

# Part 5: London

To London

The Flat

Westminster

Abolition

Women's Rights

Opium

Indian Independence

Prison Reform

Hyde Park

British Museum

Hans Sloane

# To London

Day 17: Within a block of dropping off Perky at the Hertz lot in Salisbury I did a curious thing. I switched to the right side of the road. Perhaps I was anxious to be back on home turf. Whatever the reason, there was a scream from the woman to my left which brought to my attention the error of my ways and I cranked the wheel hard to the left, in time to avoid the lorry who had a split second earlier was approaching fast in my lane.

## Parting With Perky

A minute later, we drove triumphantly into the Hertz lot

to drop off Perky. It was early afternoon on a Wednesday. We were there at the appointed time but the compound was oddly quiet. Perky seemed relieved. Quiet was good. I tried the door of the office. Locked. There was no one there. We had a train to catch.

I called the woman who apologized profusely. There was an emergency and she was obliged to rush off. “Just put the key on the top of the front tire and you’re good to go.” I did and we did – go, this time by cab. Remember York? I did. Randi did.

## Tipping

Our cabbie, an older man, dropped us at the train station in good time. I tipped him well for the short ride. He seemed surprised and pleased and with gusto helped us with our bags.

Tipping does not seem common in England. Of the 30

odd folks we joined on two mini-bus tours, I believe we were the only ones who tipped. We are visitors in their land and representatives of ours. We owe them something, at the least, a good impression. What if the cabbie had gone home that night and said to his wife, “ Picked up some Canadians today, Lovie. Bloody nice folk.” That would make my day.

## Train Trauma

Train stations can be tricky places. For example, it's important to know which way you're headed. If you know that, you'll also know which side of the tracks to stand on. And that's a pretty good start to getting on the right train. If you're not on the correct side of the tracks, serendipity will prevail and you will find yourself on a new and unexpected adventure in God only knows where. That may well be a good thing. We got on the right train, which depending on your approach to travel, might have been the wrong train, for it was the train we planned to

be on. The next stop would be tricky indeed – Waterloo Station in London. It was. Waterloo is big -- bigger and busier than any other train station in the UK. Combined with the adjacent Underground and Waterloo East stations, Waterloo is the busiest station complex in all of Europe. When it opened in 1848, it hosted 14 trains a day. Today, 274,000 trains a day come and go. That's almost 100 million trains a year. That's *million*.

At Waterloo Station, we carried out the usual comedic pantomime. Run about, one way, then the other, look for helpful signs, ask a person in uniform. No go. Ask a commuter. Got it. Line up for the escalator, down into the vortex to the underground: Waterloo Station to Green Park Station to Victoria Station to Brixton Station – at rush hour. We made it to Brixton. It remained to find the flat.



*Brixton, London*



*Brixton, London*

# The Flat

*The up escalator belched us from the tube onto Brixton Road. Almost. There were the inevitable stairs, then daylight. Now what? Which way do we walk? We were late for our meet, so I called Will, the owner. He offered to pick us up. Relief.*

*London is one of the most expensive cities in the world. Two hundred dollars Canadian per night is standard fare for a very standard room. For that money you are spared the run down a darkened hall to a shared bathroom but I assure you, you will not be overlooking the Thames and popping grapes.*

I found our London retreat online. What else can one do? “Forty-nine pounds per night,” it read. London for 49 pounds a night? The headline promised “A Lovely Bright Place, Perfect For Exploring London.” I signed up. Silly boy. It was not 49 pounds a night. There was a cleaning fee of 25 pounds, an additional guest fee of 70 pounds and a service fee of 43 pounds. Still, for London, it seemed a reasonable deal. The flat was in Brixton -- not exactly Kensington. But we’re flexible people.

## Will

Will arrived on foot. Do you remember me saying only idiots drive in Britain? Will is no idiot. He is fifties, tall, affable and physically fit. “Just this way,” he announced briskly, and off we went, walking... well, perhaps something closer to waddling. There was a pack on

our back, another on our neck and a suitcase dragging behind. Did I mention how Brits love to walk? “This is the long way,” crooned the optimistic Will ten minutes into the trek, “but it gives you a chance to get acquainted with the neighbourhood.” Swell.

In three agonies past the hour we came to the house. These are brick row houses, conjoined for blocks on end, likely built in the 1890s. They were all very much the same, nicely kept, with gleaming white trim around the windows and doors. Stacked up in front of our house, however, was a pile of construction materials. Hmm. Once single family dwellings, the houses are narrow, two stories high with an attic. Now, they are mostly converted to three suites: main floor, second floor and attic. We were in the attic.

Will stuck the key in the lock but it would not turn.

“You just have to fiddle with this lock. It’s a bit temperamental. There we go.” The door opened to reveal the hall floor, covered in filthy plastic. “Pardon the mess, they’re renovating the first floor.” I chose not to check the expression on Randi’s face and we moved forward to the stairs.

## The Ascent

The stairs were narrow and steep, with a small landing on the second floor, wide enough for one person. Here, Will unlocked the door to our suite and swung it open to reveal another long, steep, narrow staircase leading up to the unit. The roller bags bashed up the stairs behind us and with our last ounce of energy, we achieved the summit. The back half of the attic housed two starkly furnished bedrooms and a bathroom; the front half, separated by three stairs down, consisted of one large room with the ‘dining’ and ‘living’ areas. Will directed us to the latter half. “Mind the stairs.”

## The Walk-Through

The upper half of each side of the dining-living room sloped inward, as attic ceilings do. At the far end of the room, there was one small window two feet by three, a love seat on life support and a television. That was the living room. At the end closest to us was a metal folding table and four metal folding chairs. That was the dining room. Across from the dining room was a rudimentary kitchen complete with two side plates and three glasses. Fortuitously, I brought two bowls from home (I should have been a scout in my youth but being a delinquent, I found, was a full time job). “As you can see,” states Will, “the skylights bring in lots of light but the rain comes in if they’re not closed in a timely way.” Like the middle of the night, I mused.

The bedroom revealed a bed. A pleasant surprise, for our flat in Paris two years prior did not. That was it for

the tour. Will left wishing us a grand stay and disappeared with a flourish “If there’s anything you need, just call.”

As it turned out, there were a few things we needed. A bathroom sink that let the water run out, an oven bottom element to bake chicken on the other side, a mattress without ribs to allow sleep, a carpet that bare feet did not stick to, an elevator to give one the courage to leave and the strength to return and a picture on the wall to raise the spirits. Ah yes, and a new front door lock to let us back in, once out.

“Suck it up Peter,” I whispered out loud to self, “this is London. What do you expect for \$100 a night?” “More than this,” growled Randi.





*Brixton, London*



*Brixton, London, near our flat*



*Brixton, London*

# Westminster

*There it was, right in front of us — the venerable (once formidable) Westminster, on the banks of the ancient Thames. The river flowed serenely past, indifferent to the curious goings-on of humans. It had seen it all before, many times.*

*Westminster, the seat of the British Parliament, which by 1920 at the peak of the British Empire, controlled the fates of 412 million people, 23% of the world's population spread over 24% of the Earth's land mass.*

## Partners in Profit

For 300 years the British Empire grew from the innovations of the Industrial Revolution while industry

grew from the empire's spoils. British industry produced ships, armaments, textiles, tools, railways, systems, administrative efficiency and much more. Its products and byproducts were everything required to grow the empire at the expense of those it subjugated, the native peoples of its colonies.

Colonials, in turn, were obliged to labour making luxury goods for the wealthy of Britain — silk, porcelain, tea, coffee, sugar, exotic woods, gold, silver, precious gems — or labour harvesting the commodities demanded by British mills — cotton, coal, iron, timber, fish, meat, salt. They were then obliged to buy the resulting manufactured goods to line the pockets of the factory owners and investors.

## Sweat But No Equity

The people who worked in Britain's factories, manned its navy and merchant ships, served in its armies, picked cotton for its mills and cut sugar cane for its tea were assuredly not the educated, the connected, the wealthy. No, they were the poor and disenfranchised — women, children, people of colour, indentured servants, political activists, the convicted and slaves. They were people without a voice and without a choice. Most lived and worked under inhuman conditions; millions of slaves died at their posts.

## Change Agents

The tragic truth is that the success of the British Empire was made possible largely on the backs of slaves. Not all of them were people formally designated as slaves, but effectively, that's what they were. That fact is not news. Every great empire in history owed much of its accomplishments to the toils of slaves.

Yet there is another truth. When human beings egregiously violate fundamental human rights, there have always been a few courageous souls who will defy the powers that be, speak in defence of the voiceless and lead the charge for change.

From the efforts of many people over the course of the British Empire, came dramatic social change. It came in the form of small, local resistance and acts of kindness. It came from enlightened people with the influence and means to effect change within their realms. It came from religious groups such as the Quakers, who were committed to a person to building a just, egalitarian society.

Ultimately, widespread social change occurred right over there in the halls of Westminster. Laws were enacted to enable and protect the rights of all citizens. Legislated change did not come quickly. It required endless persistence on the part of many who

dedicated their lives to the causes of abolition,  
women's rights, child labour, workers' rights, prison  
reform, cessation of the opium trade and  
independence for India.

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# Abolition of Slavery

*Equality is a fundamental tenet of Quakerism and it has been so since George Fox first conceived of his new religion in the 1650s. The notion of equality to Quakers meant that no person had power over another. Titles of any kind were rejected and the power inherent in titles disavowed. Quakers would not swear allegiance to the crown, do military service, recognize the Anglican Church and so on. Thus, slavery was entirely antithetical to Quaker beliefs and over the centuries, Quakers were a constant, central force in the fight for abolition. The abolition of slavery was always a core theme of Quaker thought and practice.*

## Slave As Property

Slavery proved a tenacious foe for those dedicated to its elimination. To enslave another human being and

justify one's actions, one must first, change one's perception of the enslaved from human being to something (and I emphasize 'some thing') less, to a working farm animal perhaps, such as a horse. A horse can be trained to do useful work and can even be viewed with affection. Yet a horse will never be a member of the family, it must always be clear on who's boss, it lives removed from the house, it might have offspring which you also own and, if necessary, it can be sold and another purchased.

Armed then, with a perception of slave as a highly adaptable variant of farm animal, slave owners freed their consciences from any feelings of wrong-doing, a perception which was widely held in most sectors of European society at the time, further reinforcing the 'slavery is our right' mind set.

The domestication of animals changed the world. More

work could be done, in particular more food could be produced, more territory could be acquired, people could travel greater distances and eat healthier diets. Employing animals greatly raised standards of living and allowed human beings the unheard of luxury of leisure time. Slavery was an extension of this advantage times a factor of 100. Great wealth could be and was achieved on the backs of slaves, as one owner could have as many slaves as he or she wished or could afford (there were many 'she' slave owners). In certain industries such as sugar cane and cotton production, slaves were the only way to achieve the outputs and massive profits which occurred, profits which flowed also to government coffers, service businesses, etcetera. Slaves, then, became an essential element of the entire economy of the British Empire.

## Still Today

The modern day equivalent of slaves (apart from the unspeakable tragedy of modern day slaves themselves) is the situation in the southwestern United States where illegal Mexican immigrants living in the shadows of society cannot own property, drive a car, get health care or have a bank account. Like slaves of yesteryear, they perform the most repetitive, degrading, backbreaking work at the mercy often, of unscrupulous employers. Yet, if Mr. Trump had his way and all illegals were deported, the economies of those states would collapse. Illegal Mexicans have become an essential component of the southwestern economy.

## The Economic Factor

The point of all this is that the fight for the abolition of slavery was more than an appeal to the consciences of Euro-Britons. It was a threat to the personal economies of the wealthy and to the economy of the



nation as a whole. Regrettably, those two constituencies often took the form of the same people, Members of the House of Lords and Tory Members of Parliament. One thing was clear to those engaged in the anti-slavery movement. There were two fronts to bring on board: the public at large and Parliament.

## Appeal to Parliament

The Quakers had their own system of local and regional committees which carried out myriad social change initiatives including abolition. As well, secular anti-slavery societies were formed to accomplish the same end. Towards the end of the 18th century, the Quaker community had earned an impeccable reputation for high morals and community service. They were well connected and influential in greater British society. Thus, on 16 June 1783, Quakers petitioned Parliament directly on the matter of anti-slavery.

This, the first Quaker petition to Parliament, read as follows:

*To the Commons of Great Britain,  
in Parliament assembled.*

*The Petition of the People called Quakers,*

*Sheweth -*

*That your Petitioners met in this their annual assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the enslaved negroes, conceive themselves engaged in religious duty, to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the Legislature.*

*Your Petitioners regret, that a nation professing the Christian Faith, should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice as by a cruel*

*treatment of this oppressed race, to fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrines of the Gospel.*

*Under the countenance of the laws of this country, many thousands of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to natural rights of mankind, are held, as personal property, in cruel bondage; and your Petitioners being informed, that a Bill for the regulation of the African trade is now before the House, containing a clause which restrains the officers of the African Company from exporting Negroes. Your Petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression, and bloodshed attending this traffic, humbly request that this restriction may be extended to all persons whatsoever, or that the House would grant such other relief in the premises, as in its wisdom may seem meet.*

*Signed in and on behalf of our yearly meeting, held in London, the 16<sup>th</sup> day of 6<sup>th</sup> month, 1783.*

Two hundred seventy-three influential Quakers signed the petition, including my 3rd great grandfather, William Spriggs, and 25 other family members.

## **Zong Massacre**

Two years earlier, a horrifying event occurred in the West Indies which, no doubt, added weight to the Quakers' decision to petition Parliament. It was the Zong massacre. The Zong was a Liverpool-based ship engaged in the Atlantic Slave Trade. As the ship approached the West Indies, navigational errors caused the drinking water to run low. A decision was made to save water by tossing slaves overboard. This the crew did in lots of 50, including ultimately, the women and children. One hundred thirty slaves lost their lives.

Once the Zong reached port in Black River, Jamaica, its owners made an insurance claim for loss of cargo. The insurance company refused to pay and the matter went to court. The jury found for the slavers, although later, new evidence was brought forth which pointed fault on the part of the captain and crew. The claim was rejected on appeal. No criminal case was forthcoming, as there was no basis in law for charges of murder. The slaves were cargo, nothing more. Yet the horror of the event could not but have prodded a sector of the British public and a few Parliamentarians off the fence and into the arms of waiting abolitionists.

Still, abolition would prove to be a slow, incremental process, largely because it had become such an entrenched component of the economy of the British Empire and because those who had much to lose by abolition were the wealthy who held a great deal of politico-economic influence.

## First Legislation

Nevertheless, the efforts of abolition groups along with the writings and lectures provided by escaped slaves such as Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho eventually shifted public opinion against slavery, placing pressure on Parliament to legislate constraints on the practice. The first came in 1807 when the Slave Trade Act made the buying and selling of slaves illegal throughout the British Empire. Yet a no-trade law did not abolish slavery.

## The Fight Continued

Abolitionists led largely by William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, continued the fight, employing every campaign tactic used today: organizing action groups, investigation and research, writing, speeches and graphic images, giving the campaign a name and slogan, obtaining the backing of the influential, petitioning and lobbying Parliament, petitioning and

lobbying Parliament, boycotting sugar and rum, legal challenges through the courts and election campaigning and support for reformist MPs.

## Abolition

Finally, in 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act ended slavery, at least overtly, across the British Empire.

I say 'overtly' because shortly after, a system of indenturing was implemented, slavery by another name.

Seven years later in 1840, the World Anti-slavery Convention was held in London. It was designed to articulate and close the loopholes on slavery legislation once and for all. Again, a number of my Quaker family were there. That was essentially the death knell of legal slavery in the British Empire, although slavery continued in the United States until the end of the Civil

War in 1865.

Quaker family members worked hard for other causes as well. Notable were the strides achieved towards women's rights by Eliza Wigham, (1820-1899).

Relation: aunt of wife of 3rd cousin 3x removed

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*'The Slave Ship' by J M W Turner depicting the Zong Massacre of 1781*



*World Anti-Slavery Convention 1840,*



*Emancipation day, West Indies*

# Opium

Joseph Gundry Alexander (1848-1914)

Opium was introduced in limited quantities to China in the 7th century by Turkish and Arab traders. One thousand years later, in the 17th century, the habit of smoking tobacco reached China from North America and soon after that, the smoking of opium in China became widespread. By 1729 opium addiction was sufficiently problematic that the emperor banned the sale and use of it. The trade in opium continued unabated. In 1796 the emperor outlawed the importing and cultivating of opium. Still the opium trade continued.

Prior to 1773 the British realized that opium could be grown cheaply in India and sold to the Chinese for immense profits. American companies joined in, buying cheap opium from the Turks. But there was a problem. The British were eager to buy Chinese goods such as tea, silk and porcelain which were in high demand among the wealthy in Britain. However, the Chinese had little interest in Britain's manufactured goods. With no goods to trade, the British were obliged to pay for their purchases with gold and silver. An enormous trade imbalance resulted.

The British soon realized that the solution to the trade imbalance was to smuggle opium into China against the emperor's ban and sell it for gold and silver which could then be used to buy the high profit items for the home market.

The British East India Company, which controlled all British trade with China, could not be caught importing



and selling the opium itself. Instead, it contracted to 'country traders' to get it to Canton. There, the country traders sold the opium for gold and silver to smugglers who operated along the Chinese coast. The gold and silver was handed over to the East India Company which, as mentioned, used it to buy high-end, high profit goods for the wealthy back home.

As a side-note, my great great grandfather on my father's side, Daniel Caldwell, was, as a young man, one of those coastal smugglers. He skippered a lorcha, a sailing vessel built for speed. The lorcha was the 19th century equivalent of the speed boats used during the prohibition on the south coast of Vancouver Island where I live to run liquor across the strait to the mouths of thirsty Americans.

In 1729 about 200 chests of opium were imported into China. That number rose to 1000 chests per year in 1767 and rose again to 10,000 chests between 1820

and 1830. Each chest weighed approximately 63.5 kilograms. By 1838, imports of opium to China reached 40,000 chests. The balance of payments had shifted in favour of Britain.

The emperor was enraged when he learned of the 'behind-the-back tactics of the British and with the resulting devastation to his empire. He ordered his executive to raid the foreigners' warehouses in Canton and destroy any opium they found. The Chinese found plenty and burned it. The Brits, in turn, were fit to be tied and turned to diplomacy — gunboat diplomacy — to sort it out. The Chinese were defenceless against the superior might of the British Navy and the first of three Opium Wars was over before you could whistle the British national anthem.

A second opium war followed a trumped up allegation by the British, fabricated to force the Chinese to open more cities to trade. This time a French-British alliance

got the desired result in short order, requiring the Qing government to legalize the opium trade. By then, trade in opium had reached 50,000-60,000 chests per year, a figure which continued to rise for the next 30 years. The street value today of one chest of opium is about one million dollars.

The third and final Opium War secured for the British the island of Hong Kong in a 100 year lease. Hong Kong and Singapore would become the British Empire's trade, naval and administrative centres in Southeast Asia and consolidate their position as the dominant colonial power in the region.

## Joseph Gundry Alexander (1848-1914)

British missionaries in China had long been reporting the seriousness of opium addiction in that country and its connection to underhanded British trade. As the

opium trade continued unabated, concerned individuals and citizen groups in Britain began to 'lift the lid' on the matter.

One such individual was Joseph Gundry Alexander. Joseph

The upshot of the whole mess was that after three wars, known as the Opium Wars, China rolled over and the British got rights to trade in several Chinese cities *and...*they got the island of Hong Kong. Oh, and the opium trade continued, and continued unabated to devastate the Chinese. One such individual was Joseph Gundry Alexander.

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*Caucasian opium smokers, 1920s*



*Opium den, China*

***Joseph Gundry Alexander (1848-1914)***

*Lawyer, Pacifist, Opium Trade Opponent*

*Relation: husband of paternal 1st cousin of wife of 1st  
cousin 2x removed*



# Indian Independence

Horace Gundry Alexander (1889-1989)

Horace Gundry Alexander was one of four boys born to a Quaker family in Croyden, England. His father, Joseph Gundry Alexander, was an eminent lawyer who devoted his life to pacifism and the cessation of the opium trade (see “Opium” herein).

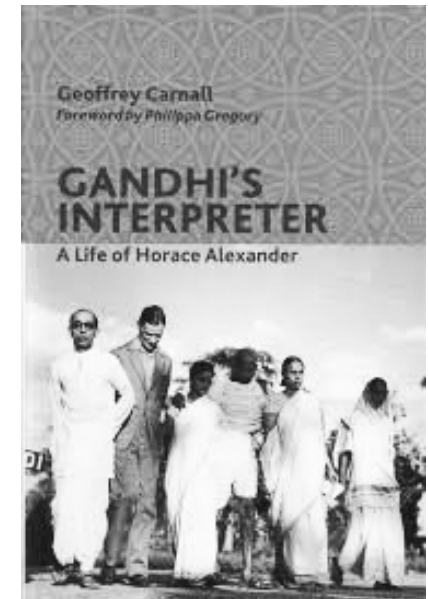
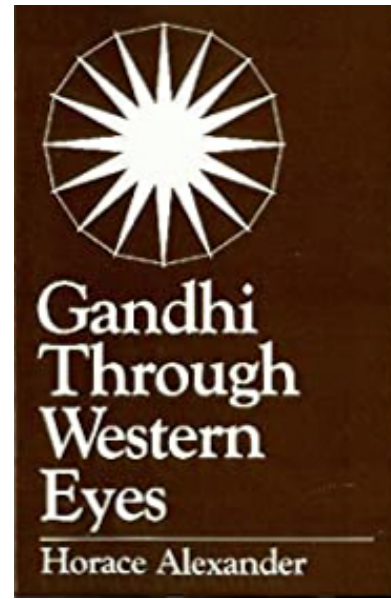
Horace attended the Quaker’s Bootham School in York, England, graduating from Cambridge in 1912. Two years later, with the outbreak of World War I, Horace worked as secretary to various anti-war

committees. He was designated a conscientious objector and assigned to teaching duties for the course of the war. In 1918, he joined the staff of Woodbrooke, a Quaker college in Birmingham where he remained until 1944. In 1927/28 Woodbrooke sent Horace to India on a fact-finding mission to investigate India’s growing demand for independence. Horace returned convinced that independence must happen.

In 1928 he first met Mahatma Gandhi and in 1930 he mediated discussions between Gandhi and the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin. Those discussions enabled Gandhi to attend the Second Round Table Conference on the future of India in 1931. Following the conference, Horace, along with fellow Quaker Agatha Harrison and others, founded the India Conciliation Group, designed to clarify British understanding of India’s political position. Horace wrote extensively on the subject in the British press.

Over the years that followed, Horace became immersed in the affairs of India, spending much of his time there. He returned again to India during World War II with the Friends Ambulance Unit to establish air raid protection from threatened Japanese attacks and he was among the first to bring famine relief to Bengal following the devastating cyclone of 1942. The following year Horace returned to England to raise funds for famine relief and to explain Gandhi's 'Quit India' campaign (which called for the orderly withdrawal of the British) to politicians and the public.

Horace had exceptional listening skills and a calm humble demeanour, well-suited to his work as a mediator. However, the intractability of British officials in London and Delhi towards Indian Independence frequently left both Horace and the hapless officials infuriated. "How childish statesmen are!" he wrote. "Do



they not realize that the threat [of independence] will always remain while *they* remain?"

After the war came a Labour government committed to Indian independence. Horace and Agatha Harrison joined the cabinet mission charged with negotiating with Indian leaders. The twosome worked quietly in the background and made a significant contribution to

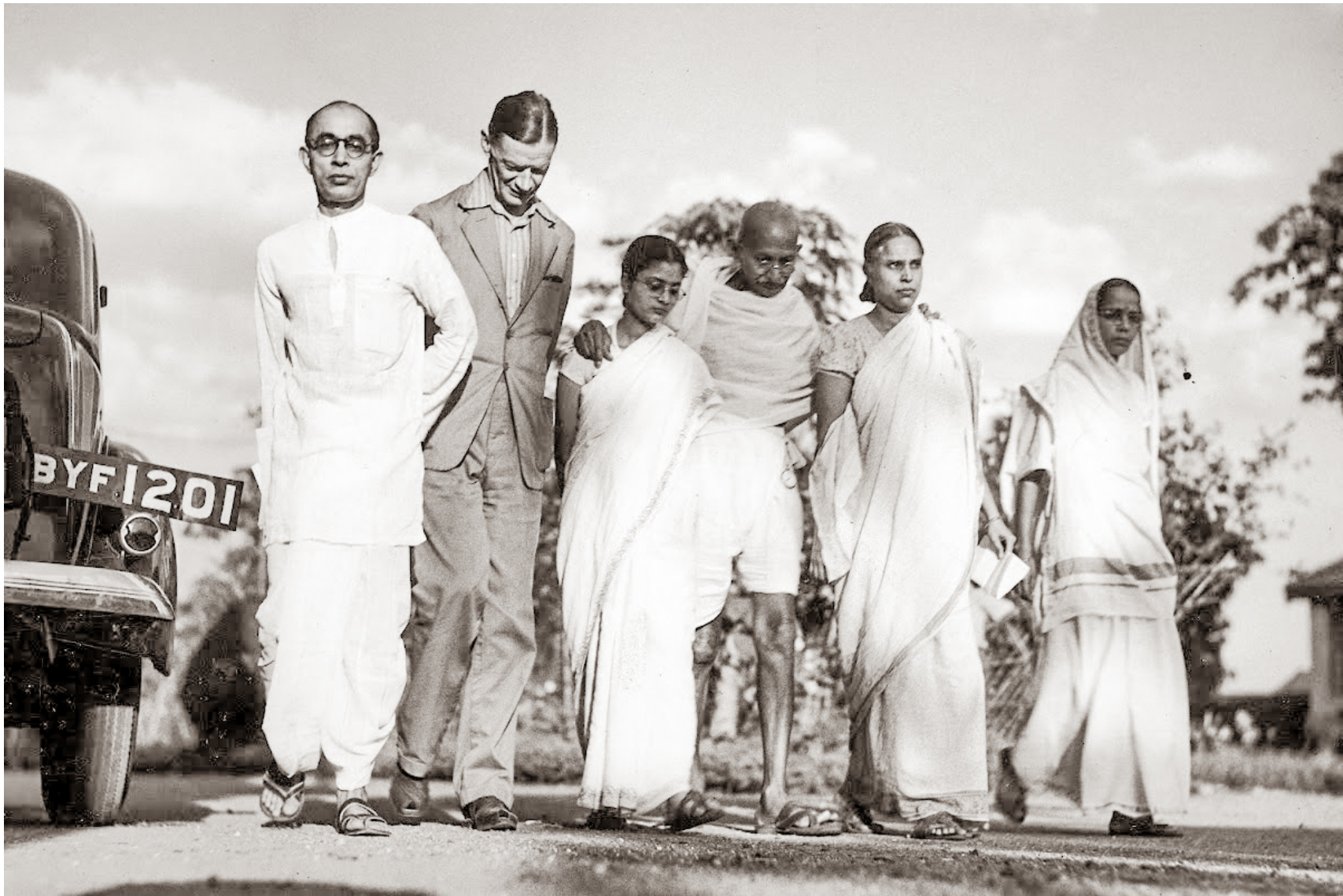
convincing Gandhi that the British delegation were there in good faith.

When Indian independence was declared on 15 August, 1947, Horace was there. By then, he and Gandhi had become fast friends. Gandhi once described Horace as "British in nationality but Indian in heart," and "one of the best English friends India has."

Horace retired from his work in India in the 1950s. In 1984, aged 95, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan medal, the highest honour given to a non-Indian civilian. Horace died in 1989 in Pennsylvania, aged 100 years.

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*Horace Gundry Alexander with the Gandhi*

***Horace Gundry Alexander (1889-1989)***

*Mediator, pacifist, lecturer, ornithologist*

*Relation: 1st cousin 1x removed of wife of 1st cousin  
2x removed*



# Prison Reform

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845)

## Prisons in Georgian Britain

The concept of prison is relatively new. It was introduced around 1750 as a more humane way to deal with lawbreakers than what then existed. What existed wasn't much — 'transportation' to the colonies, often with an order to carry out hard labour, or execution. Even a petty offence such as stealing an apple from a cart or, get this, *suspicion* that an offence had been committed was enough to send one packing to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) or British North America for 7+ years. Hundreds of offences resulted in death. It didn't matter whether you were a serial

offender, a 9 year old child, a woman with young children or mentally ill. It was equal opportunity justice.

The new approach had a decidedly religious tone. In effect, it was designed to be both punishment and rehabilitation. It invited or rather required prisoners to self-reflect, to seek and discover the error of their ways, then do penitence. Hence the term 'penitentiary.' Under this approach, a common sentence was one year in solitary confinement (reflection) and three years of hard labour (penitence).

In the 1770s the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire took it upon himself to visit hundreds of prisons across England, Wales and Europe, then wrote a damning report called 'The State of Prisons in 1777.' The report described in detail the reprehensible conditions. Men, women and children, those awaiting trial, petty and serious offenders, and the insane were thrust together in the same cells. The cells were damp, unsanitary and

overcrowded, and offered neither privacy nor protection. The report also laid out revolutionary ideas for change. The author was John Howard, familiar to many of us today as the namesake of the John Howard Society, an advocacy group for prisoners and parolees.

John Howard's report might have triggered a tidal wave of prison reform. It almost did. In 1780 Sir George Onesiphorus Paul of Gloucester built a prison applying Howard's ideas. Men, women and children were separated, prisoners wore uniforms, were taught to read and write, were fed sustainably and their health was monitored. As well, prisoners were classified to prison areas according to their status: awaiting trial, young offender, petty offender or serious criminal. What Sir Paul and John Howard built 250 years ago was in large measure the prison system we use today.

It did catch on. Several more prisons were built on the Paul-Howard model. However, adverse circumstances allowed prison reform to slip beyond the back burner into the backyard. Rising crime statistics, more conservative attitudes (read fear) among the public, MPs and policy makers, and a war with France left prisoners to languish in indescribable hell-holes of filth, overcrowding and corruption.

### **Elizabeth Fry**

Elizabeth Fry was born Elizabeth Gurney to an affluent Quaker family. Her father was a partner in Gurney Bank. Her mother was a Barclay of Barclay's Bank. Elizabeth was 12 when her mother died, leaving Elizabeth to share child rearing responsibilities. At age 20, Elizabeth married Joseph Fry, also a banker, a Quaker and member of the Fry's chocolate family. The couple had 11 children.

Elizabeth visited Newgate Prison at the suggestion of a

family friend. She was horrified and began visiting the prisoners, bringing food and clothes. That was the beginning of her lifelong dedication to prison reform. Elizabeth founded a school for children imprisoned with their parents. She introduced useful work, notably sewing for the women, and bible study. In 1821, Elizabeth co-founded a women's reform association which became the first nation-wide women's organization in Britain. In 1824 Elizabeth co-founded the Brighton District Visiting Society providing volunteers to visit the homes of the poor offering help and comfort. The model was duplicated across Britain.

Elizabeth's efforts didn't stop there. In the 1820s she began campaigning for the rights of women being transported to the colonies. On the day of their departure, the 'transportation' women of Newgate Prison were placed in open carts, often huddled together in chains with their few possessions. As the

carts proceeded through the streets of London, bystanders jeered and pelted the women with eggs, rotten fruit and filth. Anticipating the infamous journey, the terrified women often rioted in the prison the night before their departure.

Elizabeth visited the Governor of Newgate and persuaded him to use covered carriages for the trip to the dock. Then she convinced the captains of the ships to ensure that the women and children received a fair share of food and water during the voyage. As well, she arranged for the women to take sewing supplies with them to occupy their time, and provide them with a useful skill and a small income upon arrival. Elizabeth visited 106 ships and 12,000 convicts. Her efforts were a significant impetus for the abolition of transportation which finally came in 1837.

In 1840, Elizabeth opened a training school for nurses. One of her students was Florence Nightingale who

achieved fame orchestrating nursing for wounded soldiers in the Crimean War.

Elizabeth visited prisons throughout Britain as well as Europe. Many of her recommendations, including separation of the sexes, useful work and religious and secular instruction were implemented during her lifetime. On several occasions she was invited to visit Queen Victoria who became a keen supporter of her work.

Elizabeth died of a stroke in 1845, aged 65. One thousand Londoners attended her funeral. On her birthday in 2002, the British Mint introduced a new 5 pound. On it was Elizabeth's portrait. In Canada today, the Elizabeth Fry Society operates nation-wide, providing support to women prisoners and parolees and their families. Elizabeth Gurney Fry made a difference.



*Elizabeth Fry in the prisons*



*Elizabeth Fry in the prisons*

***Elizabeth (Gurney) Fry (1780-1845)***

*Prison Reformer*

*Relation: paternal 1st cousin of wife of 3rd cousin 1x  
removed of husband of great-aunt*





# Hyde Park

It was a late start. We were dragging our heels. Too late to catch the walking tour of the Jewish Quarter. It was raining but we opted for a saunter in Hyde Park anyway, followed by a wander through the British Museum. Despite the rain, the park was alive with people. On the lake, a major swimming marathon was in full swing.

From one end of the lake to the other, hundreds of swimmers in wet suits were thrashing the crawl. It was the London equivalent of a killer whale feeding frenzy. Hundreds more of their friends and loved ones huddled under umbrellas and urged them on from the shore. Coffee drinkers crowded the concessions, chatting in groups or thumbing devices. Joggers loped

by in twos and threes. Occasionally, a few horses cantered past, their riders decked out in helmets and haute couture. Here and there lovers dawdled. This is London. The rain went unnoticed.

We walked, expecting at any moment to see Kensington Palace through the trees. It never appeared. Randi was tired; so was I. Our pace slowed; the rain did not. The sooner we found shelter and food the better – for me. Change in plan. We headed for the nearest underground station. The nearest station was not near. This is a large park, equal in size to Massachusetts or the Canadian national debt. Our pace shifted from slow to glacial. The water weighed us down.

In time, (everything takes time here) we found the gaping maw of the underground and offered ourselves up as belligerent sacrifices. The hunt for the British

Museum had begun, now more an act of self-preservation than a desire for cultural enlightenment. Snake was obnoxious, of course, but we were desperate. In a state of uncaring semi-consciousness, we ignored the crowds, the noise and confusion and at the other end, we ventured again into the rain.

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*Hyde Park, London*



*Hyde Park, London*

# The British Museum

You would think that an edifice the size of the British Museum, a modern day Noah's Ark, which houses at least one specimen of everything known to humankind, would be a slam-dunk to find. No, it is not. Trump Tower is not in there yet. It takes time. Have I mentioned that everything in London takes time? We knew the general direction, thanks to the helpful advice of a pizza delivery chap who kindly checked Google Maps, then waved his hand in a sweeping movement to indicate 'over there.' So sweep we did. We walked -- left, then right, then left again, then forward and back....

Eventually, we arrived at the museum gates. There was a queue -- a snake of another sort. London invented the queue. They were everywhere. People are not troubled by them. I rather think they are viewed by the natives as opportunities for meditation, a form of stationary Tai Chi. This queue was outside... in the rain.

At the head of the queue, an official was splitting visitors into two lines according to some criteria known only to him, the security team and God. We lucked in. He put us in the fast track for V.I.P.s, it seemed, along with a family fairly reeking of money and privilege. We walked past a hundred soggy souls to the head of the line.

I'm guessing that, in our case, the sorter's decision was not based on appearance. No, I believe the fellow spotted the twisted expression on my good wife's face and decided that the threat posed by asking her to

open her bag was greater than the likelihood that she had a bomb inside it. At security, I placed my backpack on the table and began to unzip it. "No, no", barked the checker keeping a wary eye on Randi, and waved us through. We had arrived at the massive, incomparable bastion of world culture and pillage.

Fittingly, the entire world was there -- every language spoken, every colour of skin, pushing, jockeying, gesticulating and bellowing. It was chaos. I was momentarily confused. Had the United Nations moved to London? The vehemence with which they crashed about suggested it was so, for they were not happy campers and had come to claim their goods. And why not? No, it was not so. They were just people having fun, including, of course, the Selfies from Stonehenge, who were there en force. For them, the British Museum was a rather expensive fun house, a photo-op. Full stop.

Were there really that many Selfies in the world? Was it possible that the BBC was filming a follow-up to Fawltly Towers. Perhaps it was a version of Candid Camera that was tracking my every move around England, planting a steady stream of pretend Selfies in front of me to capture my bent expressions for the entertainment of the masses?

First priority: washroom, second: food. The Pizzeria was a no go, all tables taken. We headed for the restaurant, 78 steps above the floor of the massive central rotunda. Seating seemed a shoe-in. Who in their right mind would climb to such a height just to eat? We joined the queue.

Lunch was a casual affair. We lingered there into the afternoon, worrying our shared fish and chips with our forks, desperate to hang onto the last remaining seat in London. When we could linger no more, we left. I

cast a final glance back to our table, as if to secure the memory forever.

Our time in the galleries was half-hearted for we were bone-weary. There was little to see anyway; one could not get close to a display case for the crowds. The Selfies were there naturally, insisting that whole exhibits be cleared for their modeling sessions and obliging those moving past, by English custom, to squeeze behind the picture taker.

After 90 minutes we called it quits, having seen but a tiny fraction of this treasure trove. Perhaps we would return – on a stormy, cold winter's day when snow lays thick on the ground; we'd have the place to ourselves, wouldn't we?



*British Museum London*





*British Museum London*



*British Museum London*



*British Museum London*

# Hans Sloane

*Hans Sloane (1660-1753) was born into an Ulster-Scots family in 1660, in the village of Killyleagh. As a boy he developed a keen interest in natural history and collecting specimens, which he pursued for his entire life. He studied medicine in London, then spent considerable time furthering his studies in Paris and Montpellier, France where he obtained his MD in 1683. At age 24 he was elected to the Royal Society, an astonishing accomplishment for such a young man. Two years later, in 1687, he became a Fellow of the College of Physicians.*

Hans was well regarded, so much so, that in that same year, he agreed to accompany Christopher Monck

(35), the 2nd Duke of Albermarle to Jamaica as the Duke's personal physician. Monck was assuming the governorship of the island.

Hans spent 15 months in Jamaica, at which time the hard-drinking, party-going Governor Monck dropped dead and Hans returned to London. During his time in Jamaica, Hans collected a massive number of natural history specimens and curiosities which he later bequeathed to the British government on condition that they use the collection to start a national museum. That was the start of the British Museum which opened its doors to the public in 1759.

While in Jamaica, Hans connected socially and professionally with Dr. Fulke Rose, my first cousin 9 times removed. Together, they ministered to Captain Henry Morgan, pirate, privateer and Governor of Jamaica until his death from alcoholism.

Hans had another family connection. Fulke Rose was married to Elizabeth Langley, daughter of a London Alderman. When Fulke died in 1695, Elizabeth returned to London to live, a wealthy heiress of Fulke's slave-operated sugar plantations and considerable real estate holdings. It seems she and Hans got reacquainted following her return to London, for they married and had three daughters.

In his lifetime, Hans was credited with having exceptional medical skills and was sought out by London high society including the royal family. However, Hans greater contribution may have been his capacity to bring people together, connect people and to share his considerable knowledge in multiple fields. As well, Hans used his substantial wealth to support hospitals and other good causes.

Although Hans is widely credited with inventing chocolate milk, he did not. However, he did promote it

as a healthful drink. One hundred and fifty years later, the Cadbury's used Hans medical prestige to promote their chocolate milk product formulated from his recipe.

His indifference to slavery, however, must dull our admiration for the man. Slaves were to Hans, it seems, a mere curiosity, specimens of natural history to examine, catalogue and forget. Hans died in 1753, aged 93.

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*Hans Sloane, 1660-1753)*

PRS, FRS, FCP

Doctor, Lecturer, collector, founder: British Museum

Relation: husband of wife of 1st cousin 9x removed

