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Web: www.rbkc.gov.uk/libraries or www.londonhistoryfestival.com

Festival directors:

Richard Foreman, Chalke

Dave Walker, Kensington and Chelsea libraries

Tickets: Kensington and Chelsea events

Price: £5 (£3 concessions) per event

Tickets for events at Kensington Central Library 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.

Payments in person or by post should be made in cash or by cheque only. Please make cheques payable to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Payments by credit or debit card can be made via Librariesline on 020 7361 3010.

Kensington Central Library
Phillimore Walk, London, W8 7RX

Tel: 020 7361 3010

Tickets: Waterstone's events

Price: £5 (£3 concessions) per event

Tickets for events at Waterstone's Kensington are on sale at Waterstone's Kensington.

Waterstone's
193 Kensington High Street, London, W8 6SH

Tel: 0843 290 8419



The London History Festival

14 to 24 November 2011

Kensington Central Library
and Waterstone's Kensington

www.londonhistoryfestival.com



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA



Introduction to the London History Festival

Kensington and Chelsea libraries have been an integral part of the London History Festival since it began. It is a unique opportunity for regular library users – and those who we would like to become regular users – to hear authors talking about their work and to engage with them on a personal level. Kensington and Chelsea is a borough with a long and fascinating history, which makes it an ideal setting for London History Festival events. We're proud of our contribution to the festival and I hope you enjoy this year's programme.

– Dave Walker, Kensington and Chelsea libraries

History Today celebrates its sixtieth birthday this year. Since 1951 it has brought the work of the finest historians to the widest possible audience and now, with the recent launch of the History Today Book Club, it is doing more than ever to promote the best historians and writers in the field. That is why it is proud to sponsor the third London History Festival, a project that shares those aims. The festival offers the chance to engage with some of today's finest practitioners of the historian's craft in 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. It is here that history is brought to life.

– Paul Lay, Editor of History Today

Author Interviews

Hallie Rubenhold

Appearing on 15 November

Why do you find the eighteenth century so fascinating?



The eighteenth century has always struck me as an age of contradictions. In many ways it feels like the modern era's adolescent phase;

a period of rapid growth, social anxiety, change, rebellion and a desire to test the boundaries of liberty and individual rights. I've always been drawn to the stories of individuals caught up in the drama: women, children, the poor, the struggling middle classes, those who weren't the power brokers, people who had to somehow stay afloat while everything around them was shifting.

How did you find making the move from writing historical non-fiction to writing historical fiction?

Delightfully liberating! In fact, due to the subject matter that I tend to take on, I find writing non-fiction much more demanding. I love the process of undertaking research and coming across material which no-one else has examined, but often there are gaping holes in the stories I uncover. The desire to over-speculate is always there and it's hard to rein in that impulse and simply tell the story from the pieces you've found.

Where did you get the inspiration to write *Mistress of My Fate*?

Mistress of My Fate is actually the first book in a French Revolution/Napoleonic era series, *The Confessions of Henrietta Lightfoot*. I realised that there were so many well known series for men set in this period – Sharpe, Hornblower, Aubrey/ Maturin – but nothing that depicted the experience of women, written for women. I got very bored reading about male conquests of 'beautiful ladies' which described how eager the said courtesan/actress/noble woman/princess/dancing girl was for 'the embrace'. The reality was that women generally had different thoughts on the matter, and I wanted to voice those thoughts.

Roger Moorhouse

Appearing on 21 November

What motivated you to write *Berlin at War: Life and Death in Hitler's Capital, 1939-45*?



Berlin at War is a subject that had never been done before. It is strange, but despite all the thousands of history books devoted to Nazi Germany and

World War Two, not one of them concentrated on the experience of ordinary civilians living in the German capital – a remarkable omission.

Seeing the gap, I set about writing a book which would rely (as far as is possible) on firsthand accounts – using diaries, published and unpublished memoirs and interviews to frame the narrative. It was certainly not an easy book to write, but I am delighted to say that it has been very well-received, and was even shortlisted for a history prize!

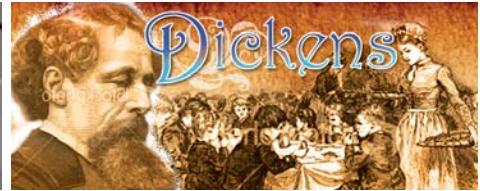
More importantly, perhaps, the book has helped to shift the focus onto the everyday experience of war for civilians in the Third Reich – a subject that has previously been rather neglected.

You are doing an event entitled 'What is history?' – what is history?

Well, you will have to come to the event to find out! Seriously, it's one of the most interesting questions that we have to wrestle with as historians.

History is almost limitless in its potential range, timeframe and subject matter – and of course, no two nations, or even historians, view events in the precisely same way. Different eyes see different things. And therein, of course, lies the fascination for the subject.

On top of that, there have been a number of shifts in historiography over recent decades – micro-history and oral history to name but two – which have made matters still more complex and nuanced. I think it will be a really interesting discussion.



❖ The London History Festival, 14 to 24 November 2011 ❖

Love, Sex and War: Jerusalem and Russia

Monday 14 November, 7pm
Kensington Central Library



The London History Festival is delighted to welcome back Simon Sebag Montefiore as he talks about the all too human drives of lust, power and violence which have shaped the histories of Jerusalem and Russia. Why is Jerusalem still considered the city at the centre of the world? And why is Russia still perhaps, as Churchill deemed it, "a riddle, wrapped up in a mystery, inside an enigma"?

This event is in association with the Kensington & Chelsea Women's Club.

History Girls

Tuesday 15 November, 7pm
Waterstone's Kensington



Hallie Rubenhold (*Mistress of my Fate*), Alex Von Tunzelmann (*Red Heat*) and Imogen Robertson (*Island of Bones*) discuss their latest books and women in history, as well as women writing history. From the virtues and vices of the eighteenth century, to the virtues and vices

of JFK and Fidel Castro, join in the discussion and question the panel.
This event is in association with Authors And Pictures, The YouTube Channel.

Europe: Past and Present

Wednesday 16 November, 7pm
Waterstone's Kensington



Bestselling Historian Norman Davies talks about his latest book, *Vanished Kingdoms*, which tells the story of the lost realms and power politics of Europe, from Ancient Britain and Prussia to the Soviet Union. Join Norman on a journey which will prove partly familiar, partly revelatory.

This event is in association with Authors And Pictures, The YouTube Channel.

All Hell Let Loose – World War Two

Thursday 17 November, 7pm
Kensington Central Library



Max Hastings talks about his new history of the Second World War. We will see the war through the prism of individual voices, of ordinary soldiers on the frontline – as well as the war being a sweeping story of grand strategy and charismatic leaders.

This event is in association with The Friends of Imperial War Museum.

What is History?
Monday 21 November, 7pm
Kensington Central Library



Historians Helen Castor (*She-Wolves*), Roger Moorhouse (*Berlin at War*) and James Mather (*Pashas*) will talk about their latest books and debate the question: 'What is History?' Join in the debate and discuss how history can still resonate, delight and instruct.

This event is in association with History Today Book Club.

How to go to War

Tuesday 22 November, 7pm
Waterstone's Kensington



Acclaimed historian Saul David will discuss his new three-part history series for BBC4, *How to go to war*. Saul will reveal the secret sinews of conflict as he explains how armies are moved, supplied and commanded. Does an army march on its stomach? How much has warfare changed, or stayed the same, throughout history?

This event is in association with Authors And Pictures, The YouTube Channel.

The Stones of London

Wednesday 23 November, 7pm
Waterstone's Kensington



Historians Leo Hollis and Nigel Jones discuss the history of the capital through some of its iconic buildings, from the Tower of London to Swiss Re's Headquarters, otherwise known as 'the gherkin'. Hear how these buildings have captured and shaped our past and how the history of London has so often touched upon the history of the world.

This event is in association with The London Historians Group.

Charles Dickens – His Life and Times

Thursday 24 November, 7pm
Kensington Central Library



Acclaimed biographer Claire Tomalin discusses Charles Dickens, the subject of her latest book. She will also talk about her previous works on Pepys, Hardy and Austen.

This event is in association with The London Magazine.

Author Interviews

Nigel Jones

Appearing on 23 November

Your previous books have been 20th century history and biographies – why did you go off-piste with *Tower: an Epic History of the Tower of London?*



There's too much narrow specialisation in history writing, especially in academia, although there are great exceptions. The story of the Tower of London

is so amazing that I found it irresistible. It literally has everything: love, lust, cruelty, greed, murder, sieges, family feuds, unsolved mysteries, great escapes – and it has everybody, too. Almost all the significant figures of our history, from the Norman Conquest to the Second World War, have associations with the Tower of London. You just can't ignore a site that has hosted all human life from William the Conqueror to the Kray twins via Anne

Boleyn, her daughter Elizabeth, Thomas More, both the Cromwells, Samuel Pepys, the Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington, and Rudolf Hess!

Most people associate the Tower of London with torture, executions and dark deeds. How did you avoid writing a grim tale?



Well, of course grimness has its own fascination, and most history books are about sinners rather than saints. However having said that, there's much more to the Tower of London than blood and guts. Few people know that it was the original London Zoo, for example – and continued to be a menagerie from the reign of Henry III until Wellington closed it down in the 19th century and packed the remaining animals off to Regent's Park. The Royal Mint was housed there too. The Crown Jewels is another story of light and shade. But I wouldn't attempt to deny that it's the dark side that draws people to the Tower of London and makes it the nation's top tourist attraction.

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Also taking place in the library

Richard Van Emden

Thursday 27 October, 6.30 to 8pm
Kensington Central Library



Richard Van Emden has interviewed over 270 veterans of the First World War and has written 12 books on the subject including *The Trench* and *The Last Fighting Tommy*. He will talk about his work including his latest book, *The Quick and the Dead*.

There have been many books on soldiers who fought and died in the First World War; *The Quick and the Dead* is the first history of the wives and children who were left behind.



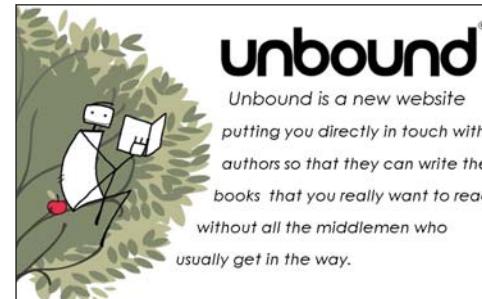
This event is in partnership with Bloomsbury Publishing.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Digital Library

See the latest features of our digital library – **Public Library Online**. All of the books can be accessed online 24 hours a day at www.rbkc.gov.uk/libraries. It includes a **Children's History Shelf**, featuring Terry Deary's brilliant new series of historical tales for seven to nine year olds.

Kensington Palace Curated Collection

Staff at Kensington Palace have created a special collection of books and audio items based on famous people associated with the palace, chosen from the library's extensive biography store. New titles have also been bought especially for this collection. They will be on display and available for you to borrow in November 2011 at Kensington Central Library. It will then tour the borough's libraries.



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