

Gatton Life

The Independent Student Newspaper Of The Royal Alexandra And Albert School VI Form



First Issue Of Gatton Life!

NAI CHI TSAI *Director*

I am happy to present the first issue of Gatton Life this school year! Due to the busy start to the term, the release of this issue was significantly delayed. However, rest assured there will be more to come!

I encourage all of you who are interested in getting involved to get in contact with me, Ed or any member of our managing board (listed below). We would be happy to have you on for the ride!

Please enjoy!

Board Members

NAI CHI TSAI *Director*
naichitsai@gatton-park.org.uk

EDWARD FREMONT-BARNES *Editor-in-Chief*
edwardfremontbarnes@gatton-park.org.uk

EKUAH ROSE *Editor*
ekuahquansah@gatton-park.org.uk

SAVANNAH FOSTER *Administrator*
savannahfoster@gatton-park.org.uk

NICKY LAM *Photographer*
nickylam@gatton-park.org.uk

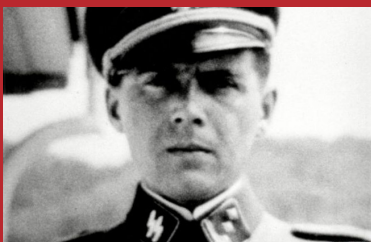


Ashes of Paris

EKUAH ROSE *Editor*

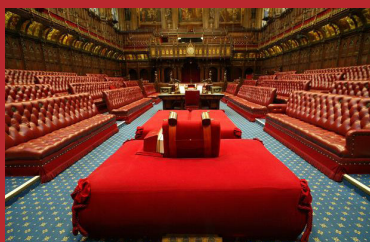
As I expect you are aware, horrific and unjustifiable events took place on Friday the thirteenth in Paris, a day that is for us, an unlucky day that most dread and hope to get through as quickly as possible. In France it is traditionally a day of luck, people buy large numbers of lottery tickets as they believe that Friday the 13th of all days is the day they are most likely to win. The irony of this superstitious belief is what made the day to an extent all the more painful. France, a country that is founded upon the principles of 'Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite': Liberty, Equality, Fraternity but they paradoxically coexists with racial tensions and a culture of discrimination.

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Ashes of Paris

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Statistics say that one in four French people admit to being 'racist'. The aftermath of the tragedy that occurred on Friday the 13th may be seen as justification for an ongoing battle, fought on the basis of hatred born of ignorance.

My thoughts go out to the victims, the families and the friends who suffered the attack but they also go out to the whole North African community which makes up the biggest ethnic minority in France. My thoughts go out to them because they are the ones who will suffer accentuated discrimination following the attacks, on whom the attacks will be blamed and from whom apologies will be demanded.

We should not allow ourselves to be surprised at the radicalisation of young Muslims. Men and women brought up in a Western society that so blatantly rejects and oppresses them. We do not excuse these crime, of course, but we must understand the context. We all pray for Paris, for the precious lives that were lost for the city that will forever be stained with the blood of innocent people we must also see past our anger. In France a surge of nationalism has been marked by the flying of the tricolour and masses of young Frenchmen volunteering to join the armed forces. However, this natural response to what can so easily be blamed on a foreign enemy in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula masked the true root of the barbaric slaughter on the streets of Paris. France is a nation divided, and a house divided against itself cannot stand.



Revenge on jihadists in Syria will not cure the infected social wounds that are slowly killing a nation built on such noble principles as freedom, equality and brotherhood. The National Front have not hijacked this massacre as they did with Charlie Hebdo. They don't need to. France is like a grieving parent, its children lie murdered and she is blinded by revenge. The attackers were almost all Europeans and we must all ask ourselves what we must too to unite our continent against terror rather than let it divide us and turn us against the very values we claim to uphold.

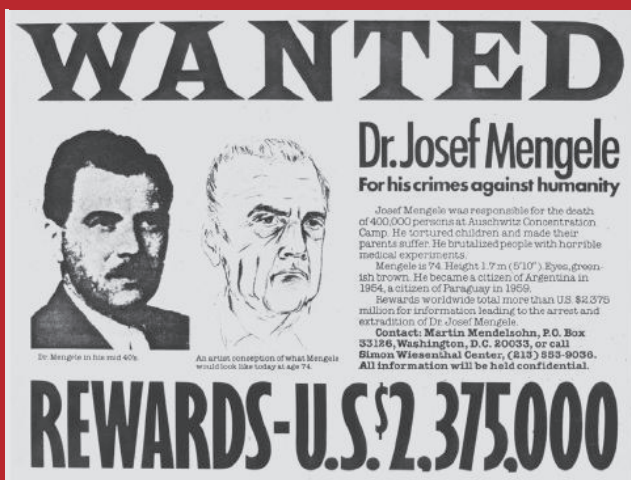


The Life of a Nazi Fugitive

LORI JACKSON *History Columnist*

Having performed tortuous experiments on people ranging from injecting chloroform into children's hearts to inflicting phosphorus burns and deliberately infecting victims with life-threatening diseases such as typhus, the perpetrator died in comfort and freedom. All for research perhaps, but it is no surprise Josef Mengele was so keen to flee Europe after Germany had lost the war.

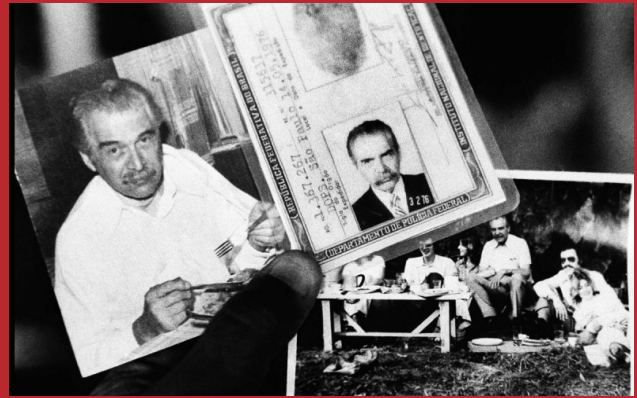
Josef Mengele, often called 'The Angel of Death', was a German SS officer during the Second World War, notoriously for the blood curdling experiments he performed on victims, especially young twins, at Auschwitz.



His position as chief physician at the time could not have been more ironic in that he destroyed the innocence of many helpless children rather than providing the care that his position entailed. Sinisterly, his child victims described him as caring, always having brought them clothes and chocolate, smiling sweetly. It is not hard to guess that this was his way of deceiving them.

Towards the end of the war Josef Mengele left Auschwitz before the camp had been liberated and transferred to another death camp, the Gross-Rosen camp in Poland in January 1945 allowing him to escape initial capture and beginning his life as a fugitive. With him he had several boxes of specimens and abhorrent records of his experiments. Unfortunately, many of his medical records had already been destroyed by the SS, preventing the world from ever truly being exposed to the full extent of his callous experiments which disregarded the fundamentals of basic morality.

Mengele then fled Gross-Rosen in February, a week before Soviet capture, and disguised himself as a standard officer in the army before being captured by the Americans. He initially registered under his real name, but, due to the disorganisation of the Allies and the fact that he did not have the ordinary SS blood group tattoo, he evaded identification. He was later released and briefly worked as a farm hand before being consumed by paranoia at the thought of the consequences of his war crimes causing him to flee Germany.



For year's right up until his death he secretly lived in various parts of South America, escaping justice. Mengele enjoyed luxuries which he did not deserve, including a trip skiing in Switzerland with his son and a second marriage during a holiday in Uruguay while the Allies believed he was dead. He was questioned, along with other doctors when a teenage girl died following an abortion. In fear of his past being exposed, Mengele took an extended business trip to Paraguay where he then gained citizenship and once again settled into a free life.

However Mengele's personal victory in escaping the punishment he deserved was still in many ways bittersweet. His actions in the war appeared to haunt him, plaguing him with mental illness as he noted in his diary. Mengele diagnosed himself as 'broken', 'depressed' and 'weak'. As result of being terrified of capture he began chewing off the tips of his moustache and swallowing them. He also pay bribes to people who knew his true identity and fought endlessly with bureaucrats when trying to get driver's licenses. These struggles this will never make up for the tortuous acts he committed and the horror he put people through.

Mengele was a malicious killer that did not deserve the life he had after what he had committed. The vivid image of his legacy is still imprinted in society as to what humans are truly capable of and how one man can still hide from justice. We cannot forget who he was for the sake of those he murdered.



Think You Can Write?
Why Not Give It A Go?

Contact: edwardfremontbarnes@gatton-park.org.uk

'UNELECTED DEMOCRACY?'

EDWARD FREMONT-BARNES *Editor-in-Chief*

Our Sixth form was lucky enough to receive a visitor at the end of last half term, Lord Bowness, a former Croydon Councillor from 1968 to 1998, Mayor of Croydon from 1979 to 1980 and a currently a Conservative member of the House of Lords.

Before he spoke to the whole Sixth form, Nai Chi and I were lucky enough to take five minutes with him to ask him about his political career and issues he has voted on that will affect us as young adults.

"What was your position at the time when the Coalition Government raised university tuition fees?"

Lord Bowness portrayed the cap on university tuition, which has created the broadly accepted cost of £9,000 for university education, as the inevitable solution given the economic climate. "I was largely not convinced by the political argument... but... from the universities themselves as to how much they needed the revenue." The informed nature of the House of Lords and generally political objectivity was part of the wider defence Lord Bowness gave of the House of Lords in his lecture after our interview.

Members of the House of Lords include financial, religious and legal experts, as well as career politicians like our speaker, and has "no party whips" who might influence votes. Having an impartial chamber as the upper house is important to British politics because it stops elected officials going beyond their mandate. Not only did our elected officials vote to raise tuition, but the experts who check their power as well. Whether one house really does check the power of the other is difficult to say.

Lord Bowness took a very realist approach to tuition saying "I think at the time they had really no alternative" later qualifying the statement with "In an ideal world you wouldn't do it." All students would agree with the latter statement but when the issue of tuition came up in the Q&A it invoked less of a response than I had expected, our guest reiterating his earlier state-



"I think at the time they did it they had really no alternative. It was controversial at the time."

ment to use that it was necessary and that "Nick Clegg paid a terrible price for doing it." There was, to the dismay of several Year 13s, no remorse in Lord Bowness' answer, only justification, frustration hinted at in the general criticism of politicians being 'out of touch' which was repeated by several students after his talk.

We also asked Lord Bowness about the Prime Minister's planed reintroduction of the Right to Buy scheme, which will directly affect us by opening up 'affordable' housing in urban areas for those of us going to university and starting internships or working. Our generation is predicted to be the first to have lived longer at home with our parents than the previous generation since WWII due to the stagnant housing market and this policy may apply to 1.3 million families inhabiting council housing freeing up a lot of properties.

"The right to buy council houses was obviously a very good scheme" according to our guest who weighed up the political, economic and ideological pros and cons of the scheme for us. "It puts lots of people on the property owning ladder who wouldn't otherwise" but "we are not dealing with public housing... we're dealing with private assets of... housing associations." The political arguments are complex but boiled down, it is a little difficult for the state to sell things it doesn't own. Whether this policy would restimulate the housing market is difficult to say. Lord Bowness pointed out there is a

"critical situation in terms of the supply of housing... that people can afford."

The scheme made working class Britons better off and was popular in the 1980s but whether it will produce the same effects now in conjunction with the Conservative's herculean task of building tens of thousands of homes annually is hard to predict. The main body of Lord Bowness' talk centred on the purpose and role of the House of Lords as the second chamber in which bills which become legislation are scrutinised a second time. The generally internationally recognised democratic system which creates 'checks and balances', as the US Constitution sees it, to avoid one chamber acting tyrannically or against the people's will. Great emphasis was placed on the integrity of the Lords, its impartiality and the Parliament Act of 1911 which prevents the Lords amending "money bills" that effect the budget (how the government spends its money).

However, the end of the Q&A became slightly heated over the right of the 'Peers of the Realm' to have any say. One Year 13 asked "If the House of Lords became elected, would you stand?" to which the answer boiled down to no. I caught up with the same student afterwards who, impassioned, stated that "...If you're not prepared to be elected you shouldn't represent us." Food for thought to all of us approaching voting age as the next general election will see all of the Sixth form emancipated and able to decide the fate of the British political system.