



Factsheet – Making History

Tuesday 1st March 2011

Robert Lucas

Making History listener Carol Hunt from Gravesend in Kent wrote to the programme after finding a “slim volume in German entitled 'Tuere Amalia Vielgeliebtes Weib!' in a charity shop. The author was a Robert Lucas and, she told Tom Holland, “it was dated 1945 and was evidently meant (judging from the cartoons contained inside) as a parody of some sort”.

What she found was a transcript of a long forgotten piece of wartime anti fascist, anti nazi propoganda that was broadcast by the German language wing of the BBC. Robert Lucas was an Austrian refugee actor and writer called Robert Ehrenzweig who fled to Britain in 1934 and joined the BBC’s German Service in 1938. He broadcast satirical letters known as the "Hirnschal Letters". The main character is Adolf Hirnschal, a German private, who writes to his wife admiring letters about Hitler and the Third Reich. But as his name Hirnschal (literally meaning cerebral cavity) suggests, the protagonist is quite clever. In talking about every-day events, the "Hirnschal Letters" undermined the authority of official propoganda and raised the morale of radio listeners.

Making History spoke to the German historian Dr Magnus Brechtken who is based at the University of Nottingham

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/expertiseguide/experts/b/dragnusbrechtken.aspx>

and the film and propoganda historian Professor Jo Fox from the University of Durham <http://www.dur.ac.uk/history/staff/profiles/?id=1563>

Binham

The Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey has uncovered thirteenth century architectural drawings and compass marks on the wall of the knave of Binham Priory near the north Norfolk coast. It is thought that these probably relate to the construction of the famous west front of the building which has possibly the earliest examples of gothic ‘bar tracery’ in England. If this is the case, they would have been made by the Master Mason and his team as they worked out how to realise this cutting-edge religious structure.

Making History's Helen Castor visited Binham to see the drawings for herself and she met up with Professor Sandy Heslop from the University of East Anglia

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/art/People/Academic/Sandy+Heslop>

Dr Jenny Alexander from the University of Warwick

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/arthistory/staff/ja/>

And Matthew Champion from the Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey

<http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/>

All three guests agreed that the work on the west front was 'tentative' and was probably sponsored by the Abbey at St Albans and was most likely being worked on at the same time as a similar feature at Westminster Abbey.

Photographs of Binham can be viewed at the Making History Facebook page.

To find out more about the role of the Master Mason, Tom Holland spoke with Dr Richard Planet who runs the Arts of Europe course at Christie's Education in London. http://www.christieseducation.com/london_faculty.html#rplant

Hungary 1919

Making History listener Jeremy Pilkington contacted the programme to find out what his grandfather might have been doing guarding a bridge across the River Danube in Budapest in 1919. Tom Holland spoke with Professor Richard Berry Professor of Political Economy of Central & Eastern Europe/Director of CRCEES at the University of Glasgow.

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/centralandeasteuropeanstudies/ourstaff/academicstaff/rb/>

Richard told Tom that the Armistice of Padua 3/11/1918 effectively ended the First World War for the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Empire began to disintegrate and various national groups- aided and abetted by the Entente powers, mainly France and the UK - began to carve out territories for themselves. These new boundaries and new states were confirmed in the hated Treaty of Trianon (1920) which reduced Royal Hungary to one third of her former size. Transylvania - formerly part of the Austro Hungarian Empire- was given to Romania. In October 1918 a new Hungarian government was established. This was led by Count Mihaly Karoly (the Red Count) This government began a period of economic and social reforms - especially land reform, but in the spring of 1919 it was ousted by a 'Soviet' style government. This 'Red' government under Bela Kun nationalised the land and most of the nation's wealth and called for assistance from the Bolsheviks. This was an anathema to the Entente powers and they encouraged the Romanians to invade. After some successes in Slovakia, the Red Hungarian Army was defeated by the Romanians who entered Budapest on 4th of August. In August 1919 representatives (Legations) of the Entente powers were sent to Hungary in order to supervise the withdrawal of Romanian troops. Jeremy Pilkington's grandfather would have been one of the force of British Royal Marines sent to police the withdrawal of Romanian troops who were intent on looting to bleed Hungary dry.

According to the historian Paul Lendvai in his 'The Hungarians: 1,000 years of victory in Defeat'. (Hurst publishers 2003)

' The Romanian occupation troops were able to ransack Budapest virtually unhindered between August and November 1919. They stole, among other things 4,000 telephones...The value of good plundered by the Romanian bands, mainly locomotives, railway carriages, machines ... amounted to 3 billion gold crowns'. (pg 376)

Contact Making History

Do you have a question for the Making History team? Anything from Cro-Magnons to the Cold War.

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