IV, describing Isabella's behaviour as "improper", adding that she "consorts with our… mortal enemy, Mortimer" and sent a copy for good measure to the Pope. Around the same time, an argument was recorded between Mortimer and Isabella in which he threatened to kill her after she suggested she should return to Edward. That this dispute took place in the presence of Isabella's son shows the depth of emotional attachment between the two. Their relationship was no secret and neither were their plans to invade.

Edward II was so sure of their threat that in January 1326 he gave orders for watches along the south coast of England to seek out letters from plotters. In February, Edward

Mortimer's daring escape

How Roger Mortimer escaped certain death with a daring flight from the Tower

Though known for his love affair with Isabella and the invasion of England, Roger Mortimer had already secured a place in royal history prior to those events. On 1 August 1323, he became one of the few people known to have escaped the prison, the Tower of London.

Mortimer had entered the Tower in 1322 after ending up on the losing side at the Battle of Boroughbridge. He was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death but Edward, in a move he would later regret, commuted that to life imprisonment. Mortimer wasn't going to let prison stop his work against the Despensers and he corresponded with allies in letters smuggled out of the Tower. Edward intercepted them and, realising the danger Mortimer posed, began to consider having him killed.

Roger Mortimer knew then that he had to flee and on 1 August 1323 he employed a trick that had worked for another famous escapee, Bishop Ranulf Flambard, by using wine to knock his guards out. While Flambard had got them drunk, Mortimer managed to get some kind of sedative into the wine that was served to them on the feast of St Peter Ad Vincula. Once they were all unconscious, the sub-lieutenant of the Tower – who had mysteriously declined wine all evening – helped make a hole in Mortimer's cell and along with another prisoner, Mortimer finally escaped through the kitchens, climbing a chimney to get to the roof. The use of rope ladders helped them negotiate the Tower's walls and roofs and soon after, they found themselves in a boat being rowed to Greenwich.

Mortimer was now the most wanted man in the country, but while armed guards searched for him, he headed to Windsor Castle to try and free others locked up after Boroughbridge. After that, Mortimer headed to the south coast and the Isle of Wight, and from there made it to relative safety in France. His daring escape became the stuff of legend and only made Edward and the Despensers hate him more.

Isabella with her French royal family – it was ripped apart by allegations of adultery

Isabella's first brush with adultery

The Queen of England knew firsthand the punishments for unfaithful royal wives

If anyone understood the dangers facing royal women accused of adultery, it was Isabella of France. As a young queen she had seen her sisters-in-law thrown into jail over claims that they had been acting unfaithfully to her brothers. The consequences for her royal house were disastrous.

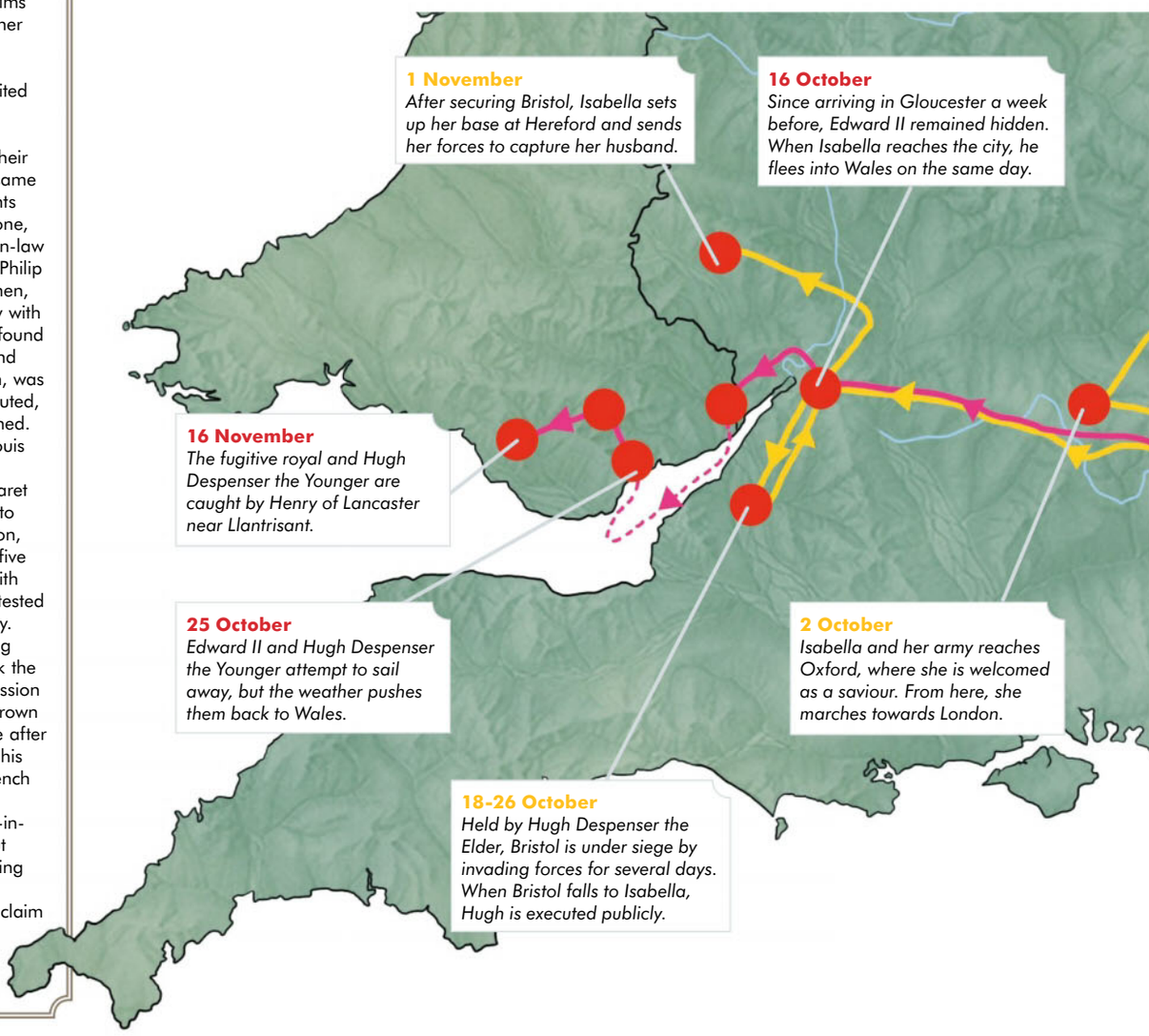
In 1313, Isabella and Edward had visited her father, Philip IV, in Paris. During the celebrations, Isabella gave purses to her brothers, Charles, Louis and Philip, and their wives. Later the same year, she saw the same bags being carried by two Norman knights in London. In 1314, visiting her father alone, Isabella told him she thought her sisters-in-law might be having affairs with the knights. Philip had them all watched and accused the men, Gautier and Philippe d'Aunay, of adultery with his daughters-in-law. The two men were found guilty as were Charles' wife, Margaret, and Philip's spouse, Blanche. Louis' wife, Joan, was declared innocent. The knights were executed, and Margaret and Blanche were imprisoned.

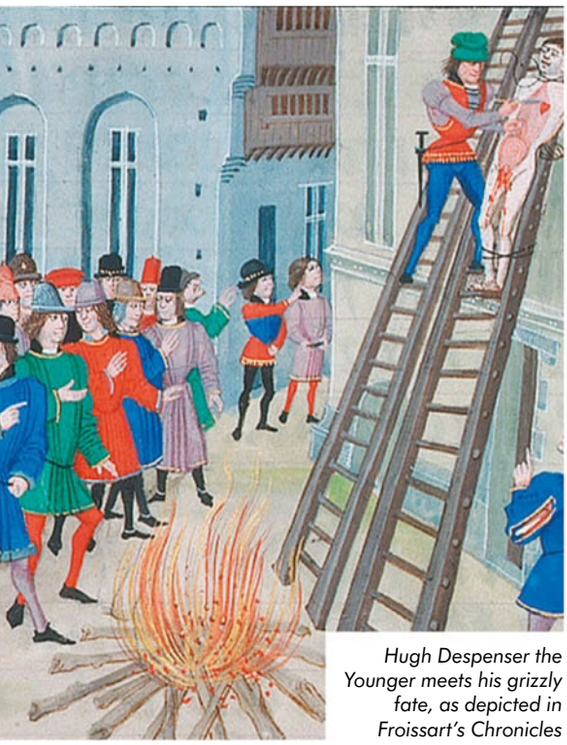
Within months, Philip IV was dead. Louis became king, carrying on the House of Capet, but he had no consort until Margaret conveniently died in 1315 allowing Louis to remarry. He died in June 1316 and his son, John, born that November only lived for five days. Louis had had a daughter, Joan, with Margaret but his brother, Philip, now contested her legitimacy given her mother's adultery. He became king but died in 1322, leaving only daughters. His brother, Charles, took the crown as the tradition of male-only succession had taken root when Philip claimed the crown above a woman. Charles remarried twice after the imprisonment of his first wife, but on his death in 1328 he left no heir and the French crown passed to the House of Valois.

Isabella had not only seen her sisters-in-law suffer as a result of their adultery, but the affairs had led to her royal house losing the crown. There would be more serious consequences, too. Ultimately, the Valois claim to the French crown was challenged by Isabella's son, Edward III, leading to the Hundred Years' War.

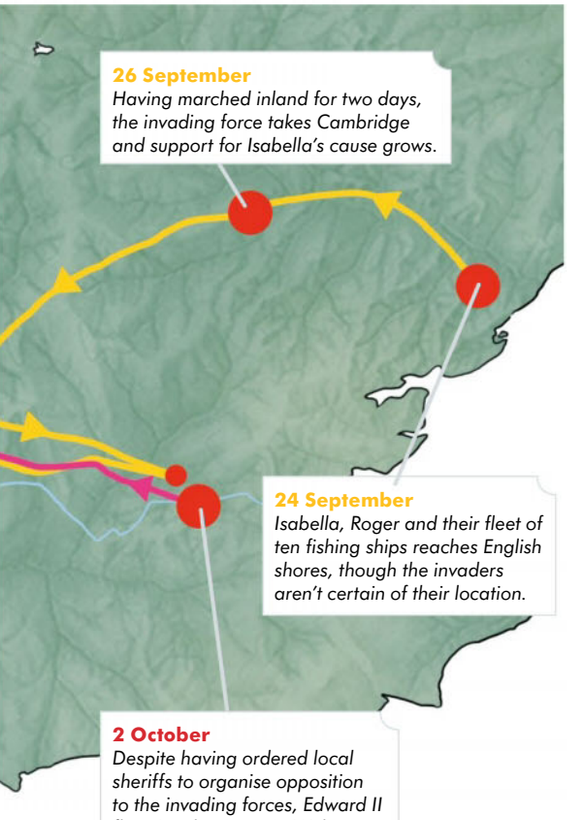
wrote to sheriffs around England warning them to be ready to take arms against Isabella, who he said was being influenced by Mortimer. Meanwhile, the Queen and the Baron were corresponding with those who opposed the Despensers in England while trying to build up alliances on the continent. In another letter to his son, Edward II told him not to marry without his permission, aware that the heir to the English throne was a useful bargaining tool in Isabella's quest to win backing for her planned attack. Edward seemed to gain the upper hand when the Pope ordered Charles IV to cease his support for Isabella and her lover in July 1326 and the chronicler, Froissart, records that not long afterwards, the French king summoned his sister and told her to abandon her plans to invade. Isabella went to her own lands in Ponthieu to raise support and as August approached, followed Roger Mortimer to Hainault where she did several deals with its count, William, for support for her invasion plans. One of these involved

Although they tried to keep their romance hidden during their campaign, this later imagining of Isabella and Mortimer shows their attraction was clear to all





Hugh Despenser the Younger meets his grizzly fate, as depicted in Froissart's Chronicles



> "Edward II ordered the city to bar its gates to Isabella and Mortimer – instead, they were welcomed warmly"

marrying her son to one of his daughters and the deal was signed on 27 August. The bride's dowry included money and ships and within a month, Isabella and Roger led their army of supporters and mercenaries, as well as the teenage heir to the English throne, onto the boats at Dordrecht and set sail for England on 22 September.

Edward's spies knew where they were planning to land and the king had ordered a fleet of ships to the Orwell, but the fleet never appeared. When the invaders landed, they were swift and ruthless in their operation. Isabella was a mastermind at winning public support and the day after arriving in Orwell she headed, dressed in her widow's clothes, towards the shrine at Bury St Edmunds, reassuring the local population along the way that her troops would not pillage and paying for any damage already done. By the time she reached Cambridge, a number of bishops joined her to express their support and hand over much-needed funds. Edward II, meanwhile, tried to raise troops and asked the people of London to help – he was all but ignored. He gave pardons to murderers if they would fight for him and offered a reward of £1,000 for Mortimer's head. The invaders headed to Oxford and Edward II ordered the city to bar its gates to Isabella and Mortimer – instead, they were welcomed warmly. Isabella was presented with a silver cup and one of her friendly bishops, Adam Orleton, preached a sermon at St Mary's in the city in her support.

Edward began to flee west while Isabella and Mortimer circled in on London, appealing to its citizens for help. The city turned for the Queen in the middle of October, taking the Tower and killing one of Despenser's men. Walter de Stapledon was in London at the time and rode for sanctuary in St Paul's, but he was intercepted and killed, with his head sent to Isabella as a trophy. It reached her in Gloucester after she and Mortimer decided to follow Edward towards Wales. Soon after, they claimed their first Despenser after laying siege to Bristol, which was under the command of Hugh the Elder. When the city fell, he was tried and executed while his son and Edward II rode hopelessly through Wales trying to find supporters. As he realised his cause was lost, Edward appealed in vain to Isabella to negotiate a settlement. By the time he was captured, near Llantrisant, on 16 November he had few men to support him, and his wife and her lover were already issuing orders to bring the country back to normality. Edward was sent to Monmouth Castle while Hugh Despenser the Younger was brought before Isabella in Hereford, where he was ultimately condemned on 24 November, dying a grisly death immediately afterwards.

On 26 November, the Great Seal was delivered to Queen Isabella – she and Mortimer were now effectively in charge of England just two months after their invasion began. Edward II remained in custody while a council debated his fate and in January, its decision to depose him was agreed by parliament. Isabella's son became Edward III, crowned on 1 February 1327 with his mother and her lover in Westminster Abbey to watch. The teenage King might be sitting on the throne, but they controlled it. By the time that news of Edward II's death reached the court on 23 September 1327, Isabella and Mortimer were fully in control and doing little to hide their relationship.

The invasion that began in such inauspicious circumstances had led them to power with little bloodshed. The lovers had freed England from some of its most hated figures, but within three years they were thrown out of power without protest. Mortimer was executed in 1330 while Isabella emerged from house arrest to play a part in royal life once more during her son's reign. Isabella and Roger's political lives were action packed, brief and turbulent, which made them notorious and led to the royal lovers' conquest of England.

Further reading

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- D Jones, *The Plantagenets*, William Collins 2013

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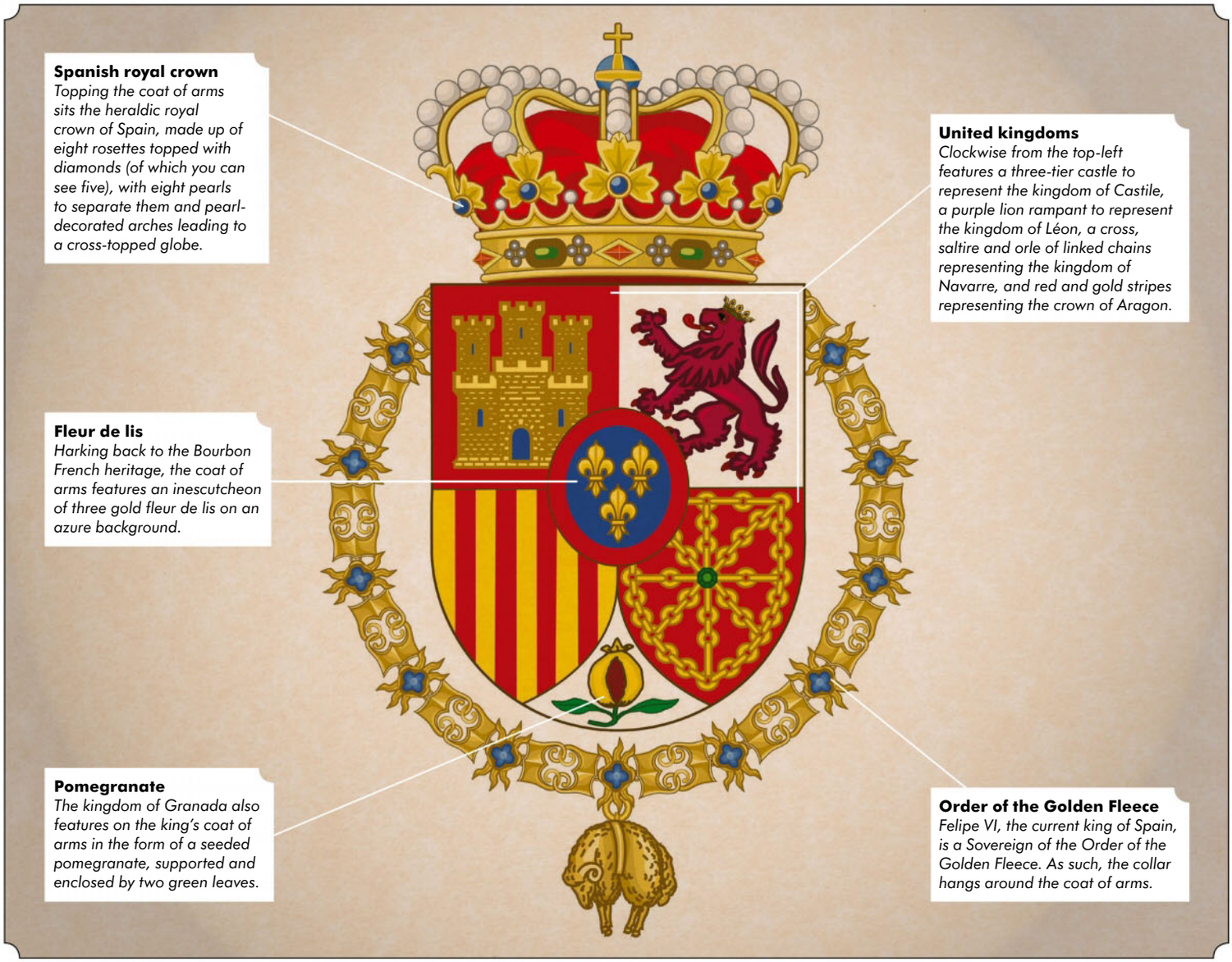
Royal House

Bourbon

1700-present

After the catastrophic demise of the Habsburgs on the Spanish throne, the French Bourbons rose from the ashes to create a new Spain

Words JACK GRIFFITHS



The Pedigree

How the French Bourbons spread to the Spanish throne

Order of succession | Marriage

The Family Of Philip V, as painted by Louis-Michel van Loo in 1743. The life-size painting features the king, his second wife and his children

Maria Luisa of Savoy
b.1688-d.1714

1 — 1700-1724, 1724-1746 — Philip V
b.1683-d.1746
Turn to page 52

Elizabeth Farnese of Parma
b.1692-d.1766
Turn to page 52

2 — 1724-1724 — Louis I
b.1707-d.1724
After his father abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Louis ruled for a mere seven months, before his life was claimed by smallpox. The crown returned to his father.

3 — 1746-1759 — Ferdinand VI
b.1713-d.1759

Maria Amalia of Saxony
b.1724-d.1760

4 — 1759-1788 — Charles III
b.1716-d.1788
Turn to page 53

5 — 1788-1808 — Charles IV
b.1748-d.1819

Mariana Victoria
b.1718-d.1781
Initially betrothed to Louis XV of France, she was ultimately rejected for being too young. This spurn soured Franco-Spanish relations. She later married Joseph I of Portugal.

Louise Élisabeth of France
b.1727-d.1759

Philip, Duke of Parma
b.1720-d.1765

Maria Luisa
b.1751-d.1819

Maria Luisa
b.1782-d.1824

Maria Christina of the Two Sicilies
b.1806-d.1878

6 — 1808-1808, 1813-1833 — Ferdinand VII
b.1784-d.1833
Turn to page 54

Infante Carlos
b.1788-d.1855

7 — 1833-1868 — Isabella II
b.1830-d.1904
Turn to page 55

Francis, Duke of Cádiz
b.1822-d.1902

After Ferdinand's abdication on 16 May 1808, Napoleon's brother reluctantly took the Spanish throne as Joseph I

Infante Francisco de Paula
b.1794-d.1865

Isabella, Princess of Asturias
b.1851-d.1931
Growing up deprived of affection, Isabella was forced into marriage with her penniless cousin, Gaetan. Plagued by depression, he committed suicide three years into their marriage.

Maria Christina of Austria
b.1858-d.1929

8
— 1874-1885 —
Alfonso XII
b.1857-d.1885

Infanta María de la Paz
b.1862-d.1946

Infanta Eulalia
b.1864-d.1958
Turn to page 55

After the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, Juan Carlos I became the first reiging monarch since his grandfather's reign

Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg
b.1887-d.1969

9
— 1886-1931 —
Alfonso XIII
b.1886-d.1941
Turn to page 56

"Spain was a republic once again, but by 1936 the army staged a coup"

Alfonso, Prince of Asturias
b.1907-d.1938

Jaime, Duke of Segovia
b.1908-d.1975
A botched operation left the second-born son of Alfonso XIII deaf. After the death of his elder brother in 1938, Jaime renounced his claim on the Spanish throne.

Infanta Beatriz
b.1909-d.2002

Infanta Maria Christina
b.1911-d.1996

María de Las Mercedes
b.1910-d.2000

Infante Juan
b.1913-d.1993

Infante Gonzalo
b.1914-d.1934

Sofia
b.1938-present

10
— 1975-2014 —
Juan Carlos I
b.1938-present
Turn to page 57

Alfonso
b.1941-d.1956
In a horrific accident when Alfonso and his brother, Juan Carlos, were alone, Alfonso was shot in the face and died. To this day, historians speculate about the circumstances of his death.

Infanta Elena
b.1963-present

Infanta Cristina
b.1965-present

Letizia of Spain
b.1972-present
The current queen of Spain had humble beginnings. Initially trained as a journalist, Letizia made her name as a news anchor on CNN+.

11
— 2014-now —
Felipe VI
b.1968-present
Turn to page 57

Leonor, Princess of Asturias
b.2005-present

Infanta Sofia
b.2007-present

Louis- Michel van Loo's 1736 portrait of Philip V, which hangs in the Prado Museum, Madrid

Philip V of Spain

b.1683-d.1746 1700-1724, 1724-1746

The founder of a dynasty

After 184 years of hegemony, the Habsburg grip on Spain came to an end as King Charles II died without issue. A major European empire with prized possessions in the Americas, the Netherlands and parts of the Italian Peninsula was now vacant. Louis XIV of France acted quickly and installed his grandson Philip on the throne. However, the decision did not sit well with the Habsburg-dominated Holy Roman Empire and the result was the 13-year long War of the Spanish Succession.

Many European powerhouses waded into the conflict before it was eventually resolved by the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. Philip V was declared King of Spain and the Spanish Americas but he no longer had land in Italy and the Netherlands. The king was never the most enthusiastic of monarchs and in January 1724, he decided to step down in favour of his eldest son who he believed should have the kingship. Tragically Louis died of smallpox seven months later, forcing Philip to return for a second tenure as king.

Philip often left his duties to his second wife and Queen of Spain, Elizabeth Farnese and his French and Italian advisors. He was a man who enjoyed solitude rather than company and was more interested in hunting and music than ruling a country. In his stead, the king's consultants ensured that his reign was a period of change for Spain with economic reforms suiting their French and Italian allies.

Philip only became more eccentric as he aged and his bizarre actions took its toll on the Spanish government. His refusal to sign documents prevented parliament from ruling effectively and the royal court even briefly moved to Seville to try and help Philip's condition to no avail. His later years were dominated by depression and insanity as Queen Elizabeth effectively ruled Spain alone. He died of a stroke in 1746.

Elizabeth Farnese of Parma

b.1692-d.1766

A headstrong queen

Philip may have been king of Spain but it was his queen, Elizabeth, who was the true ruler of the country. Much more influential than her husband, she ruled Spain with ruthless efficiency. Elizabeth was born in the Italian city-state of Parma. After surviving a bout of smallpox just after the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, she married Philip, increasing Parmesan influence on the Iberian Peninsula. Elizabeth always preferred physical activities to study and was a great hunter with a penchant for spending lavish amounts of money on herself. In formal affairs though, she was consistently strong-willed and her domineering nature was ideal for a king who would quickly descend into depression.

The Queen undertook official functions in her husband's stead and was initially a popular ruler for maintaining Spanish interests in the French Bourbon court and achieving economic and military successes. Her public support waned though as she seldom appeared in public and the nobility began to turn against her when she explored an expensive foreign policy. The queen was always determined to preserve her position back in Parma and sent military back to reclaim some of what Spain had lost in the Treaty of Utrecht. Sicily and Sardinia were also invaded but the conquest was short-lived after an alliance of French, Dutch and British troops reclaimed the islands.

Elizabeth's rule ended with Philip's death in 1746 but she was reluctant to step aside and still kept tabs on her step-son and new king, Ferdinand VI. Her further involvement as Queen Dowager was not well received and Elizabeth was exiled from the court. Still not content with giving in, she constantly gathered support against the new regime from foreign diplomats. She died at the age of 73 but lived long enough to see her second son, Charles, become King of Parma.

The official portrait of Elizabeth Farnese, which was also painted by Louis-Michel van Loo

Charles III of Spain

b.1716-d.1788 1759-1788

An enlightened despot

Even before he was King of Spain, Charles had ample experience of leadership. He had previously held the title of Duke of Parma and Piacenza before becoming King of Naples. After the death of his half-brother Ferdinand VI, Charles was determined to use the skills he had acquired over years of rule to improve Spain's standing on the world map.

The King chose a group of talented ministers that he could trust but still gave himself absolute control over decisions. He was debatably more determined than his mother, yet less dominated by personal ambition. This attitude made him a tyrant to some, but it was an effective way of ruling and an example of an enlightened despot, a ruler who was influenced by the Enlightenment to pursue healthy reforms for their country.

Despite his experience, Charles's first foray into foreign policy was a misstep. Spain was engaged in the Seven Years' War and to maintain historical Bourbon ties, he signed the Family Compact in August 1761 and sided with France. Sadly, just six months later, France crashed to defeat and Spanish territory in the New World was lost as Florida went to Britain.

Embarrassment on the European stage was remedied by Charles successfully incorporating reform into his still flourishing empire. A port-building project was carried out in 1765 to increase both trade and defence. The king had excellent organisational skills and he tweaked the French Intendant System to meet the needs of his empire. One of the most influential of the Bourbon Reforms undertaken by the house of monarchs, it improved administration and communication as it strengthened the day-to-day running of the empire. Madrid owes many of its iconic landmarks to Charles, like the Botanical Gardens and the Puerta de Alcalá, as well as the city's first sewage and lighting network. Hiring loyal statesmen like the Conde de Floridablanca as his chief minister enabled Charles to keep abreast on what was going on. Sometimes he did go too far, such as his bizarre banning of long capes and three-cornered hats, which along with escalating food prices, caused the Esquilache Riots in 1766.

Another section of society Charles sought to dominate was religion. A religious man himself, he linked the Church to the crown as closely as he could, with anything decreed by the Pope also needing royal sanction. This law angered the Jesuits (Society of Jesus), an influential international religious group with many followers in Spain. Charles moved swiftly and expelled them after blaming them for causing riots in Madrid.

Anton Raphael Mengs's portrait of Charles III of Spain in armour

> "Sometimes he did go too far, such as his bizarre banning of long capes"

Charles's desire for absolute control over religious matters also created hostility between the monarchy and the Spanish Inquisition, but again the king managed to curb his rival's powers with relative ease. The authority of the crown was now in every neighbourhood and Charles had succeeded in creating absolute control. His modernisation of the armed forces was effective and very much needed.

Back in international affairs, Spain supported the Thirteen Colonies in the American Revolutionary War. Florida was reclaimed at the end of the conflict under the conditions of the 1783 treaty of Paris and Louisiana, and Minorca also came under Spanish rule.

Charles III is regarded by many as the greatest Bourbon king who ever ruled over Spain. His methods were, at times, questionable, but they were efficient and they set the foundations for the country to become a true world power.

Ferdinand VII

b.1784-d.1833 ♛ 1808-1808, 1813-1833

A corrupt tyrant

After the progress that was made in Charles III's reign, Bourbon Spain entered a turbulent period. Just months after his son, Charles IV, sat on the throne in January 1789, one of the most significant episodes in history unfolded in France: the French Revolution. With the House of Bourbon ousted from rule in Paris, Spain prepared itself for potential invasion from the north.

The Spanish submitted to Napoleon Bonaparte's demands in October 1807 and agreed to partition Portugal between them. This didn't go unnoticed by the international community as the British themselves marched into Portugal. The Peninsular War had begun. Spain had a huge role to play and was a battle ground between British and French armies. In 1808, Charles IV decided to flee to the safety of Latin America but barely made it out of Madrid and was caught at Aranjuez. He abdicated in disgrace and his son Ferdinand was installed as king.

Ferdinand had a been a sickly, lonely child and had endured a poor education due to his refusal to study. This perhaps was one of the reasons he was so easily taken in by Napoleon who persuaded him to step down. This wouldn't be the first time the cowardly king would betray his people. The result was Napoleon's brother Joseph taking the throne. He officially ruled Spain for five years despite many still seeing Ferdinand as king.

After the French defeat at the end of war, the Cadiz Constitution of 1812 was drawn up. Written by liberals who desired modernisation, it stated that the importance of the Church and the monarchy would be minimised. This was ultimately a futile gesture as Ferdinand returned and abolished the constitution by persecuting the liberals who went against him.

However, unlike Charles III before him, Ferdinand didn't have the control over the people he desired and in the Spanish Revolution of 1820, the liberals put themselves back in command. After three unstable years where other European powers decided to wade in on the issue, Ferdinand was reinstated, again, thanks to aid from a French Army. This time the king was even more ruthless and brutal repression or forced exile was put upon anyone who dared to go against him.

While this internal strife lurched from bad to worse, Ferdinand had taken his eye off Spanish colonies, so much so that he was unable to suppress rebellions in the New World and territory was lost in North and South America. Back home, Ferdinand tried to strengthen his legacy further by overturning Philip V's Salic law to allow his daughter Isabella to be queen after his death. This was just another example of the corruption that ran through the Spanish courts at the time, as it was done to prevent his brother Don Carlos becoming king. The king was coerced into doing this by his fourth wife, Maria Cristina, who had borne him his first child and had become more and more influential. The move divided the nation and upon Ferdinand's death, different sections of the population sided with either Isabella or Don Carlos. The result was the First Carlist War in 1833 as Spain began to tear itself apart in civil war.

Ferdinand governed at a tough time for the country but he was nowhere near the strong figure the nation needed. Some claim that he tried to preserve traditional Spanish values while others see him as a brutal coward. Either way, the fact that he tried to overthrow his own father showed the cold, unhinged personality he had.

José de Madrazo y Agudo's 1821 equestrian portrait of Ferdinand

"Ferdinand was nowhere near the strong figure the nation needed"

Isabella II painted with her daughter by celebrated artist Franz Xaver Winterhalter in 1852

Isabella II

b.1830-d.1904 1833-1868

The teenage queen

Even though Ferdinand had passed away, the effects of his rule remained. Spain lurched into another era of instability as the First Carlist War (1833-1839) was fought between the liberal supporters of Isabella and the conservative Carlists who followed her uncle, Don Carlos. While the war raged on, the underage Isabella stayed in the background as her mother led the country.

The liberals emerged victorious and after a period of military rule under civil war hero General Baldomero Espartero, who served as regent, Isabella was formally installed on the throne in 1843 aged just 13. She was the first constitutional monarch of Spain but this did not make the country any less unstable.

Isabella had to choose her husband carefully as any misstep could have adverse diplomatic effects. The event was called the Affair of the Spanish Marriages and arose after her decision to marry a French noble in 1846 helped strengthen ties with France but angered Britain. Isabella has been described as attractive and charming yet of limited intelligence. Ultimately her court was too outdated to fit with the wave of progression riding through Spain at the time.

Isabella effectively handed over rule in all but name to conservatives and military leaders like General Ramón María Narváez and General Leopoldo O'Donnell. This made her relationship with sections of parliament uneasy and during her reign there were no fewer than 60 governments.

This instability was not sustainable and scandals in her private life enraged liberal rebels. Isabella was never fond of her husband and all of her children are believed to have been from lovers. Her time on the throne ended with an even weaker monarchy, which was rocked further by the Revolution of 1868. She was disposed of and exiled to Paris aged 38, never to wield the same power again. While she did later return to Spain, Isabella's son, Alfonso XII, was tasked with leading a country in a state of flux.

Infanta Eulalia of Spain

b.1864-d.1958

The free-spirited maverick

Eulalia was the youngest of Isabella's children. To protect her from the disarray of the revolution, she spent the majority of her childhood in France. She returned to Spain after the return of the monarchy and installation of her brother, Alfonso XII, onto the throne.

Known as the Infanta, a title given to daughters of Spanish kings and queens, she was a student of a convent school in her youth and this experience would have a profound effect on how she would choose to lead her life. On her arrival back in Spain, Eulalia began to resent her regal status and what she saw as the pomposity that went with it. Deviating from the royal path set out for her, she married her cousin and set up two homes, one in Madrid and one in Paris. She was a keen traveller and often visited England. In 1893 she went even further afield, visiting the World's Fair in Chicago and meeting president Grover Cleveland in New York City.

Eulalia revelled in this new life, rubbing shoulders with American high society. It wasn't all elitist though and she was often found practicing in small parish churches rather than a cathedral. This was anything but standard for a Bourbon and she soon became a regular in US tabloids.

Eulalia enjoyed her role as a European in the US and was treated by wealthy Americans. After trying to divorce her husband, she took a career turn and decided to become an author. Her books often contained controversial views on subjects from class equality to religion. In one of her memoirs, she philosophically claimed that the Spanish Civil War would end with the crumble of tradition and the advent of a new world. Eulalia died of a heart attack aged 94 in 1958 and is remembered as being different to any other of the Spanish Bourbons.

Infanta Eulalia was renowned for her controversial publications

Alfonso XIII

b.1886-d.1941 1886-1931

Almost the final Bourbon

Isabella's exile in 1870 initiated a power vacuum in Spain. Sick of Bourbon instability, elite members of society felt change was needed. From the House of Savoy, Amadeo I was named king. He reigned for three years before abdicating as the country entered the age of the First Republic. The third and final Carlist War unsettled Spain once again and in 1874, the Bourbons returned. Isabella's son, Alfonso XII, was the new king and he was welcomed with a brand new liberal constitution. His death in 1885 gave his son, Alfonso XIII, the leadership of the country.

At first the young Alfonso had a minority reign as the country was led his mother María Cristina who ruled as a regent in his stead. While she ruled, Alfonso was groomed into a king with a thorough education. Aged 16 in 1902, he was finally given outright rule of a country that no longer had an empire. Internally it was breaking apart at the seams as the Catalan and Basque peoples wanted rule of their own territory.

The new king took a notable interest in politics and oversaw 33 governments in 21 years. He favoured rotating conservative and liberal governments with continued elections. This meddling in the system stunted reform and the execution of anarchist Ferrer Guardia didn't win him many allies. It was so frowned upon that an attempt was made on his life during his 1906 wedding to Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. This wouldn't be the last assassination attempt but the king was resilient.

The monarchy suffered another setback in 1909 with the poor performance of Antonio Maura's government further increasing the pressure on both the King and the Prime Minister. As the world went to war five years later, Alfonso followed a line of strict neutrality and his humanitarian efforts gave salvation to 200,000 prisoners of war. These actions boosted his waning popularity and there was even a short-lived drive for him to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Despite this, the king made a number of errors after the war's end.

To avoid disagreements with parliament he attempted to scrap it altogether and make his rule much more absolute. This demonstrated the king's hapless political acumen and was combined with the controversial and unconvincing methods employed by Spanish forces in the Second Moroccan War. The result was one of the biggest ever threats to the existence of the monarchy.

On 14 September 1923, a coup d'état led by General Miguel Primo de Riveria altered the current regime. The upheaval galvanised the Spanish people into believing that an intrusive constitutional monarchy was not the answer. De Riveria was in power until his downfall in 1930. Municipal elections were held the following year and the Republicans and Socialists recorded a landslide victory and one of their first demands was the abdication of Alfonso. Sensing what was brewing, the king gave up the fight and abdicated.

He left Spain on 14 April 1931, never to return. He led a life of travel before finally settling in Rome. Spain was a republic once again but by 1936 the army staged a coup on the newly established order. This initiated a three-year civil war that shattered the country's finances and tore it apart socially. Emerging from the wreckage of the war was General Francisco Franco who led Spain as a dictatorship.

Alfonso watched affairs from abroad and died in 1941 in his new home of Italy.

Alfonso XIII was born into his role as king, but his enthronement took place in 1902

"His humanitarian efforts gave salvation to 200,000 prisoners of war"

Juan Carlos I

b.1938-present 1975-2014

The Bourbon rebirth

Shortly before he died, Alfonso announced that his successor would be his third son, Don Juan. Due to Franco's long dictatorship, Don Juan never got to rule and instead in 1975 when the monarchy finally returned, his son Juan Carlos stepped in to restore the Bourbon monarchy.

Franco was in failing health and wanted his successor to once again be a king. The dictator – and self-proclaimed regent – made it official by law and two days after his death, Juan Carlos was king.

Born in Rome, Juan Carlos spent his youth and early adult years at military academies and universities as he pursued a thorough education. He also had two daughters and a son with his wife, Princess Sofia of Greece. In 1969, he publicly announced that he desired the opportunity become king and his return six years later was a breath of fresh air for a stagnant Spain. He successfully negotiated a safe and peaceful return to democracy and initiated a number of progressive policies. Previously excluded left-wing political parties were brought back into the fold and he also lessened the political control that had started to stifle parliament.

This rapid change was not supported by all of society and the king's return was nearly curtailed in 1981 by a Franconian coup. Juan Carlos was alerted to the threat and suppressed it. He also addressed social matters as a liberal divorce law and a law for abortion rights were passed.

Spain had been mostly absent from the international community under Franco and to remedy their lack of international co-operation, Juan Carlos made many overseas visits in efforts to warm relations with other nations. The later years of his reign were marred by an economic downturn and rising unemployment. Facing health problems, Juan Carlos saw this as the ideal opportunity to make way for a new king, his son Felipe Juan Pablo y Alfonso de Todos los Santos.

King Juan Carlos I of Spain waves to the public after his arrival in Stuttgart 2 February 2006

King Felipe VI of Spain during his visit to Region of Oscos

Felipe VI

b.1968-present 2014-current

The modern generation

Upon his abdication, Juan Carlos said it was time for Spain to embrace a 'new generation'. After a childhood of study in both Spain and Canada, in 1986 Felipe was named heir at the age of 18 and took an oath of loyalty to the king before parliament. Felipe's title was the Crown Prince of Asturias and he was an officer in the Spanish armed forces. He was even part of his country's sailing team at the 1992 Olympic Games and he carried his country's flag in the opening ceremony.

After his stint as an Olympian, Felipe began to assume more official duties. Since 1996, he has been present at swearing in ceremonies for Ibero-American presidents. By 2011, he was undertaking more royal duties than his father, both in Spain and abroad and Felipe was tasked with meeting army, navy and air force commanders while also endorsing Spanish business, culture and tourism around the world.

These assignments were all carefully designed to install Felipe into the mindset of both the Spanish people, international leaders and partners for when he eventually took his father's place. He strengthened his standing with the Spanish people further when he married TV news anchor Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano. After marriage they put their names to various foundations to help support Spaniards in a number of fields.

Felipe and the Princess of Asturias also have two daughters, Leonor and Sofía. The princess became the first without royal blood to become queen, as Felipe took his father's place as king after the passing of the Organic Law on 18 June. He was also given the title of Captain General, the highest military rank in the Spanish armed forces.

Felipe inherited a monarchy that had been rocked by recent scandals and was made aware of a renewed drive in Catalonia and the Basque Country for independence. Felipe is currently the youngest European monarch.

Royal Gallery

Unknown

Royal Palace of Madrid

Build on the site of an Alcázar that burnt down in 1734, the Royal Palace that now stands was commissioned by Philip V and designed by Filippo Juvarra. Construction took merely 17 years, and the palace was finally inhabited in 1764 by Charles III. Since the restoration of the Spanish monarchy in the 1970s, the royal family has lived at Zarzuela Palace on the outskirts of Madrid, and the Royal Palace is used solely for state ceremonies.

The Emperor's Northmen

The extraordinary story of how Vikings became the bodyguards of the emperors of Byzantium

Words EDOARDO ALBERT

To Basil II, Emperor of Byzantium, it must have seemed that he would never rule the empire of which he'd had nominal charge since he was five. He had survived, as emperor-in-name alone, a childhood dominated by successive generals turned emperors, only to assume the imperial purple in his twenties to face rebellion on all sides and treachery in his capital, Constantinople.

But Basil had survived, removing the great uncle who had ruled in his name and turning the rebel generals against each other. However, now his enemies were camped on the eastern shore of the straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, stopping reinforcements arriving from the military heartlands of the Byzantine Empire in Anatolia (which lies within today's Turkey). That was assuming any reinforcements would come from Anatolia. The rebel general, Bardas Phokas, had marched through Anatolia on his way to lay siege to Constantinople, gathering common soldiers and Anatolian barons alike to his cause. If Basil was to survive, he was going to have to look elsewhere for help.

So far, Basil's only military expedition – an attack on Tsar Samuel, leader of the Bulgars – had been a complete disaster, mitigated only by the fact that he had escaped with his life. But one thing Basil would never lack during his long reign of 49 years was self-belief. While in this he was typical of the type of men who reign as emperors, Basil was in other ways, completely atypical among men who wield absolute power. Firstly, and most notably, he never married. In an age when securing the succession for your children was paramount, Basil's decision not to marry is extraordinary. It seems to stem from his decision to devote himself, solely and entirely, to the service of the empire. For along with sexual abstinence, he also practised physical abstinences, fasting frequently and cutting a figure that, to his subjects, seemed sadly lacking in imperial dash. One chronicler complained that, "His neck was unadorned by collars, his head by diadems. He refused to make himself conspicuous in purple-coloured cloaks and he put away superfluous rings, even clothes of different colours."

If Basil scorned the trappings of sovereignty, he was as thorough as possible in learning the levers of power, setting out to master all the details of statecraft, from taxation to the finer points of siege warfare.

Basil II
b.958-d.1025
976-1025
Known as 'the Porphyrogenitus' (Born in the Purple), Basil II may have been born to rule but he had to fight to secure his throne – and expand it – earning him a less poetic sobriquet: the Bulgar-Slayer.

Indeed, the only likeness to the man he approached for help was in their common mastery of horse riding. For, with the rebels entrenched around Constantinople, Basil sent word to Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev, asking for him to honour the pledge his father had made to the emperors of Byzantium and come to his aid.

Two more dissimilar rulers it would be hard to imagine. Where Basil was abstemious, Vladimir was notorious for his sexual appetite, keeping four wives and 800 concubines while still cutting a swathe through the wives and daughters of his kingdom.

So it was a bit of a shock, although perhaps not a surprise, when Vladimir replied to Basil saying that the price of his support would be Basil's sister, Anna, in marriage. What made the proposal even worse was that Vladimir was a pagan, and an enthusiastic one to boot. Never before had a princess of the imperial family married a barbarian; even the greatest kings of western Europe, up to and including Charlemagne, had been summarily rebuffed when they had intimated a willingness to marry into the imperial family. For the emperors of Byzantium saw themselves as the descendants of the emperors of Rome and, indeed, the empire's chroniclers always refer to Byzantium as Rome. Thus any European king, descendants of barbarians all, would seem a complete mismatch from the perspective of emperors who had been civilised when the marriage suitor's ancestors were still worshipping sticks and stones and picking nits from their beards. To entertain the possibility of Anna marrying a pagan warlord was surely beyond the pale.

> "However, despite all precedent, Basil was willing to lay down his sister for the sake of the empire – and his own continued rule"

However, despite all precedent, Basil was willing to lay down his sister for the sake of the empire – and his own continued rule. He replied to Vladimir that he would betroth Anna to him, on condition that he become a Christian. For his part, Vladimir also considered himself bound by the oath his father had given to the previous emperor, John Tzimisces, to come to the emperor's aid when called; Vladimir would dispatch a force of 6,000 fully armed Varangians as soon as possible.

As for converting to Christianity, it seemed that Vladimir had been mulling over that possibility himself. In the earlier part of his reign, Vladimir had attempted to impose Slavic paganism on his people, and he erected

BELOW *The coronation of Basil II in the 12th century, Madrid Skylitzes*

RIGHT A reproduction of the damaged fresco of Basil II

statues and shrines to the gods in Kiev. According to the Primary Chronicle (compiled in 1113), the worship of these gods included human sacrifice and other sources suggest this could well have been true. But Vladimir's own grandmother had embraced Christianity and the Grand Prince, during the course of his military campaigns, became interested in the competing claims of the various religions he encountered. For, as his power grew, representatives of those religions came to his court seeking his conversion. Muslim Bulgars, no doubt aware of Vladimir's reputation, promised him an afterlife where all his carnal desires would be fulfilled, but at the price of circumcision and abstinence from pork and wine. Vladimir found the first part of the deal desirable but, as for the latter, he said, "Drinking is the joy of the Rus. We cannot exist without that pleasure."

With all these faiths seeking his conversion and that of his people, Vladimir decided to send out embassies to learn for himself which was best. So he sent ten men with instructions to go, observe and report on these contending faiths. On their return, the envoys told Vladimir and his boyars that, so far as the Bulgars were concerned, they had found no happiness but "only sorrow and a dreadful stench." Visiting the churches of German Catholics, they attended many services but "beheld no glory there." However, when they went to Constantinople and attended divine liturgy at the Church of Hagia Sophia, "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on Earth. For on Earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men."

Vikings in the East

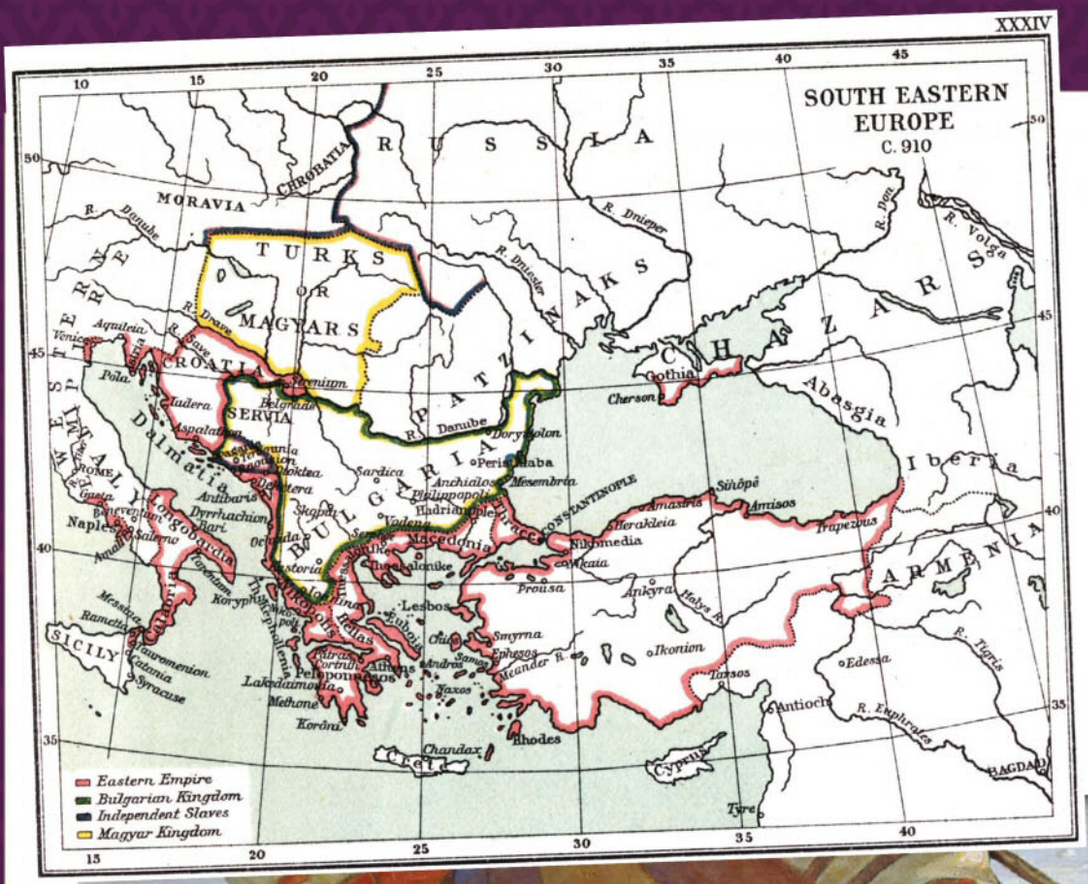
How Vikings became the first kings of Russia

Almost everything we know of the early history of Russian and Ukrainian people comes from the *Primary Chronicle – Tale Of Bygone Years* in its original title – by the monk, Nestor. While scholars now think other authors contributed to the chronicle, the *Primary Chronicle* remains our primary source. In it, Nestor tells how the tribes of Slavs around Novgorod were in a constant state of warfare with each other. They had already had contact with Vikings who, using the rivers as highways for their longboats, had penetrated deep into the interior of this thickly forested land.

Vikings usually made first contact as traders then, if sufficient wealth was uncovered, they returned as raiders and, sometimes, conquerors. But the Slavic tribes along the River Volkhov – a river significant for being the only major river reaching deep into the interior that flows north to the Baltic Sea rather than south to the Black Sea – united and expelled these raiders, only to fall into a state of anarchy. With no one tribe able to gain mastery – and thus everyone reduced to the state of primal warfare, the war of all against all, described in Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* – the tribes sent an embassy overseas to the Varangian Rus and invited them to take the rulership of the tribes. The Varangian Rus were probably Swedish Vikings and, for a people invested in gold and glory, the answer was a no brainer: three brothers, with their families and retainers, set off, rowing down the long rivers that provided the highways of ancient Russia and, arriving, bestowed on this land their name: the Rus.

The chief of these brothers was named Rurik, and he set up his base first in Ladoga before moving to Novgorod, near the source of the River Volkov. With his brothers conveniently dying, Rurik dispatched an expedition south, to Constantinople, a city of legendary wealth. On its way, the expedition (which travelled by boat, portaging the vessels where necessary) conquered Kiev, before launching an attack on Constantinople. The attack, which took place sometime between 860 and 866, was the first recorded contact between the Byzantine Empire and the Varangian Rus and, for the Byzantines, it was an unpleasant introduction to their new northern neighbours, for the Vikings devastated the area around the great city. The dynasty Rurik founded would go on to become the first tsars of Russia, enduring until 1598.

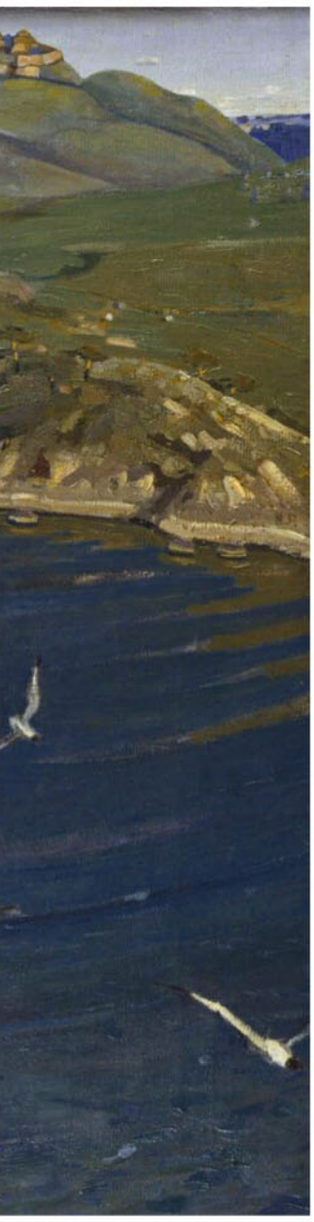
The invitation to Rurik and his brothers to become the princes of the Slavic tribes



"We knew not whether we were in heaven or on Earth. For on Earth there was no such splendour or such beauty and we are at a loss how to describe it"

FAR LEFT A 1903-map showing the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) in the decades before Basil II's birth. The Rus lived in the area anachronistically marked 'Russia'

BELOW Guests From Overseas *by Nicholas Roerich, 1901. For the Rus, the rivers Don, Dnieper and Volga were not barriers but highways into the interior of the great land to the south*



This was convenient for Vladimir politically as well as religiously, for an alliance with the Byzantine Empire would afford him the sort of prestige that none of the other religions could provide. But, for a Grand Prince on the make, only a marriage into the imperial family would provide sufficient grounds for bringing his people over to this new religion.

It was therefore timely for all concerned that Vladimir's interest in Orthodox Christianity should coincide with Basil's sudden need for urgent reinforcements. The reputation of the Varangians as the fiercest of warriors was already well known: indeed, a treaty signed in 911 between the Empire and the Rus had specified that warriors from the Rus were entitled to be enlisted in the service of the empire, "…at whatsoever time they come, and whatsoever their number." Detachments of mercenary Varangians, mindful of the great wealth of Byzantium, had steadily made their way south, sailing down the rivers Dnieper and Don into the Black Sea and on to the city they called Miklagard, the great city. There they had served the emperors of Byzantium in their campaigns.

ABOVE *Coin showing Basil II with his brother, Constantine, who ruled alongside him in name but who was more than willing to let his brother get on with the job of running the empire*

But now Basil urgently needed help. He persuaded his sister that, for the good of the empire and her brother, she should accept the marriage to Vladimir, while for his part Vladimir sent word that he would accept baptism in return for Anna's hand. The deal agreed, Basil settled down behind the walls of Constantinople to wait.

Unfortunately, Vladimir decided to leave the emperor dangling. Basil waited a year. The loyalty of the Imperial Navy preserved his throne during that year, for their constant patrolling of the straits of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and the Sea of Marmara, prevented the armies of Bardas Phokas crossing. But without the promised Varangians, Basil knew that he did not have the men to confront Bardas Phokas on land. Finally, as the year drew down to its darkest, lookouts spotted the sails of a great fleet making its way across the Black Sea towards the great city. Vladimir had kept his word. The Varangians had come.

With 6,000 Viking warriors now at his disposal, Basil made swift plans. On a dark night in late February, Basil led his Varangians across the Bosphorus, their oarlocks greased so that they made no sound, while the experienced rowers cut silently into the black water. Landing, they crept through the darkness to the site of the camp of the besieging army and waited for first light.

When it came, Basil unleashed his Varangians while, from the water, ships of the Imperial Navy hurled Greek fire upon the unsuspecting rebels. Battle swiftly became massacre, with few escaping.

But the leader of the rebels, Bardas Phokas, was not among the dead. Having been visiting his reserves, when news reached him of the disaster that had afflicted one of his armies, he set off with the reserves to his other army, camped on the shores of the Hellespont. If he could capture one of the ports on the Hellespont, he would be able to gather sufficient vessels to transport his army across the strait and come to Constantinople from the south east.

But the port of Abydos put up a stout resistance, and the Imperial Navy maintained its patrols, preventing any crossing of the Hellespont. Meanwhile, Basil made his preparations and in mid-March, he set off with the Varangians at his side.

Landing on the eastern shore of the Hellespont, Basil and his Varangians confronted Bardas Phokas and his army, which was drawn from the best troops of Anatolia. For a few days, the two armies manoeuvred, seeking to gain an advantageous position on the plain that stretches east from Abydos.

Finally, at first light on 13 April 989, Basil ordered his men to attack. The first onslaught, led by his gigantic Varangians, scattered the rebel army. But Bardas Phokas rallied his forces and regrouped. Having fought for the imperial throne for so long and so hard, he would not allow his men to rout.

But then something extraordinary happened.

As Bardas Phokas urged on his men, he saw, across the gap that had opened up between the two armies, Basil on horseback, calling his Varangians to even greater feats of arms. Seeing the emperor, Bardas Phokas called for his horse. Mounting it, and despite the best efforts of his own men to stop him, the rebel general turned the animal towards the enemy lines and spurred it into a gallop. Bardas Phokas rode, alone, directly at Basil, his sword pointing at the emperor.

The two armies watched, astonished, as the great struggle for the crown drew down to single combat between the emperor and the general. For Basil did not turn back among his bodyguards but waited in front of his men with his sword in one hand and, in the other, an icon of the Blessed Virgin that was known for its miraculous powers.

It all came down to this.

As Bardas Phokas galloped closer, a faint seemed to pass over him. The reins fell from his hands and, no longer feeling its rider urging it on, his horse slowed then stopped. Slowly, Bardas Phokas toppled from his saddle and lay still on the earth. The general who would have been emperor was dead, and no wound marked him.

Contemporary chroniclers ascribed the death of Bardas Phokas to slow-acting poison, illness or the

Blood gifts to the gods

Why Anna did not want to marry Vladimir

The 10th-century Arab traveller Ibn Fadlan left a graphic description of just why Anna thought it would be better to die than marry a prince of the Rus. He wrote about his encounter with the Vikings who traded along the River Volga, who according to Fadlan, were the most "perfect physical specimens" he'd ever seen, so at least Anna could look forward to a handsome husband. But it is in Fadlan's account of the ritual surrounding the death of a chieftain that we see why the Byzantine princess was so reluctant to marry.

The traveller had heard of a death ritual and wanted to see one for himself, so when one of the chiefs of the Volga Vikings died he asked to be present for the funeral.

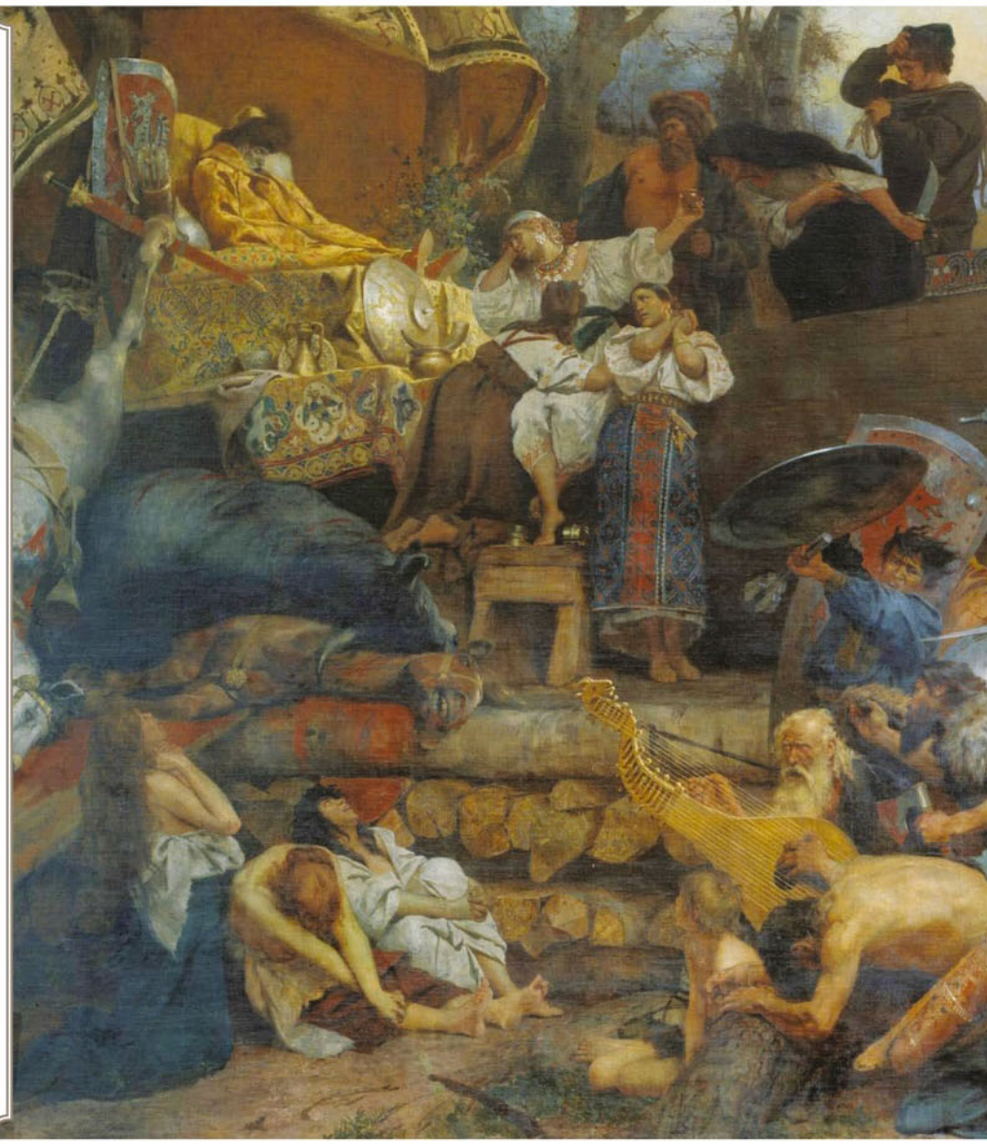
The dead man was buried for ten days before being exhumed, where the cold had made the skin turn black. While the body lay in the ground, the man's slave girls were asked who would accompany him into the next world. One said that she would and during the ten days of preparation, the girl disported herself with the best food, drink and pleasure.

On the day of death, the exhumed chief was placed in his ship, which had been pulled onto the river bank. The chief was laid out among his weapons and goods by an old woman called the Angel of Death. While animals were sacrificed, the slave girl went to the tents of the chieftain's men and had sex with them. Then, coming to a newly fashioned portal, the men lifted the girl up three times. Ibn Fadlan was told that the girl then saw into the next world, seeing her dead relatives and master waiting for her.

The slave girl was then given intoxicating drinks and sang farewell to her companions, before the Angel of Death led her to where her dead master lay. As the rest of the chieftain's companions beat their shields, six men entered and had sex with the slave girl. Then, laying beside her dead owner, four men held her hands and feet while the Angel of Death looped a rope around her neck and gave it to the other two men. Finally, the Angel of Death stabbed the slave girl while the men holding the rope strangled her.

Once the girl was dead, the chieftain's relatives and all his men, each holding a burning brand, set fire to the ship and consigned the chieftain and his slave girl to the flames.

It's no wonder that Anna was less than enthusiastic.



intercession of the same Mary whose image Basil carried. Contemporary historians have suggested that a sudden stroke, brought about by the stress and exertions of the battle, might have carried off the general.

Whatever the cause, with its leader dead, his army routed. To Basil's Varangians, this was the chance to help themselves to the spoils of battle, and they fell on the panicking men, slaughtering and despoiling them.

The Varangians had proved their worth. Now Basil had to keep his side of the bargain.

Not surprisingly, Anna was none too keen on heading off to a new life among the Varangians, and her departure was delayed. For his part, Vladimir decided to hurry matters along by seizing a key imperial outpost on the north coast of the Black Sea. With 6,000 Varangians still barracked in Constantinople, and having seen for himself how formidable they were in battle, Basil decided that Anna could delay no longer.

> "Vladimir returned to Kiev a changed man and put aside his 800 concubines and the wives"

Despite her tears – 'better were it for me to die here' – Anna was embarked, with attendant ladies and priests, for the voyage across the Black Sea to her new husband.

Vladimir was waiting for Anna at the imperial outpost that he had taken from the empire. The Grand Prince was then baptised and promptly married to the imperial Princess Anna.

Marriage made, Vladimir returned the outpost to the empire, before sailing back up the River Dnieper to his capital of Kiev.

Vladimir returned to Kiev a changed man and he put aside the 800 concubines and the four wives. Then,

BELOW A pair of 10th century drinking horns found in a burial mound in Chernihiv, in what is now Ukraine, offer a glimpse into the world of the Varangians

A depiction of the ritual sacrifices described by the Arab traveller Ibn Fadlan when he met the Volga Vikings

with his boyars beside him, he pulled down the idol of Perun, dragged it through the mud and threw it into the River Dnieper, ordering that if it came back to shore it should be pushed into the river again until it went over the falls. With Vladimir as its sponsor – he was never an easy man to say no to – Christianity became established among the Rus. And due to the king's marriage into the imperial family, and the golden light of the Hagia Sophia, it was a Christianity that saw the Orthodox Christianity of Constantinople as its guiding star.

As for Basil, a decade of fighting rebels had taught him the value of having a bodyguard that stood outside the politics and rivalries of the noble families of the empire, and Vladimir's contingent of Varangians had provided the perfect solution. Utterly loyal to the emperor, the Varangian Guard became his personal guards and, where necessary, shock troops, defending Basil and his successors to the death. Although initially composed largely of men of Norse stock, after 1066, increasing numbers of exiled Anglo-Saxon warriors sought service with the Emperor of Byzantium so that it became as much an English as a Scandinavian institution. Indeed, 'axe-bearing warriors of British race' are recorded as late as 1404. After that, the Varangians disappear from the historical record.

ABOVE Baptism Of Saint Prince Vladimir *by Viktor Vasnetsov, 1890. One of the most fateful baptisms in European history. Vladimir's conversion to Christianity put Russia on the path to becoming 'Holy Russia', a land of saints and martyrs*

Whether the last descendants of these fierce warriors made their stand in the final defence of Constantinople in 1453, we do not know. But it would be no surprise if Varangians, wielding their axes, stood alongside the emperor in the final desperate days and then died alongside him, blood guard unto death.

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A Swedish Enigma

A queen who laid aside her crown out of religious principles, a cultured adventuress, determined to be her own woman, or just irresponsible?

Words DEREK WILSON

Christina Alexandra of the House of Vasa was a phenomenon without compare, certainly in the 17th century and, arguably, in any age. If we are to begin to understand her we need to know something of her background and origins. The founder of the Vasa dynasty and, indeed, of modern Sweden, was Gustav I. It was Gustav who won independence from Denmark, established the Vasas as a hereditary dynasty, carried through sweeping economic and social reforms, provided Sweden with a modern standing army, and became a major player in Baltic affairs. He also introduced the Reformation to Sweden. At about the same time that Henry VIII in England was breaking ties with Rome and confiscating church property, Gustav was doing the same. But he went even further by embracing Lutheran theology.

Gustav was succeeded by his eldest son, Eric, who was mad, provoked a noble rebellion and died in a prison cell. Under Gustav's second son, who now inherited as John III, Sweden experienced a religious see-saw, not unlike that which appeared in England during the reigns of Henry VIII's children. John's wife belonged to the Catholic ruling family of Poland-Lithuania and, under her influence, John, as one contemporary complained, "causeth many superstitions and popish ceremonies to be reared into the church."

The situation became even more difficult when his son, Sigismund, who had already been elected King of Poland-Lithuania, succeeded him in 1592. Sigismund allowed his younger brother Charles to act as regent while he was in Poland, but the two siblings were poles apart over the religious issue and the result was a civil war, which ended with Sigismund being deposed. The king was defeated in battle in 1598 and effectively ceased to rule, though Charles was not proclaimed king until

Christina of Sweden
b.1626-d.1689
1632-1654
A diva throughout her life and a lover of the arts, Christina caused scandal with her conversion to Catholicism, her refusal to marry, and her close relationships with men.

1604. When he died, seven years later, he handed on to his son a land that was irrevocably Protestant.

The new king, Gustav II, better known to history as Gustavus Adolphus, was a hero in the mould of his grandfather. He became king at the age of 17 and spent most of his life on military campaign. Dubbed by devoted followers as the 'Lion of the North', he had already fought successful campaigns against Denmark and Russia before embarking on his most famous enterprise in 1630. This was his intervention in the politico-religious conflict known as the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). This most devastating confrontation of France, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic and most of the smaller states of Europe was a series of brutal encounters, which had resulted in no conclusion after 22 years. That was when Gustavus brought his well-disciplined army to the aid of the Protestant forces plus France to confront the Habsburg Empire. He won three decisive battles, but was killed at the Battle of Lützen in 1632. Christina, his only child, was now Queen of Sweden. She had not yet reached her sixth birthday.

Gustavus had made excellent provision for the peaceful transfer of power to his daughter. He provided her with tutors who were instructed to ensure that she received the same education as a prince. He made parliament swear an oath to support her. He arranged for her to share lessons with her cousin, Charles (four years her senior), who was next in line to the throne, probably with the intention that they would marry. Christina responded enthusiastically to her schooling. She had a lively mind and a voracious appetite for books on many subjects. She mastered the classics and spoke several modern languages. In the work of government she had a remarkably able tutor. The most precious gift Gustavus left his daughter was the Lord High Chancellor who had served him diligently for many years. Axel Oxenstierna was hailed by contemporaries as "an inexhaustible source of fine advice" and even as "the greatest man of the century." Christina did not lack sage counsel as she faced the challenge of being a woman in a man's world. But would she heed it?

The first major political answer to that question came in 1645. The leading combatants in the Thirty Years' War, having fought themselves to a standstill, gathered to solve their differences by negotiation. Oxenstierna, who believed that Sweden would gain from a continuation of the war, sent his son to lead the national delegation. But Christina sent her own agent with instructions to achieve peace at any price. Oxenstierna grumbled that Sweden's gains under the eventual treaty in 1648 would have been greater if he had been allowed to pursue a more robust policy. By this time Christina had replaced Oxenstierna as principal adviser with Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, a man whose talents lay more in enhancing the splendour of monarchy than in administration. In 1649 the queen caused even greater consternation when she declared formally that she had no intention of marrying and that she was nominating Charles as her heir. She had an emotional repugnance for the physical aspects of married life and had studied Catholic teaching on celibacy, which strongly appealed to her. Christina was now fully in command and her coronation was held in 1650. What kind of a ruler had she decided to be?

A relaxed portrait of the queen painted by Sebastien Bourdon

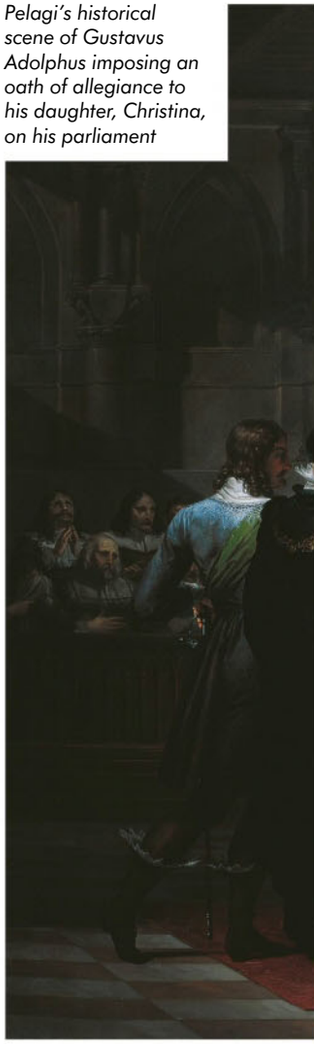
> "This strong-willed 'tomboy' was also vain and frivolous, spending lavishly on works of art, books and manuscripts"

The question is not easy to answer and her behaviour certainly puzzled many contemporary observers. She had read histories of previous queens and was a great admirer of Elizabeth I. Yet, unlike the English queen, she did not rely on femininity to achieve her ends. She often wore male attire and even when dressed in clothes appropriate to her sex she declined to fuss over 'fripperies'. At one time a ballet troupe was brought to the court, one of whose tasks was to teach the queen elegant deportment. Oxenstierna proudly remarked of the teenage Christina, "she is not at all like a female." Yet this strong-willed 'tomboy' was also vain and frivolous, spending lavishly on works of art, books, manuscripts, scientific instruments, music, drama and anything else that took her fancy.

If she had a vision for her country it was to make Sweden a 'modern' nation, the cultural equal of Holland, France, Italy and other states experiencing the artistic and scientific revolutions of the 17th century. In the fashionable salons of Europe, Sweden was regarded as a cold, backward country inhabited by rude, unsophisticated people. Christina was passionate about presiding over a court rivalling any in Paris, Vienna, London or Rome. There were few scholars in Sweden who could satisfy the young woman's thirst for knowledge. As soon as she had full access to the treasury she sent agents to scour Europe for the latest scholarly treatises and to entice leading thinkers to her court. This was an age of religious debate. Philosophers, theologians, mystics and scientists were freely discussing the existence of God, the nature of the universe and the traditional dogmas of Catholic and Protestant churches.

Thinkers of the stature of René Descartes, Blaise Pascal, Baruch Spinoza, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and, later, Gottfried Leibnitz and Isaac Newton, were

Pelagi's historical scene of Gustavus Adolphus imposing an oath of allegiance to his daughter, Christina, on his parliament



The Tre Kronor castle, where Christina grew up and lived during her reign as queen

Death of a philosopher

A private tutor to Christina and an intellectual celebrity, was Descartes' death due to a terrible cold or an act of murder?

René Descartes (1596-1650) was the first of the great rationalist philosophers of the 17th century. He believed totally in the ability of the human mind to unlock the secrets of the workings of the universe and humanity's place within it. But he went further: "I resolved never to accept anything as true if I did not have evident knowledge of its truth." So much for religious revelation and church dogma.

Descartes was an intellectual celebrity of his time, which meant that Christina was eager to add him to her collection of leading thinkers. However, as someone who wanted to know how to believe in God while being at odds with God's Church, she had a genuine interest in Descartes' philosophy.

Significantly, the queen was particularly interested in his latest book, *The Passions Of The Soul*, which explored rational control of the human emotions. She invited him to Sweden to establish a scientific academy and to become her private tutor.

He arrived, reluctantly, in 1649 and lessons with the queen began at the end of the year, in the depth of the northern winter. Christina treated her famous guest with her usual high-handedness, declaring that she only had time to receive him three times a week at 5am. This was a particular hardship for Descartes who was not accustomed to rising from his bed until midday. This and the climate rapidly took their toll on his health.

On 1 February 1650, Descartes caught a cold, which grew rapidly worse. Just two weeks later he died of pneumonia. Or did he? Recent research has suggested that Descartes might have been poisoned by a Catholic priest who feared that the philosopher's influence over the queen might deflect Christina from her Romeward tendencies.

> "The free-thinking queen was impatient with the stubborn conservatism of clergy"

among the giants of intellectual debate. Their agenda was wide, embracing Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), astrology and alchemy in the pursuit of truth. These were the kind of debates that excited Christina. For example, when she heard of an 'underground' manuscript circulating clandestinely, called *A Treatise Of The Three Imposters*, she had to have a copy. This inflammatory text denounced the teaching of Moses, Mohammad and Jesus – certainly not suitable bedside reading for Christian rulers.

For academics to engage in such speculation was one thing. For reigning monarchs to be influenced by them was quite another. They were not free to believe and practise the religions of their choice – or, at least, not without consequences. By the second half of the 17th century, state religions had become fixed. Nations were officially Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist or Anglican and rulers were constitutionally bound to support their national churches. For example, when, in 1714 Queen Anne of England died childless, the crown passed to her nearest Protestant heir, even though 56 of her relatives (all Catholics) had prior hereditary claims.

As far as we can tell, it may have been orthodox Lutheran intransigence that began Christina's move away from the religion her father had died for at Lützen. In the 1540s Swedish church authorities were divided into two camps, the moderates and the hard-liners, who argued strenuously over issues of doctrine and liturgy. The free-thinking queen was impatient with the stubborn conservatism of clergy who were deaf to calls for further reform. She also found the censoriousness of the Lutheran top brass to her extravagant lifestyle not to her taste. Her mind turned towards Catholicism and, in 1650, she sent a secret message to Rome by the hand of the Portuguese ambassador, mentioning the possibility of conversion. The result was the arrival of a delegation led by the Jesuit scholar, Paolo Casati.

It is important to understand the background of Christina's change of religion. She had been brought up in an atmosphere of aggressive Lutheranism, knowing that it was her duty to be true to her father's legacy as a champion of the reformed faith. A major part of her responsibility was to marry in order to secure the dynasty and the Protestant succession. But intellectually she was not wedded to Sweden's official religion: her wide reading had left her with doubts about Lutheran dogma – and, perhaps, about all religious dogma. While the philosopher in her questioned several aspects of belief, the queen in her was expected to endorse theological

Philosopher René Descartes explains his ideas to the scholarly queen c.1650

certainties. Not only that; she was expected to set a sober moral example. The freedoms she had enjoyed as a high-spirited child and teenager were diminishing. She was now a young woman in her prime – and still high-spirited. But was she also homosexual?

There is no doubting her masculine demeanour and, in later life, she had at least one intensely close relationship with another woman. But she also scandalised her people by indulging in a series of erotic adventures with various male favourites, on whom she bestowed extravagant proofs of her affection. Bearing in mind her aversion to childbirth, it is probable that she never allowed any amour to go too far.

Whatever the truth of Christina's sexuality, it was yet another aspect of her life which piled on the pressure. In 1651 she had a nervous breakdown. She became unstable in judgement. This was demonstrated dramatically in the case of Arnold Messenius, a spy, troublemaker and intriguer who had spent years in jail, who was released by the queen and raised to high rank. His way of repaying his benefactress was to call her 'Jezebel' and spread risqué stories about her. Christina 'flipped'. In a fit of

A portrait of Christina by Sebastien Bourdon. The painting now hangs in the Prado Museum, Spain

rage she demanded Messenius' immediate execution – and that of his 17-year-old son. Not long after this the queen dismissed her long-term favourite, Magnus De la Gardie and exiled him. Messenius, undoubtedly, deserved his fate but he and De la Gardie were drawing attention to widely held criticisms that were damaging the crown.

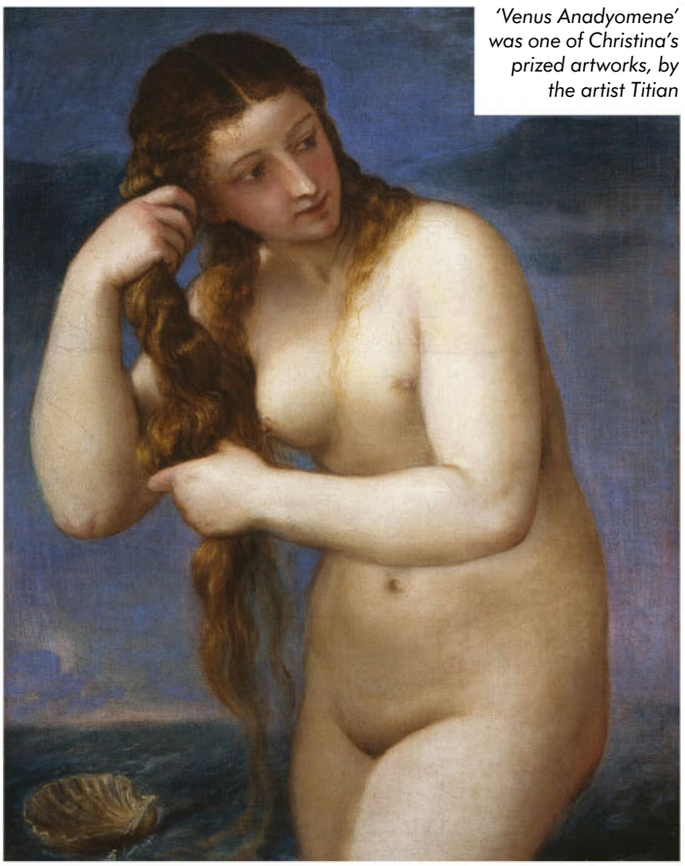
News of an unconventional French doctor/philosopher, Pierre Bourdelot, reached Stockholm and Christina sent for him to try his skills on her. Those 'skills' included exposing his patient to erotic literature. Bourdelot was a libertine who followed the hedonistic principle of François Rabelais, "fais ce que voudras" ("do as you please"). Confronted by the depressed and exhausted young queen, he ignored such conventional medical treatments as bleeding and advised her to relax and enjoy herself, casting all restraints aside. He may have been simply telling Christina what she wanted to hear and he certainly left for France laden with gifts from his grateful patient. His 'medical advice' released the tension in Christina's life. She would do what she had long contemplated but feared to put into action. She packed up her treasures and had them despatched to Antwerp and, in February 1654, she informed her council of her decision to abdicate in favour of her cousin.

Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, the Swedish diplomat who thrived under Christina's rule

By mid-June she had departed at the head of a cavalcade of carriages and wagons and over 250 attendants, having arranged a suitable financial package to enable her to live comfortably in exile. She made no mention of her intentions to convert, in case that affected the negotiations. Not until she reached Antwerp did she become a Catholic in a ceremony on 24 December, an event that was kept secret for almost another year.

But how deep-felt was her conversion? For the remainder of her long life she was no more a devout Catholic than she had previously been a good Lutheran. Attending her first communion, she joked

> "Catholics were as scandalised by her behaviour as Swedish Lutherans had been"



'Venus Anadyomene' was one of Christina's prized artworks, by the artist Titian

The great collector

Christina developed an exquisite and unrivalled collection of art and literature

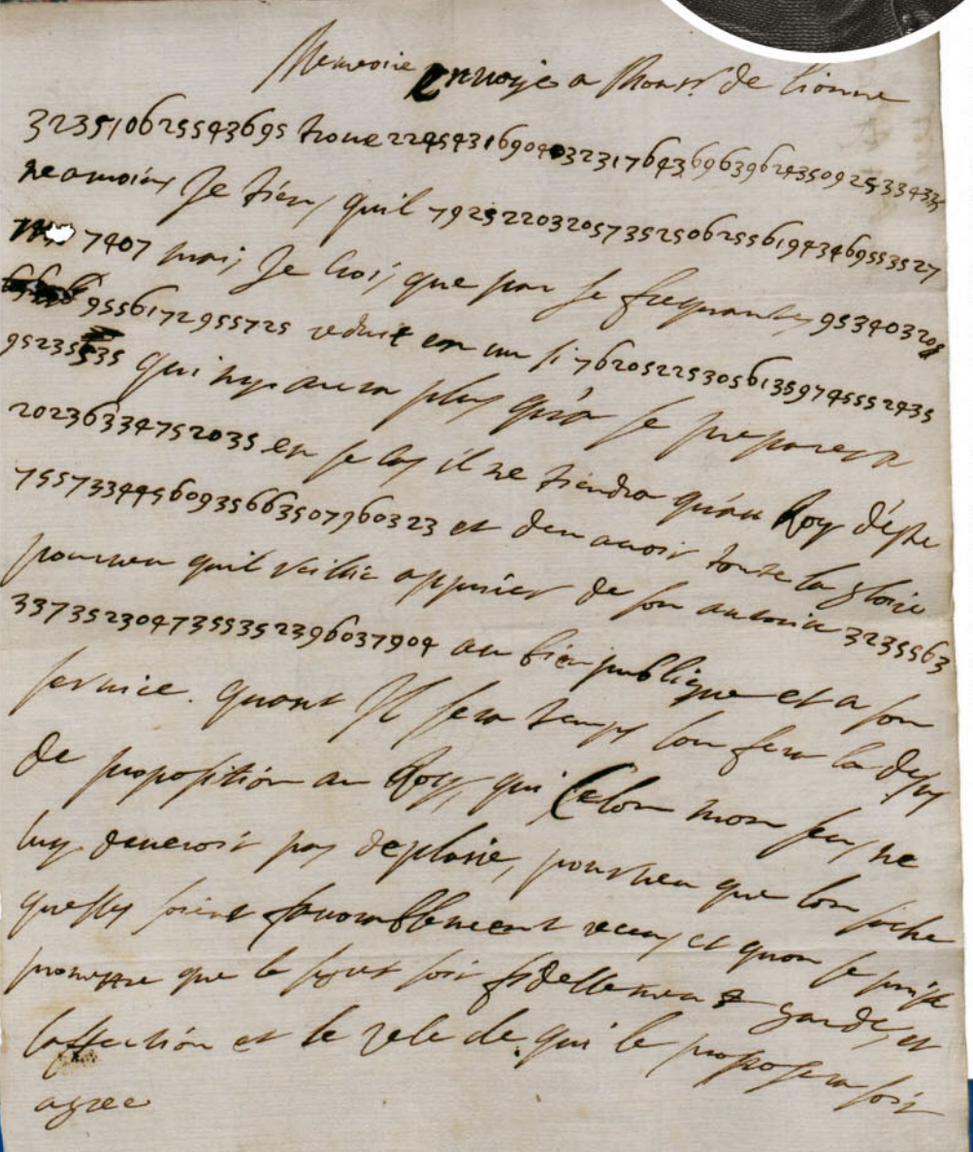
Christina amassed the biggest and best art collection in Rome but its foundation had begun years before. During the Thirty Years' War, Swedish armies had plundered several great European palaces. From Prague alone, 472 artworks were despatched to Stockholm, where the queen built a new wing to house them. She was soon adding other items acquired by agents on her behalf – and developing her own taste. She wrote to one of her agents: "Here there are Dürers and other German masters whose names I do not know, which anyone but me would greatly admire [but] I would give them all for a pair of pictures by Raphael." It was art of the sunny South that appealed to her, particularly that of the Venetian school. When she abdicated she took her 40 favourite artworks with her.

Once settled in Rome she set about filling galleries at her villa with paintings, tapestries, books, manuscripts and classical statuary. She missed no opportunity to buy. Jewellery came from England when Charles I's treasures were dispersed. A Raphael altarpiece came from a cash-strapped nunnery. Christina loved portraits but it was the Venetian masters, such as Titian and Tintoretto, that touched her most. Her collection of Veroneses was the best ever assembled by anyone at any time, anywhere. It is no surprise that she possessed very few religious works.

about the doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that the bread and wine blessed by the priest was transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ). This she considered to be philosophical nonsense.

Certainly, the ethos of her chosen church was more attractive than that of straight-laced Protestantism. She enjoyed the externals of Baroque Catholicism – the paintings, architecture, sculpture and music. But Christina's morals showed no reformation. Devout Catholics were as scandalised by her behaviour as Swedish Lutherans had been. In all probability, what she loved above all else was freedom. In her travels through Europe she was in her element – being fêted by kings, debating with great thinkers, and visiting the cultural centres that were on the itinerary of many young noblemen making the 'grand tour'. As Christina's biographer puts it, the Roman church appealed to her as, "it was, after all, in Rome."

Ironically, escape from Sweden and the burdens of office did not give her the total freedom she craved. As a private person, she was no longer protected by royal privilege. This she found difficult to accept. She was, for example, genuinely surprised when a petulant action while a guest in a foreign court aroused protest. What was the event? She ordered the summary execution of a servant who had displeased her. Even in Stockholm the punishment of the Messeniuses had been carried out



LEFT Christina attended a banquet with Pope Clement IX after her conversion

INSET Cardinal Decio Azzolino and Christina were very close

BOTTOM One of the letters written by Queen Christina of Sweden to Cardinal Decio Azzolino between 1666 and 1668

with a semblance of legal sanction. Christina made a leisurely progress to Rome where she was rapturously received by Pope Alexander VII, a fellow scholar and connoisseur. She took up residence in a wing of the Vatican placed at her disposal. Her conversion was considered a great Catholic coup and was marked by banquets, theatrical performances, firework displays and other celebrations that went on for more than a month. She made Rome her principal residence for the rest of her life, eventually settling in the Palazzo Corsini in Trastevere, an imposing Renaissance residence designed by Donato Bramante, the architect who designed St Peter's Basilica. This became one of the leading foci of Rome's social life and one of its tourist attractions. Christina established a literary salon, which later developed into the Arcadian Academy and had a long, honourable history. Here, Rome's cognoscenti and visitors came to enjoy music, poetry and learned debate. She set up the city's first public theatre, she threw lavish parties, and she extended her patronage to young scholars and artists.

But her relationship with the Vatican was strained. After her tumultuous welcome it took little time for the gilt to wear off the gingerbread. Pope Alexander was scandalised by Christina's eccentric and morally dubious behaviour and refused to receive her. He suspected that her relationship with Cardinal Decio Azzolino, who looked after her finances, was more than friendship and described her as "a queen without a realm, a Christian without faith and a woman without shame." She got on better with his successor, Clement IX, but the next Pope, Innocent XI, regarded her as a danger to public morals and closed down the theatre that she had started. Christina was too much of a free thinker to be a supporter of any church. When she learned, in 1685, that Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes, which granted a measure of toleration to French Protestants, she complained strongly to the Pope.

Christina Vasa was a diva. She did her own thing, enjoyed shocking people and thrived on notoriety. She got away (literally) with murder, excusing herself, with a shrug, as a 'wild northerner'. She was governed by no clear moral code and any principles she had tended to be made up as she went along. She even made a couple of half-hearted attempts to reclaim the Swedish crown. No church could have endorsed her as a devout adherent. Yet, on her death, in 1689, her funeral was conducted with elaborate public ritual and she was buried in St Peter's Basilica, one of only three women to be accorded this honour.

Further reading

- V Buckley, *Christina, Queen Of Sweden – The Restless Life Of A European Eccentric*, Fourth Estate 2004
- J Lacombe, *The History Of Christina, Queen Of Sweden*, Adament 2000

Royal Gallery

Unknown

Allegory Of Queen Christina's Submission To The Catholic Church And Pope Alexander VII

Often attributed to Italian artist Angelo Trevisani, the *Allegory Of Queen Christina's Submission To The Catholic Church And Pope Alexander VII* depicts a scene of the Swedish queen, having been accepted into Rome by Pope Alexander VII, kneeling at his feet in St Peter's Basilica. The painting is in the State Portrait Collection of Sweden's Nationalmuseum.

Victoria's Secret

Through the 19th and 20th centuries, European royal families were blighted by haemophilia, but what led to its rampant spread?

Words CATHERINE CURZON

Few medical conditions enjoy the rich royal pedigree associated with haemophilia. It became so rife in the palaces of European royalty throughout the 19th and early 20th century that it even acquired the nickname, 'the royal disease'. From the United Kingdom to Russia and beyond, the disorder cut a deadly dash through Europe. But what is haemophilia, how did it enter the royal bloodlines, and what part did the legendary Queen Victoria play in its spread through her fellow monarchs and their offspring?

Haemophilia is a genetic condition, usually inherited, that affects blood's ability to clot. This means that injuries take longer to heal and the risk of serious complications from apparently insignificant wounds is greatly increased. Minor bumps and grazes can lead to serious bruising and bleeding of a severity that seems disproportionate to the size of the wound inflicted, while the dangers posed by internal injuries and haemorrhaging are much greater than in someone without the condition. Although females carry and transmit haemophilia to their children, they are extremely unlikely to ever suffer from the disorder themselves. Males who carry the gene, however, can expect to suffer from all manner of unpleasant symptoms. Those who live with haemophilia can

Franz Xaver Winterhalter's 1846 family portrait of Victoria, Albert and their first five children. Princess Alice, gazing at her sister Victoria while she leans over baby Helena, was a carrier of haemophilia

Victoria and Albert with their children. Alice (first left) and Beatrice (fourth right) carried haemophilia, while Leopold (fifth left) died as a result of it

experience spontaneous attacks of internal bleeding, known as "bleeds" and while these can be managed to some degree by modern medicine, in centuries past, a diagnosis of haemophilia could be a death sentence.

The very first documented instance of haemophilia in the royal family of Great Britain occurred in Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, the eighth child and fourth son born to Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. This wasn't an isolated case, and two of Victoria's daughters, Princess Alice and Princess Beatrice, were later proved to be carriers who passed the condition to their own offspring. It was the start of a long chain of tragedy.

Prince Leopold passed the disease to his two children

Leopold was frail from the moment of his birth and, when he was diagnosed with haemophilia in infancy, his mother became determined to shield him from any possible risk of injury. Though he could be wrapped in cotton wool during childhood, Victoria had to let him go one day and, when he was a young man, he married Princess Helena of Waldeck and Pyrmont. Together the couple had two children, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, who was a carrier of haemophilia, and Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, who was unaffected. Alice's own son also suffered from haemophilia and he died in a car wreck at the age of just 20, falling victim to a haemorrhage as a result of his condition.

In fact, Victoria was right to be concerned for Leopold and his death did indeed come as a result of his haemophilia. When he was just 30 years old he fell and hit his head. The injury resulted in a fatal cerebral haemorrhage that claimed his life. Although Leopold was the first of Victoria's descendants to fall victim to haemophilia, he was by no means to be the last. Thanks to the illustrious marriages of those daughters who were carriers, the disorder was soon finding its deadly way into the palaces of Europe.

Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's youngest child, was married to Prince Henry of Battenberg, a union of love rather than duty. The couple's youngest son, Lord Leopold Mountbatten, died unmarried as a result of haemophiliac complications from what should have been a minor operation on his hip. Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg, Beatrice's daughter, was a carrier of haemophilia and when she married Alfonso XIII of Spain, the deadly disorder made its first documented appearance in the ruling House of Bourbon.

Victoria Eugenie gave birth to six children and two of these, Infante Gonzalo of Spain and Alfonso, Prince of Asturias, were diagnosed with haemophilia. Desperate to keep them from injury, the royal household kept the two boys cosseted at home for as long as they possibly could. Just as Victoria had found, however, you cannot keep a child under wraps forever and just as their mother feared it would, haemophilia eventually led both young men to suffer early deaths.

Gonzalo was involved in a minor car accident at the age of 19 when out driving with his sister. While swerving to avoid a cyclist, the car he was travelling in ran into a wall but both of the young royals appeared to be uninjured. Gonzalo, however, had unknowingly sustained a serious internal abdominal injury. Even though this was diagnosed in time to save his life, Gonzalo had suffered with lifelong ill-health and his heart was too weak to risk an operation. With no other

ABOVE Princess Alice's marriage to Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt brought haemophilia into the family, with tragic consequences

RIGHT Princess Beatrice brought haemophilia to the House of Battenberg and through her children, to the throne of Spain

course of action open to them, the royal physicians could only stand by and watch as Infante Gonzalo of Spain died as a result of an injury that should have been operable. Due to his condition and his youth, he had not yet married nor had any children.

His eldest brother, Alfonso, died four years later in circumstances that carried a chilling echo of the Infante's death. While out driving in 1938 he ran his car into a telephone box but emerged apparently uninjured. Well aware of how dangerous such an accident could be to a haemophiliac, Alfonso no doubt counted his blessings, unaware that he had already sustained what would prove to be a fatal internal injury. Little realising how serious the accident had been, Alfonso's health declined rapidly as his internal bleeding went untreated and he died as a result of that minor car accident. Like so many other royal haemophiliacs, he had no children.

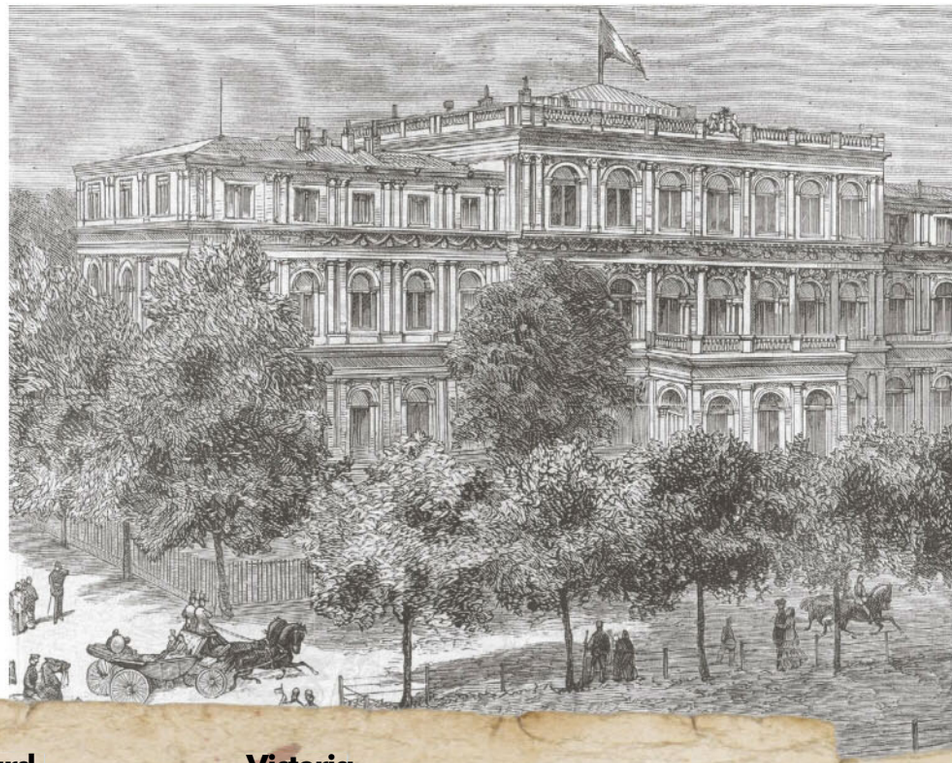
> "Just as their mother feared, haemophilia led both young men to suffer early deaths"

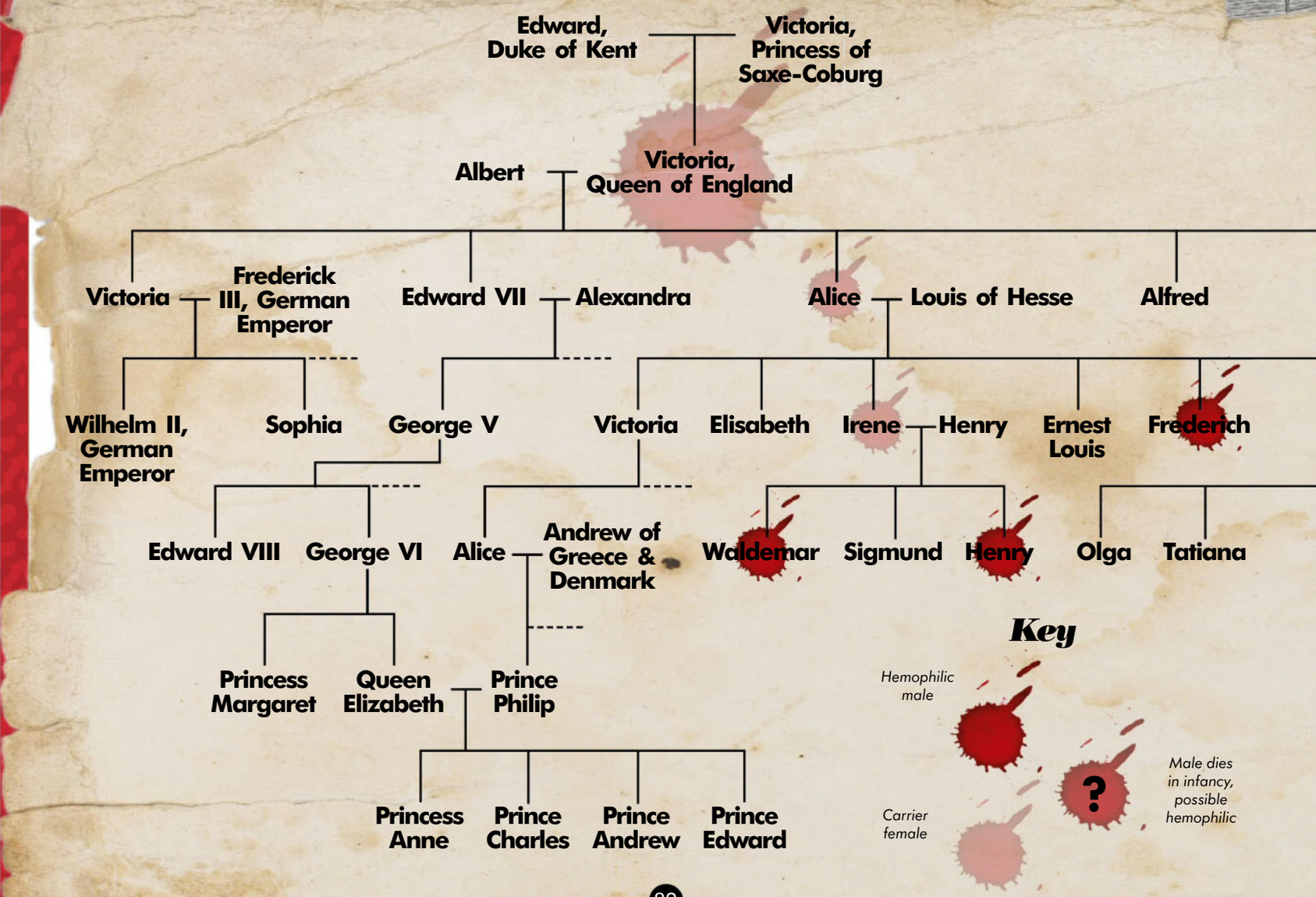
Although the marriage of Victoria Eugenie and Alfonso had been one of love at the start, they were not destined to enjoy a happy ending. With the physical burden of haemophilia weighing heavily on those who suffered from it, the emotional weight was equally pressing and when Alfonso realised that his firstborn son's circumcision would not stop bleeding, he knew precisely what it signified. When news of the heir to the throne's haemophilia reached the ears of the Spanish public, Victoria Eugenie's popularity waned and she began to feel isolated, rejected by the people of her adopted land. Even worse, Alfonso also held his wife responsible for bringing haemophilia into his family. As the years passed, the once loving couple drifted further and further apart and Alfonso took a succession of lovers to his bed, leaving his wife to devote herself to philanthropy and charitable works.

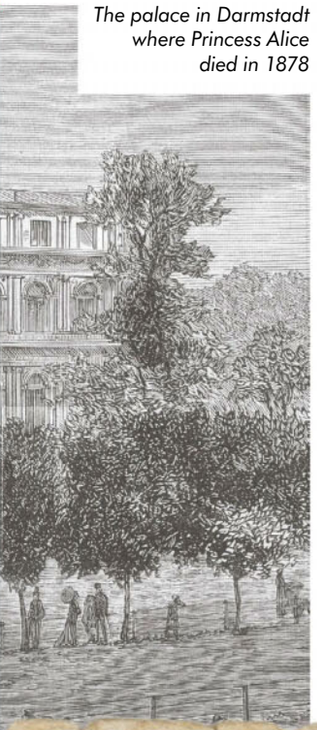
It wasn't only Princess Beatrice who carried haemophilia into Europe though, as her sister, Princess Alice of the United Kingdom, also played a part in the spread of the disorder. She married Prince Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt and of their seven children, one son was born with haemophilia, diagnosed when he suffered a minor playtime injury that bled for days, with all efforts to staunch it proving fruitless. The House of Hesse-Darmstadt had no choice but to face the mortifying fact that the deadly condition had now wrapped its tentacles around their own dynasty. Later it would be clear that two of their daughters also carried the gene, but it was their son, Friedrich, known as Frittie, who faced a tragic fate.

In 1873 two-year-old Frittie was playing with his brother, Ernst, under the care of their mother. During the game, Ernst dashed to another room, the windows of which stood right angles to that which contained

Little Frittie was one of many young European princes who died when haemophilia caused a seemingly insignificant injury to become fatal







The palace in Darmstadt where Princess Alice died in 1878

> "With his haemophilia making all efforts at treatment hopeless, Frittie suffered a fatal haemorrhage and literally bled to death"

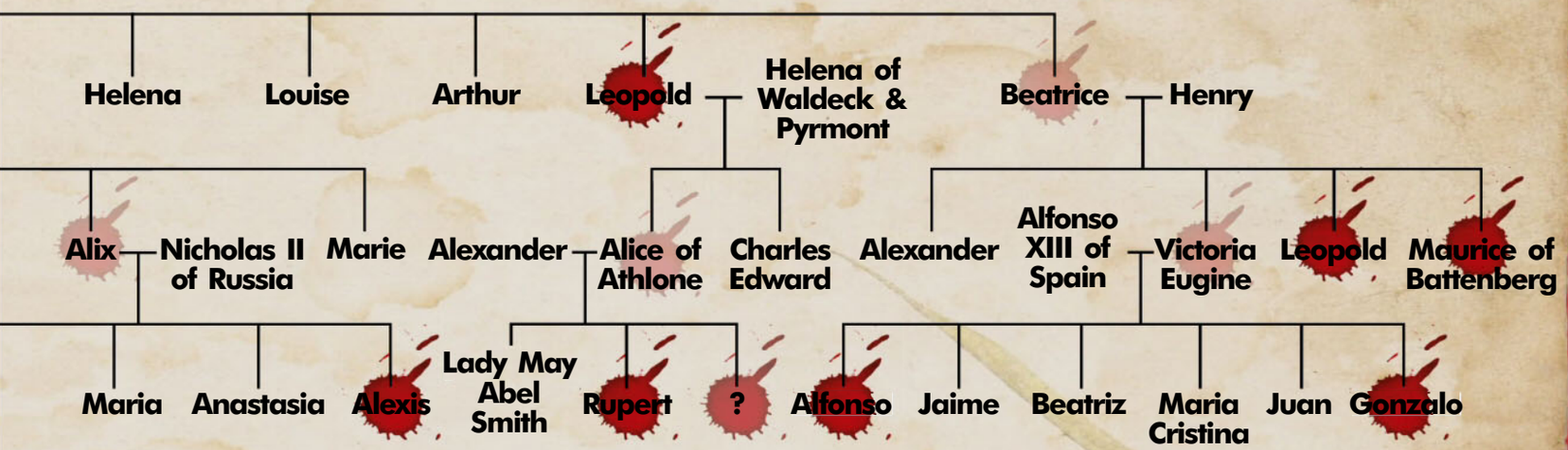
Alice and Frittie. When he appeared to be perilously close to the open window, Alice left her young son alone for a few moments in order to retrieve the little boy. Frittie, however, leaned out of the window that stood at right angles to the room that now contained his brother, hoping to continue the game. Tragically, he fell six metres onto the palace balustrade below. Although the injuries the little boy suffered would probably not have been life-threatening in a healthy child, Frittie was far from healthy and his condition deteriorated at a frightening speed. With his haemophilia making all efforts at treatment hopeless, he suffered a fatal haemorrhage and literally bled to death.

Alice blamed herself and was left bereft by the death of her son. She never truly recovered from the tragedy and her marriage became increasingly unhappy as the years passed. It seemed that haemophilia was now immovably ingrained in the branches of the royal family trees and when Alice's daughters, Irene and Alix, married and had families of their own, the condition continued to spread across the continent.

Irene made a prestigious marriage to Prince Henry of Prussia, the brother of Kaiser Wilhelm. Two of their three sons, Prince Waldemar and Prince Henry, were diagnosed with haemophilia and it eventually claimed the lives of both. The latter was killed by a haemorrhage when he fell from a chair during a childhood game at just four years old. Tragically for his parents, royal physicians confirmed that Henry would certainly have survived the relatively inconsequential accident if he had

The curse of haemophilia

In a matter of generations, the royal disease spread across the monarchies of Europe



The mystery of Prince Maurice

Prince Maurice of Battenberg's haemophilia is disputed in light of his record as a second lieutenant in the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Feted for heroism during the Battle of the Marne, the prince was fatally wounded by shrapnel while leading an attack at Zonnebeke in October 1914. It seems unlikely that a known haemophiliac would have been allowed to serve on the frontline of World War I, but his brother Leopold served too and his haemophilia is undisputed.

While Leopold was eventually kept from the fighting by a promotion to aide-de-camp in April 1915, there's nothing to place him out of harm's way for August and September 1914 and many newspaper reports

describe both Leopold and Maurice as being at "the front" with the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Leopold was then invalided home with a knee injury some weeks before Maurice's death, perhaps convincing the War Office that the front was no place for a haemophiliac. It's a potent reminder that the rigours of military life could pose as potent a risk to a haemophiliac and the courage required to enlist as Leopold did can't be understated.

Ultimately, we don't know if the 'gallant' Prince Maurice defied the genetic cards he'd been dealt in order to play his part. It may be unlikely, but these were clearly men with a remarkable sense of duty.

George III is perhaps the most famous suspected case of porphyria

The other royal disease

Haemophilia isn't the only disorder to have a very illustrious connection

Although haemophilia is notorious for its connections with royalty, it shares the dubious title of a 'royal disorder' with another condition. Porphyria is a name for a cluster of genetic disorders that attack the nervous system or skin of the sufferer, causing problems that range from abdominal problems to mental distress. Although symptoms of porphyria can vary depending on the type and severity of the disorder, the most unusual is possibly the fact that it can turn the urine of sufferers purple!

The most famous case of suspected historical porphyria is undoubtedly King George III, the so-called 'mad king'. The theory that George's episodes of mania were caused by porphyria was first put forward in the late 1960s and, though some researchers disagreed with the hypothesis, many sources continue to state as a fact that the king suffered from porphyria. It is worth noting that some historians and medical professionals have questioned this retrospective diagnosis, which could only have been based on anecdotal evidence.

As porphyria is hereditary, many researchers have attempted to ascertain whether other members of European royal families both before and after George III might have suffered from the disorder. With characters including Mary, Queen of Scots, and Vlad the Impaler also joining the illustrious list of suspected cases, there's little wonder it has become a condition associated with royal houses. Because the diseases that come under the umbrella heading of porphyria were not fully understood and grouped together until the late 19th century, the vast majority of historic cases can only have been diagnosed retrospectively, so none can be stated as an absolutely reliable diagnosis.

Even today, porphyria cannot be cured as it isn't one single condition, but a cluster of varied disorders and diseases. The symptoms can be managed and treated, but those who live with the disorder can still suffer from painful and distressing complications, including some that can be fatal. Whether porphyria did indeed afflict the royal houses of Europe in centuries gone by might not be proven but, like haemophilia, it is a disorder that can be as deadly today as it was in the past.

"Haemophilia wreaked a century of havoc on the neighbouring royal houses and then, as suddenly as it appeared, it was gone"

not been a haemophiliac. Waldemar survived childhood and lived into his mid-fifties, an unusual turn of events for a royal haemophiliac. However, he eventually fell victim to the illness and died as he waited for a blood transfusion in World War II.

Having successfully fled the Russian advance and been admitted to a clinic in Tutzing, Waldemar found that all medical resources had been diverted by the newly-arrived US Army. With the liberated victims of concentration camps taking precedence for urgent care, there was no blood available for the life-saving transfusion that Prince Waldemar needed and, with his doctors powerless to help, he died in the clinic just one day after he was admitted. Despite being married to Princess Calixta of Lippe-Biesterfeld, Waldemar chose not to have any children, all too aware of the risk that he might pass on his deadly illness to any offspring. Slowly but surely, the royal haemophiliacs were falling to the devastating condition that plagued them. Perhaps the most famous incidence of haemophilia in the royal families of the 19th and 20th centuries was its occurrence in the House of Romanov, the ruling Russian dynasty. Haemophilia was introduced into the Romanov bloodline by Alix, who was the fourth daughter of Alice and the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, the woman with whom it had all begun.

Prince Waldemar lived to an old age with the condition

LEFT Seen here with the empress and her children, Rasputin's claims to be able to cure the Alexei's haemophilia saw him rise to a position of immense influence

BELOW Tsarevich Alexei Nikolaevich on a tricycle in 1913

Alix married Tsar Nicholas II and took the title of Empress Alexandra of Russia. The couple had five children; one son and four daughters. The tragic family were famously murdered during the Russian revolution so none of those girls would ever live long enough to marry and have children of their own. Whether they carried the haemophiliac gene is therefore a mystery, but the couple's only son, Tsarevich Alexei Nikolaevich of Russia, was diagnosed with the condition at a young age.

Well aware of the devastating power of the illness and the risk it posed to Alexei's life, Alexandra devoted herself to his care and became increasingly overprotective. She remembered too well the death of other family members from the illness and, when her son began to bleed from even the slightest trauma, her fear for his life only deepened. Alexandra's anxiety made her easy prey for those who sought influence and none were more famous or notorious than the legendary Grigori Rasputin, a self-proclaimed mystic who convinced the Tsarina that he alone could heal her stricken son. Of course, Rasputin had no such powers but Alexandra refused to believe that he was a fraud, and was soon his devoted follower.

Although Alexandra's fears for her son were natural enough as a mother, she also carried a heavier burden on her shoulders, for Alexei was the only son borne of the royal marriage, and there was no spare waiting in the wings should this particular heir die before his time. There was neither a cure nor any effective treatment for haemophilia and, when the best medics failed her, the Tsarina turned to mysticism in her search for the ever-elusive cure. Such a desperate mother was easy prey for Rasputin's scheming ways but when Tsar Nicholas became suspicious of the supposed mystic, he dared take no action thanks to Alexandra's devotion to the monk. After all, Alexandra was convinced that Rasputin's influence kept little Alexei alive, and Nicholas couldn't risk sending him away in case his son died, which would be a coincidence too far.

Alexei, however, grew gradually more sick even as Rasputin's influence and power became the subject of mockery, suspicion and hostility across not only the ruling classes, but the Russian people too. Eventually, Rasputin was murdered in 1916. Just two years later, the ruling Romanov family was executed by firing squad in a desolate cellar, ending their imperial rule of Russia forever. Tests conducted on the remains of the Romanov dynasty decades after their death suggest that the strain that afflicted the royal families was the more serious and extremely rare variant known as haemophilia B, which was not identified by the medical establishment until 1952.

The last known member of Queen Victoria's family to suffer from haemophilia or carry the royal disease died in 1969, having been predeceased by her children who were affected by the disorder. Although there are still living descendants of the late queen and her children, none of them either carry or suffer from haemophilia. Theoretically, the condition could still reappear via those descendants but the chance is extremely small.

Seemingly from nowhere, the haemophilia carried by the family of Queen Victoria wreaked a century of havoc on the neighbouring royal houses and then, as suddenly as it appeared, it was gone. Perhaps one day haemophilia will reappear in the royal bloodline but, for now at least, the royal children of Europe appear to be safe from its devastating scourge.

Further reading

- DM Potts, *Queen Victoria's Gene*, Sutton Publishing 1999
- J Van der Kiste, *Queen Victoria's Children*, The History Press 2009
- S Sebag Montefiore, *The Romanovs: 1613-1918*, W&N 2016
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Royal Gallery

Before 1916

Rasputin

Gregori Rasputin (1869-1916) became a favourite of the Tsarina, as she believed that he could heal her haemophiliac son. Here, Rasputin poses in the style of blessing. For his alleged powers and his hypnotic eyes, Rasputin garnered a following of 'disciples', who considered him a man of God.

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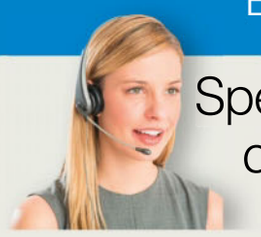

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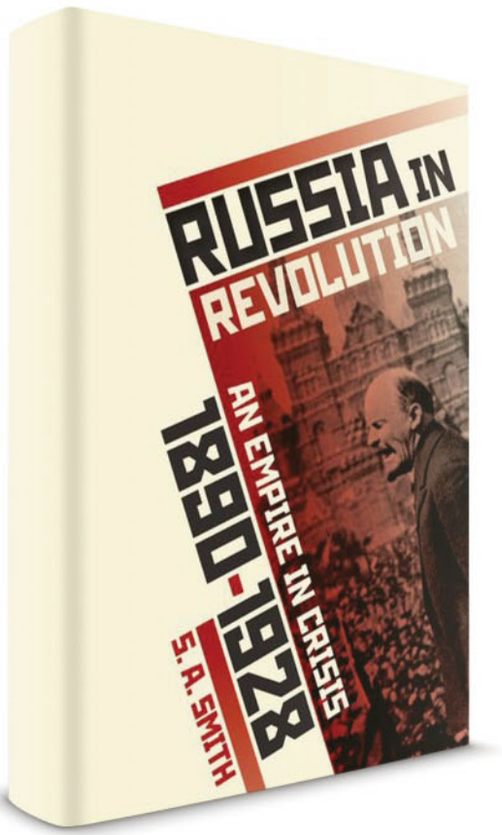
Reviews

Russia In Revolution: An Empire In Crisis 1890-1928 *by S A Smith*

"Peace, bread and work"

Publisher Oxford University Press Price £25 Release Out now



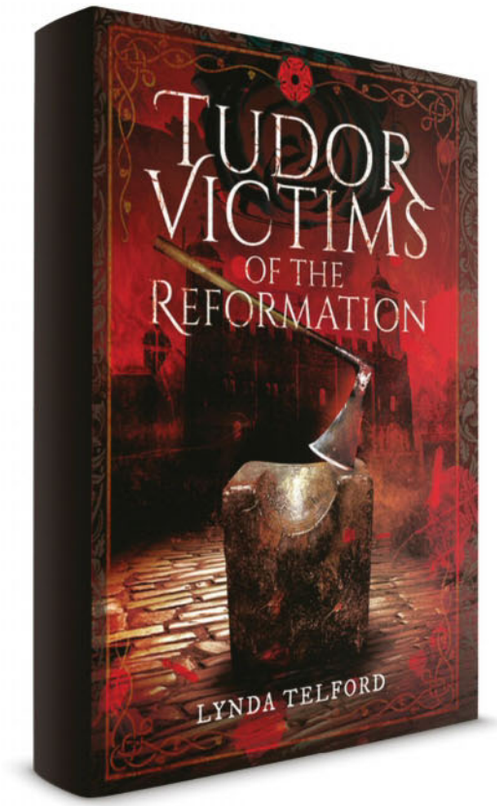
Taking on the early 20th century Russian revolutions, both the failed 1905 and successful 1917 revolutions, the crescendo of political and socio-economic events in the years before that led to the Tsars being toppled, and the aftermath of Stalin's rise to power, is a daunting task for any historian. It's a vastly complicated historical era with no single definitive flashpoint, as influenced by international politics and the underhand machinations of European and American colonial leaders as it was by Russia's own internal struggle. Appropriately, this is the story of *An Empire In Crisis 1890-1928*, told by a writer who's no journeyman academic.

Steve A Smith is an Oxford University professor of history and a senior research fellow at All Souls College, who graduated after a year-long stint at Moscow State University before the Iron Curtain was pulled down. Besides his first-hand experience of life in the USSR, his curriculum vitae includes a reassuring number of books on communism and revolutions in China and Russia.

Smith's fluency in the subject is in no doubt. He takes the reader from the pre-revolution, distant rumblings of dissent in the styx as Tsar Nicholas II attempted to convince everyone that the Russian State and the people were in unison, despite a clear disconnect between local government and the masses. These few, early chapters are the most difficult to stick with, perhaps because the subject matter is more esoteric than many with a passing interest in history would be used to. Smith doesn't dress his work up with flowery prose to compel the reader to turn the page, just straightforward language with an appreciable restraint on terminology. Still, the 'Roots of Revolution', up to the failed 1905 revolution, lacks the payoff we anticipate with the chapter, which concerns the outbreak of World War I, and the decapitation of the Russian Empire when Tsar Nicholas and his family are executed in 1917. But it's worth this relative drudge.

Russia In Revolution poses and roundly answers questions like, how did World War I contribute to the end of Tsarist Russia? How, despite the best efforts of the White Army – the combined forces of Japan, Europe, America and pro-democratic Russians – did democracy in post-revolution Russia fall flat on its face? And one of our own burning questions: how did Stalin come to the fore to lead the Bolsheviks after Lenin died in 1924? We can't imagine Smith set out to please everyone with *Russia In Revolution*, as it has a textbook tone that won't suit a casual reader. But we appreciate its accessibility, despite the depth of his subject.

The February revolution in 1917 was the beginning of the end for the Tsars. By the beginning of November that year, the soviets ruled Russia



Tudor Victims Of The Reformation *by Lynda Telford*

Does this scholarly book stand out in a crowded market?

Publisher Pen & Sword Price £25 Release Out now

Books on this particular period of English history are not in short supply, but given the fertile ground it provides for historians this is not surprising.

Author Lynda Telford's profile on the dust jacket of this book states that she is interested in "the underdog, the maligned or the misunderstood." Again, this is not unique to her as an author; history's 'victims' offer greater potential for the writer to arouse the readers' sympathies.

Structurally, this book is slightly foreboding, as its 18 chapters lack subject headings, meaning that dipping in and out is not really an option. Similarly, there are few illustrations and no photographs, meaning that it's not the most instantly inviting book. As a consequence, *Tudor Victims Of The Reformation* reads rather like an extended essay at times; fine if you're looking for an erudite read but this could have been easily negated with a few presentational tweaks. In this sense, the book's cover image of an executioner's axe is somewhat misleading; the book is not remotely kitsch but instead a serious academic endeavour. Fortunately, Telford employs a crisp and clear writing style that, to a large extent, counteracts the slightly dry format of the book; this is a perfectly accessible read and it's well paced.

Anne Boleyn receives a significant amount of the attention here, presented by Telford as one of the chief 'victims' of the reformation, with Katherine of Aragon's experiences during this timeframe also examined in some detail. Those with an interest in this period will find Telford's book a worthwhile addition to the bibliography.

Young And Damned And Fair: The Life And Tragedy Of Catherine Howard At The Court Of Henry VIII *by Gareth Russell*

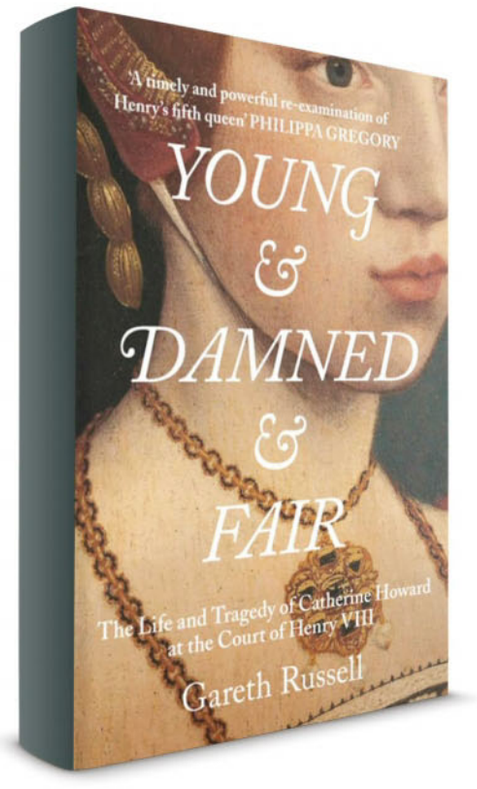
A revealing account of Henry VIII's teenage bride

Publisher Harper Collins Price £25 Release Out Now

The tragic story of Henry VIII's fifth queen has been covered before but never quite like this. *Young And Damned And Fair*, digs deep into the dark and twisted underworld of Tudor nobility, a place filled with conniving subjects, adulterous nobles and a king's desperate search for a fifth wife. Gareth Russell has written about royal history in the past and has also penned a couple of novels.

This storytelling background means the book has a descriptive quality and focuses on many fascinating tales from the era. The text commences like the opening act of a film, skipping between vivid descriptions of the execution of Thomas Cromwell and the royal wedding of Catherine to Henry. The following chapter is devoted to Catherine's father Edmund and pulls no punches, labelling him as "a toxic combination of corrupt, unstable and pathetic." Clearly, those in search of a traditional biography should look elsewhere as the book is more than just a rundown of Catherine's downfall. This helps maintain interest in a crisis for the aristocracy that involves many illustrious members of Tudor nobility.

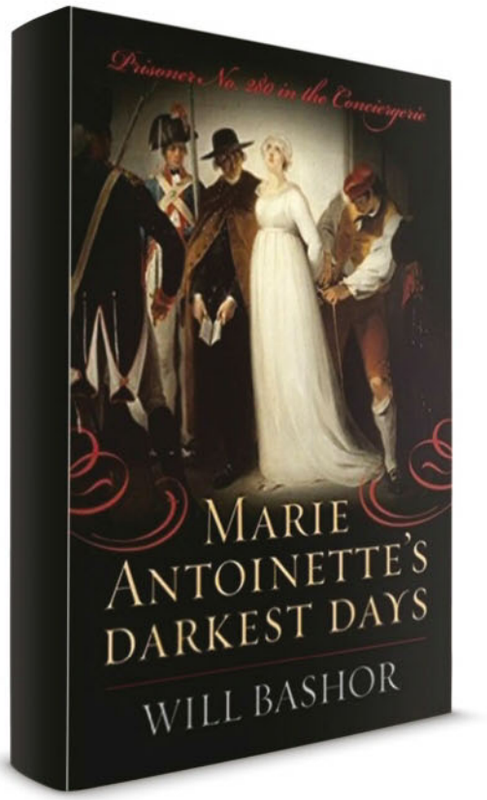
It's difficult to not feel sorry for the naive and innocent 19-year-old Catherine, who began her noble life being preyed on by men like Henry Manox and Francis Dereham, before marrying an ageing and fattening 49-year-old king. The book does a great job of tracking every facet of Catherine's rapid ascent to queendom, as well as setting the scene for the beginning of Henry's decline.



Marie Antoinette's Darkest Days, Prisoner No. 280 In The Conciergerie *by Will Bashor*

The final days of France's last queen

Publisher Rowman & Littlefield Price £18.95 Release Out Now

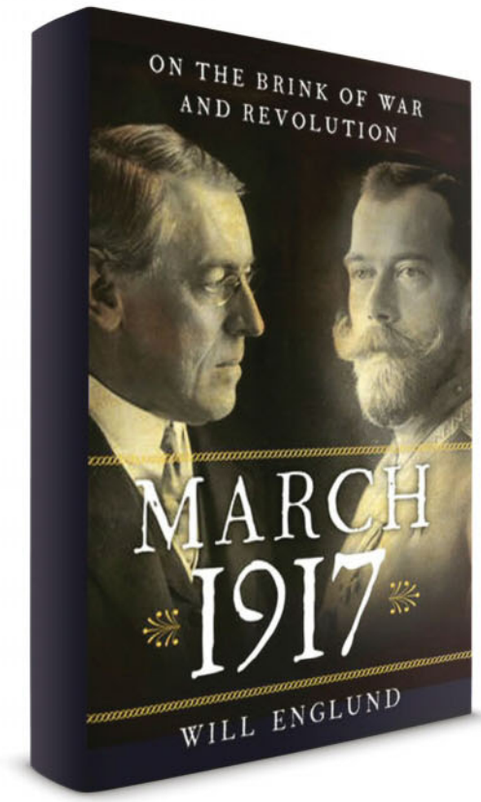


Will Bashor's latest book begins on 2 August 1793, when Marie Antoinette was escorted away from her family to begin her incarceration in a dank, mouldy and rat-infested dungeon in the Conciergerie prison. Known as the "antechamber of the guillotine", most prisoners did not stay long before meeting their fate. Registered only as Prisoner no. 280, Widow Capet – or Marie Antoinette – however, spent two and a half months awaiting her doom.

In *Marie Antoinette's Darkest Days*, this intimate look at the most distressing time in the queen's existence breathes vivid life into an 18th century France on the cusp of permanent change. It is all the more poignant, then, also knowing that this tale has no happy ending. The violent side of the French Revolution has never been so stark, as Marie Antoinette's son, Louis Charles, is torn from her grasp in a plan to have the boy turn against his mother and accuse her of further crimes.

At times, Bashor's precise account of this turbulent time reads like a novelisation of Marie Antoinette's final days. His meticulous attention to detail unveils stories and circumstances that read like the memories of Prisoner no. 280. Supporting footnotes, illustrations and floorplans show the breadth and depth of Bashor's research, and bring to life the finer details of Widow Capet's imprisonment and execution; from the floorplan of the Conciergerie to images of the queen's head held loft atop the scaffold and beyond, to her body's final resting place.

On occasion, *Marie Antoinette's Darkest Days* can feel a little slow in revealing its story and weighed down by facts, but for any student of the French Revolution and the French royal family, this book is an experience that is not to be missed.



March 1917: On The Brink Of War And Revolution *by Will Englund*

Reflecting on a world at unrest

Publisher Norton & Company Price £22.95 Release 7 March 2017

Tying in with its 100th anniversary this year, *March 1917* remembers the month in which a chain of watershed moments occurred across the world. It is a look back at a time of change and hope, and political tension and unrest, as the revolution began to brew after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, World War I arrived in Europe, and America stood on the edge of their first international military intervention.

It marked a huge shift in US foreign policies, a shift that is still felt today. The product of this time is a climate of distrust between two of the world's largest nations that still exists today, and is of particular interest in relation to current events. Will Englund is very successful at re-creating the air of hope and progress in the US, describing the conviction of how the American Dream is possible for everyone, including immigrants, as well as the looming fear and paranoia caused by the tension with and within Russia. It was a time of pivotal social shifts, sexual revolution, dance clubs, and jazz music. A time for women to be heard and immigrants to be seen.

Meanwhile, in Russia, the air was full of excitement for the revolution, for justice and the people's voice. As a former Moscow correspondent for the *Washington Post*, reporting in Russia for 12 years, Englund has more than deserved the right to call himself an expert on Russian politics and culture. He uses individual diaries and memoirs to recreate and analyse the experience of the common man as well as high-profile politicians and revolutionaries, and transports the reader back 100 years.

Anne Boleyn: A King's Obsession *by Alison Weir*

The second instalment in a series of novels based on Henry VIII's six wives

Publisher Headline Review Price £18.99 Release 18 May 2017

Alison Weir is a hugely successful writer, of that there is no dispute. Like many others, she's chiefly built her career around the Tudors; a muse most abundant, it would seem, given the proliferation of both academic tomes and volumes of the popular history variety, which flood the market with Henry VIII and his six wives as their central narrative. Much like their predecessors on the English throne, the Plantagenets, silence never seems to descend upon the Tudors and the production of books, television dramas and films surrounding them doesn't seem to be showing any signs of slowing down.

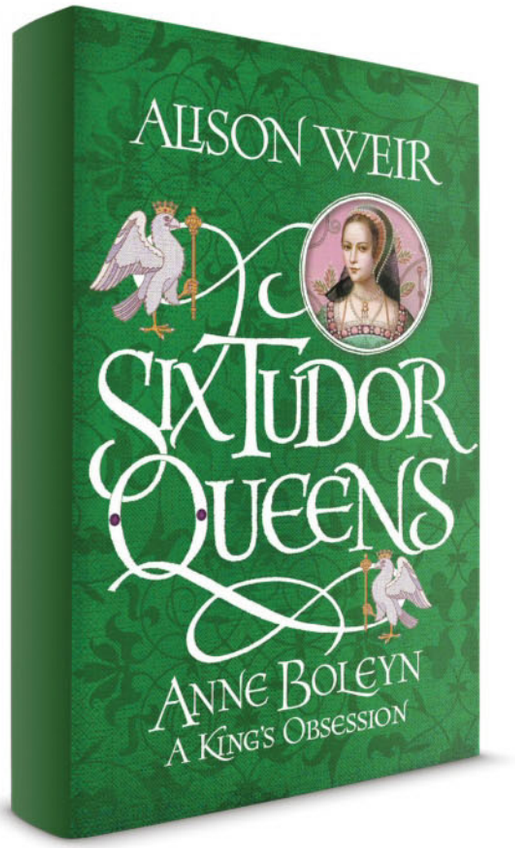
There is room, of course, for both relatively lighter-weight and more scholarly writing when it comes to history. It's a broad church, which means different things to different people; not everyone wants to be thrown in at the deep end of the past and find themselves bogged down in a highbrow history lesson. But this book – the second in an ongoing series from Weir – is a rather rum proposition, if ever there was one.

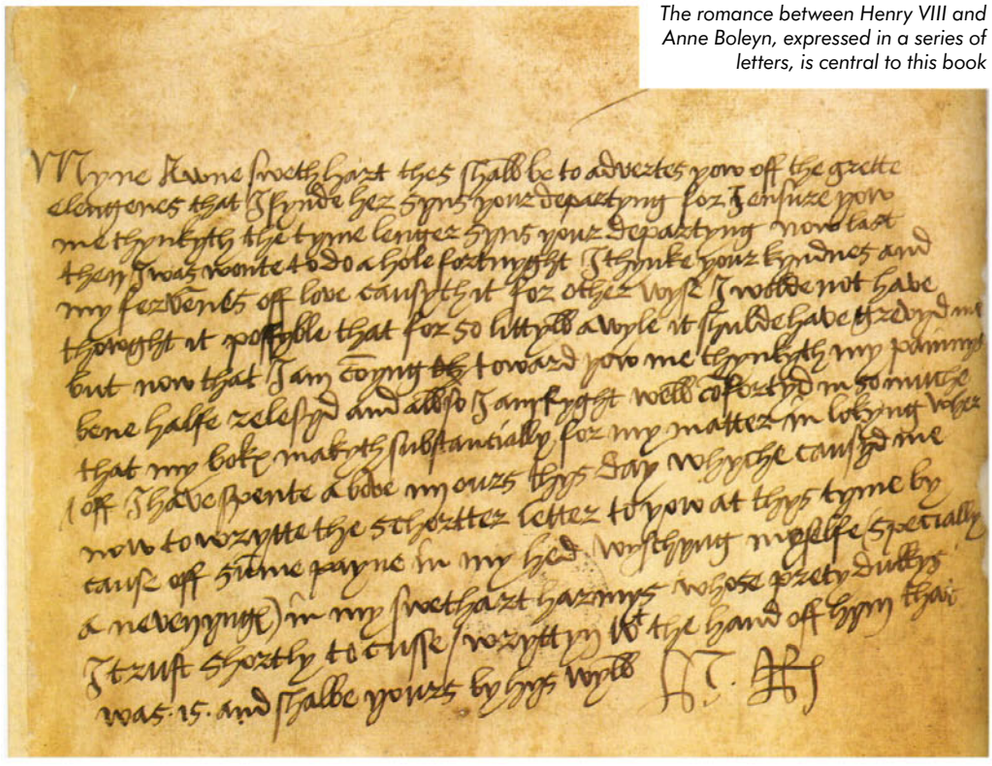
Anne Boleyn: A King's Obsession fits under neither of the aforementioned sub-types of historical nonfiction: it's a separate genre, that of the historically-informed novel. It's a concept more familiar, perhaps, to our television screens than the shelves of bookshops, but given that Weir is working on a book for each of Henry's wives, we assume that there has to be some mileage in it.

Attitudes to a book like this will very much be a matter of personal taste. If you don't naturally warm to this approach as a rule, it seems unlikely that Weir will have anything for you to change your mind. When you see history dramatised on television or at the cinema, the avoidance of an unpleasant air of artless vulgarity depends heavily on a good quality screenplay and persuasive performances. However, the writing in *Anne Boleyn: A King's Obsession* isn't awfully impressive. We wonder if, were it penned by someone other than Weir – an unknown debutant for instance – there'd be so much enthusiasm surrounding its publication. The prose isn't particularly persuasive: at times faintly cringe-inducing, at other times simply a little dull, while the rather gratuitous account of her execution simply feels exaggerated and, to be blunt, a little cheap. The moments of passion between Anne and Henry are not handled with the utmost elegance, either.

Despite this, and with the best-selling success of the previous instalment on Katherine of Aragon in mind, it seems virtually assured that *Anne Boleyn: A King's Obsession* will reach a receptive and plentiful audience – and that this will be replicated across the following four titles. Its virtues shouldn't go unacknowledged: research and focus are required to create something like this and there are clearly plenty of people out there who like to read this type of book.

Written in the third person but from Anne's perspective, it succeeds in putting you amidst the action and making distant events that occurred half a millennium ago feel as if they are happening now, but a significant suspension of disbelief is required. After all, with the best will and the most thorough research in the world, the truth behind many of the thoughts, conversations and decisions are lost in the mists of time, and nonfiction is inevitably mixing at close quarters with fiction throughout. Approach with caution.





The romance between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, expressed in a series of letters, is central to this book

Interview

Richard Barber

With a background in Plantagenet rulers and Arthurian legends, historian Richard Barber delves into the fascinating splendour of Medieval court festivals

You've written on the first Plantagenet rulers of England – what fascinates you about the period?
This is a time when the English institutions that are familiar today were beginning to evolve, and also a period when England and the continent were closely involved. The first Plantagenet, Henry II, inherited England, Normandy and lands down to the Loire and married Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose duchy and overlordships stretched down to the Mediterranean. It was the first British empire, and he was a charismatic figure, one of the few Medieval kings whose character was vividly described by his contemporaries. His sons, Richard and John, were very different: Richard was a chivalrous figure and a good general, but spent much of his time outside his lands, while John lacked Richard's skills, and although he was a good administrator, lost most of the continental empire to the French king. Only Gascony was left, and the later Plantagenets fought with varying success to keep it, culminating in the campaigns by Edward I and Edward III which led to the Hundred Years' War. In England it was a time of great wealth, of great artistic endeavours, and of the emergence of English as the language of both rich and poor. English law, with the jury system, and the first English parliaments also belong to this period. Edward III is one of the greatest of the English kings, even though his dramatic victories did not, in the end, lead to a successful recovery of the lands that Henry II had once ruled.

You've written several books on Arthurian legend – how are they significant to your other research?
Everyone likes a mystery, and we are no nearer to solving the question of who the 'real King Arthur' was or if he actually existed. This was the starting point for me in my school days, but it led into a wealth of wonderful stories told in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and

"We are no nearer to solving who 'the real King Arthur' was"

even Hebrew. Arthur is probably the single most popular hero in western European literature.

The first fictional romances about him began to appear about 1160, and there was an extraordinary explosion of this new kind of story – the forerunner of the novel – in the next 50 years. By 1220, writers had created the stories of the love triangle of Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot, and of Tristram, Iseult and Mark, as well as the great religious epic of the Holy Grail. These stories were all linked to Arthur's court and magnificent illuminated manuscripts of the whole body of tales were commissioned in the 14th and 15th centuries. This is the background to the world of the Plantagenet kings and they adopted Arthur – whose supposed continental empire was modelled on that of Henry II – as the first British ruler who was their great predecessor. Edward I created the round table, which is now at Winchester Castle, for a tournament there in 1285, and Edward III proposed an Order of the Round Table 60 years later as a way of recruiting an army for his next campaign in France. The fascinating questions that the legends pose have really been the main subject of my work.

The Prince In Splendour provides an insight into court festivals of the Medieval period. What kind of research went into creating the book?

The best sources are, of course, eyewitness accounts, and we have these at intervals from the 12th century onwards. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, lord of Germany and much of Italy, held a great festival at Mainz in 1184.

At the other end of the timescale, we have reports running into thousands of words on the magnificence of the festivals in Burgundy. One of these comes from the organiser of the festival himself, Olivier de la Marche, from the marriage of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and Margaret of York, daughter of Edward IV, at Bruges in 1468. He was also one of the judges at the tournament that followed the wedding, and he writes in minute detail about the occasion. He had previously organised and taken part in the so-called 'Feast of the Pheasant' in 1454, at which Philip the Good proclaimed his intention to go on crusade.

We can supplement these descriptions by actual entries in the royal accounts, which often give remarkable details of the items being made or purchased.

Which chapter of the book was particularly interesting for you to write about?

The chapter on the occasions when kings made a ceremonial entry into a city was possibly the most varied of all, because there was an extraordinary mixture of parade, play acting, theatrical scenery of the most ingenious kind, feasting and music. These ceremonies start at the beginning of the 13th century and were in full swing at the end of the Medieval period. Feasts, of course, were spectacular with singers, dancers and actors; but they were limited by the space in which the feast took place. Here the whole city was at the disposal of the organisers of the event. Over the years, a kind of routine built up, and we can watch this happening both in London and Paris. The traditional stopping places for the king's procession on a royal entry into London were London Bridge, the fountain at Cornhill, Cheapside with its cross and conduit, before the King came to Saint Paul's Cathedral. The parades came to have elaborate themes. Richard II made a ceremonial entry into London when he restored the city's charter in 1392: the programme for it was probably written by the confessor to John of Gaunt, the king's uncle. It depicted Richard in terms of Christ taking back his errant spouse, the Church, which allowed the city of London to be portrayed as the new Jerusalem described in the Bible.

Entries were traditionally described as 'joyous', but this was not always the case: Bruges had rebelled against Philip the Good of Burgundy in 1437, and part of the penalty inflicted on the town was that next time the duke came to the town, the procession would be a penitential one.

It is this interplay of high politics and spectacle, and the presentation of the prince in splendour, that makes all of these performances – rather strange to us today – so fascinating.

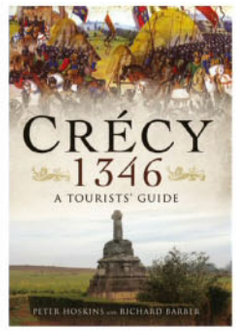
Do you see _The Prince In Splendour_ as a comprehensive coverage of Medieval festivals?

At the beginning of the middle ages we have very little material on festivals because the records – chronicles, royal accounts and letters – are so scanty. So a comprehensive coverage is impossible, but I think it is fair to say that _The Prince In Splendour_ gives as wide-ranging a survey as possible. However, although I have been working on and around this subject for many years, there is always something new to be found.

Since I wrote the book, I found that a famous festival given by Edward I for the knighting of his son, later Edward II, in 1306, was mirrored in a competing festival given by Philip IV of France for his son in 1312, and that it was possible to reconstruct it in detail. And a recent publication gathers a mass of detailed information about the official visit of the emperor Charles IV to Paris from 4 to 7 January 1378, during which Charles V of France held three state banquets in the royal palace on the Ile de la Cité. I hope that The Prince In Splendour is both an introduction for the general reader to the world of court festivals and a starting point for other scholars to investigate further.

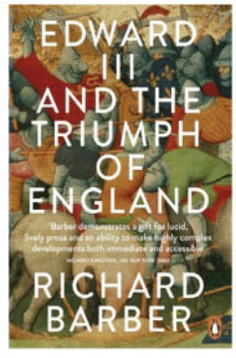
The Prince In Splendour is available now for £39.95. For more information and to buy a copy, visit The Folio Society website at **www.foliosociety.com**

Author highlights



Crécy 1346: A Tourists' Guide (co-authored with Peter Hoskins)
Publisher Pen & Sword
Price £14.99
Release September 2016

Henry II: A Prince Amongst Princes
Publisher Penguin
Price £10.99
Release April 2015



Edward III And The Triumph Of England
Publisher Penguin
Price £12.99
Release August 2014

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The downfall of Nicholas II

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Royal Relic

The Grand Duchess Vladimir Tiara

Smuggled out of Russia by a spy, these stunning stones have a story to tell

Crafted by the Romanov court jeweller Carl Edvard Bolin, this tiara of 15 interlocking diamond circles and pear-shaped pearl drops was made for the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna. It was a wedding present from her husband, Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich in 1874. For better or worse, she married into the loathed family of Tsar Nicholas II.

In the wake of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Maria fled Saint Petersburg, stowing her beloved tiara and other jewels in a safe at Vladimir Palace. Since her husband's death in 1908, she had enjoyed spending her annual pension of 1 million francs living an imperial lifestyle. As patron of the arts, Maria became known as the grandest of grand duchesses. Not wishing to be without her treasures, she hatched a plan to retrieve them. With help from a British intelligence agent, Albert Stopford, the royal jewels were smuggled out of Soviet Russia and put in a bank vault in London.

Upon Maria's death, the tiara was passed on to her daughter, Elena Vladimirovna, who sold most of her collection to benefit her exiled family and charities. The Vladimir Tiara had suffered during its grand escape, but Queen Mary, wife of George V, saw the potential. She acquired the piece in 1921 had it altered so that the pearls were interchangeable with her Cambridge emeralds. The tiara was later willed to her granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty has donned the Vladimir Tiara at numerous occasions throughout her reign. It was worn not only on several important state events, such as her visit to the Vatican City, hosted by Pope John Paul II, but also when sitting for her official photograph as Queen of Canada.

However, among the tiara's most famous owners was Diana, Princess of Wales. The Queen had gifted it as a wedding present, but following Diana's death, it was returned. Her Majesty may not have added any stones like her grandmother, but she has been known to wear it a third way: with no pendants at all. Perhaps the tiara's versatility will ensure it's worn by generations to come.

The tiara was displayed at Buckingham Palace in 2010, as part of the exhibition The Queen's Year

Queen Elizabeth II has worn the tiara on many occasions. This photo is from her 43rd birthday

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