

HISTORY BULLETIN

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>American Election</i>	1
<i>1927</i>	1
<i>Another Day...</i>	1
<i>Black and British</i>	2
<i>Books</i>	2
<i>A United Kingdom</i>	2



Another Day in the Death of America by Gary Young

Saturday, November 23rd, 2013. It was just another day in America; an unremarkable Saturday on which ten children and teens were killed by gunfire. The youngest was nine; the oldest was nineteen. White, Black and Latino, they fell in suburbs, hamlets and ghettos. None made the national news.

Young traces the story of each shooting and each life. Readable commentary on the USA today.



AMERICAN ELECTION

Current affairs and the study of history are inextricably linked even though it is trite to say that we do so to ‘learn lessons’ from history. The idea that we study history to avoid repeating these lessons seems even more ridiculous. However, at the most basic level, if you are interested in history, you are probably interested in current affairs and politics.

So, what to make of the American election? There are comparisons with the Brexit backlash and to the rise of nationalist parties in Europe. France is about to have its own Presidential election in which Marine le Pen is likely to feature strongly whilst Angele Merkel faces a challenge from AFD in 2017. But to what extent should we expect to compare the experience of the United States and that of European countries? Global capitalism ensures that we share many of the same products, especially in the English speaking world but one of the salient features of the many commentaries on the USA during the election was just how



different U.S. society is from its European counterparts. Start to think through the differences and you should be struck by how profound they are and also how conflicted the country has become: a society built on ‘freedom’ which is fixated by the freedom to carry arms; a society founded by people seeking religious tolerance which is proposing to ban Muslims from entry.

The election also exposed a country split in its beliefs and attitudes, where those in the coastal cities seem to have little in common with the central mass. How has this happened?

The American section of the iGCSE course followed at

Haileybury has the subheading: A Divided Union. Never has it seemed more apt.

No doubt a plethora of books will emerge about the President elect. It may be impossible to separate fiction from the almost unbelievable truth. **Trump Revealed: An American Journey of Ambition, Ego, Money and Power** by Kranish and Fisher is a biography which takes care to be fair. Trump emerges as dynamic and imaginative but untrustworthy and self-centered. Sadly, even an attempt to be fair to him ends by being damning enough.

ONE SUMMER—AMERICA 1927

Middles are currently reaching the end of the USA in the ‘20s topic. Bill Bryson’s study of the USA during a single year would be an excellent way to sew up the course. Through anecdotes about sport, film, crime stories and music, Bryson illustrates a

society which saw a seismic shift. Most Americans in the ‘20s grew up in a world where important events happened in Europe. Now suddenly America was dominant in nearly every meaningful way. Charles Lindbergh’s flight to Europe was a culmi-

nating expression of the shift in the centre of gravity. Lindbergh’s fortunes after his ground breaking flight perhaps illustrate one of the first casualties of the cult of celebrity.

Katherine Howard: The Tragic Story of Henry VIII's Fifth Queen by Josephine Wilkinson. A bit of revisionist history here which reveals Katherine Howard, usually depicted as a harlot at the height of her power, in a new light. Howard was just 15 when Henry cast his eye in her direction—a child by today's definition. Wilkinson makes us think about how men have abused women. Good history makes us think about the present as well as the past—link this to the 'everyday sexism' debate.

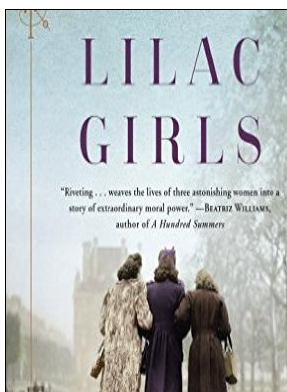
A United Kingdom starring Rosamund Pike and David Oyelowo is currently in the cinema. It tells the true story of a white office clerk and a black lawyer who fall in love in post-war London. The hitch, apart from all the disapproval of a mixed race affair, is that he is to be the next King of Botswana. The critics are divided on whether the film turns the story into a fairytale but there is agreement that the film is brilliantly acted and shot.



Round up of books

The Girl in the Glass Tower by Elizabeth Freemantle features the Tudors again but this time in historical fiction. The book is rich in historical detail. It focuses on Arbella Stuart who spent her youth in the unenviable position of heir to Elizabeth. Not surprisingly she was enmeshed by the tawdry intrigues of her make relatives.

Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly is not a work of literary genius but it tells a good tale. Moreover, it is a story based on truth. Kelly follows the path of three women through the camp of Ravensbruck and into the post-war world. The experiments carried out on women 'rabbits' in the camp links disturbingly to our work on progress in medicine in Fifties.



BLACK AND BRITISH

From the Battle of Trafalgar to the First and Second World Wars, black people have played an integral role in the most significant moments in our national story. In recent decades, academics, researchers and community groups have begun uncovering a history that has, for too long remained untold: how black Britons shaped the UK's culture and society from its earliest times.

Throughout November the BBC has been running a series of programmes across its networks on what it means to be Black and British today. The centerpiece is a series by the historian David Olusoga, **Black and British: A forgotten History**.

which is now on Haileybury Clickview.

There is much more to the study of black British history than you might at first think. Yes, the stories are amazing but Olusoga also raises issues of how we know about these stories. The BBC website has a insightful guide into the problems of studying the experience of people who left few direct records or whose history was told for them: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z8g2xsg>.

One of the projects the BBC has followed is based in Liverpool. It explores the experience of black servicemen from the First World War who were left stranded when the conflict ended and

eventually faced race riots. The whole archive is available online: <http://www.greatwar-to-raceriots.co.uk/>

The BBC pages give you multiple links to both national and local archives on the black experience. There is also advice on how to start your own research. If you are interested in studying history at university, spending a while browsing through some of these sites will give you a valuable insight into carrying out primary research.

Try the Black Cultural Archive:

<http://bcaheritage.org.uk/>

