

# HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

*Making old news big news*

Issue 4: 2013/14  
*'Breaking the Rules'*





## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello,

I can't believe we're halfway through the academic year already! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and are as keen as I am to make a start on Semester 2 modules...

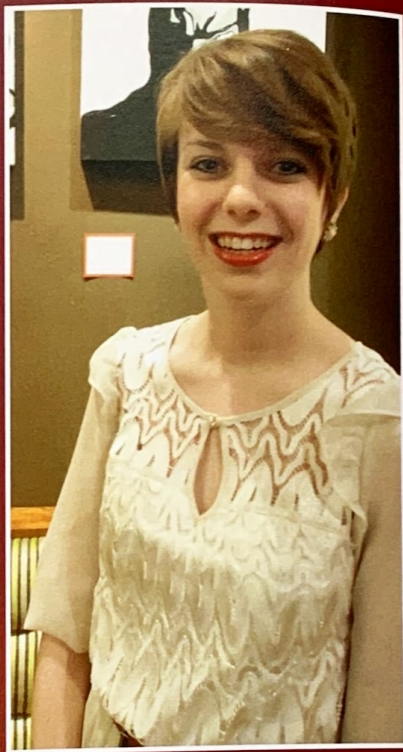
This issue of the History Student Times will be approaching the theme 'Breaking the Rules', so expect an array of articles covering illegal literature, Byzantine Empresses, Cuba and all sorts in between.

As you might have already spotted, we also have a brand new logo designed by Nook Barnes, which will feature on our Facebook page, Twitter account and brand new HST Blog – the details for which you can find on the back page of the magazine.

Once again I would like to say a huge thank you to all of our writers; to the School of History for funding our printing costs; to Jonathan Mitchell for setting up our blog; and to our editors Andrew Jackson, Jessica Papworth and Robert Tidball, without whose contributions this edition might not have been possible.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Rachael Gillibrand.



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## LETTER FROM THE HISTORY SOCIETY

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Happy new year from HistSoc!

We're very excited to be back and get our plans for this term up and running after having easily the best semester we've ever had as a society last year. If you didn't get involved in our numerous events and ridiculously hectic schedule it's not too late to get involved this semester. With just under 500 members we're the largest Arts society in the entire Union for the second year running! I'm really proud of the whole committee for working so hard and this semester we're continuing to be on the lookout for people to take over the reins very soon as \*sob\* my two years as president are coming to a close!

To pick a highlight of last term is ridiculously hard! We've had three evening socials invading Tiger Tiger, Hifi and Mint with over 100 people every time. Our enormous retro-sports themed Otley run made it onto the Arc's Facebook page with them saying it was the biggest Otley run they'd ever seen. Our GIAG Dodgeball had an incredible turn-out of over 80 people and was even filmed by LSTV for their sports show. Almost every seat was taken in the venue for our Pub Quiz, where over 70 people showed off (or perhaps not) their historical knowledge and had drinks on us. Our football squad came second in the Saturday league and both our netball teams have won their respective Friday and Saturday leagues and progressed to the playoffs. Our footballers and netballers have also had two memorable joint socials and have broken sweat on the netball court in our annual boys vs. girls netball match. After four nail-bitingly tense matches between our two girl squads and two boy squads the girls (for the second year in a row) were the victors beating the boys in 3 of the matches and drawing in the last. Suffice to say this is going to be resurrected next term as the boys couldn't live the defeat down!

Our social secretaries have really outdone themselves this term with not only the above socials but our two biggest events of the year, our annual trip and our Christmas Ball. We're ecstatic that our trip to Prague sold out and we're taking 40 people to the city the first few days of the Easter holidays – if last year's trip to Berlin is anything to go by we're in for one hell of a few days! For the 270 members who attended the Christmas Ball I'm sure you will agree it was an absolutely phenomenal night. We've said it before and we'll say it again – thank you to the wonderful Amy Upton for working six months on such an incredible night. We were absolutely overwhelmed by the first 200 tickets selling out in less than 15 minutes and are so happy we were able to negotiate an increase in numbers so everyone who wanted to come could! The Royal Armouries was an absolutely stunning venue - the champagne, wine and cocktails flowed and the LUU Big Band put on a brilliant performance with the dance floor being full right up until the lights came on!

This semester expect a continuation of our enormous evening socials, but also an increase in our academic events. We hope you members are taking advantage of our fortnightly newsletter put together by our wonderful academic secretary Izzy – it's your hub of what's going on in the department. Expect historical trips and talks, and most importantly exciting events with our prestigious sponsors. You really don't want to miss out on this!

Hope you see you at one of our events shortly, and don't get too stressed this semester!

Cat - President



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# INTERVIEW: DR. PETER MAW

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Lecturer in 18th Century History

FREYA POTTER TALKS TO THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT'S NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF

FOR 2013/2014

**FP: Why are you particularly interested in eighteenth-century history?**

DR. MAW: Every historian has their favourite century and the eighteenth is definitely mine! I have always been interested in the eighteenth century because of its transitional nature - it bridged the gap between the early modern and the modern and pioneered developments that have shaped the world we live in now. The eighteenth century was particularly important for *Britain*. It was in this century that Britain became Europe's leading imperial power and, in its closing decades, it was Britain that first found the path that led to modern economic growth. In much of my historical work, I seek to add clarity to our understanding of the origins and significance of these two developments.

**FP: Tell us a little about the modules you're going to be teaching at Leeds, what can students expect from your courses?**

DR. MAW: The modules that I offer focus on the history of Britain and its colonies in the Atlantic Ocean. In the second year, I am teaching two modules that reflect my interests in British and British-Atlantic history in the long eighteenth century.

In Semester 1, I teach 'Britain and the Atlantic World'. The module explores the significance of flows of peoples, ideas, and commodities across the Atlantic and compares and contrasts the types of societies that developed in the British-American colonies. It includes a detailed analysis of Britain's engagement with slavery and the slave trade, the trans-Atlantic 'consumer revolution'. In Semester 2, I offer 'Britain and the Industrial Revolution'. The module is framed around the two key historiographical debates on the *causes* and *character* of the British industrial revolution. The module also offers students the opportunity to consider the *social impact* of the industrial revolution and provides coverage of the different ways that people *experienced* the industrial revolution, drawing contrasts between rich and poor, young and old, rural and urban, male and female, and nation and region.

For those of you interested in going on to MA study, I also offer an advanced module on Britain's role in the transatlantic slave trade. With a particular emphasis on historiographical debates, the module will explore the establishment and growth of the slave-plantation system in the Caribbean and North America, changing patterns of commercial organisation (including the rise of Liverpool as Britain's leading slaving port), the notorious 'middle passage', the roles played by Africans in the slave trade, and the transmission of African cultures to Atlantic America. The module will also consider the rise of anti-slavery sentiment in Britain, the ways that these ideas were mobilised, and the eventual abolition of the slave trade in 1807.

**FP: What do you think students will be most surprised to learn from your modules?**

The modules that I teach explore some of the most interesting aspects of British, Atlantic, and global history in the eighteenth century: child labour; the slave trade; the rise of the West and so on. They also raise some pretty important questions about the nature of our own present-day society. Perhaps the most important of these is the perennial question of why some countries are rich and other countries are poor. To answer this question satisfactorily, it is necessary to look back to the eighteenth century and to the history of a small island located off the western coast of mainland Europe.

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**MEET THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT - MEET THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT**



It was there, in Britain, that we can begin to find an answer to this question; it was there that the world's first industrial revolution took place. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Britain (and Western Europe in general) had similar levels of economic growth, trade, science and industry to the most advanced parts of Asia. But, by the nineteenth century, a large gap had opened up, a gap that is only now beginning to close. Something happened in the eighteenth century, that thrust Britain, Western Europe and its colonial offshoots, to the centre of the global stage and the repercussions of these developments still affect the way we live our lives today. When put this way, it is still possible to view the industrial revolution and the European colonisation of the Americas as the biggest stories in town.

**FP: What's your biggest piece of advice for Undergraduate students?**

DR. MAW: Make good use of your tutors! Of course, you will attend lectures and tutorials but there are other ways that your tutors can help you. Most important of all, I think, is to discuss your assignments with tutors: talk to them before you submit your essays and discuss how you can improve them afterwards. Learning the skills of good essay writing in history is hard but responding positively to tutor feedback makes the process easier.

**FP: Do you think the historian can ever really be objective? Or is subjectivity a valuable historiographical approach?**

DR. MAW: Historians attempt to interpret the past. It can't be recovered and historians can't assess it objectively. When going through the process of historical research, the historian must repeatedly make judgments on how reliable sources are, how they can be interpreted, and how much weight should be given to particular types of evidence. The better these judgments are the better the history will be. A historian can add to our knowledge of the past by finding new sources or by asking different questions of more familiar sources. We can always learn more, or understand things more clearly but historians will continue to interpret important questions in different ways. The present is contested and subject to a broad range of competing interpretations; it is healthy that we can extend the same degree of scrutiny to historical developments.

**FP: Do you have a favourite historical figure, or someone you're most interested in?**

DR. MAW: I don't like to play favourites in history; the complexity of the changing historical contexts can make it difficult to judge people's actions in past. I am less interested in individuals than in broader social groups. At the moment, I am spending a lot of time thinking about British merchants and the unique space they occupied in eighteenth-century society, especially on how their commercial activities allowed Britain to become the world's foremost trading nation and how the legacies of the 'merchants' century' were felt in their contributions to British politics and political culture, their roles in the City of London's establishment as the world's leading financial centre, their investments in country houses, art, and conspicuous consumption, and their roles in the rise of industrial capitalism at the close of the eighteenth century. These issues can be explored in my third year Special Subject module when it runs for the first time in 2014-15.

**FP: Do you have a favourite novel or film?**

DR. MAW: I am interested in a broad range of literature and film but as regards historical fiction one book that I would recommend to students interested in the eighteenth-century slave trade is Alex Haley's *Roots: The saga of an American Family* (London: Hutchinson, 1977). This is a fictionalised (and probably partly plagiarised) account of Haley's family history, in which the author traces his ancestry back to the 1760s in what is now Gambia. The book provides a fascinating and poignant exploration of eighteenth-century African society, the experience of slave trade, and slave life in North America.





## THE POWER OF ILLEGAL LITERATURE

From Enlightenment Thinkers to the Battle Against Super-Injunctions

It may not be the most glamorous or even exciting form of 'breaking the rules', but one cannot underestimate the power of a few simple words. Such a reality passes us by without consideration, but literature has in fact been shaping our ideas our whole lives. With each newspaper stand on the street corner preaching everything from the travails of Katie Price, to the front page exclusives and Obama's G8 Summit speeches, it is clear to see that our knowledge of the world comes from what other people have written and what other people have thought.

Therefore it is easy to understand why, throughout the ages, those in power have been particularly concerned with what people are reading. Yet it is equally easy to see why so many aspiring writers are lured across those blurred lines of restriction into the scandalous world of illegal literature. Although it seems that nowadays breaking the rules no longer has the same sense of romanticism, and mostly entails the rather unromantic disobedience towards a footballer's prostitute inspired 'super-injunction'.

But even this gives birth to the fantastical world of the rich and powerful – a sphere so sordid and full of scandalous secrets that people are desperate to keep hidden at all costs. The pressure of this world often leads to select social elites making the publication of such details illegal. However, opposing them are the plucky individuals who battle such restrictions, publishing what they are not supposed to publish, as they wade through the obscure boundaries of the freedom of the press...

You do not have to look far into history to find this phenomenon in its less vulgar form. The most obvious example is the libellous writers of the 18th Century, such as Rousseau, Montesquieu and perhaps most famously, Voltaire. Epitomized as the age of free-thinking intellectualism, the ideals of the Enlightenment and its philosophers challenged every aspect of the tradition and institutionalism of the age – ranging from religious practice through to sexuality. For example, the vehement opposition to the Catholic Church far exceeded the label of 'controversial' and it was not long until literature promoting such ideals was forbidden.

As the Enlightenment writers retreated underground their true power rose to the surface. Historians have often argued that it was these ideals, these illegal words, that fuelled the atmosphere preceding the French Revolution and influenced Benjamin Franklin in the American counterpart. Therefore illegal literature does not only hold the power to cause scandal, but can even destroy age old institutions and dictate the course of history.

For centuries now philosophers, novelists, and journalists alike have been regulated in what they can and cannot write from so many different angles, and yet have still managed to defy these rules in equal measure. Our fleeting glance through history shows just how significant such defiance can be. It may well be an old and somewhat tired cliché, but when writers venture beyond the realm of the permitted, the pen is indeed mightier than the sword.

Jonathan Mitchell



# CANIBAL HOLOCAUST

He broke the rules. He released his film. He faced a life sentence in prison.

Just ten days after the release of *Cannibal Holocaust* in Italy in 1980, its director, Ruggero Deodato, was arrested and charged with obscenity. The film was banned in around 40 countries, and is still banned in Italy to this day.

Despite its contemporary reactions, Deodato's film is seen by many as commendable to the horror genre. *Cannibal Holocaust's* influence has been acknowledged by directors such as Oliver Stone and Quentin Tarantino, as his film created the idea of 'found footage', perhaps most famously used in horror film *The Blair Witch Project*.

**"The film was banned in around 40 countries, and is still banned in Italy to this day."**

Thousands were enraged and sickened by his film believing that real people had actually been tortured, murdered, and eaten in order to create it. Deodato had cleverly chosen rather obscure actors, asking them to sign a contract to say they would disappear for a year after the film was shot. This meant that people genuinely thought these actors had been killed on camera, and it was only when a small handful of them later ap-

peared in court to prove Deodato's innocence, were the murder charges dropped.

The gruesome nature of horror films is not at all new to us as a modern day audience, however in the 80s this concept was relatively fresh, and the events in the film are enough to turn anyone's stomach. The title, *Cannibal Holocaust* implies just what kind of film you are getting yourself in for, and I must warn you, it is not for the faint hearted.

Filmed in the Amazon Rainforest with real indigenous tribes and American and Italian actors, it tells the story of a missing documentary film crew who had travelled to the Amazon in order to film cannibal tribes. A rescue mission manages to find the film crew's cans of film and the audience are forced to watch the shocking findings. What starts out as an all-access project meant to cover the cannibalistic tribe's everyday practices quickly descends into the systematic killing of the documentarians.

However, it is clear that Deodato is not just reinforcing in his audience's minds the view that these tribes are barbaric and less civilised than the Western World. The ensuing murders and cannibalistic acts that occur stem from the ac-

tions of the whites.

**"Even today as we make efforts to capture rare footage of native tribes, do we face damaging their ways of life and incurring a very negative response from them towards us..."**

The white men of the group rape one of the female tribe members, causing the Yanomamo natives to seek their revenge. They are perhaps the real savages in the film; raping and killing the natives in order to obtain sensational footage for the media back home. Even today as we make efforts to capture rare footage of native tribes, do we face damaging their ways of life and incurring a very negative response from them towards us. Of course, nothing as drastic as in *Cannibal Holocaust*, but Deodato is definitely affirming the increasingly important notion in modern day society that we should leave them be.

If you wish to be deeply disturbed then I highly recommend watching *Cannibal Holocaust*, just be wary of eating dinner beforehand.

Mila Wood



# PURPLE REIGN

## Powerful Empresses in Byzantium

Byzantium appears rather colourful and exotic when compared to the backward kingdoms of Western Christendom during the Middle Ages. One eye-catching element is the role of women in politics; interesting things could happen when there wasn't a man to inherit or when a regency was required.

### Empress Theodora

The first powerful woman of note in Byzantium was the Empress Theodora (527-548). Suffice to say, she was a bit of a character. According to the contemporary account of Procopius she was the daughter of a bear keeper at the Constantinople circus. The death of her father forced her and her sisters into the circus themselves as actresses. In Roman society, actress and prostitute were one and the same. Her speciality act involved geese, and trust me, you don't want to know any more than that.

**“This marriage made no sense politically, was religiously awkward and would have been socially embarrassing. The only possible motive for such a marriage must have been love...”**

Marrying a common prostitute was not exactly a shrewd political move for the heir to the throne; Justinian, indeed the law had to be changed to allow the union to take place. Furthermore, at that time the Empire was racked by a complex religious controversy over the nature of Christ. Whilst Justinian and the Imperial house were very much in the orthodox camp, Theodora was a stringent Monophysite, the 'rebel' faction. This marriage made no sense politically, was religiously awkward and would have been socially embarrassing. The only possible motive for such a marriage must have been love, a heart-warming thought in an age where we think of marriage as a purely political tool.

Once she and Justinian had ascended to the throne in 527, she was politically active, exercising a strong influence over Justinian and arranging beneficial marriages for her family and friends. She didn't hide her religious views and gave shelter to many of the leading monophysite thinkers who faced persecution. Upon the appoint-

ment of the anti-monophysite Pope Silverius in 536, she was able to engineer his removal and get her favoured candidate Vigilius elected. She also introduced significant legislation on women's rights, including making men and women more equal before the law, giving women the right to reclaim their dowry and cracking down on pimps who exploited women in the capital.

### Empress Irene

Our next character is Irene. Marrying Leo IV in 769 for reasons unknown, possibly after a bride show (in which eligible brides are displayed to the heir for him to pick from), she became Empress in 775. As was the case with Theodora, Irene lived in a time of intense religious debate, namely iconoclasm, a fierce dispute over the use of icons in the church. The Imperial family were very much iconoclasts, however, Irene did not share these views privately. Upon the discovery of religious icons in her personal possession, Leo refused to share a bed with Irene again.

Fortunately for her, he died in 780 and she became regent for their 9 year-old son Constantine VI. Irene set about restoring icons to what she saw as their rightful place, calling church councils in 786 and 787 which ended iconoclasm and reunified the Eastern and Western churches. As Irene continued to rule for him even after he had come of age, Constantine grew restless and in 790 led an open rebellion against his mother with the support of the military, banishing her from court.

Through skilful intrigue, Irene was able to return to Constantinople in 792 and was reinstated as Empress alongside her son. Tension remained and two factions emerged around each ruler. In 797, Irene launched a coup, having her son's eyes gouged out and seizing total power herself. Constantine died of his wounds shortly afterwards.

From 797 to 802 she reigned alone, the first woman to do so in Byzantine history, signing legal documents as "Emperor of the Romans". In 800, the Pope took advantage of the fact that the position of Roman Emperor was technically vacant to crown Charlemagne as the first Holy Roman Emperor in the West. As this was embarrassing to Byzantium, it is claimed that a marriage of



convenience between Charlemagne and Irene was proposed however it never happened. In 802, Irene was deposed in a palace coup and her finance minister seized the throne. Iconoclasm was reintroduced and Irene spent the final year of her life in exile on the island of Lesbos.

### Empress Zoe

Our final woman in purple is Zoe. She came to the throne because of the failure of her family to secure the succession. Her uncle, Basil II 'The Bulgar slayer' had no children and so the throne passed to his elderly brother Constantine VIII. He had neglected to marry off his daughters Zoe and Theodora, who were probably in their late forties and therefore dangerously close to being beyond child-bearing age.

Upon the death of her father in 1028, Zoe chose Romanos Argyros as her first husband, thereby elevating him to Emperor. But it soon became apparent that Zoe could not have children and according to the chronicler Psellus, the couple became alienated and Zoe began an affair with the lowly and considerably younger Michael the Paphlagonian. The couple conspired to rid themselves of Romanos III, who was found dead in the palace pool. They were married the same day and Michael was crowned Emperor. Before long, Michael became paranoid that Zoe would tire of him like she had of Romanos and so she was effectively kept as a prisoner in the women's quarters of the palace. When it became clear that Michael IV's health was fading in 1041, his supporters made Zoe adopt

Michael's nephew, who therefore became Emperor Michael V upon his uncle's death later that year.

Zoe's political career seemed to be over when Michael V disposed of her, exiling her to a convent. The people were having none of it however and rebelled against the deposition of the legitimate heir. The mob succeeded in overthrowing Michael and installing Zoe, alongside her younger sister Theodora, who had been a figurehead of the revolt. After a brief period of joint rule, Zoe, who never liked her sister, was able to exclude her from government by marrying her third husband, Constantine Monomachos, who became Constantine IX.

There were more popular revolts in 1044 against Constantine's mistress, Skleraina, whom the public feared would oust Zoe, the mob only being satisfied when Zoe and Theodora appeared on the palace balcony to assure the public they were safe. Zoe died peacefully in 1050 and her final husband also ruled until his death in 1055. After this, there was 18 months under the elderly Theodora, a more confident and capable administrator than Zoe, before she too passed away. Her death marked the end of the Macedonian line and the beginning of 25 years of infighting over the succession.

Alex Clifford



Empress Theodora, Basilica of San Vitale, Yorck Project.



Empress Zoe, from the Hagia Sophia (Istanbul, Turkey)



# MILICIANANS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

## Challenging Expectations of Gender Conventions

*"Now I've seen everything. A woman commands the company and men wash the socks.*

*This really is a revolution"*

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-9, and the revolution within it, changed Spanish society dramatically - at least for the duration of the war. This was especially notable for women. Though it is generally recognised that women tend to achieve more liberation during wartime, due to the absence of men, some women in Spain took it upon themselves to go a step further. Breaking away from all established gender conventions, republican women took up arms to fight against

Franco and the fascist forces alongside their male counterparts - these women became known as the *milicianas*.



Republican militia in training, Gerda Taro at Wikipedia, 1936.

Women serving in the military remains an issue of contestation today, let alone in 1930s Catholic, conservative (especially in regards to gender relations) Spain. Women going into combat was entirely unprecedented and broke all the expected gender norms of a woman's place being 'in the home'. The *milicianas* and their impact has led to quite a historiographical debate which began to unfurl in the 1980s once Franco and his regime had died. Their numbers are contested varying from a meagre two hundred, to a thousand on the frontline, with thousands more trained and defending their towns and villages - although whichever estimation is closest does not alter the fact that women did fight.

Images of *miliciana* women wearing blue overalls with guns slung over their shoulder were rife and were utilised by both sides in their propaganda campaigns. Whilst the Franco and the fascist forces espoused the *milicianas* as proof of the ruin and immorality of the Republican side, the Republicans held up these iconic images in order to show that the entirety of society was involved in the

anti-fascist campaign. As a result, many *milicianas* became famous war heroines. For example, Lina Odena killed herself rather than being captured by enemy forces and had a garrison named after her, whilst Rosario, 'the dynamiter', was revered in a poem by Miguel Hernandez after her hand had been cut off. Some women, like Mika Etchebehere, even commanded garrisons - and it was a *militia* man in her column who said the quote at the beginning of the article.

However, despite the fact that women were now more visible in society than ever before, gender conventions were not entirely challenged and disposed of. There is evidence that many *milicianas* were expected to carry out the domestic duties of their unit and many were harassed by men at the front. They were also accused of being prostitutes and counter-productive to the war effort, with many other women denouncing their actions. It is very common and easy to criticise those who transgress gender norms, and though much of the criticism of the *milicianas* was misplaced, they were pretty much all recalled from the front by the end of 1936. Nevertheless, the bravery of the Spanish women who went to fight should not be forgotten or undermined. The *milicianas* were an unpredictable and radical departure from the normal rules of society - an extraordinary example of breaking the rules!



# THE FREETHINKER

## The Power of Satire as a Weapon in the Arsenal of the Press

Earlier this year a copy of *Private Eye*, was held up in court and condemned by a judge. The reason for this was a colorful illustration on the cover of the accused phone-hacker Rebekah Brooks accompanied by a caption likening her to a witch. In the circumstances the judge considered it 'in bad taste'. The trial continued and *Private Eye* returned to doing what it does best; mocking public figures of any position or creed. It is a proud country indeed where the press are given free rein to mock, jibe and joke at whoever they see fit without fearing repercussions. However, I'm sure you won't be surprised to hear it was not always like this.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century people could be locked away for printing something that a judge deemed to be 'in bad taste'.

Indeed, many were and it was their sacrifice which created the free press which we enjoy today. One pioneer of journalism was G. W. Foote, the creator of the magazine *Freethinker*. In 1883 Foote was arrested for blasphemy and sentenced to a year's imprisonment with hard labour due to the content of this publication. Like the judge who criticised *Private Eye*, Foote's magazine was deemed to be in 'bad taste'.

The *Freethinker* was avowedly Republican and, more worryingly for late Victorians, avowedly atheist. Writers had been questioning religion for decades but the *Freethinker* managed to accomplish what no previous publication had. It reached the masses, the ordinary working man and woman, and opened up the debate past the folds of the Victorian intelligentsia. Its method was at the time somewhat revolutionary. Starting in 1882, every copy of the *Freethinker* was adorned with a satirical cartoon. Almost always biblical and always laughing at the expense of Christianity. The use of cartoons and the fact that it was sold for 'the people's price' of one penny, meant that even the illiterate and uneducated poor could be exposed to freethought and question the intrusive dominance of Christianity.

It was the *Freethinker* that first realised the power of satire as a weapon in the arsenal of the press. The frequent use of cartoons and other illustrations was not replicated by any other publication until the founding of the *Daily Mail* in 1896. Now we are used to opening up a newspaper and seeing an elephant-eared sketch of a royal or MP. Satirical cartoons are now part of this country's journalistic make-up. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century however they were deemed so offensive and vulgar that their publication was enough to land you a hefty prison sentence. Foote quite naturally lamented this and wrote "Why should one man be allowed to deny miracles, and another man be imprisoned for laughing at them? Must we regard long-faced skepticism as permissible heresy, and broad-faced skepticism as punishable blasphemy?"

Foote's wit and refreshing use of humour was in the end his downfall. However, without people such as G. W. Foote, prepared to break the rules in the name of free speech and rational skepticism, today we might not have such a fair and



Private Eye Magazine, Gruenemann at Flickr, 2012.





## PRAGUE

### A metropolis at the heart of the Great European Divide

Prague is a cultural masterpiece; a metropolis at the heart of the great European divide, with an incredibly vast, and at times, rather dark history. Having survived invasions by both the Nazis and the Soviets, it is a testament to the city that so much beauty remains. Indeed this is one of Prague's most endearing elements. Even the cobbled streets, lined with antique lanterns and ornately carved, brightly lit facades, provoke a certain bewilderment.

There is however much more than just architectural wonderment. The capital has a great tradition of resistance, with many of its attractions evoking the hard fought battles it has had to endure. One portent example is the Saints Cyril and Methodius Cathedral. Riveted by bullets, the crypt within marks the last stand between two Czech parachutists and an almost 800 strong SS detachment. A chilling museum within its white washed walls valiantly portrays the incident as it leads you through ever entombing, subterranean chambers. Generally off the tourist radar, sites like these pervade into an otherwise romantic veneer, providing a clear glimpse into the soul of the city.

Just nearby, and a memorial to protest, is the infamous Wenceslas Square. Awarded 3rd place in TIME Magazine's top ten protest plazas of all time, the square has been host to a number of momentous demonstrations. Most memorable of which being the anti-Soviet rallies in honour of Jan Palach's selfless martyrdom. An obsidian cross, appearing as though it has melted into the weathered paving, solemnly commemorates the ordeal of his fiery death. Host to a vast array of comparable monuments and unique sculptures the square remains overshadowed by the grandiose National Museum. Standing as a great

monolith, this palace like structure towers over the square with a brute dominance. The luxurious entrance hall, reminiscent of a French Renaissance theatre, can merely hint at the treasures inside.

Outside in the main square, alongside a range of fashionable high street stores lies the formerly titled Horse market, sheltered within rustic wooden cabins. This traditional medieval delight no longer sells horses but instead perfumes the air with a range of Czech delicacies; most of which are unpronounceable, but remarkably tasty. Appearing quaint and family friendly the square does, much like the rest of Prague, harbour a more sinister side featuring a high concentration of well established strip clubs. Needless to say numerous hours can be spent simply idling around this fabled plaza, and the many others just like it.

One thing that any venture to Prague must wholeheartedly embrace is the astounding array of beers on offer. Beer brewing in the Czech Republic has been a tradition for centuries, with the capital's oldest, continually running brewery dating back 500 years. The average, high quality pilsner pint generally retails at around 40 Koruna (around £1.20), making this well crafted beverage cheaper than water. It almost feels like a challenge by the locals; a test of will to conserve the pennies and go for gold.

With such a rich history, diverse culture, and vibrant nightlife, Prague is both an incredibly beautiful and entertaining city. Any one element alone is well worth the airfare.

Andrew Jackson



# REVIEW

## Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*

Written and directed by Guillermo del Toro; *Pan's Labyrinth* captures the brutality of the fascist regime under General Franco while also highlighting the personal struggles of those in the Falange and the guerrilla fighters who opposed them. Central to this is Ofelia (Ivano Baquero) who is trapped in a remote outpost due to her mother's marriage to the viciously insane Captain Vidal (Sergi Lopez). Ofelia's Alice in Wonderland-esque journey is divided into three tasks, reminiscent of classical mythology. Del Toro's work has been described as 'fairytales for adults', an apt description of the dark world which she descends into. The macabre nature of the fairyland is mirrored in several gruesome torture scenes as Captain Vidal neurotically hunts down the guerrillas surrounding his encampment.

**"*Pan's Labyrinth* captures the brutality of the fascist regime under General Franco while also highlighting the personal struggles of those in the Falange and the guerrilla fighters who opposed them."**

Del Toro was originally offered the chance to direct *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* but turned it down to direct *Pan's Labyrinth*. He acknowledges that the two films have similar themes, both featuring children as leads in the same wartime period, escaping to a fairytale world guided by a fawn.

Del Toro believed that the film should remain authentically Spanish and so the only non-Spanish actor was Doug Jones who played Pan the Faun and the Pale Man. Del Toro alternates between directing Spanish arthousefilms such as *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pan's Labyrinth* and English speaking blockbuster movies such as *Mimic* and *Hellboy 2*. He was initially offered a budget by Hollywood twice the amount he used in *Pan's Labyrinth* provided the film was shot in English, his refusal to

allow this shows his dedication to the film he both wrote and directed.

**"'Breaking the rules' is a constant theme of *Pan's Labyrinth* as it is the disobedience of Princess Moanna which results in her becoming trapped in the human world..."**

'Breaking the rules' is a constant theme of *Pan's Labyrinth* as it is the disobedience of Princess Moanna which results in her becoming trapped in the human world in the opening scene. Del Toro's work is always opposed to authoritarian regimes as revealed in *Pan's Labyrinth*, the audience supports the guerrillas and the efforts of Mercedes (Maribel Verdú) to aid them. Del Toro presents that it is right to fight against a fascist regime although it may be 'breaking the rules' and shows this through the actions of individuals. The struggle of Mercedes and the doctor (Alex Angulo) against Captain Vidal is an engaging sub-story attached to Ophelia's. Their belief in sacrifice is juxtaposed with Vidal's desire to continue his family line and disgust at the guerrillas he fights against.

However the historical context of the events in *Pan's Labyrinth* are underplayed. Focusing on the personal stories of the characters, Del Toro loses the political context of the fight of the guerrillas against the Francoist regime. These guerrillas formed the backbone of the French resistance to the Vichy government, then returned to Spain after World War Two in an attempt to fight their own fascist aggressors. Without the help of the Allies this failed and the guerrillas were reduced to patches of resistance mopped up by radical fascists such as Captain Vidal. Without giving a backstory to this conflict Del Toro gives us an emotional bond with his characters but no knowledge of the wider setting.

Robert Tidball



# VIVA CUBA

*'An astounding lack of Western brands or influence...'*

In an age where societies across the world are dominated by Westernised brands, adverts, and ideals, Cuba breaks the rules by being wholly non-conformist to this trend. In anticipation of my trip to Cuba this summer, I was informed that 'Cuba was changing', its Communist legacy diminishing as the perhaps 'inevitable' Americanisation of the country had slowly begun to take place. As a History student with preconceptions of Cuba dominated by images of revolution, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, I was disappointed to think the Cuba I would visit would no longer have the effigies of Guevara and 'Viva Cuba' plastered over every wall.

Upon arrival in Havana, however, it was undoubtedly apparent that Cuba remains a place still wholly steeped in its Communist history. The legacy of revolution is diffused throughout the whole city, from the man that offered my family a 'Socialist price' for a horse and carriage ride, to the book shops stacked full of propaganda pamphlets. The bleak 'Revolution Square' surrounded by concrete buildings baring the faces of Castro and Guevara resembled something from George Orwell's 1984, a glaring example of the influence of the Soviet Union on the country during the Cold War period.



Amy Upton, 2013

The typical images one associates with Cuba certainly remain, with its crumbling colonial grandeur and abundance of 1950s cars. Despite assumptions about the changing nature of foreign influence in Cuba, the lack of American investment or influence is stark. American citizens are still forbidden by U.S. law to visit the country, an evident reflection of the fears of Communist influence that remain forty-one years after the Cuban Missile Crisis, and an acknowledgement of the enduring legacy of revolution that still permeates perceptions of Cuba today. Further, the lack of Western brands or influence is quite astounding, especially considering its close proximity to the United States; not an Apple logo or Starbucks in sight, and when requesting a Diet Coke in our hotel I was met with a distinctly perplexed look and subsequently given Cuba's own brand version of Coca-Cola. Browsing a menu most items are preceded by the words 'Cuban National', clearly reflecting the steadfast importance of holding onto their own national independence and identity.

However, the juxtaposition between the tourist side and the true reality of life in Cuba is perhaps most shockingly obvious to a group of English travellers. Whilst sipping on a strawberry daiquiri in 'El Floridita', a bar credited as Ernest Hemingway's favourite, it was easy to forget the unquestionable abject poverty of the street vendors outside, vying for the attention of the unmistakable Western tourists out on the streets. Whilst there is pride for the enduring legacy of Communism and non-conformity within the country, and the tourism it attracts, the miserable faces of those queuing for hours to use a pay phone on the street hints at a sad reality of discontent for a system that is ultimately so backwards in the twenty-first century.

Cuba broke the rules in the revolution of the 1950s, and still does so today, remaining almost completely devoid of the American and Western influence that so dominates the rest of the world. The country is still defined by its history, transcending Capitalist ideals that make it completely unique and non-conformist in one sense, yet so backwards in the other. Despite the pride that exists in such a unique and independent country, the adverts at the side of the road thanking Castro and Guevara for revolution are perhaps beginning to fade in significance for those individuals increasingly alienated by a Communist system that exists in a largely Capitalist world.

Amy Upton



# BEAU BRUMMELL

## King of the Dandies

*'There are three great men of our age, myself, Napoleon and Brummell, but of we three, the greatest of all is Brummell.'* Lord Byron

Born in 1778, George Bryan Brummell was a leading pioneer of dandyism. He broke the established societal rules of the Georgian era in his deviation from the popular French fashions that dominated European dress. Instead, he opted for more muted colours and tailored attire, earning himself the nickname 'Beau' for his stylish ensembles.

Brummell first began to build up a reputation of elegance and wit during his time as a student at Eton and Oxford. However, it was not until he joined the Prince of Wales' military regiment (the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons) that he really earned himself a name within society. Known for their drinking and lack of morality, the Dragoons were largely made up of Prince George's acquaintances, who brought Brummell into high society and later to the attention of the Prince himself. Beau quickly befriended George, who was said to have marvelled at his clothes and his fastidious dressing routine (including teeth cleaning, shaving and daily bathing). Consequently he fell into royal favour, allowing him to climb higher into the upper echelons of fashionable society.

After inheriting his father's £30,000 fortune, Brummell made it his business to frequent Gentlemen's Clubs and the most exclusive parties thrown by London's social elites. He was reported to be a fantastic storyteller and conversationalist, and both his witty remarks and charming façade won him the admiration of the upper classes.

His close relationship with the Prince allowed him a great deal of influence within the realms of fashion. He en-

couraged men to cast aside the lacy trims and bright colours that had previously been popular, in favour of more simply cut garments and elaborate neckwear. He stressed the importance of high quality fabric and bespoke items of clothing, and was famous for the Bath coating material of his blue jacket. He was also credited with the transition from breeches to trousers within Regency menswear, and was said to have frequented a number of different tailors so that no single establishment could claim to have been his inspiration. Simply put, he was a trendsetter. He had the power to bring someone into fashion by way of his favour, or to cast someone out with little more than a disparaging comment.

However, Brummell's time in the sun was not to last forever. He managed to lose the entirety of his father's fortune through gambling and extravagance - plunging him into terrible debt. Although worse than that, a quarrel with the Prince of Wales (which resulted in Brummell calling George fat) lost him his royal support and patronage, and in 1816 he was forced to flee to France.

Once in France, Beau's life seemed to spiral rapidly downwards. Although he managed to achieve the role of British Consul for Caen, allowing him to start paying off some of his debts, this position was abolished after a couple of years, and Beau was forced to resort to hiding in order to avoid bailiffs. In 1835 he was imprisoned for a couple of months over an unpaid debt, and those who met him remarked on his slovenly appearance and fading interest in fashion. An alleged contraction of syphilis gradually worsened throughout the latter years of his life leaving him delusional, depressed and subject to sei-

zures. Finally, after two cases of paralysis he was sent to Bon Sauveur asylum in Caen where he remained until his death in 1840.

It seems almost sad that the man credited with the foundation of dandyism could end his life in debt and squalor... But, despite that, Brummell was remembered first and foremost as a pioneer in men's fashion. He broke all the rules of the previous century and created something new and elegant that continues to inspire fashion designers to this day.

Rachael Gillibrand



Robert Deighton, Beau Brummell, 1805



# REMEMBERING THE COLD WAR

## An Unbroken Rule?

How do you remember a war that never happened, a war that was fought by diplomats and spies, and bomber pilots waiting for the order to unleash nuclear Armageddon? I was watching a program on BBC2 recently, part of their Cold War season, in which British historian Dominic Sandbrook attempts to move beyond military and diplomatic history to present an overview of British society and the Cold War. I watched his program with interest, as the Cold War rarely attracts much attention in the mass media, particularly given the build-up to next year's First World War centenary. There seems to be an informal rule to treat the Cold War as more of a diplomatic or military event than a period dominated by mass society.

Studying IHP, I find we can have a tendency to sometimes overemphasise the hard power and diplomatic elements of the Cold War. When you're sat in the Brotherton with six volumes of *Foreign Relations of the United States* (if you're in your first year, you'll soon get to know FRUS!) on your table, it is easy to forget that, whilst Britain and America were arguing over the prosecution of the Korean War by Douglas MacArthur, for example, ordinary people were attempting to live ordinary lives. It was refreshing to watch Dominic Sandbrook attempt to break the rule, so to speak, of speaking about the Cold War purely in terms of the arms race and Mutually Assured Destruction.

**“Where were the ordinary people? Surely not everyone was either a servant of the forces of repression or a victim? A bomber pilot, a dissident or a spy?”**

I had in fact, and I worry about admitting this in case of who could be reading it, only heard of the Red Dean of Canterbury in passing. Hewlett Johnson, born in the same year as Winston Churchill, arguably the founding father of Britain's Cold War, served as Dean of Canterbury – not to be confused with the Archbishop of Canterbury – from 1931 until 1963. Throughout his tenure, he was a committed Marxist and spoke in support of the Soviet Union, which he saw as being at one with Christian morality. Following visits to the USSR in the 1930s, Johnson wrote a

book drawing almost exclusively on doctored Soviet propaganda he had been given during his stay. His activities earned him the suspicion of MI5 and the Stalin International Peace Prize, the Communist bloc's answer to the Nobel Prize. Although Johnson began to reconsider his views in light of the nuclear arms race and 1956 invasion of Hungary, in a sense he was almost a one-man fifth column, and very embarrassing to the British Labour government of Clement Attlee.

At this point I was struck with the memory of my holiday to Prague in September. Most tourists could be forgiven for wandering through the charming baroque streets oblivious to the Czech Republic's recent history, but I was keen to delve beneath the tourist-oriented surface. As well as enjoying some good beer and very good food, I tried to trace as much of the city's Cold War past as possible, starting off by embarking on an organised tour of the remnants of state socialism. On the tour, and in my independent travels, I came across many remnants of totalitarian repression and state control: the secret police headquarters, with its great statues of Socialist Man standing guard above the portico; the Victorian-era exhibition grounds converted into the Party Congress centre; the television tower for jamming Western signals; ugly, conformist apartment blocks; an old airfield complete with Soviet nuclear bombers; and even a nuclear bunker – unlike the British equivalents, designed to serve as a public shelter for ordinary citizens, even if this was little more than a propaganda tool. But where were the ordinary people? Surely not everyone was either a servant of the forces of repression or a victim? A bomber pilot, a dissident or a spy? There is one museum which includes daily life among its exhibits, but even that is through the paradigm of totalitarianism.

The difference to Berlin was noticeable. First, that Prague has not chosen to turn its Cold War past into a tourist attraction. In Berlin, I bought my bust of Lenin from one of the many stalls crowding round Check-





point Charlie; in Prague, I had to find a little antique shop to procure my golden head of Gottwald, Czechoslovakia's Stalinist leader. But deeper than that, Prague seemed to be still struggling to come to terms with that portion of its history, and to decide how to remember the Cold War.

**“Did people really convert their spare bedroom into a fallout room? Did our grandparents really pay that much attention to the announcement of the Cuban Missile Crisis or Kim Philby’s defection on the news?”**

If you read Anna Funder’s *Stasiland*, it is clear that reunified Germany suffered from a similar condition until quite recently, with museums and memorials focusing on totalitarian aspects of the regime such as the Berlin Wall and the Stasi, but thanks in part to the development of Ostalgie, that has become more balanced, with Berlin’s DDR Museum and its many copies presenting a balanced view of state and society in East Germany. The Czech Republic hasn’t quite found that balance yet, still erring on the side of caution and following the rule of either mentioning the Cold War only in whispers, or choosing to focus on a black-or-white, top-down view of events. As my fellow third years studying Europe’s Communist Dictatorships will no doubt concur, this approach can obscure the extent to which life went on as the world waited for nuclear annihilation.

I’m left wondering if we’re doing that much better in Britain. The so-called National Cold War Exhibition is hidden away in a branch of the RAF Museum



A recently restored nuclear bunker in Yorkshire - a reminder of MAD, Alex Shaw

somewhere east of Wales but west of Birmingham. A few sites such as nuclear bunkers have been opened to the public, but many more remain rotting, and even this propagates the accepted paradigm of MAD, rather than going deeper to ask just how far the Cold War influenced British society during the last half of the twentieth century. Did people really convert their spare bedroom into a fallout room, as recommended in Civil Defence leaflets such as the famous *Protect and Survive*? Did our grandparents really pay that much attention to the announcement of the Cuban Missile Crisis or Kim Philby’s defection on the news? Whilst it is clear that hotter periods such as the Korean and Vietnam Wars extracted a heavy toll on ‘normal’ society, and this has been well studied, we’re still struggling to confront the question of what were people doing whilst the diplomats talked, spies crossed sides and pilots sat in their bombers, their fingers hovering over the controls. It is easy to remember the Cold War in hard power terms and it’s a rule which is yet to fully broken.

Alex Shaw



Prague’s Secret Police Headquarters - a monument to totalitarianism, Alex Shaw

**RNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER**



# MEET THE DAVIDSONS

Margaret and John return to Leeds 50 years after they first met

*Margaret and John Davidson, who both studied history at the University, first met over a cheese and wine event in 1963. So, when they contacted the university fifty years later in the hope of 'revisiting the scene of the crime', the School of History just couldn't resist a celebration. During a surprise cheese and wine party (just like that fateful event of Fresher's week 1963) Freya Potter was given the chance to speak with them...*

## FP: What was it like as a student in 1963?

J: It must have been at the beginning of the academic year and our landlady said, 'Students, they're not all that popular in Leeds because they manned the buses in the General Strike!' That was 1926 and they were still holding a grudge in 1963!

M: There was an issue with the Graduation hats because of the bouffant hairstyles! I don't know how I balanced it on the back on my head!

J: Women were heavily outnumbered by men but looking at the students at the event today that looks like it's been reversed.

M: Back then I could not get myself through the door into the lecture hall, I was really intimidated by all those men. I would have missed the lecture if my friend hadn't turned up. It was very much a man's world, there were no women lecturers and no focus on women's history.

**"Back then I could not get myself through the door into the lecture hall, I was really intimidated by all those men... It was very much a man's world, there were no women lecturers and no focus on women's history."**

## FP: What were your favourite modules and subjects you studied when you were here?

M: I seemed to fall into Tudors and Stuarts ad nauseam, it was Tudors and Stuarts at school and I did a brief teaching experience and low and behold it was Tudors and Stuarts so I have a loathing of Henry VIII! I'm not sure that it was available here but my interests were 15<sup>th</sup> Century, which doesn't seem to have been popular at all.

J: Elton's *Tudor Revolution in Government* was contemporary so that really was the cutting edge of History then. But I remember we must have done something about the Yorkist experiment in government because someone had stolen the book on Edward IV out of the Brotherton Library! Professor Forster's module on the Northern history of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century was certainly up my street, I really enjoyed that and he was a good tutor because he was very focused and very erudite, he really knew his subject. He was a great human being as well, we got to know him a little bit afterwards, sadly we haven't been in touch for many many many years but to see him today was just absolutely fabulous.

M: There was an emphasis on medieval history. And then the European branch was very very interesting, we had some really good lecturers.

## What did you think of the Campus when you revisited it this afternoon? Has it changed much?

M: Oh yes phenomenally! What has struck me is the colour, there's so much colour! In 1963 it was just the start of Mary Quant and all that sort of thing, but I don't remember there being a tremendous flare for fashion and certainly not



amongst the men, unlike when you walk around now! The architecture is wonderful, the changes are just lovely! You can go to some places and you think, that's not how I remembered it, they've destroyed it, but no! It's all blended. I can imagine people coming to have a look round and thinking yes, I'd like to come here.

J: The university has just grown out of all proportion from when we were here.

M: I remember being interviewed and was asked why I wanted to come here, I just felt I wanted to be in Leeds and I can't give a rational answer. I just had this feeling.

“What has struck me is the colour, there's so much colour! In 1963 it was just the start of Mary Quant and all that sort of thing, but I don't remember there being a tremendous flare for fashion and certainly not amongst the men, unlike when you walk around now!”

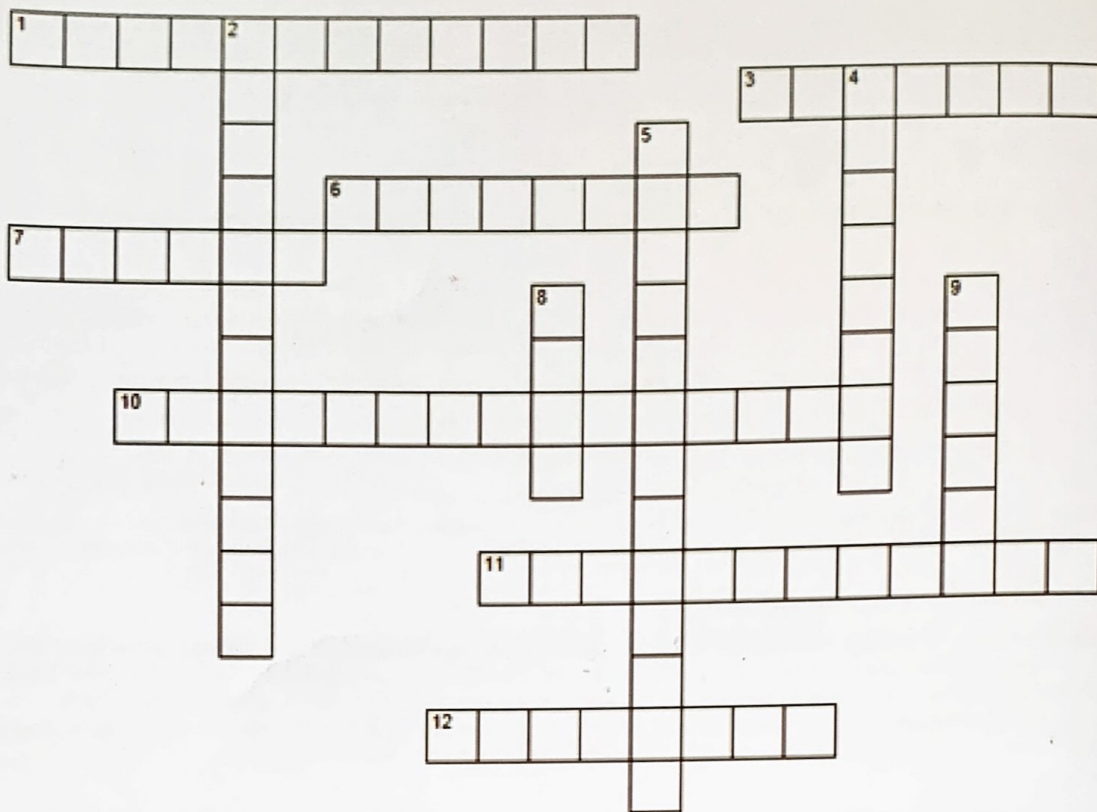
FP: What did you go on to do after University?

J: I intended to teach, I applied for about twenty or thirty jobs to teach history in Newcastle but didn't get any of them. Margaret decided she wanted to go on a wanderlust and I'm a Geordie, Geordies don't go very far! But I got a job in New Zealand, I taught there for 8 years and became head of department and then Margaret -she'll kill me for telling you this! But she was besotted with Richard III and wrote a historical novel, *My Lords Richard*, the story of Anne Neville. We came back to England and we got a camper van and did a grand tour of all sorts of places that Margaret had written about.



Leeds University History Department, Class of '66.





**Across**

1. What was the 1968 period of liberalisation in Czechoslovakia called? (6/6)
3. In which country was Marie Antoinette born? (7)
6. Which Carthaginian general led his army across the Alps with a contingent of elephants? (8)
7. Which model was voted the face of 1966? (6)
10. Which architect was responsible for the rebuilding of 52 churches after the after the Great Fire of London? (11/4)
11. What object was rediscovered in 1799 and made the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphs possible? (7/5)
12. Which famous Tudor warship sank in 1545? (4/4)

**Down**

2. What pen name did the famous novelist Eric Arthur Blair write under? (6/6)
4. Later known as Lana Peters, what was the given forename of Stalin's daughter who defected to the US? (8)
5. Who was Henry VIII's wife when he died? (9/4)
8. Which King signed the Magna Carta? (4)
9. What was Mussolini's first name? (6)

**Find the answers in the next edition of the History Student Times!**

**Down:** 1. Dallas, 3. Belfast, 4. Bayeux Tapestry, 6. Train, 8. Cyprus, 9. Poland, 10. CIA, 11. Whig  
**Across:** 2. Longbow, 5. King Arthur, 7. Spencer Perceval, 12. English Civil War, 13. Christopher Columbus, 14. Chartism  
**Answers to 'Leaders and Laymen' crossword:**

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