



# The London History Festival

15 to 25 November 2010

at Kensington Central Library

[www.londonhistoryfestival.com](http://www.londonhistoryfestival.com)



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## Introduction

by Paul Lay



History Today, which celebrates its 60th anniversary in January, is a publication whose mission is to bring the work of the finest

historians to the widest possible audience. That is why it is proud to sponsor the second London History Festival, a project that shares those aims. Building on last year's remarkable success, the London History Festival brings the chance to engage with some of today's finest practitioners of the historian's craft to the people of one of the great world cities, itself rich in history. The distinguished historians at the London History Festival seek to both entertain and enlighten, through their books and oratory. The London History Festival is a social event too, encouraging its audience to mingle and share common interests. The authors will also be available for a book signing session and chat once the talks are completed. The London History Festival is one of the jewels of the capital's cultural life. It is here that history is brought to life.

– Paul Lay, *Editor of History Today*.

## Author Interviews

**Roger Moorhouse**

(appearing on 16 November)



**What was it that inspired you to write about the experience of Berlin at War?**

**Roger Moorhouse:** The primary motivation was that it is such

an obvious subject for study, with immediate resonance to a broad audience, and yet it had never been done before. For all the countless tomes on Nazi Germany and World War Two, we still know comparatively little about the everyday experiences of ordinary Germans, so I hope it will at least begin to redress the balance.

**Why do you think World War Two still fascinates us?**

**Roger Moorhouse:** World War Two was a genuine cataclysm – 50 million dead, millions more displaced, unimaginable destruction – it redrew the map of the world. But I think the reasons for the subject's continued popularity in the UK are to be found much closer to home. It was arguably the last time that Britain really did something outstanding on the world stage; defying Hitler and facilitating the victory of the Western Allies. Also the conflict has a strong moral component, which makes us feel good about ourselves.

**Are you excited about doing an event with Antony Beevor?**

**Roger Moorhouse:** I am. I am a big fan of his. Antony is a great inspiration to us all, I think; he led the way, making both publishers and the wider public realise that history could be a very vibrant, happening, sexy subject. And I think many of the current crop of historians owe him a tremendous debt for that.



**Susan Ronald**

(appearing on 15 November)

**Why do you think the Tudors continue to fascinate us today?**



**Susan Ronald:** The Tudor era was the first time we can recognise ourselves in a distant past. These were extraordinary times: the English Renaissance was taking hold. Our most enduring playwright Shakespeare inspired the people with his histories, comedies, sonnets and dramas. The discovery of America and the dawn of the British Empire were on everyone's lips. But for me, the fascination lies in the intense human story of the Tudors themselves. They were an historic dysfunctional family outside the parental home. It was also the time of the greatest upheaval in the Church for hundreds of years, and one that would forever change the course of history.

**What was your inspiration for writing The Pirate Queen?**

**Susan Ronald:** I had always been an admirer of Elizabeth I, wondering how she could have been so successful as a 'weak and feeble woman' in a distinctly man's world. When I was writing my second book – *The Sancy Blood Diamond* – I came across phenomenal manuscripts which all pointed to an incredibly sophisticated understanding of the relationship between trade and plunder by the queen, and her personal involvement in both. I detoured from my 'diamond' research to see if anyone had written about this portion of Elizabeth's life and was shocked and relieved to discover that no one had.

**As well as being an author, you also work as Secretary for the Biographers' Club. Can you tell us a little more about the Club?**

**Susan Ronald:** The Biographers' Club is the only charity in the UK specifically for biographers. It seeks to educate, inspire, promote and foster a better understanding of the art of biography and its relevance to history. We hold monthly events where biographers can meet and discuss their concerns with one another as well as listen to talks of interest relating to the art of writing good biography. We award two prizes annually: The Tony Lothian Prize, which is open to uncommissioned, first-time writers working on a biography; and The Best First Biography. To find out more: [www.biographersclub.co.uk](http://www.biographersclub.co.uk)







## The London History Festival: 15 to 25 November 2010

### The Tudors

15 November, 7pm



Justin Pollard, historical consultant to The Tudors TV series and researcher for QI, Susan Ronald, author of *The Pirate Queen*, and Jessie Childs, author of *Henry VIII's Last Victim*, discuss why the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I still resonate and engage. Was Henry VIII a tyrant, or the father of a nation? Was the Armada our finest hour? And why are we still obsessed with the dynasty and the age? This event is in association with The Biographers' Club.

### Antony Beevor, from Stalingrad to D-Day

16 November, 7pm



Roger Moorhouse, acclaimed author of *Berlin at War*, interviews Antony Beevor, the country's bestselling historian. Antony will

answer questions about a number of his books – including *Stalingrad*, *Berlin* and *D-Day* – and discuss why World War Two continues to fascinate both him and us. How much did Germany contribute

to its own downfall? What were Stalin and Hitler like as military leaders? What were those last days of the war like in Berlin for its citizens and soldiers? This event is in association with Tickets for Troops.

### Britain's Greatest Prime Minister

18 November, 7pm



Bestselling authors Michael Dobbs, David Kynaston, Saul David and Richard Vinen debate who is Britain's Greatest Prime Minister.

Was Churchill merely a great war Prime Minister? Has history treated the Iron Lady kindly? Do we get the Prime Ministers we deserve? Join the debate and cast your vote at the end in what will surely be a lively and entertaining event. This event is in association with the Friends of the Imperial War Museum.



### Spies

22 November, 7pm



Ben Macintyre, author of *Agent Zigzag* and *Operation Mincemeat*, and Jimmy Burns author of *Papa Spy*, discuss their latest books and the nature of spies, both in World War Two and now – their traits, moral codes and the difference that they make. Did the rules change during the Cold

War? Are MI5 and MI6 today our guardians, or something else? Alex Von Tunzelmann, author of forthcoming *Red Heat*, about the Cold War in the West Indies, interviews the authors. This event is in association with Waterstone's High St Kensington.

### Rome and Carthage

23 November, 7pm



Tom Holland, author of the modern classic *Rubicon*, and Richard Miles, author of *Carthage Must Be Destroyed*, discuss the two great empires – their similarities and differences. Who was the greatest general, Hannibal or Scipio? Why did Rome ultimately triumph? What was their



legacy? Question the authors about the original clash of civilisations. This event is in association with History Today.

### The Victorian Age

25 November, 7pm



Is this Britain's Golden Age, or does a dark cloud still hang over the period? Kate Williams, author of *Becoming Queen*, Patrick Mercer, author of *Dust and Steel*, and Fiona Rule, author of *The Worst Street in London*, speak about their latest books and various aspects of the age – its Queen, its wars and Victorian London. How much of the Victorian Age can we see in 21st Century Britain? Are we enamoured with the era of Empire, or appalled by it? This event is in association with the The Kensington Magazine.

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## Author Interviews

Saul David

(appearing on 18 November)



**How did you feel when you were asked to be Patron of the London History Festival?**

**Saul David:** Very old!

I'd assumed only the doyen(ne)s of my subject would be considered – but obviously not. Actually, it's a great honour and a sign that, after 15 years of being labelled a 'revisionist' historian (and not always kindly), I've finally been accepted by the Establishment (whatever that is). Just don't ask my age.

**What is your new historical novel about?**

**Saul David:** It's called *Hart of Empire*. It's set during the second Anglo-Afghan War (1878 – 80) and features my series character, George Hart (the son of an Irish/African actress and an unidentified VIP), who is sent out to Afghanistan on a secret mission to locate the Prophet's

Cloak, the country's most sacred artefact, which Disraeli fears will be used by religious extremists to wage jihad against the pro-British Amir of Kabul. Of course things don't go to plan, and Hart is soon on the run with a beautiful Afghan princess and his faithful Pathan guide Ilderim. Will he find the cloak and get the girl? You'll have to read it to find out.

**Why did you choose Palmerston as your Greatest British Prime Minister?**

**Saul David:** Easy. He was the dominant political figure in the mid-19th Century – the first third of Victorian Age – when the British Empire expanded by an unprecedented factor of five. His very name conjures up the self-confident, non-nonsense attitude of Britons at a time when the country, quite literally, ruled the waves and was – like America today – the world's only superpower. A hawk abroad, his domestic policies were often quite progressive and even radical; nor was he above compromise and, like his Liberal Democrat descendants today, was happy to form coalition governments.

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**Hart of Empire**  
SAUL DAVID

Available now in Hardback

## Also taking place in the library

**Subterranean City: beneath the streets of London**

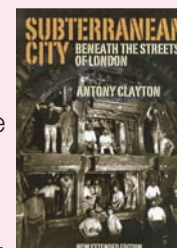
Thursday 16 September 2010  
6.30pm to 8pm

Kensington Central Library



Antony Clayton, author of *Subterranean City*, presents an illustrated talk about various aspects of the inverted city beneath our streets

such as lost rivers, sewers, underground railways and government bunkers. The talk will also uncover some of the colourful folklore of underground London including legends of secret tunnels and passages.



Tickets are free and available from any Kensington and Chelsea Library

**Mood Mapping with Dr Liz Miller**

Plotting your way to emotional health and happiness

Tuesday 19 October 2010  
6.30pm to 8pm

Brompton Library



Developed by Dr Liz Miller, mood mapping is a new easy to use tool that helps you feel better, healthier and more in control of your life. Liz is a

GP, Psychologist and Occupational Health Physician. She is focussed on helping people to better manage their physical and mental health. She developed the mood mapping system as a response to her own experience of mental ill health.

**ROGER MOORHOUSE**  
**BERLIN AT WAR**

'A well-researched, fluently-written and utterly absorbing account of what life (and, so very often death) was like for ordinary Germans in the capital of Hitler's Reich during the Second World War'  
**Andrew Roberts**



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Festival director: Dave Walker

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**Tickets are on sale at all Kensington and Chelsea Libraries.**

Postal applications for tickets can be sent to the Local Studies Library at Kensington Central Library.

**Tickets £5.00 (£3.00 concessions) per event  
and £20.00 (£15.00 concessions) for all 6 events.**

Payments in person or by post – cash or cheque only.  
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