



The Grasshopper

The Organ of The Gresham Society

It does for grasshoppers what the plague did for London. (Entomologists Weekly)

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College Notes

We thank Professor Jo Delahunty for her stint on Council and warmly welcome Professor Chris Lintott, who is replacing her. And we welcome Naresh Sonpar as a new member of Council on the City side.

Ave Atque Vale

We say goodbye to Loyd Grossman after his time as Chairman of Gresham. The appointment of a new Chairman is imminent.

We welcome Nigel Israel to the Society, whose acquaintance with the College goes back many years. He is a member of a range of livery companies.

Then we welcome Professor Alain Goriely as the incoming 34th Professor of Geometry. He is currently the Director of the Oxford Centre for Industrial and Applied Mathematics and is a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Lastly, we are pleased to welcome the 40th Gresham Professor of Law, Clive Stafford Smith JD OBE, an Anglo-American lawyer, perhaps best known for his activities with regard to capital punishment in the USA and the matter of Guantánamo. He teaches part-time at Goldsmiths and the Bristol Law School.

Members' Corner

The Gresham family continues to prosper and make its mark on the world: we are pleased to report that Professor Alex Edmans has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He is already a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Professor Avinash Persaud has done himself proud as Bloomberg have listed him as one of the 13 Ones to Watch. Nothing sinister of course – he has just been tipped as someone to watch

on the topic of climate action. And our former Provost Sir Richard Evans is in print again with *Hitler's People: The Faces of the Third Reich* which has just been published by Allen Lane. A solid tome at 624 pages.

The Circular Miles

Alderman Canon Alison Gowman reports of an interesting new initiative:

[The Livery Climate Action Group](#) are keen to support pan Livery initiatives in sustainability. Information Technologist Russell Macdonald has launched the Circular Mile, as he is keenly aware of the e-waste that is building up which can be repurposed, reused or recycled. Even in and around the Square Mile there are many who are digitally disadvantaged either as students or the elderly or those in straightened times. Businesses donating their old equipment with a purpose to help and dispose of in a sustainable way are building a circular economy, hence the Circular Mile. Along the way people can learn new skills in working on these items and this will create jobs and connect our communities. The project is still in the early stages but now includes several charities who work in this area as well as some fellow Liveries such as the Chartered Surveyors. *Editor's Note: For more information on this excellent initiative see [The Circular Mile](#)*

Reflections

Thomas Hardy's burial and the heart

A further reflection on the burial of Thomas Hardy (see G20) brings to mind his own poem "Friends Beyond":

No more need we corn and clothing, feel of old
terrestrial stress;
Chill distraction stirs no sigh;
Fear of death has even bygone us: death gave all
that we possess.



He did have his morbid streak after all (just think of “Dun becoz we was too many”) so he might just have been tickled at the thought.

History at odd angles

If only History were as clear-cut and straightforward as some people would have us believe. Abraham Lincoln is celebrated for the fact that he led the Union during the American Civil War – only he had two brothers-in-law who died fighting with the Confederate Army. Mary Todd Lincoln hailed from Kentucky, which was a border state at the time. Samuel was killed at Shiloh, Alexander at Baton Rouge, and her own brother-in-law, Benjamin Harding Helm, was killed at the Battle of Chickamauga in Georgia. It must have made Sunday lunch a bit of an ordeal *en famille*.

Helm, a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army, had actually been offered a post in the Union Army by Abe himself, something which also happened, ironically, in the case of none other than Robert E Lee, who of course led the Confederate Army with some initial success. For Robert E Lee see *Alistair Cook's America* – though Cook says that it was Mary Lincoln's brothers who were killed. For command of the Northern forces see page 207. NB Lee was anti-slavery and freed his own slaves on the outset of war. NB Arlington Cemetery lies in the grounds of Lee's own home. (Alistair Cook even has a picture of Lee standing at the door of his house just as the war was breaking out.)

Patrick O'Brien and St Paul's Cathedral

It is surely possible that the author of the Lucky Jack Aubrey naval series once visited St Paul's Cathedral, but it is surely no coincidence that the monument to Captain Edward Riou (just on the left as you leave the Crypt) is a clear reflection of the key plot in *Desolation Island*. Captain Aubrey, in command of *HMS Leopard*, is sailing in the Southern Ocean and runs into an iceberg. After all sorts of adventures of course, he comes out on top (though not literally...).

This episode in fiction is replicated almost exactly. Riou was in command of *HMS Guardian* and was en route to Australia with a consignment of convicts, plus a large number of animals as part of the food supply. They were running short of water when they spotted an iceberg and Riou thought to collect some ice in

order to replenish with water. However, fog came down and the ship hit an underwater obstruction in the lower part of the iceberg. After strenuous efforts to retrieve the situation, 259 people left in five small boats (only one of which was saved by a passing Frenchman). 62 remained on board – which gives some idea of the living conditions on board a 44-gun two-decked ship.

As the monument states, “Lieut Riou encouraged all those who desired to take the change of preserving themselves in the boats to consult their safety but judging it contrary to his own duty to desert the vessel he neither gave up to despair nor relaxed his exertions whereby after ten weeks of the most perilous navigation he succeeded in bringing his disabled ship into port receiving his high reward of fortitude and perseverance from the divine providence on whose protection he relied.”

After all that it seems unfortunate that he was lost at the Battle of Copenhagen when commanding *HMS Amazon*. He was cut in half by a parting shot from the Danish batteries. The monument itself also commemorates James Mosse, the other captain to be killed during the battle while serving on board *HMS Monarch*.

What's in a name

Personally I am not too sure about doppelgangers although it is possible that people can look alike or possibly dress alike sufficiently so as to cause confusion. But it does get complicated with namesakes. I actually had one at the bank many years ago – another T J Connell, only he was Thomas James. The bank got into the habit of paying any funds into my account – and drawing any from his. I did say to the bank that I had no objection to this arrangement, though I have to say that it did not last long. But I found later that there was another T J Connell at the local surgery – and he was also a Timothy John. Fortunately, the d.o.b. was different.

But it was ever thus. Graham Greene actually found himself in the curious situation of hearing of people who were claiming to be the real Graham Greene, though he never managed to track one down. However, there was a case of a man who was arrested in India, claimed to be the Graham Greene – and that stopped Greene himself from going to India in case he got arrested for jumping bail.



Creepy crawlies again

Having mentioned the Aesculapian snake in Colwyn Bay and along the Regent's Park Canal, they have now appeared in the national press as someone nearly tripped over one recently along the canal. (Hardly surprising as it was six foot long, but then they are harmless and do keep the rat population down.)

But now we hear of scorpions living "on an island in Kent". Could this be The Isle of Thanet? Dreamland will never be the same again. But no – they are to be found (in their thousands apparently) in Sheerness Dockyard, where they have been living since they came ashore from a sailing vessel in the 18th Century. But they don't seem to worry people too much as they are nocturnal apparently.

Change for a fiver

Some of us can remember the old orange ten-shilling note (a favourite for birthdays when I would stick one or two in the slot on top of my piggy bank) and the green one-pound note (a fair treat sometimes for Christmas). And doubtless someone out there can even remember the white five-pound note. However, did you know that the Bank of England has also issued a One Million Pound banknote? Dating from 1968 it looks suspiciously like the old ten bob note (so do take care if ever you are trawling through an antique shop) but it pales into insignificance when compared to the Titan – the One Hundred Million Pound note which is kept in the Bank of England (so 'tis rumoured) as a surety for banks in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

I can just imagine the security level if ever one of these had to leave Threadneedle Street. I am sure that some readers can recall soldiers of the Guards Regiment on stag outside the Bank as this was the case from 1783 to 1973. They were called in at the time of the Gordon Riots in 1780 and somehow stayed on as the Bank Piquet. Until 1963 they actually marched from barracks – not too bad if they were stationed at the Tower of London but a bit of a slog if they had to march from Wellington or Chelsea. In later years they were allowed to go by tube (in FSMO?!), though I do have a photo of a detachment marching through the fog in around 1950 – a very atmospheric shot of London past. Oddly enough, an older gentleman of my acquaintance and a former Colonel of Gurkhas tells me it was

the "Bank Piquet" which he recalls – and he even knows one of the Gurkhas standing guard outside the Bank now.

Editorial

I am pleased to see that the livery companies are coming together more in order to extend their reach and punch – the Circular Mile above is a good example of that, and No Going Back (the scheme for ex-prisoners which figured in the Lord Mayor's Lectures on Thursday 11 July) is being supported by no fewer than 40 Companies. This pan-livery concept is bringing all sorts of companies together, my favourite being the Wet Ten (who have grown more in recent years, but it's a nice name). They cover the livery companies which make use of water for whatever purpose, ranging from the Launderers to the Farmers, with the Water Conservators in pride of place. And even more proud is our very own Carolyn Roberts who is on her way to becoming Master. Her lecture on the Thames Barrier is also available in the Lord Mayor's Lecture series on 7 March 2024.

Talking of which, the whole series is bucketing along. We now have 104 webinars signed up through to the end of Michael's mayoral year in November. For more information go to the [Gresham Society website](#) and click on [Knowledge Miles](#).

Wars without end

Talk about demonstrations against foreign tourists in Barcelona – there are parts of Spain that are still at war with various countries. The French should avoid the delightful town of Lijar in Almería as it was formally at war with France until 1983, but only since 1883 when King Alfonso XII was insulted by a mob in Paris. Peace was not restored until the French Consul in Málaga intervened and signed an official treaty, much to the satisfaction of all 650 inhabitants who were finally able to stand down.

But then worse might well have befallen any unwary Danish tourists who wandered into the mighty town of Huéscar, which is only 10 kilometres from Granada (only just out of range of cannon shot). The Mayor declared war on France (plus Denmark) for supporting Napoleon. Locals were surprised 172 years later that all 10,000 of them were still technically at war with Denmark, as *sensu strictu* peace had



only been signed with France after the 100 Days.

The two Danish journalists sent to investigate were promptly arrested in a light-hearted fashion, only to find that the local constable had lost the key to their handcuffs. A major international incident was only averted when the local blacksmith intervened. The Costa del Sol might never have been the same.

Not as clear as it seems

So often the truth behind the story as simply stated is stranger than fiction. Whilst it is true that the first woman to be appointed to the Senate was Rebecca Latimer Felton (on the 21st November 1922) she did not take her seat – as she was only Senator for a day. She was an unlikely candidate, being 87 years old and deeply racist, (hardly surprising, having been born in Georgia in 1830). Her husband sat in the House of Representatives and when one of Georgia’s senators died just before the elections, Mrs Felton was appointed to take his place pending the vote. In practice she was in position for just one day, but this was important as the Nineteenth Amendment (which gave women the vote) had only been passed in 1920, so making her a senator (even for a day) proved the point.

Envoi

The Lord Mayor’s Progress

Our current Lord Mayor, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, continues with his globetrotting, as is right and proper for all lord mayors in order to promote the City of London. Since G20 (that’s the most recent edition of The Grasshopper and not the other crowd) he has been to the Netherlands and France (for the Olympics) and has covered the UK from the Channel Islands to Sheffield and then Edinburgh for the Tattoo. All fairly close to home at the Mansion House, but the Autumn will see him off to the Baltic States, Finland and Iceland, not to mention Vietnam, Laos, Bermuda, Canada and Germany. Quite an itinerary!

For those of us lesser mortals with our feet more firmly on the ground, the Coffee Colloquies are much to be recommended. These are linked into the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals but, Michael being Michael,

he has added a few more, to include Space Protection Insurance, Ethical AI Investment, plus Philanthropy and Investment to the list. The Colloquies are on at the Mansion House (an early start with much-needed coffee at 0845) through to November, and you do need to book. See [Lord Mayor’s Coffee Colloquies - City of London](#) for the dates.

And talking of being firmly on the ground, the Lord Mayor’s Balloon Regatta was in the programme for 2024, having been cancelled over the past five years because of bad weather and Covid. Unfortunately, the weather was against it for every Sunday in July.

And talking of talking, Michael has clocked up nearly 300 speeches to date. Quite a year!

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

The new [College programme](#) is already out on-line and the programme in paper format is available from 5th September.

Take a look in particular at Monday 7th October at 6pm, when Baroness Catherine Ashton will be speaking on the topic of “[European Security: Building for the Long Term](#)” – a highly current topic. By longstanding tradition, this lecture is linked to the Gresham Society, as it commemorates Professor Peter Nailor who did so much to revive the College in the early 1990s. Let’s hope for a good turnout of Society members! And please note that this will be held at Mercers’ Hall. We are grateful to our sponsors for their support.

If you have any news items for *The Grasshopper* do let Tim (t.j.connell@city.ac.uk) or Basil (greshamsociety@gmail.com) know. Anything on awards, recent publications or odd curiosities will doubtless suit.

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