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SYMEON

— Issue Eleven —

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Department of History,
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With its pandemic and politics, the past year has presented a particularly strange time for students and staff to study history. Of course, as historians, we are not unfamiliar with catastrophic events. The past is populated with crises: we ponder the reasons for economic recession, contemplate the causes of conflict, whilst the impact of famine and plague are all in a day's reading and research for many of our peers. Used to viewing these disasters at a distance, however—from documents and artefacts found after the fact—it seems especially strange to find ourselves in the midst of one. With our historical hindsight, it is hard not to feel as if we are living the history that our successors will study.

By the same token, though, history also has tales of recovery to tell. For every disaster, difficulty or downfall, there are stories of strength to be heard. In recognition of this positive counterpart to the crises that typically concern historians and inspired by the resilience shown across the globe in the face of our current crisis, then, this year's edition of Symeon explores the theme of recovery. The articles that follow foreground examples of resilience and recuperation across diverse contexts, cultures and chronologies.

Physical recovery has become a key concern not only for those who have contracted COVID-19 but also for those with underlying health conditions for whom the concept of recovery is perhaps more complex. These issues are foregrounded as food for thought in Coreen McGuire's exploration of the telephone's paradoxical role during the 1918-19 influenza outbreak. Revealing how increased reliance on the telephone heightened inequality for those with hearing loss, McGuire prompts us to consider the impact of our own current reliance on digital communication.

Concerned also with hearing and health, Ruben Verwaal recounts the relationship between the recovery of earwax and early modern definitions of deafness. Crucially, he reveals that, in some cases, its removal appears to have brought about a recovery from the deafness its build up caused! Chronologically closer but physically further afield, Yotam Gidron draws on his ethnographic research amongst the Nuer communities of the South Sudanese-Ethiopian borderlands to explore how attitudes to healing have shifted following the adoption of Protestantism.

As well as being characterised by crisis, history and its study can also be adversely affected by crisis. Crucially, though, as the following contributors reveal, the past plays an important role in recovery— both personal and public. With the closure of museums over the past year, public engagement with—and indeed enjoyment of— history has been under threat. Alumna, Gemma Ashby, describes how the current crisis has affected museums and, more importantly, how they are recovering and playing a key role in not only cultural but also personal recovery for many. Likewise, John Hamer draws on personal experience to relate how past political conflict has posed challenges for history teachers in Cyprus. Happily, however, he is also able to report the ways in which historians have helped foster intercultural trust and consequently kickstart Cyprus' recovery. Antonia Perna also explores the relationship between education and political recovery in her contribution, taking prizegiving ceremonies in Paris schools as a barometer of recovery in post-Revolutionary France. Meanwhile, Emily Glynn examines how the greatest political conflict in living memory has been coopted in contemporary political discourses in her reflection on Second World War myths and their prevalence in the recent Brexit debate.

As historians, we are all regularly involved in the recovery of hidden pasts. This thought informs Eva MacDonald's contribution, which uses the Hereford World Map to recover thirteenth-century thoughts on identity. Crucially, she reveals how problematic military propaganda was central to English identity several centuries before Brexit! Finally, Emma Yeo brings us back to Durham with her study of St Oswald's parish, where she finds stories strikingly similar to our own and, amidst the death and disease, evidence of the local support that enabled this community and—she confidently concludes—will enable our own to recover.

Nicola McNeil
Editor-in-chief

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Front cover: This issue's bookshelf belongs to Christina Riggs, Professor of the History of Visual Culture. Christina's research explores the impact of photography across a range of fields as well as the colonial and imperial history of archaeology in the Middle East and its ramifications up to the present day. As a former museum curator, Christina is also interested in the history of museums, collecting and archives.

This page: Image courtesy of Durham University.

Contents

Department news

Image courtesy of Durham University.

Sarah Davies
Head of the Department of History

As we approach the end of this quite extraordinary academic year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Durham History Department alumni community for their continuing support over the last few years.

Particular thanks are owed to those alumni who have enhanced our website by contributing profiles of their careers after Durham—if you haven't seen them, you can find them **here**. We know that these have been very useful for current and potential students who are thinking about the benefits of a Durham History degree. Our graduates continue to be highly valued (90% of our 2018 graduates were in paid employment or further study 15 months after graduation), and it is fantastic to be able to read the personal stories that illustrate this.

We would also like to thank those who have made generous donations to the Department and University. Thanks to the generosity of History graduates Guy and Sarah Weldon, the University has established the Weldon - le Huray studentships to support Arts and Humanities students from lower-income households. Likewise, we are very excited that a recent legacy has allowed us to create the Ralph Waggett MA studentship, aimed at a student from a BAME background studying on one of our Master's programmes

in History. There are further alumni-funded History studentships in the pipeline—more news on this soon!

Symeon is a great way for us to maintain our links with our alumni, and we are delighted that this edition contains articles by two alumni, John Hamer OBE and Gemma Ashby. Whilst you can also keep up to date by following us on Twitter @durham_history, we would welcome suggestions of other ways we can stay in touch. We have been thinking, for instance, about organising a social gathering, and we have also wondered if alumni might be interested in attending online lectures by members of the Department. Do let us know your thoughts—we would love to hear from you.

This has been an interesting year in the life of the History Department. It has not been easy, but we have adapted to the situation thanks to the versatility of staff and students and the wonders of technology. Colleagues have had a crash course in delivering remote teaching. Online lectures have become the 'new normal', while seminars have been conducted through a mix of face-to-face, hybrid and online formats. We are getting used to experimenting with digital pedagogy and are now thinking about what we might like

to retain from this experience. Certainly, while we are all looking forward to returning to face-to-face interaction in the classroom, it is clear that some of the digital innovations have been a great success.

The same is true of research. For example, online research seminars offer some advantages over conventional in-person events, allowing us to reach much broader audiences than we could have previously imagined while also raising the international profile of the Department. Though COVID-19 has undeniably had a major effect on colleagues' ability to carry out research this year, it is a pleasure to report that several significant publications have appeared in recent months. Graeme Small and his colleagues have published a handsome (and heavy!) new edition of Johan Huizinga's classic *Autumntide of the Middle Ages,* while Kevin Waite's *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* is out in hardback and paperback. Justin Willis, meanwhile, has co-authored *The Moral Economy of Elections in Africa* and Markian Prokopovych *The Museum Age in Austria-Hungary: Art and Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century*. One of our newest colleagues, Coreen McGuire—whose work

appears in this issue—has published *Measuring Difference, Numbering Normal: Setting the Standards for Disability in the Inter-war Period*. Retired colleagues also continue to be very productive. Some of you will remember Margaret Harvey: together with Lynda Rollason, she has produced a new edition—the first for over a century—of William Claxton's *The Rites of Durham*.

It was particularly exciting to hear that a book by a recently-appointed colleague has been shortlisted for the prestigious Wolfson Prize. Rebecca Clifford's *Survivors: Children's Lives after the Holocaust* tells the moving story of Jewish children who survived the tragedy of the Holocaust. We are delighted that Rebecca will be joining the Department in September as Professor of Modern European and Transnational History.

We will also be joined by a new Assistant Professor in Black British history, Dr Liam Liburd, who will be our first ever appointment in this field. The decision to create a post in Black British history is just one of several Departmental initiatives aimed at 'decolonising' the curriculum and diversifying our staff and student body. We still have a

great deal to do in this area but are starting to make real progress. As already mentioned, we took the decision to use a bequest to create a studentship targeted at BAME applicants. Likewise, we have also raised money to establish a prize for the best student dissertation on an aspect of BAME history.

The BAME history dissertation prize will add to our existing portfolio of alumni-funded prizes. On this note, we are pleased to report that in 2021 these were awarded to Eve Nicholson (Edward Allen Prize for the best performance in the first year), Angus Crawford (Alumni Prize for the best performance in the second year), Jack Fraser (Thompson Prize for the best performance in the final year), Jack Fraser (Dissertation Prize) and Grace Wilson (Gibson Prize for the best dissertation on a topic in local history). As well as our prize-winners, we would like to congratulate every single one of our students. They have coped so well in this most difficult and challenging of years: we hope that next year will be an easier one for them and for all of us.

Johan Huizinga, *Autumntide of the Middle Ages,* edited by Anton van der Lem and Graeme Small (Leiden University Press, 2021).
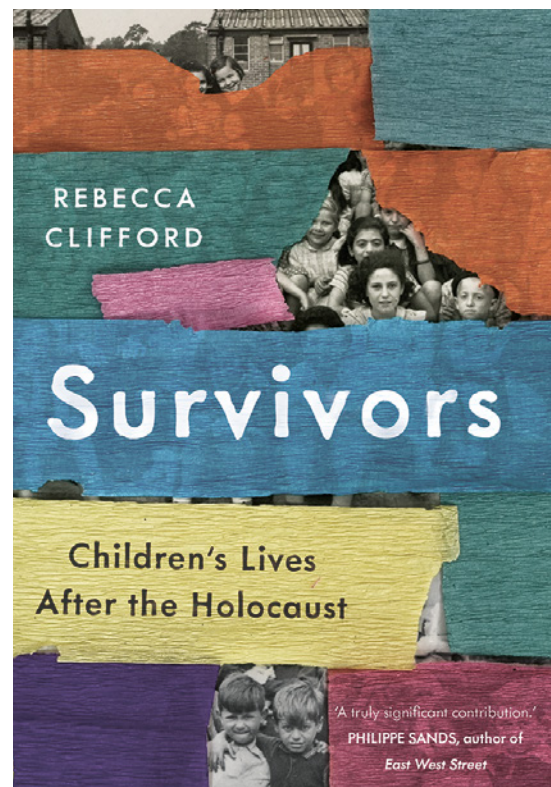
Rebecca Clifford, *Survivors: Children's Lives after the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2020).
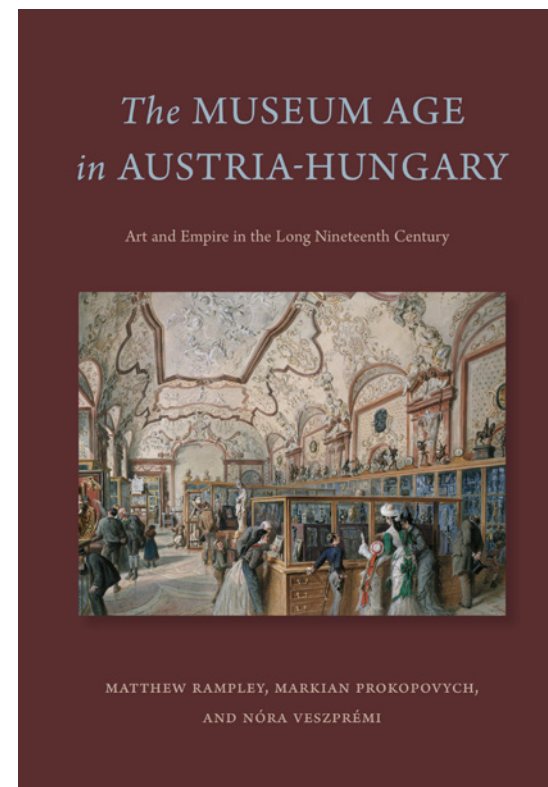
Matthew Rampley, Markian Prokopovych, and Nóra Veszprémi, *The Museum Age in Austria-Hungary: Art and Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Penn State University Press, 2021).
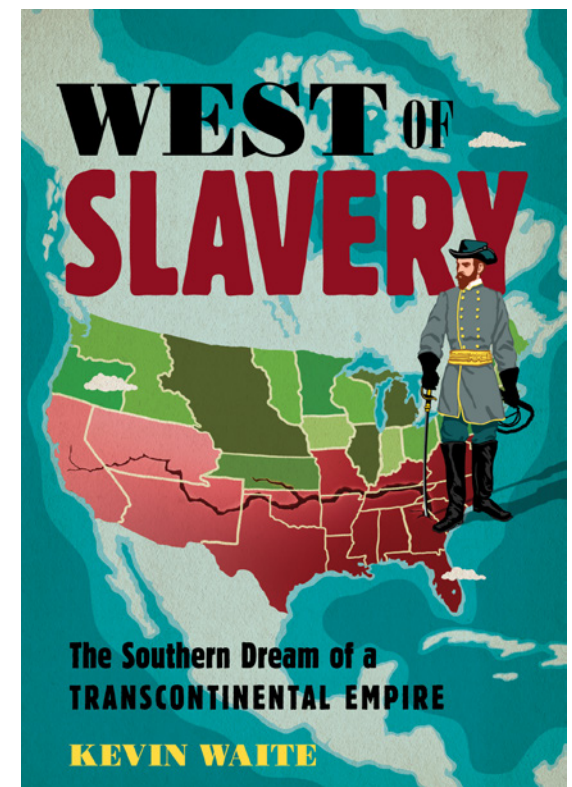
Kevin Waite, *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (North Carolina University Press, 2021).

Recovering Technology:

the use of the telephone in the 1918-19 influenza pandemic

Coreen McGuire

Coreen McGuire is Lecturer in Twentieth-Century British History at Durham University. You can read more about how technologies related to hearing loss and respiratory disability created new ideas about normalcy in her first book, *Measuring Difference, Numbering Normal: Setting the Standards for Disability in the Interwar Period*. She won the Disability History Association prize for outstanding article in 2020 and is currently working on a book with Dr Jaipreet Virdi on the British scientist, Dr Phyllis Kerridge, which will be published by Johns Hopkins Press in 2023.

·INFLUENZA·

A telephone at home in times of sickness is not a luxury—it is a necessity. You can talk to your friends, and despite your illness, you can still control your business if you are on the telephone at home. The cost? A modest payment of approximately 10/- a month rental, a penny for each local call, and little more than a halfpenny a day for an extension telephone to your bedside.

KEEP IN TOUCH—
TELEPHONE

INQUIRY FORM
To the Secretary, General Post Office, London
Please send me, without any obligation on my part, full particulars of telephone service—its advantages and its costs.
Name
(Mr. Mrs. or Miss)
Address
Town
11—F

An advertisement of the Post Office Telephone Service

Figure 1: Telephone advertisement, 1934.

What does recovery mean?

If we think about individual recovery from something like the common cold, then recovery might mean being back to normal with the cold quite forgotten. This sense of recovery — as a return to past normalcy — is the same sense we would use to talk about economic recovery or recovery in the housing market. In other cases of personal illness, we might recover but be changed, transformed even, by the experience. We might become more cautious and risk-averse, changing our habits to be more health conscious, or we might gain new empathy for others and appreciation for loved ones.[1] Sometimes recovery remains elusive and we must learn to manage our new normal. This sense of recovery links to another signification of the word recovery: the sense of an ongoing attempt to regain something lost.

In view of these dual significations, as we recover from COVID-19, do we prioritise recovery as retrieval or recovery as revival? To answer this, we need to think about how the pandemic has transformed the way we communicate and assess these communication technologies not with a view to 'the new normal' but, rather, by reckoning with the past normal. Normal was not good enough for many, and pandemic learning demonstrated the possibility of accommodating people with chronic illnesses, the disabled and students who do not fit the 'traditional' student profile in more flexible and inclusive ways. Analysis of communication technologies used in past pandemics illustrates the deep entanglements between health, infection control, communication and inequalities.

Such interrelations are illuminated in analysis of the telephone in the influenza pandemic of 1918–19. Colloquially referred to as the Spanish Flu, this Influenza Pandemic came in three deadly waves and had an extremely high mortality rate, notably in young people.[2] The British governmental response to the 1918 pandemic has been criticised by historians for its passivity, its disinclination to acknowledge the seriousness of the event and its overall focus on personal prevention and personal health over structural policy measures.[3] On the other hand, contemporary uncertainty about its nature as a *virus* has been highlighted by historian Michael Bresalier, who has urged us to remember that knowledge of the pandemic as a virus was '*in-the-making* between 1918 and 1933'.[4] The workplace measures used to reduce infection in this period exemplify this uncertainty around differentiating bacterial from viral infections and the interplay between communication technologies and medical interventions. The telephone was a key tool in controlling the influenza pandemic, but also a focus of concern because of its probable role as a vector of germs. Although it played a role in reducing infection, it also posed a potential health risk, especially in shared spaces. In addition, it deepened inequality for people with hearing loss.

1. Havi Carel has done work on illness as transformative experience, see H. Carel, 'Ill, but Well: A Phenomenology of Well-Being in Chronic Illness', in J. E. Bickenbach, F. Felder and B. Schmitz (eds), *Disability and the Good Human Life* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp.243-270.

2. It is estimated to have killed 40-50 million people worldwide. A Garcia-Sastre and R. J. Whitley, 'Lessons Learned from Reconstructing the 1918 Influenza Pandemic' *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 194:2 (2006) 127-132.

3. See A. Tanner, 'The Spanish Lady Comes to London: the Influenza Pandemic 1918-1919' *The London Journal* 27:2 (2002) for the focus on individual failure and S. Tomkins, 'The Failure of Expertise: Public Health Policy in Britain during the 1918–19 Influenza Epidemic' *Social History of Medicine* 5:3 (1992) 435-454 for the failures of the government response more broadly.

4. M. Bresalier, 'Uses of a Pandemic: Forging the Identities of Influenza and Virus Research in Interwar Britain' *Social History of Medicine* 25:2 (2011) 400-424 (p.402). Italics in original.

Influenza: Keep in Touch

The telephone offered a way to work from home and reduce the risk that you would spread influenza to others.[5] We see this rhetoric in the advertisement in figure 1, which portrayed the telephone as a way to provide protection from illness while retaining business acumen, explaining 'despite your illness, you can still control your business if you are on the telephone at home'.[6]

However, rates of illness in the (all-female) workforce during the pandemic meant calls were restricted because over 1000 telephone operators were absent from work.[7] Nevertheless, the telephone remained critical in the fight against influenza. On March 13, 1919, the Ministry of Munitions reported on the 'precautions against Influenza' they had instated to protect their staff working at headquarters. 'Telephones are sprayed so far as possible by the Welfare Staff, and Departments are being encouraged to send a number of their staff to the sick-room to fetch solution and a spray, for the purpose of spraying their Department's telephones.'[8] Other crucial 'prophylaxis' included ventilating rooms, disinfecting lifts and infected rooms (using a formalin lamp) and disinfecting the throats of contacts with iodine.[9] The telephone was a locus of concern as a shared technology that necessitated very close contact between the device and the mouth. Early telephones handsets were adjustable so users could place their mouths and ears directly against the receiver and transmitter. This was necessary because the early telephone was very difficult to hear.

Telephone Voices

Somewhat ironically, the telephone (patented in 1876) was originally designed to function as a kind of hearing aid to support Alexander Graham Bell's attempts to make the deaf speak. However, the telephone increased the number of people perceived to have hearing loss because sound was (for the first time) isolated from accompanying visual information that would help aid understanding. Even for those who could hear it, telephone calls were difficult. We can see from this Post Office 1923 guidance (figure 2) on 'how to pass and receive a telephone call', that the
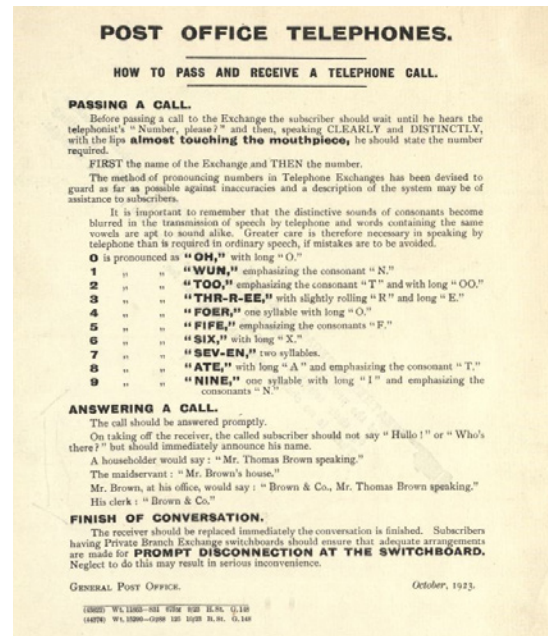

Figure 2: Guidance for telephone usage, 1923.

telephone blurred consonants and elided vowel sounds.[10] The technology required a different way of speaking and so ushered in new communication norms.

This guidance makes it clear that the process of telephone transmission made speech less comprehensible for those with hearing loss, especially those with noise or age induced hearing loss who would have struggled to hear higher frequencies—where information-delivering consonants are pitched. Specific pronunciation and etiquette norms were instated to mitigate this effect. Protocol helped users to know what to listen for and expect, further easing the communication process. The technology did not force the *elevation* of a particular accent in the way of the radio and the BBC, rather it forced the *standardisation* of a telephone voice.[11]

Telephone Ears

Increased use of telephony caused problems for people who could 'manage' their hearing loss in other communication settings and who otherwise considered themselves as 'hearing'.[12] This disconnect was partly the result of the Post Office's design choices. To test their telephones, the Post Office designed an 'artificial ear'. However, the data used to create the artificial ear's representation of normal was skewed to represent 'the ideal' (eight normal men with good hearing) to the detriment of those at the edges of a more representative average curve. Using data that excluded those with imperfect hearing meant the average threshold, which represented normalcy, was artificially high. Those consequently unable to use the 'normal' telephones used the Post Office's 'telephone service for the deaf'.[13] However, from 1947, plans for an NHS hearing aid moved provision of auditory technologies under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and diminished the role of the Post Office in providing nationalised assistive technologies.[14] This meant users with hearing aids struggled to access telephony in the second half of the twentieth-century. For example, in 1954, a telephone user advocated for a new telephone design to help people with hearing aids. They made their case by highlighting its dual importance to public health, explaining that they needed a flat mouthpiece rather than a curved mouthpiece to use the telephone with their hearing aid (see figure 3). They emphasised that 'many people who are not deaf would prefer the flat mouthpiece as more hygienic. I have met several who have expressed that opinion. A good case could be made out for all public call boxes to be fitted with hand telephones with flat mouthpieces in the interest of public health'.[15]

This telephone user attempted to gain access to assistive technology by emphasising its wider incidental benefits. This case relates to two of the central insights driving my research: that technologies are crucial to our understanding of disability and that disabled innovation is crucial to the development of technologies. Using safe
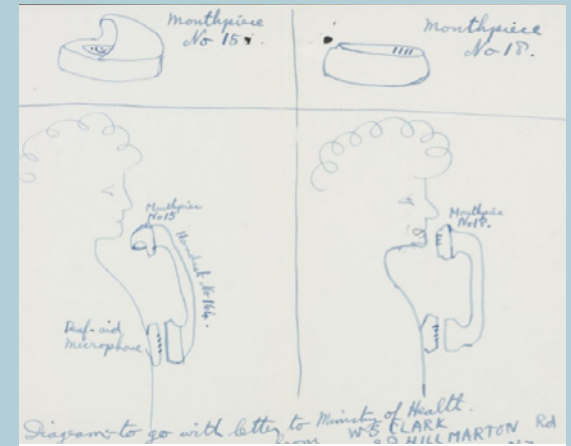

Figure 3: Letter offering suggestions for different telephone designs, 1954.

communication systems in the pandemic has exacerbated problems for those with hearing loss. Necessary use of facemasks has made it difficult to communicate and video-communication technologies without subtitles have increased difficulties for those with hearing loss.[16] Though in-built subtitles are now available on Zoom, automatic captions are often faulty because voice recognition technologies rely on biased data, so errors increase for users with higher voices and/or with non-standard accents.[17] This bias is due to the origination of this technology in telephone systems. In the USA, Bell Laboratories prioritised *patterns* of speech forms over *diversity* of voices, which meant vocal measurements from men and children were averaged out and represented as 'typical'.[18] This statistical approach has led to enduring race and gender bias in voice-recognition software.[19]

In the move towards recovery, we must ensure we retain the accessibility measures that the pandemic has made possible *and* actively improve on them. Recovery should allow us to forget about the worst parts of the pandemic while retaining its better aspects. Doing so will ensure that we experience recovery as revival rather than retrieval.

5. Michael Kay documented the history of the telephone as an important quarantine tool in his 2014 University of Leeds PhD thesis.

6. Press advertising proofs, volume 1, 6. Influenza British Telecom Archives TCB 699/1/6 Proof of newspaper advertisement (1934).

7. S. Tomkins, 'The Failure of Expertise: Public Health Policy in Britain during the 1918–19 Influenza Epidemic' *Social History of Medicine* 5:3 (1992), p.441.

8. Ministry of Munitions of War, Central Establishment Notice No. 82. Precautions against Influenza. National Archives, MUN 4/3702, pp.1-2. Thank you to Dr Laura Robson-Mainwaring for drawing my attention to this source and helping me access it for this article. For more on Dr Robson-Mainwaring's work on 'Public Health and the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic' see **https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/**

9. Ministry of Munitions of War, Central

Establishment Notice No. 82. Precautions against Influenza. National Archives, MUN 4/3702.

10. The British Post Office had a legal monopoly over the telephone system between 1911 and 1981.

11. See J. R. Schwyter, *Dictating to the Mob: The History of the BBC Advisory Committee on Spoken English* (Oxford, 2016).

12. The concept of managing hearing loss was introduced in G. Gooday and K, Sayer, *Managing the Experience of Hearing Loss in Britain, 1930–1930* (London, 2017).

13. This process of making this service was driven by disabled innovation and user activism and is explored in detail in chapter 3 of my book.

14. The Post Office engineers, who were the de-facto experts in auditory assistive technologies in the mid-twentieth century, designed the Medresco.

15. 'Suggestion that a flat mouthpiece, instead of

the normal cupped one, should be provided to facilitate the use of a telephone in conjunction with a deaf aid worn on the chest'. Letter from W. S. Clark to Telephone Headquarters, 20 March 1954, British Telecom Archives, TCB 2/ 172, folder 'Telephone for Deaf People'.

16. Subtitles, originally designed through disabled innovation by deaf users, are today used by a variety of people for a variety of reasons, see 'Pandemic Pedagogy 2.0: Coreen McGuire – The Pandemic and Teaching Practice: thoughts on subtitles and accessibility' *History UK*, February 2

2021, **https://www.history-uk.ac.uk/2021/02/04/pandemic-pedagogy-2-0-coreen-mcguire-the-pandemic-and-teaching-practice-thoughts-on-subtitles-and-accessibility/**

17. Appearance enhancing filters were available before subtitles were.

18. M. Mills and X. Li, 'Vocal Features: From Voice Identification to Speech Recognition by Machine', *Technology and Culture* 60:2 (2019), pp. 129-160.

19. Ibid. p. 152.

The Recovery of Earwax in Early Modern Europe

Ruben Verwaal

Ruben Verwaal (PhD, 2018) is postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for Medical Humanities and the Department of History, Durham. He specialises in the history of medicine, material culture and disability in early modern Europe. He recently published his first monograph, *Bodily Fluids, Chemistry and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Boerhaave School* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). It demonstrates how chemical experimentation on bodily fluids allowed doctors to gain a better understanding of the living body and reinvent ancient humoral theory. His current research project investigates medical understandings and popular perceptions of deafness and hardness of hearing.

c.1680 portrait conjectured to be of Robert Hooke (1635-1703).

In the 1670s Robert Hooke (1635–1703), eminent member of the Royal Society, recorded his experiences of impaired hearing. He particularly complained about tinnitus, a ringing or buzzing in the ears. In December 1672, he filled his ear with warm honey, wool, and the oil of bitter almonds, hoping it would relieve him of his complaints. But on New Year's Day 1673, Hooke still woke up with a 'strange noyse in right ear […] like a horne or bell', which continued to plague him for months. Finally, on Monday 11 August, Dr Carew syringed Hooke's ears, which helped to 'fetch out a core' of earwax. Hooke had no complaints about noise in his head for the next eight months.[1] Hooke was far from the only one who experienced hearing difficulties caused by earwax. Based on diary entries and medical dissertations, we know that earwax-related hearing problems were quite widespread.

Unfortunately, it appears that no sample of early modern earwax has been saved in museum collections. Nor have historians shown any interest in the pieces of wax from inside the ear. Yet earwax can be an important point of entry into medical understandings of hardness of hearing. Early modern physiologists, for example, asked why the auditory passage secreted this waxy substance in the first place. What constituted earwax? How did it relate to healthy hearing? In this essay, therefore, I will shed light on both the material aspects and knowledge claims about earwax, arguing that earwax provides a fresh view on early modern perceptions and experiences of hearing and deafness.

French physician and anatomist Guichard Joseph du Verney (1648–1730) was one of the first to describe the particulars of *cerumen* (from the Latin *cera*, meaning 'wax'). Du Verney was a member of the Académie Royale in Paris and gave anatomical demonstrations.

In 1683 he published *A Treatise of the Organ of Hearing*, which discussed the anatomical structure of the ear, the physiology of hearing, and ear diseases.[2] He presented earwax not simply as a yellowish waxy substance secreted in human ear canals, but referred to a whole range of properties: transparent and yellow, oily and bitter, smooth, viscid and dry earwax, in excessive and diminutive quantities.

Where did earwax come from and what was its function? Ear anatomy helped explain the origins of earwax. Du Verney first described the structure of the outer ear, the ear passage, and its outer layer of skin, which housed numerous round follicles (see Figure 1). These ceruminous glands had already been mentioned by Niels Stensen in 1661.[3] Du Verney went one step further and suggested that the short ducts steadily secreted an oily substance for two reasons. First, earwax served to moisturise the eardrum, preventing it from drying out and losing its tension. Second, the bitter and sticky properties of earwax caught dirt and prevented insects from entering and hurting the eardrum.[4]

In 1743, Professor Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) concurred with Du Verney's theory that the skin and eardrum were preserved by a liniment. Curious about the secretion of earwax, Von Haller rubbed his ear a hundred times in an hour with a piece of black velvet. He noticed how, each time, new smudges were wiped off and concluded that the earwax was perpetually being discharged to keep the outer ear lubricated.[5]

1. H.W. Robinson and W. Adams, eds., *The Diary of Robert Hooke, M.A., M.D., F.R.S., 1672–1680* (London, 1968), pp. 15, 18–9, 54, 99; Emily Cockayne, 'Experiences of the Deaf in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), pp. 493–510, here 498.

2. Guichard Joseph du Verney, *Traité de l'organe de l'ouie: contenant la structure, les usages & les maladies de toutes les parties de* l'oreille (Paris, 1683); idem, *A Treatise of the Organ of Hearing: Containing the Structure, the Uses, and the Diseases of All the Parts of the Ear,* trans. John Marshall (London, 1737).

3. Niels Stensen, *Disputatio anatomica de glandulis oris, & nuper observatis inde prodeuntibus vasis secunda* (Leiden, 1661).

4. Du Verney, *Traité de l'organe de l'ouie*, pp. 71–72.

4. Albrecht von Haller, *Dr Boerhaave's Academical Lectures* (London, 1745), vol. 4, p. 171.

The glandular skin in the ear canal, in G.J. du Verney, *Traité de l'organe de l'ouie* (Paris, 1683), Planche III. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Red lacquered bone ear spoon with gold decoration, Italian, 18th to 19th centuries. Science Museum Group, A96511.

Earwax also had its downsides, however. Du Verney recognised that earwax could grow too bitter, thick, and that it could be secreted in too large quantities. Dried up earwax and dirt could accumulate and block the ear passage, hence causing hardness of hearing, such as in the case of Robert Hooke.[6] Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, numerous physicians would comment on hardness of hearing caused by the collection of cerumen and the formation of stones in the ears. Giovanni Battista Morgagni (1682–1771), for example, observed the generation of cerumen calculi in a man and in an old woman. Yet he believed this kind of deafness was more common in Northern Europe, presumably because the colder weather would have an impact on the fluidity of the wax.[7]

Du Verney had indeed hypothesised that the cause of earwax viscosity was the cold, which thickened the wax.

After all, the external ear was open to the elements. In addition, people of a phlegmatic temperament were generally believed to be colder and therefore prone to earwax accumulation, bringing about swellings, ear pain, feelings of heaviness, and hardness of hearing.

What could one do about it? Du Verney suggested quite simply to apply the opposite: heat. Please do not try this at home, but stopping the ear with thick wool or cotton perfumed with musk was believed to open the pores and stimulate the free flow of earwax. Another popular treatment involved syringing the ears with milk, water with thistle, or other decoctions, including linseed-oil mixed with drops of spirits of wine, and the oil of bitter almonds. Indeed, physician François Boissier de Sauvages (1706–1767) relayed that he injected a patient's ear with soap and honey dissolved in heated mineral water, after which he was able to pull out a thick, hardened piece of wax.[8]

If none of the above worked, Du Verney suggested the use of ear spoons, followed by a series of injections if necessary.[9] For most barber-surgeons, the 'ear-pick' was standard equipment. According to Randle Holme (1627–1700), the 'Instruments of the Barber' include 'A pair of Tweesers, or Twitchers: with an Ear pick at the other end of it' which 'cleanse[d] the eares from waxe, which often causeth a Deafness in the party.'[10] These earwax removal treatments gained significant traction. Surgeons and healers, such as Margaret Searl in London, advertised deafness cures in newspapers and broadsheets.[11] The fact that the Science Museum Group stores an impressive collection of hundreds of ear spoons, made of bone and ivory, bronze, and even silver, attests to their widespread use. Ear spoons had to be handled with caution, though, because picking one's ears too vigorously could mean damaging one's eardrum.

Curiosity about the 'remarkable' properties of earwax continued. When in the late eighteenth-century Dr Jean-Noël Hallé (1754–1822) was struck with such excessive earwax secretion, he furnished his friend Antoine François de Fourcroy (1755–1809) with sufficient quantities to enable chemical analysis. The cerumen was collected with an ivory ear spoon and was wrapped in paper, leaving stains like oil. De Fourcroy found that the wax, besides tasting bitter, was easily kneaded into a ball, explaining

how it could naturally form into a solid cylinder in some. When heated the wax melted and gave off a thick fume, supporting the therapies Du Verney had suggested.

De Fourcroy concluded that besides bones, earwax was the least alterable of all animal parts. Distilling proved impossible, as did dissolving in water. Left out in the air, earwax became dry and brittle. Based on these adhesive properties of earwax: De Fourcroy added a third function to earwax: to soften and deaden the sonorous vibrations of the air.[12] It is ironic how the substance that was responsible for hardness of hearing, was also conducive to healthy hearing.

Today we may recognise the build-up of earwax as a simple case of 'conductive hearing loss'. Yet around 1700, earwax was not confined to solely this type of deafness at all. As a fluid it showed great variability. Earwax flowed in and between various hearing categories, from healthy and moderate hearing to hearing difficulties of tinnitus and deafness. Earwax transformed the meaning of deafness: not as something fixed and permanent, but as something fluid and potentially episodic. The recovery of earwax, in other words, testifies not only to the fluidity of our bodies, but also to the fluidity of our ideas and medical understandings about health and deafness.

6. Du Verney, *Traité de l'organe de l'ouie*, pp. 72–73.

7. Giovanni Battista Morgagni, *The Seats and Causes of Diseases Investigated by Anatomy*, trans. Benjamin Alexander, 3 vols. (London, 1769), vol. 1, p. 322.

8. François Boissier de Sauvages, *Nosologia methodica sistens morborum classes, genera et species, juxta Sydenhami mentem et botanicorum ordinem*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1763), vol. 2, part 2, pp. 301, 313–4.

9. Du Verney, *A Treatise of the Organ of Hearing* (London, 1737), 114–120.

10. Randle Holme, Academy of Armory (Chester, 1688), p. 127, 427; Eleanor Decamp, *Civic and Medical Worlds in Early Modern England: Performing Barbery and Surgery* (London, 2016), pp. 137–8.

11. 'Margaret Searl: Wife to the late Samuel Searl, Famous for Relieving and Curing deafness, Depending on any External Obstruction Of the Organ of the Ear' (London, 1706).

12. Antoine François de Fourcroy, *A General System of Chemical Knowledge* (London, 1804), 451–460.

Healing, Protestantism and Cattle Sacrifice in the Ethiopian-South Sudanese Borderlands

Yotam Gidron

Yotam Gidron received his PhD in African History from Durham in 2020. His research, supervised by Cherry Leonardi and Jacob Wiebel, dealt with Evangelical Zionism and Nuer political life in western Ethiopia. He is the author of *Israel in Africa: Security, Migration, Interstate Politics* (Zed Books, 2020).

It is a given in many societies across the world that spirits affect the health and wellbeing of humans and other animals, either directly or by influencing the state of the environment in which they live. Indeed, the appeal of many faiths lies precisely in their promise to provide humans with the necessary knowledge, tools and techniques to seek healing, protection and recovery. However, how humans can and should engage with spirits is a complicated question, to which different faiths provide radically different answers: the objects or practices one faith deems legitimate for engaging with the divine, other faiths dismiss as superstitious, idolatrous or satanic.

My PhD thesis examined the evolution of Protestant Christianity among Nuer communities living along the South Sudanese-Ethiopian borderlands in north-eastern Africa. Here, as in many other parts of Africa, born-again churches—a label that refers to a range of conservative Evangelical Protestant groups—gained considerable popularity over the past three decades with far-reaching social and political implications. Drawing on a year of ethnographic research in the west-Ethiopian region of Gambella, my thesis examined the emergence of several Messianic groups whose members seek to emulate the form of Christianity practiced by the first followers of Jesus in New Testament days.

One reason that the rise of Protestant Christianity among Nuer communities is significant is that this faith understands the relationships between people, and between humans and God, very differently from the faiths that historically prevailed in Nuer society. While Protestant Christianity typically focuses on the individual believer's interiority, intention or bodily dispositions as the locus of engagement with the divine, Nuer norms focus on interpersonal relations and pragmatic rituals in which the ultimate tools for communication with spirits or God are cattle and spirit mediums. These differences impact, in turn, both how people understand the causes of sickness and how they seek healing.

Before the spread of Christianity, Nuer sacrificed cattle in order to deal with all sorts of misfortunes and challenges: infertility, famine, sickness, the death of a person by lightning, and, perhaps most importantly, after homicides and cases of incest, which were believed to cause deadly (and potentially contagious) bodily pollutions known as *nueer* and *rual*. Cattle sacrifice could amend relations between humans, and between humans and spirits, because the lives (and more precisely, the blood) of humans and cattle were intertwined, serving as an extension of each other; cattle exchange was an avenue for forging kinship ties (hence, for example, the practice of transferring cattle as bridewealth during marriage among Nuer), and cattle could also substitute humans 'in sacrifice, or in other words in relation to God.'[1]

Over the past century, under the influence of Christianity, markets, and the state, the place of cattle as media that connect humans both to each other and to God has been increasingly undermined. When American Presbyterian missionaries first settled among Nuer communities in the early twentieth century, they anxiously tried to convince them that cattle sacrifice represented a misguided attempt to communicate with God. For missionaries, the resort to cattle sacrifice was evidence that Nuer were 'thousands of years behind.'[2] Meanwhile, the increasingly popular practice of selling cattle in regional markets in Sudan and Ethiopia or consuming it as food in urban areas, coupled with government interventions in which cattle was primarily framed in economic rather than spiritual terms (as court fines, tax and tribute) also led people to reconsider their relationship with cattle.

Not many Nuer were persuaded by missionaries to become Christian during the colonial period (1898-1956), but since the 1960s, and particularly during Sudan's second civil war (1983-2005), conversion rates have skyrocketed. However, not all misfortunes could be explained by the Christian doctrine, and not all hazards could be mitigated without cattle sacrifice. Anthropologist Sharon Hutchinson has argued that as late as the 1990s, conversion to Christianity continued to leave people with 'ritual and explanatory lacunae', leading many to resort to cattle sacrifice despite the campaigns of Nuer evangelists to eliminate the practice.[3] When faced with complicated diseases or misfortunes that their new faith could not explain or solve, Christians often opted for ('traditional') sacrificial rituals rather than silent (Protestant) prayer and trust in the Word of God. From the Protestant perspective, this turn, from inner belief 'back' to pragmatic rituals, represented a failure.

The repertoire of practices born-again Christianity has brought to the region since the late 1990s, as I came to understand it, is much richer and better suited for offering alternatives to 'traditional' rituals. To a large extent, I think, this is because contemporary born-again faiths, while they still focus on the individual and dismiss cattle sacrifice, are far more open to rituals and experiential forms of worship than the more ascetic type of Protestantism missionaries introduced a century ago. For a generation of young Christians who grew up under the influence of born-again churches in refugee camps and urban areas—away from their families' cattle *rey ciën*, in the 'village'—a wide range of activities such as Bible study, charismatic prayer sessions, lengthy fasts, nightly vigils, church development work and healing and deliverance programmes filled the 'ritual and explanatory lacunae' Hutchinson described.

1. Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (Oxford, 1956), p. 260.

2. Eleanor C. Vandevort, *A Leopard Tamed* (New York, 1968), p. 167.

3. Sharon E. Hutchinson, *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State* (Berkeley, 1996), p. 325.

Boys and cattle in a village in Lare, Ethiopia.

Christian Temple Church on a Sunday morning, Gambella town.

Seventh-day Adventist baptism in the Baro River, Gambella town.

In the Nuer language, the relationship cultivated with God through constant religious work and self-mastery is referred to as *maar*—the same word used to refer to bonds of kinship historically established through blood ties or cattle exchange. The starting point of this relationship is at the moment of baptism (*buony*), when one is 'born-again'. But being 'born-again' is not a status one achieves and then simply retains. It is a never-ending process. After baptism, the relationship with God has to be maintained through practices that usually focus on the body of the believer and the senses: from studying the Bible, praying and praising (including singing and playing instruments in church), through 'doing God's work' (hoeing the church's compound, helping with the construction of new church buildings, going out to evangelise, organising conferences), to the disciplining of the flesh (fasting, refraining from sugar, coffee, alcohol and smoking). While many of these activities are carried out in groups, and in this sense are explicitly social, their focus is on the individual.

Cattle, under these circumstances, have increasingly been desacralised and relegated to non-spiritual spheres of Nuer life, where they are treated primarily as a religiously neutral index of 'ethnic' identity and an economic resource. No Nuer marriage is ever complete, for example, without the transfer of bridewealth cattle, even though cash has been increasingly used to replace real cows in this context. Cattle sacrifice also still takes place, although it is increasingly rare. This usually happens following cases of incest which include, according to Nuer law, any sexual relations between individuals genealogically related five to seven generations back. But even in this context, it seems that the ritual has been largely desacralised and is viewed as an operation whose spiritual dimensions are rather ambiguous. Some Nuer born-again Christians argue that intense prayer sessions and extended fasts can prevent the sickness associated with incest and obliterate the need for sacrifice in this context too.

The evolution of the relationship between humans, cattle and spirits highlights the (perhaps now-obvious) point that 'all religion is material religion,' regardless of how concerned it is with immaterial entities and forces.[4] But it also demonstrates the historicity of the materiality of religion: how religious objects and practices are entangled in various legal, economic and social processes that transform not only the nature of religious life but also the very parameters of what is considered 'religious' or faith-related in the first place. The ways in which humans engage with spirits or God to promote their wellbeing, then, are historically dynamic and deeply political. There is a great deal we can learn from studying how they change.

4. Matthew Engelke, 'Material Religion', in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, ed. by R. A. Orsi (Cambridge, 2011), p. 209-229.

Reimagining Recovery in the Museums and Heritage Sector

Gemma Ashby

Gemma graduated from Durham in 2016 with a BA in History before going on to complete an MA in Museum Studies at Newcastle University. She is now Assistant Keeper of History at Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums.

Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Books based in the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Like many other sectors, museums, galleries and heritage sites have been a casualty of the COVID-19 regulations, having been closed for the majority of the last year. With the announcement of the national lockdown, many museums closed their doors unsure of when they would next re-open. Within my own organisation, like many, we optimistically presumed the closure may be measured in weeks, rather than months. Exhibits were closed, displays were covered over, and objects were stored for their conservation. Being a local authority museum service, many of our staff were redeployed into various front-line urgently needed roles within our local council, and we began to adjust to working from home, away from the collections and archives we care for.

This was a situation repeated at many sites across the country and which still continues, after only a brief period last year in which museums were allowed to open, subject to tiered regional restrictions.[1] Nationally, the closure has resulted in a 77 per cent decrease in museum visitors. The DCMS Culture Recovery Fund, administered in several waves over the last year, has been a lifeline for those successful in receiving it. However, with the reliance of many museum sites on income generated through footfall, spends in cafes and shops, and attendance at events and activities, the sector is struggling to continue.

The Florence Nightingale museum has announced its indefinite closure. Many museums have also announced restructures. Most recently, the V&A publicly announced a restructuring of their curatorial departments that would jeopardise their materials-based expertise i.e., textiles or metalwork, and create high numbers of redundancies in an effort to save £10 million annually. Public pressure and staff advocacy has resulted in revisions to the proposed changes, though curatorial redundancies are still imminent. Tate also announced a large restructuring, effectively halving their staff in their commercial enterprises, with a further loss of over 100 jobs from their gallery staff. The Museums Association even launched a national redundancy tracker on their website.[2]

This sector, which has already suffered from the sustained rollback of arts and culture funding in recent years, is now facing an even bigger struggle. But as we emerge from lockdown and public health restrictions, how does the sector recover, and what should it learn from the last year?

Museums play an extremely important civic role and allow life-long relationships with learning to be fostered and nurtured. They are repositories of local, national, and global histories and facilitate research and study. They provide spaces for representation, contemplation, and often escapism and fun for many of the children and young people that visit.

Museums have also continued to prove the worth of their existence and funding through vitally needed community work throughout the pandemic. In the North East, Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Books won Best Lockdown Project at the Museums Change Lives Awards in 2020. Their work in East End Newcastle, in collaboration with local community partners, focused on supporting children and families seeking fun and creative activities whilst under lockdown restrictions by providing themed activity packs, door-step

performances and digital storytelling. Their work also saw 600 hot meals and 225 recipe packs distributed to families. Nationally, museums have utilised digital technology to expand their reach and create online cultural activities to combat loneliness and isolation.

As disruptive and devastating as the forced closure of sites has been, it has prompted the reshaping of the sector and has accelerated changes that were desperately needed. Undertaking high-quality digital programming and transforming activity into online events has widened the accessibility of museums for many and allowed people who may never have previously been able to visit a museum site to engage with and enjoy their collections. Outreach work has continued in various ways, though digital poverty in many areas has been difficult to overcome. Whilst progressive steps are being taken for some accessibility, we must not forget those for whom digital engagement is not an option. In recovering from the pandemic closures, museums must be sure not to revert back to old, intimidating, and insular representations and continue to welcome and foster positive relationships with their local communities.

In a year that could easily populate an entire contemporary update of *We Didn't Start the Fire*, it has been difficult to know what to collect to capture the current time. Museums have scrambled to undertake contemporary collecting and select objects and ephemera that best represent, and go some way to explain, the circumstances of the last year. At TWAM, we collected digital images of rainbows produced by

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1. At the time of writing, museums are expected to open nationally in mid-May.

2. The most recent update at the time of writing stands at 4,089 jobs lost.

Children across the country placed rainbows in their windows.

The empty pedestal of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol, the day after protesters felled the statue and rolled it into the harbour. The ground is covered with Black Lives Matter placards.

people across Tyneside, as well as several physical images. We are planning to collect a uniform from a City Host who assisted visitors to Newcastle city centre and enforced social distancing and one-way route measures. We are also planning on collecting stories, either in the form of recorded oral histories or representative objects, from local community groups who helped support vulnerable people in their areas and several Tyneside businesses who pivoted their work to urgently produce PPE and rapid testing equipment.

Then there is the intangible community spirit that was created, the fear experienced by many, and the extraordinary sacrifice displayed by our country's frontline key workers. Over the last several decades museums have worked hard to record complex histories and stories, but it is difficult to know whether it will be possible to ever capture the full range of personal, local, and national experiences.

It seems that the events of the last year have caused more people to reflect on the past and how it is relevant to their current experiences than ever before. Museums and public representations of history could and should be helping people to understand their current circumstances and to reflect as we move out of the pandemic globally. In telling such stories, they can help people to comprehend the enormity of the last year and place it in context, as well as helping to nurture empathy for others by building on common ground and shared experiences. However, in the forthcoming months, and even years, it will be important to balance potentially triggering reflections on COVID-19 with

stories of hope, encouragement and inspiration.

When reflecting on how museums will recover from COVID-19 closures, it would be remiss not to consider how in the year that most museums, galleries, and heritage sites have largely been closed to the public, their purpose and actions have never been more intensely scrutinised or contested in the national media. After the Black Lives Matter movement gained global attention following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA, many museums began to grapple with the inherent imperialism and racism that can be traced through the founding of their institutions and collections. Whilst this approach is not new, museum professionals across the world have pushed for the thoughtful
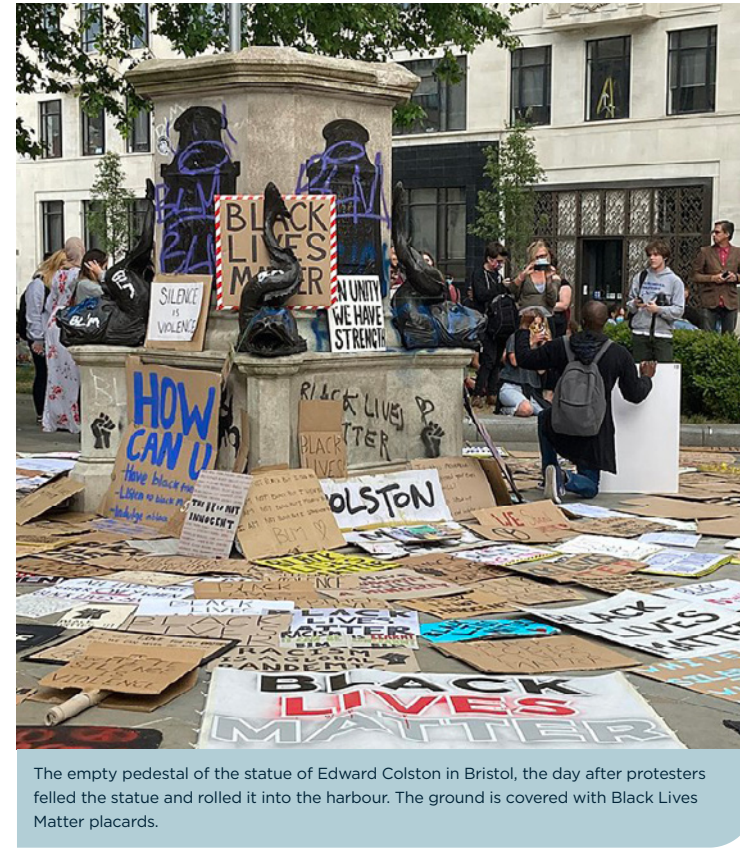
and necessary decolonisation of such spaces and collections for many years, recent events have brought the issue into the forefront of discussion for many. However, the backlash to organisations willing to acknowledge these truths, and outline their work to combat it, was vast.

The National Trust has faced some of the worst interrogation and misrepresentation of their work. In particular, their *Colonial Countryside* project in collaboration with Dr Corrine Fowler received the worst abuse and calls for the discontinuation of the project. It should be noted that the project, which is led by children and young people to unpick colonial narratives of country houses and their landscapes, has been running since 2017 with previous positive press attention. Museums addressing any anti-racism or decolonisation work have quickly become the focus of fierce polarising debates on British history, whether on social media or within the national press, often resulting in calls to discontinue such work or face the withdrawal of public funding. Many of these debates can be distilled into the question of whether the acknowledgement of the nuances or negatives of colonialism in British history is in some way unpatriotic or seeks to serve contemporary political agendas.

After the toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol, there was widespread demand for the statue to be placed in a local museum. Bristol museum M-Shed received the statue, and following conservation, there are

plans for it to be displayed in an exhibition that will also feature placards from the city's Black Lives Matter protests. Museums are often named as repositories for contested statues, but they must have the freedom to interpret such items and undertake community consultation without the threat of funding cuts.

The public discourse on history and museums underscores a growing divide between how some people view the static nature of history and how those of us who study and work with it believe that is open to consistent re-evaluation and interpretation. As museums recover financially, they also need to work to recover the notion that they are not neutral spaces of unquestionable truths; collecting, preserving and sharing history will ultimately never be a neutral act.

As the sector begins to recover and more people are able to return to heritage sites, museums are going to have to work harder than ever to articulate their vision for the stories they tell and, further, to honestly and openly communicate their decision-making processes. The last year has shown that there are many successful ways of engaging people with the past, and museums must continue to adapt and evolve to do this in increasingly diverse and accessible ways. Now more than ever, museums should be for all and should aim to tell honest, compelling stories of the past.

Teaching History in Post-Conflict Societies:
a personal reflection

John Hamer OBE, MA, FRSA

John graduated from Durham in 1962. Following a PGCE at Oxford, he taught history in a Grammar School and Sixth Form College before joining HM Inspectorate in 1984 and subsequently serving as education adviser to the Heritage Lottery Fund from 1997–2000. For the last 20 years he has worked as an education consultant for various government and other organisations in the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Russia and South Africa. John was appointed OBE in 2011 for services to heritage education.

The Home for Cooperation, Nicosia, courtesy of the Home for Cooperation.

Some fifteen years ago, driving through Belgrade with a friend who teaches history at the university, we went past the ruins of buildings bombed by NATO over twenty years ago. The bombings were a response, NATO argued, to the activities of Serbian forces in Kosovo. A few months earlier, I had been in a taxi travelling from Pristina to Peja in Kosovo. For several miles, on either side the road, were houses that had evidently been demolished rather than simply fallen into ruin. "Those", said my Kosovo Albanian taxi driver, "used to belong to Serbs. We blew them up so that, should the families want to return, there would be nothing there for them."

Another country and another taxi, this time returning to the airport at Sarajevo. My driver told me that he had lived in the city whilst it was besieged by the Bosnian Serb Army following Bosnia and Herzegovina's declaration of independence from the Yugoslav Republic in 1992. Whilst independence was overwhelmingly supported by the Bosniak and Croat communities, it was equally overwhelmingly opposed by the Bosnian Serb community. At 1425 days, the siege was the longest in modern times. To begin with, my driver said, he was terrified, but, ultimately, terror gave way to fatalism: "you cannot", he explained, "live with such a level of fear as I had for that length of time."

Such encounters will be familiar to anybody who has visited the former Yugoslav Republic in recent years. I travelled there on and off for several years, working with history teachers in schools and universities as an education consultant for the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe— two of the many organisations supporting teachers and young people trying to make sense of a recent past that saw several brutal events and remains deeply divisive.

In his novel *Birds Without Wings*, Louis de Bernières wrote that 'All war is fratricide', but also asked 'Where does it all begin?' His answer is that 'history has no beginnings, for everything that happens becomes the cause or pretext for what occurs afterwards.' The chain, he argues, reaches back to when the 'first Cain of one tribe murdered the first Abel of another.'[1] De Bernières' novel is about a once harmonious and mutually supportive community in Anatolia prior to, during and after the First World War. It is a community that is ultimately ripped apart by conflict that divides friend from friend, neighbour from neighbour, Muslim from Christian, Turk from Greek and Turk and Greek from Armenian.

It is not difficult to identify contemporary parallels with de Bernières' depiction of war-torn, nineteenth-century Anatolia. In July 1974, Turkish forces landed on the north coast of Cyprus. During the years that followed, Greek Cypriots fled south, and Turkish Cypriots fled north. North and South were subsequently separated by a 180 kilometre buffer zone, the 'Green Line', patrolled by United Nations troops. Various settlement plans were proposed and subsequently rejected. As a result, Nicosia became—and remains—the last divided city in Europe. For thirty years, there was little interchange between the two parts of the island: it was not until 2003 that the first crossing opened in the buffer zone, and it became possible for people from either side of the line to meet. Amongst them were historians from the universities and history teachers from schools. Indeed, an early outcome of the easing in regulations was the establishment of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research—an organisation founded by and featuring a board of Turkish and Greek Cypriot researchers, historians and teachers in primary, secondary and higher education.

1. Louis de Bernières, *Birds Without Wings* (London, 2005), p. 286.

The main aim of the AHDR is to encourage dialogue around, and research into, history and history teaching in order to promote the critical thinking conducive to democracy and peace in Cyprus.[2] Often working in partnership with, or funded by, international organisations, it 'challenges states of exception, attempts to dismantle division through transformative knowledge and creates opportunities for encounter.'[3] To these ends, the AHDR has produced a range of supplementary historical materials—published in Greek, Turkish and English—for use by teachers and young people across the divide. One of the strengths of these materials is that they draw on shared stories and experiences to emphasise elements that the Cypriot communities had, and in some instances still have, in common. This is the case, for example, with the publications that deal with the Ottoman period in Cyprus and 'Mixed Villages'.[4] Equally, as exemplified by texts such as 'Thinking Historically about Missing Persons,' the AHDR does not avoid addressing potentially sensitive issues.[5]

Cypriot historians have not merely published, however. They have also built or—more accurately—restored. In May 2011, as a result of the AHDR's vision, what had been a family home left derelict by the events of 1974 became a unique community centre—the Home for Cooperation. Standing at the centre of the buffer zone in Nicosia, the Home for Cooperation was envisaged as an 'infrastructure of peace' intended to transform a 'dead zone' into 'a zone of cooperation.'[6] Today, it provides both working spaces and a range of cultural, artistic and educational programmes designed to foster creativity and intercultural trust.

Though Cyprus is perhaps the most notable, it is not the only place where historians from communities with a history of enmity have succeeded in building constructive relationships. Bodies such as Euroclio and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research have also played a major role in promoting mutual trust and cooperation between teachers of history, their students and the wider community in post-conflict zones.[7] The real challenge for educators in these politically precarious places, however, is managing difference. Here, studying history means living with ambiguity rather than searching for unassailable truths and acknowledging that, at different times and in different contexts, we all may be regarded as either an 'insider' or an 'outsider'.

Often, such strategies are dismissed as nonsense. "How", asked a contributor to a Council of Europe seminar, "can Bosnians achieve something common as citizens if they are unable to agree on the history of the past?"[8] Indeed, not every seminar attendee is easily persuaded of the potential history holds, particularly in environments where powerful and highly polarised emotions lie just below the surface. The scars run deep, and time does not erase them, though it is a significant factor in determining what to teach and when to teach it. Some have suggested, for instance, that there should be a moratorium on teaching a contentious past until sufficient time has elapsed—typically, two or more generations.

This, however, is not a solution I subscribe to, not least because it fails to appreciate the long-lasting power of the collective memory shared by communities and families. Instead, the position I have arrived at, at least for the time being—and somewhat to my surprise—is that, in post-conflict environments, a teaching and learning approach based solely on historical reasoning can only take us so far. Guiding young people in the process of gathering, analysing and interpreting evidence in order to develop historical narratives is important. But as well as offering an intellectual experience, the study of history needs to engage students emotionally. I say this for two reasons. Firstly, because attitudes, values and ways of behaving are the products not only of rational, cognitive thinking but are also the expression of an emotional response. Secondly, in deeply divided, post-conflict societies, young people may carry two or more conflicting versions of the same events: the formal, rational and 'classroom-based' version of history sits alongside stories of the past shaped via family, community and the media. Inevitably, these latter narratives carry with them a great deal of emotional attachment. Students, and their teachers, then, need to have the opportunity to explore their individual backgrounds and identities and the ways in which these shape their historical understanding.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF CO-OPERATION

WHEN TEACHING AND LEARNING HISTORY
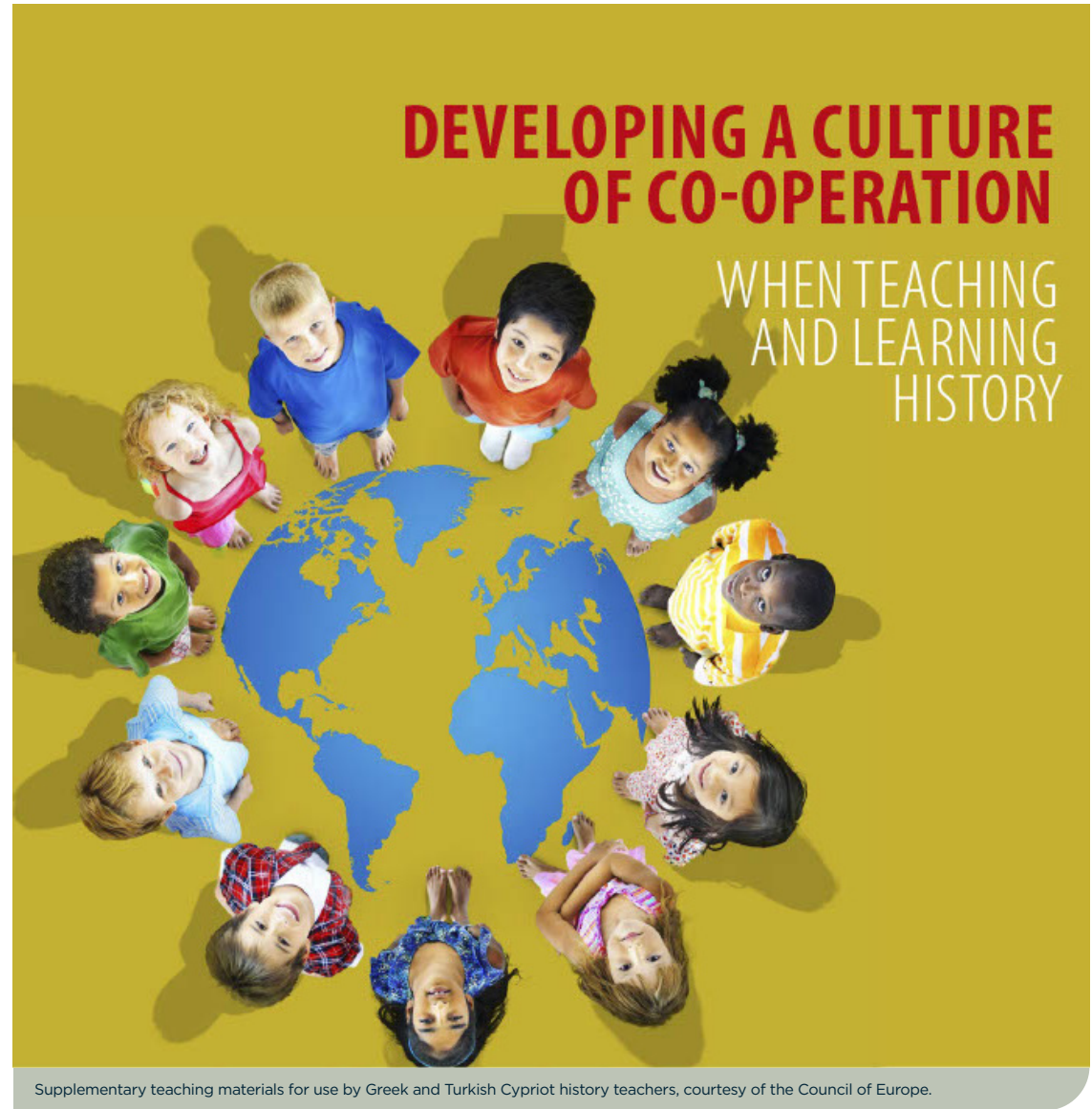
Supplementary teaching materials for use by Greek and Turkish Cypriot history teachers, courtesy of the Council of Europe.

2. Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 'Info', accessed 23 April 2021, at **https://www.ahdr.info/.**

3. Christine Counsell, Chara Makriyianni and Meltem Onurkan Samani, *Constructing the AHDR Supplementary Educational Materials: A Journey in Cooperation for a Better History Education* (Cyprus, 2013), p. 3.

4. Hasan Samani, Maria Mavrada, Meltem Onurkan Samani and Maria Georgiou, *The Ottoman Period in Cyprus: Learning to explore change, continuity and diversity* (Cyprus, 2011); Marios Hadjivassiliou, Maria Georgiou, Mutlu Kale and Gülen Onurkan Aliusta, *Mixed Villages in Cyprus: A Teacher's Guide* (Cyprus, 2011).

5. AHDR, *Thinking Historically about Missing Persons: A Guide for Teachers* (Cyprus, 2011), accessed 23 April 2021, at **https://ahdr. info/our-work/supplementary-educational-materials#thinking-historically-about-missing-persons-a-guide-for-teachers.**

6. Chara Makriyianni and Meltem Onurkan Samani, 'Inauguration speech for the Home for Cooperation in Nicosia' (Cyprus, 11 May 2011).

7. Euroclio, established in 1992, is the European Association of History Educators. It currently has over eighty full and associate member associations representing some fifty countries. The Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) for International Textbook Research, based in Braunschweig, was established in its present form in 1975. It is internationally recognised for its work in textbook research and revision, particularly in history, geography and social studies. The GEI has also played a significant role in the mediation of textbook conflicts and acted as advisor to international organisations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe. See: Eckhardt Fuchs and Steffen Sammler, *Textbooks between Tradition and Innovation: A Journey through the History of the Georg Eckert Institute* (Braunschweig, 2016).

8. Council of Europe, *The Religious Dimension of Intercultural Education* (Strasbourg, 2004).
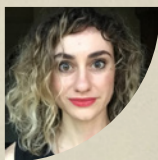
Hope of the Nation:

Celebrating schoolboys' achievements to end the French Revolution

Antonia Perna

Antonia Perna recently completed her PhD in the Department of History. Her thesis explores concepts and experiences of childhood and youth in the French Revolutionary period, with a particular focus on their politicisation. She is currently Rome Scholar at the British School at Rome, where she is researching French cultural imperialism as manifested in schoolbooks in Napoleonic Italy.

On 27 August 1798, pupils received academic prizes at the Central School of the Côte-d'Or in Dijon, east-central France. These young pupils were the 'objects of the sweetest and most beautiful hopes.'[1] At a similar ceremony in the southern city of Albi a year later, a teacher informed his pupils, 'it is to you that we turn our gaze and our hopes … [you] whose hearts are not wilted by the poisoned breath of crime.'[2] This rhetoric of hope placed in the younger generation was typical of school prizegiving ceremonies and festivals celebrating youth in the later years of the French First Republic (1792–1804). Reeling from years of bloody revolution, the French looked in particular to the education of the young as a means of ensuring long-term recovery and the right kind of revolutionary legacy.

Only shortly before, in Year II of the French Republican calendar (1793–4), terror had been 'the order of the day'.[3] The King, Louis XVI, had lost his crown in September 1792 and his head in January 1793. His consort, Marie-Antoinette, followed him to the guillotine that October. In the months that followed, France was riven by civil war and unrest, political factionalism and war abroad—and, as the Republic sought to protect itself, its leaders became increasingly intolerant of dissent. The result was the death of up to forty thousand citizens, before the purge of the Terror's own proponents in summer 1794.[4] The revolutionaries' progress in achieving liberty, equality and fraternity was tarnished by the memory of bloodshed and far from secure.

The new regime therefore sought to end the revolution. Its achievements must endure, but social harmony and political stability must be permanently restored—even as threats persisted from both left and right. Simultaneously, the advent of more peaceful times meant that intellectual progress could be pursued. These goals informed the development of a new system of education, which included schools and an updated programme of public festivals.

Under the Directory, governing from 1795 to 1799, a three-tier system of education was established. On the first level were primary schools—initially only for boys, until an amendment was made. The second level featured the central schools, or *écoles centrales*—fee-paying secondary schools for boys aged twelve and over—as well as specialized schools such as the Veterinary School and the Polytechnic School.

Finally, there was the creation of the National Institute of the Sciences and Arts, a learned society whose members published research and advised the government.

Both the Directory and intellectuals within the National Institute believed that public morality could be reformed through reason and intellectual progress and that this morality would sustain the Republic in the wake of the Terror.[5] According to a government report on education in 1795, 'the arts are to end the Revolution that they began, to end all disagreements, to restore harmony among all those who cultivate them'.[6] As the revolutionaries looked optimistically to their legacy in the younger generation, their emphasis was therefore on priming youths in moral virtue and reason.

At the same time, the revolutionaries sought to encourage morality among the French public more generally through a new programme of annual festivals. Among these were three celebrating the life stages of French citizens: youth, marriage and old age. The youth festival was held in spring, symbolizing new growth and the sowing of seeds for the future. It typically involved a procession of school pupils and teachers, local authorities and municipal officers, followed by speeches and the presentation of prizes to students who excelled. It also included the symbolic arming of sixteen-year-old boys and the signing of the civic register as a rite of passage for those who had turned twenty-one. Many schools also held public prizegiving ceremonies on separate dates as part of the academic calendar.

Crucially, celebrating youth in this way meant celebrating male—and predominantly affluent—youth, since the central schools and the majority of others involved in these ceremonies were fee-paying and admitted only boys.[7] This lack of inclusivity was symptomatic of the government's desire for stability. Popular politics was associated with the militancy of the Terror, and women, in particular, were excluded from political participation. Indeed, reacting to riots led by women in May 1795, the previous government had banned women not only from participating in political assemblies but also from gathering in the street in groups of more than five.[8] In this context, the revolutionary legacy was to be fulfilled by educated—and privileged—young men.

1. *Distribution des prix de l'école centrale du département de la Côte-d'Or, en l'an 6 de la République française* (Dijon, 1798), p. 17. All primary-source translations by the author, unless indicated otherwise.

2. *Procès-verbal de la distribution des prix aux élèves de l'École centrale du dept. du Tarn ; le 10 fructidor, an 7 de la République française,* (Albi, 1799), p. 7.

3. On the origins of this phrase, see Jacques Guilhaumou, '« La terreur à l'ordre du jour » : un parcours en révolution (1793-1794)', *Révolution française,* accessed 24 April 2021, at **https://revolution-francaise.net/2007/01/06/94-la-terreur-a-lordre-du-jour-un-parcours-en-revolution-juillet-1793-mars-1794**.

4. This estimate includes the 16,594 confirmed death sentences, as well as estimates of those killed without trial or who perished in prison, on the French mainland alone. It does not include casualties in battle. Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror During the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA, 1935), pp. 26–37.

5. See Martin S. Staum, *Minerva's Message: Stabilizing the French Revolution* (Montreal and Kingston, 1996), pp. 4, 68–70; Andrew Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, NY, 2008) esp. p. 67.

6. Pierre-Claude-François Daunou, 'Rapport sur l'instruction publique, 23 vendémiaire, an IV' (1795), p. 112, accessed 4 June 2020, at **https://archipel.uqam.ca/325/1/Lakn-Daunou.pdf**.

7. Bursaries were available for poorer pupils at the central schools, but these were not the majority. Moreover, a study of prize-winners at the École centrale du Panthéon in summer 1799 shows that better-off pupils tended to be more successful. Robert R. Palmer and Dominique Julia, 'Le Prytanée français et les écoles de Paris (1798-1802)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française,* 53 (1981), pp. 142–3.

8. Olwen H. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto; Buffalo; London, 1992), pp. 44–50; Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and their French Revolution,* trans. Katherine Streip (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 331–364.

Bust of Napoleon Bonaparte crowned with a laurel wreath. Etching, 1796–99. Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

In accordance with the state's plan for stability, pupils received prizes for both intellectual achievement and moral behaviour. The highest-achieving pupils on each course typically received a prize or runner-up award, whilst some institutions also awarded a prize for 'virtue' or 'morality', celebrating qualities such as diligence, honesty, kindness and obedience.[9]

Both academic and morality prizes were considered paths to glory. At the Central School of the Côte-d'Or, the history teacher spoke enthusiastically of 'this glorious day' and encouraged prize-winners to 'love throughout [their] lives this glory which accompanies merit and virtue'.[10] Similarly, when nineteen-year-old Jacques-Philippe-Henri Gisclard was awarded the 'virtue prize' at the Central School of the Tarn, his school's literature teacher promised him, 'your name and your triumph will be gloriously inscribed in our school's annals'.[11]

Such glory served not only the individual but also reflected on the nation. One headmaster thus informed his pupils that it was their responsibility 'to elevate the French Republic through your writing, to the degree of glory which still distinguishes the republics of antiquity in the memory of men'. Evidently inspired by such notions of long-term legacy, one of his pupils, 'Cit[izen]' Jacquet-Delahaye, alluded to the glory France would gain 'when a new Homer, when another Virgil' might transmit Napoleon Bonaparte's victories (in Italy and Egypt) 'to the most distant posterity'.[12]

Equipping pupils to write well of the Republic was evidently seen as a way to perpetuate its glory. The academic prizes themselves contributed to this goal: they typically took the form of a book, including canonical and enlightenment French texts, such as those of Racine and Rousseau, and classical works composed by the likes of Homer and Virgil. To represent the honour of their achievements, moreover, pupils might also receive a laurel branch—the classical symbol of victory—and a medal, as indeed Gisclard did.

The ceremony records also demonstrate that youths were expected to serve the nation through military service. However, unlike virtue and academic achievement, which could be accrued at school, this expectation was not to be fulfilled until the future. Thus, although sixteen-year-old boys were armed as part of the youth festival proceedings, this ritual was merely a symbolic exercise, and it did not include the youngest pupils.[13] Tellingly, in 1799,

a local official in Paris urged youths to enlist, specifically when they reached twenty, which was the legal age of conscription at the time.[14] This expectation stood in stark contrast to the celebration of child soldiers in the earlier years of the Revolution, when, for instance, two young boys killed in action had been hailed as martyrs for the Republic.[15]

Furthermore, despite advocating combat in defence of the Republic, teachers and officials emphasized that peace should be the ultimate goal. Conquest was a worthy objective only if motivated by the desire to liberate the oppressed.[16] General Napoleon Bonaparte, who presented himself as liberator to the populations he conquered in Egypt and Italy, was therefore held up as a role model to pupils. As one headmaster said of Bonaparte, 'amidst his successes, hasn't he topped off his glory with morality!'[17]

The school prizegiving ceremonies and youth festivals thus show a desire for youths to serve France through talent, virtue and appropriate military service. In these ways, it was believed that they would provide stability going forward and ensure an honourable legacy for the new republic's achievements. However, these expectations were occasionally nuanced depending on pupils' school status and race. Thus, although similarly celebrated for their moral and academic achievements, state-funded pupils were usually urged to show gratitude to the Republic and were evidently considered an investment in the nation's future.

This language of gratitude was most pronounced at the National Institution of the Colonies, a school in Paris whose pupils included the sons of Black officers in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue. When one pupil, Lechat, expressed his gratitude to the Republic for bringing him out of slavery and into enlightenment, he was employing a learned language of debt imposed on former slaves after their emancipation in 1793–4.[18] Even as pupils like Lechat and his brother benefited from the same education as their white French peers, they were always expected to return to Saint-Domingue and spread republican values there. Thus, Lechat's commitment to repaying the Republic through 'diligence, obedience and efforts of courage' had less in common with the virtues expected of his white classmates than with exhortations to former slaves to '[w]ork … with courage, in order to deserve the blessings of the nation'.[19] Tellingly, there is no mention of glory in the report of this ceremony.

Pupils in the playground of the Collège de la Marche, which became the Institution nationale des colonies in 1797.[21]

Entrée du Lycée Lapérouse. This former Jesuit college housed the Central School of the Tarn, where Gisclard won the morality prize in 1799. It is still a school today. © 2012 Jjmesnil /Wikimedia Commons.

Joseph Barra [sic] aged 13 years assassinated by rebels died shouting 'long live the Republic' […], stipple engraving, 1794. Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Overall, the ceremony reports suggest optimism that the younger generation would stabilize and perpetuate the Republic after years of violence and uncertainty. Ultimately, though, pupils' achievements were irrelevant to this goal. The Directory fell with Bonaparte's coup-d'état in November 1799, and the ceremonies continued only until 1802. As First Consul, Napoleon abolished the central schools that year and expelled the Saint-Dominguan pupils from the National Institution of the Colonies. In 1804, he crowned himself Emperor. Long-term stability had certainly not been obtained during the Republic. The same year, after a brutal struggle in response to Napoleon's efforts to reinstate slavery, Saint-Domingue became independent Haiti.

As for the pupils, Pierre-Blaise and Charles Lechat did not return to Haiti, but both had military careers in the Napoleonic Empire. Gisclard became a land surveyor, likely building on his education at the Central School of the Tarn. Fifty years after he won his virtue prize, he became mayor of his canton, albeit under a new and even-shorter-lived republic.[20] Indeed, the former pupils of the late 1790s forged their careers under a series of shifting regimes— a far cry from the stability the Directory had sought. Nonetheless, this did not preclude individual success or service to the nation.

9. On morality prizes, see Julia M. Gossard, 'Prix de Moralité: The Inculcation of Young French Citizens', *Age of Revolutions* (2017), accessed 22 May 2020, at https://ageofrevolutions.com/2017/06/19/prix-de-moralite-the-inculcation-of-young-french-citizens/.

10. *Distribution des prix […]* Côte-d'Or, p. 18.

11. *Procès-verbal de la distribution des prix […]* Tarn, p. 10. We can ascertain Gisclard's age using parish registers: Archives départementales du Tarn, 1 E 317/2.

12. *École-centrale du département d'Indre et Loire : fête de la jeunesse, 10 germinal an VII* (Tours, 1799), pp. 4, 6, 9.

13. Ibid., p. 6.

14. Eugène Bénard de Moussinières, *Discours prononcé par le citoyen Bénard, Président de l'Administration Municipale du huitième Arrondissement, le 10 Germinal an VII, jour de la Fête de la jeunesse* ([Paris], 1799), p. 14.

15. Antonia Perna, 'Bara and Viala, or Virtue Rewarded: The Memorialization of Two Child Martyrs of the French Revolution', *French Revolution*, *French History* (2021), advance online

publication https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/craa071.

16. *Procès-verbal de la distribution des prix […]* Tarn, p. 3.

17. Jean-François Champagne, *Discours prononcé par le C.en Champagne, Directeur de l'Institut national des Boursiers du ci-devant Collége [sic] de l'Égalité, dans l'Assemblée générale des Élèves, pour la distribution des prix de Moralité […]* (Paris, 1797), p. 7.

18. It is unclear whether the speaker was Pierre-Blaise or Charles Lechat, as both attended the school.

19. *Exercice qui a eu lieu le 5.e jour complémentaire de l'an 6 de la République française, une et indivisible, à l'Institution nationale des colonies […]* (Paris, 1798), pp. 2–4; Julien Raimond, quoted and translated in Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill, 2004), p. 188.

20. Les maires de Villefranche-d'Albigeois', *Annuaire mairie* (2020), accessed 26 April 2021, at https://www.annuaire-mairie.fr/ancien-maire-villefranche-d-albigeois.html.

21. Intaglio print from F.N. Martinet and Jean-Charles Poncelin de La Roche-Tilhac, *Déscription historique de Paris et de ses plus beaux monuments*, vol. iii (Paris, 1781). Image: Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne; Open License.

Second World War Myths and the Brexit Debate

Emily Glynn

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Halt ze German Advance Sign, Liz Eden, Twitter, 28 May, 2016. Image courtesy of Terence Eden.

It is striking that, in the twenty-first century, the language of the Second World War is still so visible in our contemporary political discourse. As recently as 2016, the Brexit campaign was plagued by numerous anachronistic comparisons on both sides of the debate. Those voting to leave the EU celebrated the 'Dunkirk spirit' of Britain and boasted their historical ability to stand alone from Europe.[1] Conversely, those voting to remain rendered the referendum another 'Eden moment', drawing on the failures of Prime Minister Eden.[2] The loud obsession with the war also created bizarre campaigns such as the Leave poster exclaiming 'halt ze German advance! Vote Leave' (see figure 1).[3] While it is not uncommon to draw on past events to interpret our present, narratives of the Second World War appear to pervade the fabric of our politics far more than any other historical comparison.

One obvious reason why the language of the Second World War is so attractive and prominent in our political discourse today, is, as Montlake argues, its simplicity.[4] Instead, I would argue to the contrary: there is no single 'myth' of the Second World War, and it is, in fact, the very range of competing narratives that explains the continued resonance of the war in our political discussions. The use of the Second World War in contemporary politics is a complex and contested process. Furthermore, when we do remember the war, we are actually thinking about distinct historical episodes rather than a single event. Perhaps the term 'simple' could be used, however, not in ignorance of the complications. There are a number of simple myths that appeal, but it is not simplicity that dictates its popularity but, instead, the multifarious nature of such myths.

One of the most prominent narratives of the Second World War is that of Churchillian leadership—a belligerent approach to politics. Conservative Party leader, Boris Johnson, has famously articulated this, praising Churchill as a man of 'vast and almost reckless moral courage'.[5]

Unsurprisingly, this myth galvanises Conservative Party values, upholding the message that the war rekindled one's love of the country, patriotism and valour.[6] This is a narrative of individual 'heroic' leadership and one that celebrates 'the few' such as the pilots in the Battle of Britain lauded in Churchill's 'never was so much owed by so many to so few' speech in August 1940.[7] A narrative resonating more strongly for those on the political left is that of the 'people's war' — a story of shared sacrifice and endeavour, culminating with the creation of the National Health Service. This is a social democratic message drawing upon the ordinary men and women who came together and saved the nation — the antithesis of the Churchillian 'few'. Furthermore, it is a narrative often associated with the Labour Party, who are often credited with building a new welfare system. For those who recognise this myth, the war concludes with the general election of 1945, where the people of Britain appreciate the triumphs of collectivism in electing Labour Party leader Clement Atlee.

The intellectual historian Kit Kowol elaborates on how these contradictions play into a broader narrative of British politics.[8] Our political climate has been dominated historically by the staunch competition between the Conservative and Labour Parties. It is this competition that Kowol believes can be attributed to these competing myths, as the narrative of a people's war and of Conservative patriotism fall respectively to each party. This in turn has created competition 'not just over who controlled the state, but who exactly was 'the nation'.[9] Since the aim of history is to select what is 'meaningful' for the individual or collectively defined subject, it can vary group-to-group.[10] In the case of both the Labour and Conservative Parties, the history of the Second World War has framed their identities through telling a selective version of history that is meaningful to them and their followers.

1. Example: A. Pearson, 'For Brexit to work, we need Dunkirk spirit not 'Naysaying Nellies'', *The Telegraph*, 1 August 2017.

2. Example: S. Hall, 'Brexit: 60 years on and the ghosts of Suez have come back to haunt the Tories', *The Conversation*, 6 July 2016, **https://theconversation.com/brexit-60-years-on-and-the-ghosts-of-suez-have-come-back-to-haunt-the-tories-62061** [Accessed 14/08/2020].

3. A. Sims, 'Anti-EU billboards reading 'Halt ze German advance' placed on M40', *The Independent*, 29 May 2016, **https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/anti-eu-billboards-reading-halt-ze-german-advance-placed-m40-a7055186.html** [Accessed 10/09/2020].

4. S. Montlake, 'Battle of Britain's history: How the myth of WWII shaped Brexit', *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 March 2019, **https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2019/0328/Battle-of-Britain-s-history-How-the-myth-of-WWII-shaped-Brexit** [Accessed 25/08/2020].

5. B. Johnson, 'Boris Johnson: The Day Churchill saved Britain from the Nazi's', *The Telegraph*, 13 October 2014.

6. K. Kowol, 'Britain's obsession with the second world war and the debates that fuel it', *The Conversation*, 4 June 2020, **https://theconversation.com/britains-obsession-with-the-second-world-war-and-the-debates-that-fuel-it-139497**, [Accessed 25/08/2020].

7. Churchill, *So Few*, House of Commons, 20 August 1940, **https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/the-few/** [Accessed 13/09/2020].

8. Kowol, 'Britain's obsession with the second world war and the debates that fuel it'.

9. Ibid.

10. J. Friedman, 'The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity', *Journal American Anthropologist*, Volume 94. Issue 4, p. 837.

I would develop Kowol's argument further by suggesting that competing myths occur not only between parties but also within them too. Occasionally, opposing parties do not conform to the symmetry of opposing myths. As seen in Brexit, sometimes there are multiple narratives that do not sit comfortably together — those who were pro-Brexit argued simultaneously that Britain was a plucky underdog, 'standing alone', whilst also an imperial trading power. To hold these two thoughts coherently in the same argument highlights confusion within rival camps regarding Britain's place in the world.

Another narrative that does not fit within the confines of 'left versus right' is that of British decline. Concepts of decline and rebirth within the Brexit debate have often been presented in unclear and contradictory ways and by commentators who seem perplexed by the Second World War and its relevance today. Many commentators have claimed Brexit was driven by an imperial nostalgia, that, in some Brexiteer quarters, there existed the idea that closer ties with the Commonwealth would replace European connections: a vision colloquially termed 'Empire 2.0'.[11] However, the political historian Robert Saunders critiques the notion of imperial nostalgia. He claims there was perhaps a louder voice within the pro-Brexit vision that emphasised Britain 'alone' throughout the war, stressing the narrative of a determined, defiant and plucky nation. Yet, in this narrative, the empire is forgotten — and thus Saunders believes it was, instead, 'imperial amnesia' that galvanised Brexiteers. In expressing the belief that Britain can be great again, even without an empire, they are hailing a British exceptionalism maintained by historical amnesia. In reality, Britain was a global and economic power simply *because* it had an empire. Now that it does not, a buccaneering spirit alone could not elevate Britain to be a dominant power once again.

The particular events we choose to emphasise in remembrance of the war are significant. War is often discussed as a single episode, but the Second World War was in fact a dynamic process from which we choose individual episodes that we invest with meaning. Often, it is the preamble of the war, and the failures of the 1930s, that are recalled. For example, the rather crude Brexit campaign that exclaimed 'Halt ze German advance, Vote Leave', played upon Britain's previous policy of appeasement and its failure. Such staunch advocacy of immediate action plays into a narrative which we choose to remember and is evident in the words of Darren Grimes, a then 22-year-old Brexit activist: 'we're a proud island nation that survived a world war...I don't think we're about to be bullied by a French egomaniac.'[12] Here he refers to the French President, Emanuel Macron, but the message remains clear — the failure of appeasement has created a mythologised memory whereby any form of negotiation or conciliation is swiftly averted. The identity of Britain as a strong and dominant nation was vulnerable when Chamberlain's policy of appeasement failed on numerous occasions, and, therefore, the strong tendency to condemn such action in contemporary circumstances validates the image that Britain is and will continue to be a central world-power — accurate or otherwise.

The moments that others choose to remember are those of the 1940s: most notably Dunkirk (the evacuation of allied soldiers from the beaches), the Battle of Britain (the defence of Britain from the German air force) and VE Day (Germany's surrender). A common factor in the recall of all these events is the myth of 'standing alone', aided by Churchill's infamous speeches including 'We Shall Fight on the Beaches', 'Their Finest Hour' and 'Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat'.[13] This myth is one so pertinent in our politics today since, according to Lucy Noakes, it 'codifies for us something about what it means to be British'.[14] It invokes concepts of bravery, pluck and courage, which, while seemingly positive, are factually incorrect in their origin.

As recently as 2017, former UKIP leader, Nigel Farage, urged people to 'go out and watch *Dunkirk*' a newly released film based on the legendary events.[15] While trying to appropriate the memory of Dunkirk to fuel his Brexit Leave campaign, he met backlash not only from Remainers but also from film-writer Christopher Nolan for marginalising those who stood by Britain's side

The Polish squadron during the Battle of Britain, No. 303 Squadron Picture Gallery. Image courtesy of Wilhelm Raruszynski.

throughout the events of Dunkirk and its aftermath.[16] As David Edgerton notes, the notion of 'standing alone' is a mythologised ideal and perhaps the most dangerous myth of all.[17] Britain won the war through ruthless state planning and control, not simply courage and pluck. Not only did Britain have the largest colonial empire boosting their manpower, but they also had significant resources readily available. With a formidable industrial base, Britain proved a phenomenally sophisticated military state. Furthermore, in the Battle of Britain, the most successful British squadron was the Polish 303 Squadron, without whom, according to the head of Fighter Command, Sir Hugh Dowding, 'I hesitate to say that the outcome of the battle would have been the same'.

Despite this, romanticised myths continue to inform many Briton's narratives of the Second World War, though the narrative is confused, contradictory and ahistorical. It is used to validate decisions with potentially gigantic and even catastrophic results by drawing upon a false narrative of historical pluck, courage and independence in the name of national character.[18]

11. G. Younge, 'Britain's imperial fantasies have given us Brexit', *Guardian*, 3 February, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/03/imperial-fantasies-brexit-theresa-may [Accessed 26/04/2021].

12. C. Grey, 'The dangers of Brexit Britain's obsession with the Second World War', *iNews*, 28 September 2018, https://inews.co.uk/opinion/comment/brexit-britain-second-world-war-fixation-203066 [Accessed 12/09/2020].

13. W. Churchill, *We Shall Fight on the Beaches*, House of Commons, 4 June 1940; W. Churchill, *Their finest hour*, House of Commons, 18 June 1940; W. Churchill, *Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat*, House of Commons, 13 May 1940.

14. L. Noakes, quoted in S. Montlake, 'Battle of Britain's history: How the myth of WWII shaped Brexit', *Christian Science Monitor*.

15. N. Farage, 'I urge every youngster to go out and watch #Dunkirk', Twitter, 25 July 2017, https://twitter.com/nigel_farage/status/889971797386514434?lang=en [Accessed 25/08/2020]; *Dunkirk*, 2017, Christopher Nolan.

16. H. Mance, ' Dunkirk' does not teach us anything about Brexit', *Financial Times*, 28 July 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/adf46768-736d-11e7-aca6-c6bd07df1a3c [Accessed 25/08/2020]; A. Wiseman, 'Christopher Nolan: why 'Dunkirk' is anything but a 'Brexit movie', *Screen Daily*, 30 November 2017, https://www.screendaily.com/news/christopher-nolan-why-dunkirk-is-anything-but-a-brexit-movie/5124612.article [Accessed 25/08/2020].

17. D, Edgerton, quoted in quoted in S. Montlake, 'Battle of Britain's history: How the myth of WWII shaped Brexit', *Christian Science Monitor*.

18. https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/the-polish-air-force-in-world-war-2/303-squadron.aspx.

Recovering New Readings from the Hereford World Map

Hereford *Mappa Mundi*. (Photo: The Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral).

Eva Macdonald

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Although ambiguity surrounding its authorship means we will never be able to definitively determine its contemporary meaning, as the largest surviving medieval world map, the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* provides invaluable insights into medieval Latin Christendom's relations with the wider world.[1] In particular, the inclusion of anti-Jewish iconography and placement of bestial imagery beyond the boundaries of Christian Europe reveals how English national identity was shaped by both xenophobic and anti-Semitic sentiments circulating in thirteenth-century England.

The special relationship that had previously existed between medieval rulers and Judaism began to decline in the early thirteenth century. This is most clearly exemplified by Edward I's expulsion of England's Jews in 1290.[2] The growing secular hostility towards this group that culminated in their expulsion is suggested by earlier events, including the 1275 Statute of the Jewry, which forbade Jews from charging interest on money they loaned, and their subsequent persecution in 1276–1278 for alleged coin clipping.[3] Contemporary with the map's late thirteenth-century creation, these events highlight the precarious position of England's Jews in the high Middle Ages.[4] That a close connection existed between such secular attitudes and the Christian Church's own views on the Jewish religion is emphasised by contemporary events across the Channel in France. Here, in 1242, King Louis IX burnt Jewish religious texts following Pope Gregory IX's recommendation that the Jewish book of Law—the Talmud—was the 'chief cause' of Jewish 'perfidy'.[5] Crucially, Louis' act highlights not only consistency between France and England's secular policies pertaining to Judaism but also the influence of clerical attitudes on the persecution these policies led to.

In her seminal study of the Hereford map's Exodus scene, Strickland argues that anti-Semitic aspects of English national identity were born out of both clerical and secular prejudices and that these prejudices were played out on the Hereford map.[6] In particular, Strickland interprets the Exodus scene depicted therein as an attempt by clerics—the map's creators—to justify Edward I's expulsion of England's Jews in 1290 and, by extension, evidence of similar Church–state interaction over Judaism to that seen in France.[7] The Jews depicted in this scene are identifiable by their stereotypically hooked noses and blank scroll, which Strickland interprets as a symbol of Judaism's supposed spiritual blindness.[8] The representation of the Jews in this scene as '*Judei*' rather than biblical Israelites,

moreover, demonstrates a significant divergence away from the canonical Exodus narrative and so hints at an anti-Jewish sentiment amongst the map's clerical creators.[9] Tellingly, the use of both icons and writing in the scene indicates that the map was intended to be accessible to both literate and illiterate audiences and so suggests that the map's clerical and secular anti-Semitic aspects were widely understood. Certainly, as we have seen, secular events contemporary with the map's creation indicate that its lay audience were increasingly exposed to anti-Jewish dialogues and would therefore recognise the anti-Semitic sentiment latent in the map's iconography.

The existence of an anti-Semitic worldview amongst Catholic clerics elsewhere in Western Europe is corroborated by contemporary documentary sources. Godfrey of Viterbo's twelfth-century chronicle, for instance, argues that Alexander the Great's imprisonment of the cannibalistic monsters, Gog and Magog, reflected the fate of the biblical lost 'eleven [*sic*] tribes of Jews'.[10] This anti-Semitic myth is also echoed in Otto of Freising's prophetic commentary concerning the Hyrcanian Jews, who, he contends, will emerge, like Gog and Magog, with humanity's final days.[11] Since these comparisons with medieval monsters are pejorative and effectively dehumanise the Jews they describe, they reveal the anti-Semitic sentiment of their clerical creators. Admittedly, though, as Grabois argues, twelfth-century intellectuals frequently engaged in cross-faith scholarly discussion—as typified by the intellectual co-existence of Andrew of Saint Victor and 'his Hebrew', Joseph Shor of Orleans—suggesting more accepting attitudes towards Judaism amongst the clerical elite.[12] Certainly, the Exodus scene constitutes only a small proportion of the map's iconographic programme, with a greater part focusing on the judgement of Christians and Jews alike by Christ, indeed indicating the existence of a more interconnected and inclusive clerical cosmology.[13] Yet, the contemporary criticism of Andrew's collaborative approach, as exemplified in Rufinus' *Summa*, implies that this inclusive worldview was not homogenous among medieval scholars.[14] Therefore, although Viterbo's ideological commentary may be dismissed as one of many conflicting readings of Gog and Magog, its anti-Jewish connotations are supported by contemporary Western European scholars, making it possible to read the iconography inherent in the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* as evidence of a similarly anti-Jewish worldview amongst English clerics and their lay congregation.

1. Valerie Flint, 'The Hereford Map: Its author(s), two scenes and a border', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* Vol. 8 (1998), pp. 24-37.

2. Robin Mundil, *England's Jewish Solution* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 71.

3. Debra Strickland, 'Edward I, Exodus and England on the Hereford World Map', *Speculum*, 93:2 (2018), pp. 449-450.

4. Flint, 'The Hereford Map', p. 23.

5. Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2008), p. 39.

6. Strickland, 'Edward I', p. 468.

7. Ibid., p. 420

8. Strickland, 'Edward I', pp. 430–32.

9. Ibid., p. 429.

10. Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon seu universitate libri, qui chronici appellantur* ed. B. G. Struve (Ratisbon, 1726), pp. 266-67, in John Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Times of the Crusades* (New York, 1925), p. 288.

11. John Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Times*

of the Crusades (New York, 1925), p. 288.

12. Aryeh Grabois, 'The Hebraica Veritas and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century', *Speculum*, 50:4 (1975), pp. 620-623.

13. Massimo Rossi, 'The Hereford Mappamundi: Visible Parlare', in P. D. A Harvey (ed.), *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and their Context* (London, 2006), p. 187.

14. Grabois, 'The Hebraica Veritas', p. 626.

anti-Semitic attitude but also references the attack on Jewish legal autonomy that was a consequence of this clerical feeling.

The map also reveals that the worldview of its clerical authors was shaped by xenophobic feeling more generally. It does this is in two key ways. Firstly, as Jeanne Fox-Friedman argues, the geographical 'marginalisation' of the many monstrous creatures depicted on the map towards the East indicates Latin Christendom's attempt to associate the East with monstrosity and simultaneously distance itself from such.[18] Beasts such as the *Cynocephali*, or 'dog-headed people', for instance, are clustered around the Asian segment of the map. Tellingly, Wittkower also adds that many of the beasts illustrated on the map carried moral meanings that the illiterate lay community could have identified.[19] Given that Europe encompasses most of the map's commercial landmarks, moreover, the choice to place the majority of all monstrous creatures featured on the map south of the Nile, hints at the specifically Eurocentric dimension of its clerical creators' xenophobic worldview.[20]

Secondly, the prevalence of crusading iconography, exemplified by the depiction of Jerusalem at the map's centre, highlights a belief not only in Western Europe's religious but also militaristic superiority. In this way, it reinforces the Eurocentric worldview suggested by the pejorative placement of the map's bestial imagery. Despite the ambiguity surrounding its inclusion, Strickland claims that the depiction of a war elephant's empty howdah is an allegory for Edward I's inconclusive crusades of 1270–72.[21] A carriage carried on top of an elephant, the howdah often carried militaristic connotations; though, it must be noted that the elephant might have simply been added to illustrate the exoticism of Asia to a Western audience. Nonetheless, the map also alludes to Edward's other military campaigns such as the building of Conwy Castle following his successful conquests in Wales and the fortification of Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1296, supporting this suggestion.[22] Indeed, the decision to include these otherwise insignificant locations on a world map indicates that the map's creator was attempting to downplay Edward's crusading failures by celebrating his militaristic victories closer to home. Moreover, since the castles served as permanent physical expressions of Edward's expansionist ambitions, they necessarily demonstrate an

Exodus scene depicting *Judei* worshipping an idol. (Photo: The Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral).

Moreover, the map conceivably alludes to contemporary concerns voiced by the Catholic Church over Jewish legal independence, lending further weight to the suggestion that anti-Semitic sentiments were prevalent amongst the English Catholic clergy who, we have established, influenced the map's creation. The papal role in the decline of Jewish legal rights apparent between the eleventh to thirteenth century is highlighted in the shift away from Pope Innocent III's twelfth-century accommodation of Jewish legal autonomy and towards the restrictions imposed by the Fourth Lateran council in 1215.[15] Crucially, the council stipulated that Jews should be 'marked off' by 'dress' to prevent inter-faith relationships, revealing contemporary Christian concerns with religious purity.[16] Interestingly, Strickland argues that the map's depiction of Moses with the Twin Tablets of Law might symbolise the badge that Edward I decreed English Jews wear as part of his similarly repressive Statute of the Jewry in 1275.[17] In this way, the map demonstrates not only the Catholic Church's

Beasts including *Cynocephali* or dog-headed people. (Photo: The Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral).

Jerusalem at the centre of the Hereford World Map. (Photo: The Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral).

uncompromising and forceful attitude towards England's nearest neighbours. When considered together with the Eurocentric and latently xenophobic placement of pejorative imagery such as monstrous beasts within the map, then, this militaristic iconography supports the suggestion that English identity in the thirteenth century was shaped by a growing militaristic xenophobia as well as anti-Semitic sentiment.

Despite the lack of definitive conclusions that can be drawn from the Hereford map, then, this reading has revealed the emergence of anti-Jewish and xenophobic influences on English identity in the thirteenth century. In particular, the corroboration between the map's depiction of the Exodus scene and events contemporary with the map's production, such as the 1275 Statute of the Jewry, indicate the growth of such anti-Jewish sentiment in

thirteenth-century England.[23] Moreover, the concentration of monstrous beasts depicted south of the Nile and its contrast with the mercantile depiction of Europe further hints at the Eurocentric and otherwise xenophobic worldview held by the map's clerical creators.[24]

The true potential of the Hereford map, however, lies in its myriad interpretations. Indeed, it can be equally interpreted as an invaluable source of evidence for medieval attitudes toward race and gender as well as proof of the influence that Roman culture held in the medieval period. In this way, the map demonstrates how, despite the difficulties inherent in determining the contemporary significance of historical documents, such sources still enable the historian to recover important insights into the period and context in which they were created.

15. 'Innocent III: Letter to the Jews 1199', in Oliver Thatcher and Edgar Mcneal (eds.), *A Source Book for Medieval history* (New York, 1905), pp. 212-213; 'Lateran IV: Canon 68 - on Jews', in H. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary*, (St Louis, 1937), pp. 78-127.

16. 'Lateran IV: Canon 68 - on Jews', in H. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary,* (St Louis, 1937), pp. 78-127.

17. Strickland, 'Edward I', p. 449.

18. Jeanne Fox-Friedman, ' Vision of the World: Romanesque Art of Northern Italy and the Hereford Mappamundi', in P. D. A Harvey (ed.), *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and their Context* (London, 2006), p. 139.

19. Rudolf Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East: A study in the History of Monsters', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 5 (1942), p. 177.

20. Scott Westrem,' Lessons from Legends in the Hereford Map', in P. D. A Harvey (ed.), *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and their Context* (London, 2006), pp. 200–202.

21. Debra Strickland, 'The Bestiary on the Hereford World Map', in Ingrid Baumgartner, Nirt Ben-Aryeh Debby and Katrin Kogman-Appel (eds.), *Maps and Travel in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period: Knowledge, Imagination and Visual Culture*, (Berlin, 2019), pp. 72–3.

23. Ibid., pp. 449-450.

24. Westrem,' Lessons from Legends in the Hereford Map', pp. 200–202.

Recovery and Renewal:
Surviving hardship in early modern Durham

Emma Yeo

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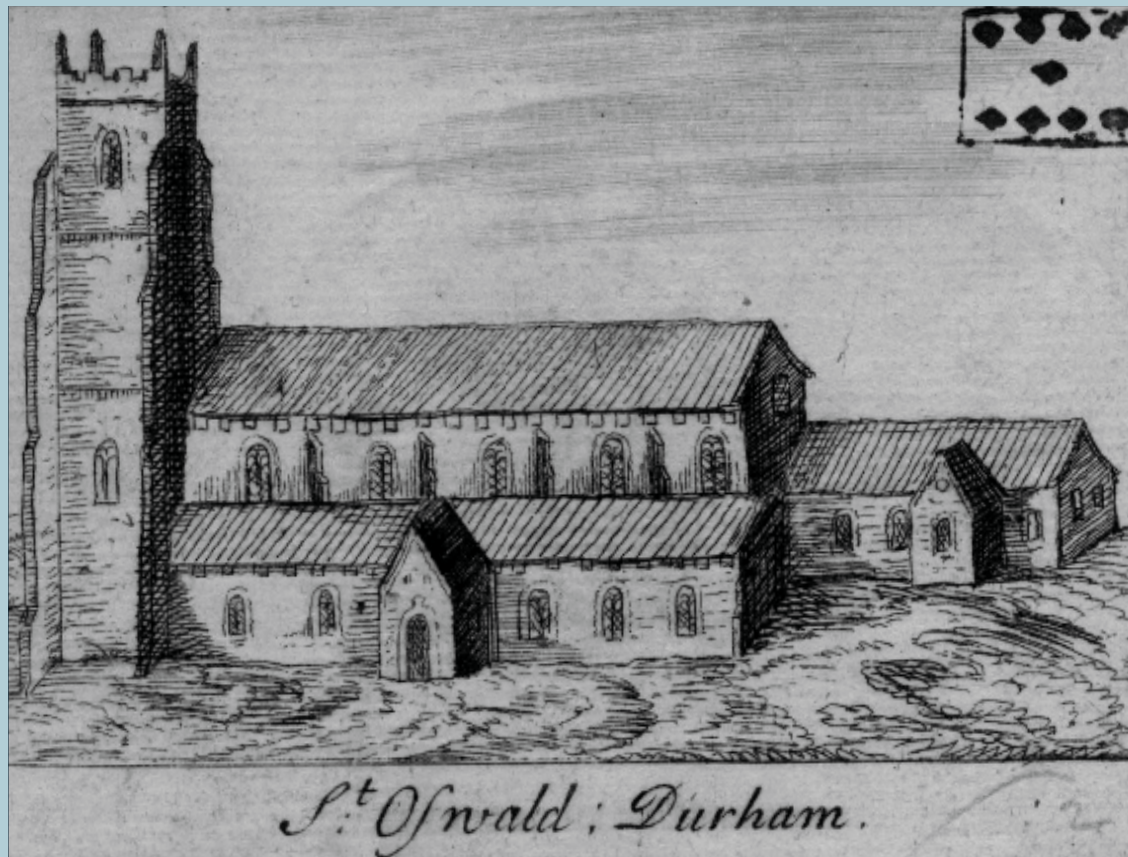
Sketch of St Oswald's Church, Durham, reproduced by kind permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral'.

Looking back on your student days, you may remember the hustle-bustle of Church Street en-route to the Bill Bryson Library. On your right-hand side is the church of St Oswald's, its churchyard set back from the road, giving snippets of life in a long-ago Durham. Aside from the eighteenth-century graves and monuments to great local men inside the church itself, St Oswald's church is important as the spiritual heart of the parish from which it takes name. Focusing on the lives of individuals within this single parish offers an opportunity to understand how our early modern forebears responded to crises and how we, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, might do the same.

The tale of St Oswald's parish during times of both personal and communal crisis is one of communities working together to support and protect their own. The life story of Mary Rowell provides an especially moving example. Her father, William, had been a singer at the cathedral and, upon his death, he devoted significant attention in his will to pleading with his wife and daughter to treat others kindly. Mary's mother quickly remarried and had a second family. From surviving probate records it appears that Mary's relationship with her half-siblings was very limited by her later life.[1] Instead, during her final illness she was supported by her close friends. Lying in her home in Elvet, she left her worldly goods to John Wood and 'her good friend' Elizabeth Gent, stating: 'I doubt not they will continue well unto me' before handing the keys to her home to them.[2]

Female friends were often key providers of support during times of hardship, and an examination of the social networks of Mary Rowell and Elizabeth Gent reveals 'clusters' of widowed and single women in the Elvet area of Durham.[3] The situation at Mary Rowell's bedside is all but mirrored at Elizabeth Gent's own deathbed decades later. She had survived her extremely elderly husband, and relations with her step-daughter appear fractious, with Elizabeth remarking that she had 'no relatives that owne me'.[4] It was instead her close friend, Elizabeth Swinburne, who cared for her and to whom she left her belongings in recognition of her kindness.[5] Like the volunteers who have done so much to help the aged and sick in modern Durham, the women of St Oswald's came together to care for each other during their times of need.

As we have sadly experienced for ourselves over this past year, hardship can also strike a community as a whole. Early modern England was no stranger to epidemic disease. Between 1608 and 1751 there were seventeen years in St Oswald's with significantly heightened mortality, often partially the result of disease.[6] It is, however, the years 1644 to 1645 that stand out as highly traumatic moments in the parish's history, with mortality peaks far greater than those experienced elsewhere in the period.[7]

The civil wars led to significant disruption in Durham. Quartering armies was expensive, and a rise in illegitimate births followed the presence of large numbers of soldiers.[8] The mortality crisis of 1644–as Jeremy Boulton found in his study of Combining details of the 261 deaths recorded in the parish register for 1644–1645 with the Durham Protestation return demonstrates the geographical dimensions of the crisis: 29.82 per cent of traceable householders in Elvet experienced the death of their nuclear family compared to just 6.6 per cent for the areas around Broom.[9] The geographical and social disparities in the impact of COVID-19 are something we will have to reckon with in coming years.

While suggestions of a 'decline in neighbourliness' across early modern England as a whole have some merit, community relations in Saint Oswald's parish during moments of crisis remained collaborative.[10] Nicholas White, who lost most of his relatives in the plague before dying himself, granted the majority of his small estate to Gillian Underwood. They were not related but, unlike his wife's kin, she was resident in the same parish and may have been a significant source of support.[11]

1. Arthur William Headlam, *The parish registers of St Oswald's, Durham* (Durham, 1891), hereafter *PRSO*; Durham University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections, DPR/I/1/1634/C5/1-3; DULASC, DPR/I/1/1670/R23/1-3.

2. Ibid.

3. Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet* (Oxford, 2003), p. 361; Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 164-165; DULASC, probate records; *PRSO*.

4. Ibid; DULASC, DPRI/1/1665/G4; DPRI/1/1692/G1.

5. Ibid.

6. Mary Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997); *PRSO*.

7. Dobson, *Contours*; PRSO.

8. *The case of the auncient tenants* (London, 1650); *The sad and lamentable case of the tenants* (London, 1654), Christopher Durston, *The family in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 159-161; *PRSO*.

9. Stuart B. Jennings, 'A Miserable, Stinking, Infected Town', *Midland History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2013), pp. 51-70; A letter from Newcastle (London, 1647); A declaration published in the Scots army (London, 1646); Matthew R. Greenhall, 'Economic Causes and Consequences of the Scottish Invasions', Northern History, Vol. 49, No. 2 (2012), pp. 265-280; Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and society* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 6, 289.

10. Keith Wrightson, 'The Decline of Neighbourliness Revisited' in Norman L. Jones and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 19-49.

11. DULASC, DPRI/1/1645/W8.

Eighteenth-century Graves at St Oswald's.

Crises end, however, and communities must find a way to move on together. Religion was a powerful comfort in times of trouble, with diarist Thomas Chaytor appealing directly to God for assistance on multiple occasions in his diary.[12] A belief in providence provided a way to comprehend trauma, as did the knowledge that, in their theology, the end of their loved ones' lives brought them to God—as reflected in the opening lines of most contemporary wills. *Memento mori* rings to their nearest and dearest, meanwhile, advised them to live well and make generous donations to the poor, thereby providing hope for their community's future in their own darkest hours.[13] Our own increased knowledge of our own mortality and the fragility of everyday life will, I hope, likewise lead us to seek a better future for our communities.

For families in Saint Oswald's, recovering from crisis often included new marriages or the births of children. After a famine in 1623, of which 46 per cent of the victims were unmarried individuals (often children), there was a rise in conceptions amongst the affected families as they grieved and attempted to repair their families. It is notable that very few families were ever wiped out by disease, and there are some families whose time in the parish stretches across

several generations and beyond my period of study.

Parish records during the period 1644–1645 are fragmented. The lists of the dead are littered with half-remembered lives, including children whose names are lost to history. For some of these unlucky souls, it is possible to recover their identities with reasonable certainty. The names of others, especially the children of the migratory poor, cannot be found through family reconstitution. As the death toll rose, the ability of record-keepers to note life events declined rapidly, and ensuring the accuracy of the register was ultimately abandoned until the crisis had abated. Once it was possible, however, the parish clerk, Nicholas Sheffield, painstakingly copied out the remaining names of those that had been lost month-by-month.[14] His efforts ensured that the toll of the pandemic on his community would not be forgotten, the list a tangible reminder of what had occurred that would be retained for centuries to come. Where names were not possible to find, individuals were marked by their parentage or their origins as soldiers and thus outsiders to the town.

Aside from the necessity of keeping a parish register, remembering the victims of the pandemic kept the history of their community alive, and there is, perhaps, a lesson for us there too. The 1918 flu pandemic, known as the Spanish Flu, is largely forgotten. Family history conversations with my grandfather have brought up the details of his uncles' experiences in World War II, one serving in the tank corps and another becoming a prisoner of war in Japan. When I asked him whether anyone ever talked to him as a boy about the flu epidemic that would have severely

altered the course of their lives during their own youths, however, he could not remember the topic ever being mentioned. Silence hides trauma but does not remove it. Through ensuring the memory of who and what has been lost to COVID-19, just as Nicholas Sheffield did for his own community, we will take one step towards recovery.

At first glance the stories I have briefly mentioned of life in Saint Oswald's parish are bleak. I have said nothing of the happy moments scattered throughout ordinary life, of feasting and marriages or time at play. Life was not wholly overshadowed by the threat of disease and conflict, as the exhilarating nights out in the Elvet area of the city reflected in surviving eighteenth-century court documents prove.[15] Gossiping about national politics, or local rumours, could also be a source of excitement.

When completing a family reconstitution study of the parish, it was the uniquely tragic stories that stood out, those of families with numerous illegitimacy scandals or a fall to near-destitution in a single generation. Those of ordinary lives no more tragic than any other do not.

The last year has given me an insight into how fortunate a life I have led, without the personal experience to know instinctively what our early modern forebears had to learn through repeated moments of personal pain. Better days will come, and there will once again be moments of joy and feasting with friends and family without disease being the first word on everyone's lips.
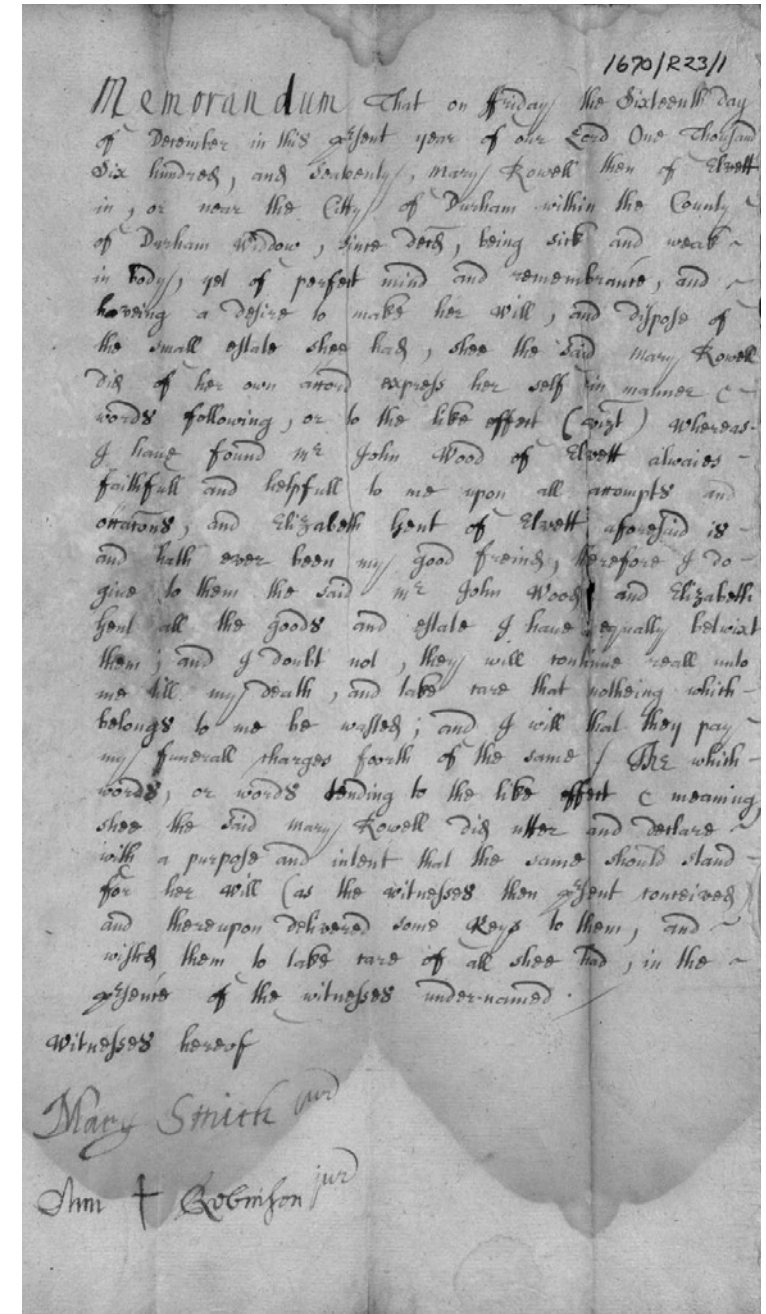
Mary Rowell's will, reproduced by permission of Durham University Library and Collections.

12. DULASC, Add.MS.866; Alexander Walsham, 'Deciphering Divine Wrath and Displaying Godly Sorrow' in Jennifer Spinks and Charles Zika (eds.), *Disaster, death and the Emotions in the Shadow of the Apocalypse* (London, 2016), pp. 21-43.

13. DULASC probate records 1650 to 1750.

14. *PRSO.*

15. See marital cause records in DULASC.

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We hope you enjoyed Issue Eleven. Until next time!

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