



The Grasshopper

The Organ Of The Gresham Society

Cheaper than The Sun and less eye boggling than the Daily Star

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College Notes

Professor Edith Hall is re-filming her public lectures (not just those for Gresham, but all her lectures) and giving them away on YouTube: you can read about that at [Edith Hall.co.uk](http://Edith.Hall.co.uk)

Barnard's Inn Hall is far from silent in these days of lockdown as it rings to the sounds of workmen who are attending to such mundane but vital parts of College life like heating, ventilation and fire alarms, which were by and large overlooked when the Hall was built in the 14th Century.

The Gresham Society AGM took place on February 1st with 40 people in attendance. The minutes are available at [Gresham Society AGM Minutes 2021](#). One interesting point that came up in the lively informal chat derived from comments on the earrings which had apparently (and quite unwittingly) been worn by Professor Jo Delahunty in court. This led to excited discussion as to whether items of bling might brighten up a lecture, though the suggestion that professors should deliver their lectures while sitting in a deck chair in front of a tropical beach backdrop while wearing beach clothes and sipping Planter's Punch was not passed on to Academic Board, although there was a view that this might lighten both the topic and delivery.

Ave Atque Vale

Welcome to new members Professor Martin Daunton, Visiting Gresham Professor of Economic History for 2020/21 and a warm welcome too to Dr Wendy Piatt, CEO of Gresham College, who was interviewed in G5.

Vita Vitarum

Graham Hoare 1935 – 2021

Graham Hoare joined the Gresham Society in 2010. After taking a Mathematics degree at Imperial College (London) and a PGCE at the Institute of Education (London), he taught mathematics to secondary school children all of his working life. After his first position as second in department at

The Simon Langton Grammar School in Canterbury, he spent 34 years at Dr Challoner's Grammar School for Boys, heading the mathematics department, including a spell as Deputy Headmaster. He was involved in setting up and running the Royal Institution's Mathematics Masterclass series for young people, ran the Mathematical Association's "Problem Corner" in their *Gazette* for 20 years, and was Letters Editor for the Institute for Mathematics and its Application's (IMA) *Mathematics Today* journal for 20 years. The IMA named the Graham Hoare Prize after him and awards it annually to Early Career Mathematicians for a brilliant *Mathematics Today* article, to recognise Graham's valuable contribution to the IMA and the wider Mathematics community, especially in encouraging young mathematicians. Graham also actively supported the UK Mathematics Trust and the Bletchley Park Education Department. He died after contracting an infection that proved resistant to medical intervention, on 17 January 2021. (*Editor's Note: And may I add that he taught me in my first year at the Langton more years ago than I care to remember...*)

Professor Jack Mahoney

And fraternal greetings from Jack Mahoney, who was Professor of Commerce from 1987 to 1993, and indeed the first professor of business ethics at King's London (always supposing that this is not a contradiction in terms...). His latest book *The Holy Spirit and Moral Choice in Thomas Aquinas* has recently been published by Lexicon/Fortress and is available through Amazon. More on Jack's interesting career and contribution to Gresham when space permits.

New Appointments

We are delighted to announce the appointment of former Chairman of the Gresham Society Jack Wigglesworth to the Editorial Board. We invited him over the phone to become Editor-at-Large, only it was a bad line and he heard Editor-at-Lunch. We think he will fill the role to perfection.



New Publications

Congratulations go to Robert Vas Dias for the publication of his latest book, *Poetics of Still Life: A Collage* (Permanent Press), which combines 65 still lifes in colour (ranging from pharaonic times to the present) with meditative and critical commentaries alongside his poems and prose poems. This is Robert's 17th book – and he is already working on the next one.

Dr Adrian Seville is taking the world by storm with his Vintage Board Games which is going down a bomb in its Czech language edition. It has already appeared in French, Italian, Japanese and Spanish, though Adrian denies having done any of the proofreading himself.

And cross fingers for Professor Alex Edmans, whose latest offering *Grow the Pie* (Cambridge University Press) has been longlisted by the Chartered Management Institute as Book of the Year. It is based on his Gresham lecture series in 2018-2019.

I have to say with some regret that my latest book proposal has been turned down. It was going to be a novel set in Eighteenth-Century Cornwall, with lots of shipwrecks and smugglers. The publishers tell me however that they regard this simply as a small piece of Cornish pastiche...

Members' Corner

Gresham Society Webinar No.2

Dr Fred Hohler (PM of the Mercers' Company and much else besides) delivered a very interesting talk on Watercolour before the Age of Photography on 18 February to an enthralled audience of 40, a number of whom met up for drinks on Zoom afterwards. Things got quite lively, especially when the topic came up of Pictures of Nudes as Drawn by My Father – which would undoubtedly make an interesting subject for our next webinar. It would undoubtedly arouse more interest than Professor Frank Cox who (inevitably) regaled us with his medical drawings of amoebas, deadly parasites and the female *Mephistopheles* mosquito...

Unfortunate Announcements (series of 1000)

Not so much foot in mouth as microphone up the spout: Professor Robin Wilson tells us of the choral event where the announcer said, "The orchestra will be laid out on the floor, and the choir will be in tiers above". (*Editor's Note: keep them coming folks!*)

One for the lawyers

During the miners' strike of 1984, when Arthur Scargill was head of the Miners' Union, a Yorkshire miner put in a very late claim for compensation. The judge said to the miner's counsel, "Your client is doubtless aware of *Vigilantibus et non dormientibus jura subveniunt?*" meaning "The law serves only those who are vigilant with their rights and not those who sleep thereupon." Whereupon Counsel replied, "M'Lud, in Bamsley they speak of little else."

Noise pollution and amorous crickets

The Gresham Society contains no end of sharp-eyed members. Robert Stripe writes in from the Fenlands to express concern that motorway noise is upsetting the mating habits of crickets as the males can't make enough noise for the females to hear above the hum of speeding vehicles. The Grasshopper Himself has remarked (rather huffily I thought) that crickets are not grasshoppers and anyway he's never had a problem in that department himself.

Reflections

M C Escher: following on from the Penrose Triangle

Following on from Escher and his impossible perspectives in G6, he is well-known for particular figures, such as "Convex and Concave" of 1935, "Relativity" of 1953 or the celebrated "Waterfall" of 1961 with water flowing upwards and downwards at the same time, or the animals that morph in and out of themselves. These all derive from his interest in mathematical forms and unusual perspectives, despite not having had much formal education himself. But his artistic eye spotted the curious geometrical shapes of Moorish tiles in the Alhambra, or the patterns created by the walls and roofs of crowded Italian villages such as Amalfi in 1931. It is all mathematically curious, aesthetically dazzling – and enough to leave one dizzy.

Escher was not completely original, however, with his focus on elongated forms and the distorting effect of convex shapes. The 16th Century Mannerist painter Francesco Parmigianino (1503-1540), for instance, was a leading early exponent of etching, and a keen observer of strange perspectives. He was undoubtedly involved in alchemy too, which may explain the fact that he devised the formula that led to the creation of the Parmesan cheese that bears his name. And Hogarth of course was very interested in perspective, as may be seen in his "[Satire on False Perspective](#)".



Satire on False Perspective

Hogarth has managed to work in at least twenty-three examples of false perspective. (How many can you spot at [Wikipedia: Satire on False Perspective?](#)) (Editor's Note: And we can all look forward to Professor Sarah Hart's Gresham lecture on *Perspective on 18th October 2021.*)

More on Napoleon (see G6)

Napoleon does seem to have been misquoted rather than more than most. He does not appear to have remarked on the English being a nation of shopkeepers, though Dr O'Meara, his physician on St Helena, does refer to it in his memoirs. The phrase was coined by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* of 1776. And Napoleon may have used the word "grocer" (*épiciier*) anyway.

Nor does Napoleon seem to have ever talked about a whiff of grapeshot. The phrase as such first appears in Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution - A History* of 1837 (whose second edition in 1857 inspired Dickens to write *A Tale of Two Cities* two years later.) The French equivalent would be *une volée de mitraille*, (not to be confused of course with *mitrailleuse* machine gun or *mitraillette* sub-machine gun, though the standard infantry rifle, the FAMAS is referred to colloquially as *le clairon* – bugle. Our senior military members might note, however, that this is being phased out now in favour of the HK416. But I digress.)

For a lengthy list of items attributed to Boney (but which he probably never uttered, like "An army marches on its stomach") go to [10 Things Napoleon Never Said](#).

And don't let's even get started on *Pas ce soir, Joséphine*.

Plague Notes

Plague on the Continent

In the hope that the Covid nightmare is now receding with the onslaught of the vaccines, perhaps we can revert to History for the while. 1665 – 1666 was not the only outbreak of plague in England in the Seventeenth Century. There were also outbreaks in 1603, 1625 and 1636, with death rates perhaps five times average for the time, but then England was by no means the exception. In Italy between 1629 and 1631 as many as 69% of the population might have died. Plague ravaged Spain between 1647 and 1652, focusing on Valencia and Seville, and Barcelona was weakened economically for 150 years by periodic outbreaks of plague. (It rather puts me in mind of Rio de Janeiro and the impact of yellow fever on its trading status, though that's another story.)

The rather attractive town of Arenys de Mar (25 miles north of Barcelona) is an interesting case in point. Every year in August the town re-confirms its devotion to Sant Roc, as the outbreak of plague in 1607 ended on his Saint's Day; young people in white costumes with red sashes parade through the town and spray everything and everyone (especially the members of the Town Council), using a special five-holed jug called an *almorratxa* which contains eau-de-cologne and basil leaves, a folk memory of some long-forgotten remedy. (Editor's Note: *Sant Roc, Alias Saint Roche of Montpelier, is the patron saint who intercedes in cases of plague and pestilence. He is also, quite implausibly, the patron saint of dog lovers.* See [Catholic Online - St. Roch](#) – it's quite a story.)

Editorial

For those of you who remember going to Gamages (as mentioned in G6) I well remember the sheer excitement of coming up to a London store in the Christmas season. The Christmas lights for a small child in those drab post-War days were unforgettable, as were the sheer buzz and good humour of the crowds in those far-off days. Gamages had a wide range of departments, selling everything from car parts to shotguns. Its Christmas catalogue was famous, as was the famous model railway with



both day and night scenes. Gmagages closed in 1972 and the site almost opposite Gresham has been completely re-developed.

But now the whole high street picture has changed, and the traditional West End stores will doubtless go the way of other longstanding well-loved names, ranging from Debenhams to Jaeger. And, sadly, that Christmas buzz of long ago may well have gone too. Shopping by the click of a button is just no substitute and simply adds to the personal isolation of today's world. Which is why, I am sure, Gresham will continue to flourish in the lecture hall as much as it will on-line.

Envoi

In the present world where bogus electioneering, false accounting and the suppression of worthy causes seems to have taken over all democratic principles, it seems inevitable that the Gresham Society should have come to the attention of the Dark Web.

The following is doubtless a piece of false reporting and may well have come from some underground and underhand foreign power, who probably hacked into Ian Harris' computer:

I was actually planning on arranging some insurrection. It is apparently all the rage. None of the members believe for one moment that the Gresham Society elections have been conducted in a free and fair manner. Indeed it's pretty obvious to anyone and everyone that they have been stolen. We want the Gresham Society back and we want to make the Gresham Society great again, whatever that might mean and whatever it might take to achieve it.

Somebody might have noticed our longstanding tradition of getting through the business of the AGM in seven minutes flat, but I would simply put that down to some firm chairmanship.

The College could, however, usefully draw on the new strapline "Make Gresham Great Again". Given Sir T's propensity for smuggling, money laundering, gun running and espionage his example should fill any spaces left by the demise of Donald Trump quite effectively...

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Rare Find in the National Library of Paraguay

I doubt whether many readers take the *Buenos Aires Herald* on a regular basis, but they may be interested in a piece of historic publishing news concerning my own family. It has long been a tradition that an illustrious ancestor of mine (known to history as "Colonel" Connell) went out to Australia in 1788 as part of a government re-settlement scheme. It appears that he founded the town of Goolagong Springs in the Northern Territories, which flourished until the State Government introduced income tax. This outraged the independent-minded settlers so much that they decided to strike out again on their own – this time to Paraguay, which was offering free land to European settlers. They actually founded the Colony of New Australia, though this did not succeed as the land proved to be in the Chaco, an area largely destroyed in the Chaco War and much of it subsequently carved up by the victorious nations of Brazil and Argentina.

It would appear that the settlers survived but made the fatal error of moving off to the Matto Grosso, and were not heard of again, even though Colonel Percy Fawcett did mount an expedition to find them.

Now the National Library of Paraguay has announced that Colonel Connell actually had time to write his memoirs and the manuscript has recently been discovered (it survived evidently having fallen down the back of a filing cabinet). Provisionally entitled *Punting Up The Paraná* it is quite legible, written in a firm copperplate hand, though somewhat damaged by the teredo beetle. The Biblioteca Nacional has contacted the National Library of Australia in Sydney for assistance in conservation, though the Mayor of Goolagong Springs has declared that the manuscript rightly belongs in the local museum and has set up a Crowdfunding scheme to bring it back home. If any member would like to contribute, please contact me.

And as ever, if you have any news items for *The Grasshopper* do let [Tim](#) or [Basil](#) know.

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