

A STUDY OF HERITAGE IN BRITAIN:
FROM THE FALKLANDS WAR TO WINDSOR CASTLE

by

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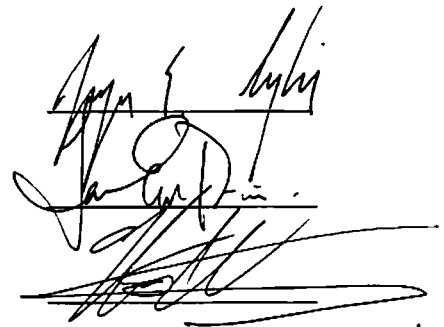


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Preface

In Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s, the past is pulled into the present under the guise of heritage. This heritage so pervades the economic, political, and social life of Britain that its influence is felt far beyond its previous traditional role. Thus, heritage can be divided into two phases: the first being the formation of conservation and preservation societies concerned mainly with preserving and presenting to the public a slice of aristocratic life, and the second being the rise of the heritage centres with their more plebeian focus as well as the maintenance of the more traditional facilities. This paper will focus on this second phase in which curators and historians face the ramifications of not only the way heritage has been preserved and conserved, but also of the way this "history" has been marketed in order to convey a specific message.

Against the backdrop of the emerging heritage "industry," three events occurred that illustrate how complex and problematic this second stage of heritage has become. Although very different in nature, together they speak very loudly on the role that heritage now plays in modern Britain. So closely intertwined were the Falklands War and the raising of the Mary Rose in that same year that one must be examined in light of the other. Not since the First and Second World Wars when the British propaganda machines rallied the country in the name of "British Heritage" and all that was "English," had a government employed the concept of heritage as extensively as did the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher.¹ Under her leadership, heritage assumed a new prominence, becoming closely identified with both

¹ Raphael Samuel, Theaters of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture (London: Verso, 1994) 218.

patriotism and nationalism. In order to rally her country behind the Falkland War, Prime Minister Thatcher invoked the spirit of "National Heritage" and "National Identity" through "Churchillian" speeches reminiscent of past imperial glories and victorious battles. This climate of heightened nationalism and patriotism framed the second incident which also recalled Britain's illustrious naval heritage and imperial glory. The *Mary Rose*, Henry VIII's flagship which sunk in the Solent on July 19, 1545 "before the enemy (the French) even touched her," was brought back to the anxiously awaiting British public by an elaborate and expensive expedition.² Much more than the remains of a warship were returned. She was yet another tangible reminder of past glory and a source of national pride, just like the fleet that returned victorious from the South Atlantic months before. Equally significant to this paper, was an incident that occurred ten years later when a disastrous fire in a crucial piece of British heritage, Windsor Castle, destroyed the buildings pseudo-Gothic facade. In the process, the fire ignited a debate over such issues as the role of the monarchy in the twentieth century and the authenticity of any restored piece of the past.

If these two moments in heritage that occurred in 1982 and 1992 are set into the larger political, economic, and social climate of Britain when the heritage industry was booming, several key themes emerge. Heritage has become increasingly commercialized and politicized, yet at the same time has arguably provided for the needs of Britons as they face their ever changing and often unsettling future. As the British become more obsessed with their past, a past that illuminates Britain's former imperial glory and industrial power, history is unavoidably altered as it is presented as heritage. The use

² George Hill, "A soft landing for the *Mary Rose*," *The London Times* 12 Aug. 1982:8.

and manipulation of heritage raises far-ranging questions, from the issues of authenticity and selectivity, to the notions of monarchy, national identity and "Britishness" and finally to the ramifications of looking to the past rather than to the future. Often what is said about the past reflects more upon present conditions and perceptions than past realities. This thesis will examine the two moments in heritage in terms of these issues to illustrate the complex and problematic nature of this secondary phase of heritage.

To accomplish this task, I relied upon the works of several prominent historians in this field to provide the basic framework for the role of heritage in Britain. Authors such as Raphael Samuel, Robert Hewison, David Lowenthal and Patrick Wright were key to understanding not only the necessary historical perspective, but also different facets of heritage such as memory, national identity and the rise of the heritage industry. Social historians such as Paul Gilroy and Tom Nairn were helpful in illustrating the role of race and monarchy in post-war Britain. Finally, I examined newspaper and journal articles in order to add a contemporary perspective of the Falklands War, the raising of the *Mary Rose*, and the fire at Windsor Castle as they were occurring. This combination of sources has provided the foundation upon which I have based my analysis of the role heritage has assumed in Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Chapter I Perspectives on Heritage

Far from being somehow "behind" the present, the past exists as an accomplished presence in public understanding. In this sense it is written into present social reality, not just implicitly as residue, precedent or custom and practice, but explicitly as itself--as History, National Heritage and Tradition.
(Patrick Wright, On Living in an Old Country, 142)

In this passage from his book, On Living in an Old Country, Patrick Wright suggests the pervasive nature of history and heritage in British life. In a country surrounded by visual artifacts of its rich history, where it appears that every village has a Celtic cross, medieval earthworks, or a Gothic church in its proximity, it is clear that many British subjects encounter the past everyday. Preservation and conservation societies, which began with the Open-Space movement of the mid-nineteenth century, have found great support in recent years with those who wish to keep the past alive in the present, to preserve British heritage. Now heritage has become an all encompassing term, broad enough to include the preservation of landscapes, monuments, buildings and artifacts of historical or cultural interest, as well as the more plebeian aspects of the early Industrial Age and, more importantly, the preservation of the national past. Among the pieces of British heritage preserved by the British National Heritage Fund in 1981 were "Henry VIII's sunken flagship *Mary Rose*, the communion bread holder of Mary Queen of Scots, the state bed of the speaker of the House of Commons" as well as "some Wordsworth manuscripts, the Astor Apostle spoons, trade union banners of the

1930's, a colony of Greater Horseshoe Bats" and the "elm lined Cambridgeshire avenue whence Second World War bombers were guided home."³

Yet, at the same time, the term heritage is vague enough to defy precise definition. Even the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Act of Parliament which established it avoided defining concretely the boundaries of heritage. According to the Fund's Annual Report for 1980-81, "We could no more define the national heritage than we could define...beauty or art," and so the fund "decided to let national heritage define itself" by awaiting "requests" from individuals "who believed that they had a part of the national heritage worth saving."⁴ Lacking a consensual and formal definition by politicians, historians, conservationists and preservationists, heritage expanded, evolved, and ultimately flourished in the 1980's.

It was no coincidence that the many facets of heritage came to the forefront during the Thatcher years. The political, economic and social conditions of the time created a climate which enabled heritage in all its manifestations to flourish and assume a larger role in British life than ever before. In a country faced with a large influx of immigrants, and the closure or down-sizing of major industries, in a country perceived to be "in decline" by the majority of its citizens, Britain's fascination with the past was in many ways understandable.⁵ It was in this climate that the past offered a certain stability, coherence, and security that many Britons found lacking in the continually changing fabric of life. In essence, Britain was going through an identity crisis brought about by the loss of its empire and the loss of its status as an industrial power and world leader. For a country which at one time had

³ David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 37.

⁴ Robert Hewison, The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline (Great Britain: Methuen, 1987) 137.

⁵ Hewison 9.

possessed an empire that encompassed one in every five people around the globe and the naval supremacy to defend and support it, the refrain "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves" now rang hollow.

The identity crisis Britain faced in the 1980's and 1990's was partially due to the extensive nature of her past empire. As this empire dissolved, countless subjects from her former colonies and members of the newly formed Commonwealth flocked to her shores. The once fairly homogenous white population of this island nation faced the daunting task of assimilating individuals of various hues who brought with them their diverse cultural and religious traditions. These immigrants challenged Britain's long held concepts of shared identity and nation and forced the country to examine what it meant to be a British citizen. Paul Gilroy, a noted British cultural historian and a descendant himself of immigrants, grappled with the racial overtones he saw as inherent in the concept of "Britishness." In his book, 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (1987), Gilroy maintained that while blacks and other immigrants of color were granted citizenship by law, they did not achieve "authentic national membership" in the British nation.⁶ In other words, being "British" in the eyes of the law was quite different than being "British" in the eyes of white British citizens. When it came to immigrants, both first and second generation, the truth was that there was "more to Britishness than a passport."⁷ This "reworking" of the idea of Britishness denied "even the possibility that black people can share the native population's attachment to the national culture--God, Queen and

⁶ Paul Gilroy, 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) 46.

⁷ Gilroy 59.

country."⁸ Although neither the left nor the right referred overtly to the race issue in their debates over nationalism, Gilroy believed that what emerged was the subliminal message that Britishness and blackness were incompatible within modern day society. Even though Gilroy was speaking of the black "race," the same prejudice and discrimination affected Pakistanis, Indians, and other immigrants. Ultimately, Gilroy believed that writers and the politicians of the Conservative party were blaming the decline of Britain and its loss of pre-eminence in the world on "the dilution of once homogeneous and continuous national stock" by these immigrants.⁹

The concept of "Otherness" has long been a part of the British psyche and key to their sense of national identity. Linda Colley, in her book Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837(1992), examined the source of this national identity and the principles which upheld it. For over two hundred years the British have defined "who they are by reference to who and what they are not," the "other."¹⁰ England, Scotland and Wales had united to form the new nation of Great Britain in 1707, defining themselves "as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the other beyond their shores."¹¹ Putting their regional differences aside, they invented a nation under a Protestant banner to face the threat of recurrent wars, especially those with Catholic France. According to Colley, the whole reason for Britain's existence had rested on its Protestant culture, the threat of war, and the "triumphs, profits, and Otherness represented by an

⁸ Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70's Britain, John Solomos, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones and Paul Gilroy, "The organic crisis of British capitalism and race: the experience of the seventies" (London: Hutchinson, 1982) 29.

⁹ Gilroy 46.

¹⁰ Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 6.

¹¹ Colley 6.

overseas empire."¹² As all of these factors have largely ceased to be operational, as Protestantism has declined as a driving force in British life, as the threat of war from Continental Europe has lessened and Britain has joined the European Economic Community, and as the empire and days of imperial glory have disappeared, the "other" is no longer a motivating force to keep England, Scotland and Wales together.¹³ Ironically, the "other" that so united the nation and gave it a sense of identity for centuries has now appeared in person on its shores to challenge that same identity.

Key to upholding Britain's fragile sense of national identity is its past as it is expressed through its heritage. This heritage defines not only the nation's identity, but also that of its individual citizens. According to David Lowenthal, in The Past is a Foreign Country(1985), although the past is gone, "a mass of memories and records, of relics and replicas, of monuments and memorabilia, lives at the core of our being."¹⁴ He believes that the past completely "surrounds and saturates us; every scene, every statement, every action retains residual content from earlier times."¹⁵ His theory is that the past is important to an individual's sense of identity as it provides value, purpose, and meaning, qualities that can no longer be found elsewhere. In addition to these qualities, Lowenthal argues that Britons find a certain sense of security as they "flock" to historical sites to "share recall of the familiar, communal recollection," and as such this communal recollection becomes a key component in the formation and maintenance of national identity.¹⁶

¹² Colley 6.

¹³ Colley 374.

¹⁴ Lowenthal xxv.

¹⁵ Lowenthal 185.

¹⁶ Lowenthal 8.

Patrick Wright believes, like Lowenthal, that the national past as expressed in its heritage, defines the essence of a nation as well as unifying its people with a sense of citizenship.¹⁷ His book, On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain (1985), is important for the connections it establishes between everyday life and the historical consciousness, as well as between the national past and the "leading tensions of the contemporary political situation."¹⁸ Underlying his whole work is the idea that Britain's past "is written into present social reality" and exists "not just implicitly as residue, precedent or custom and practice, but explicitly as itself-as history, national heritage and tradition."¹⁹ After a long sojourn outside of Britain, Wright returns to discover that the "attentions of everyday life" have expanded the national heritage to include the "local scene alongside the capitol city, the old factory alongside the municipal art gallery," as well as the "urban tenement or terrace alongside the country house, the vernacular alongside the stately and the academically sanctioned."²⁰ However, in this trend, Wright sees a politicizing of heritage that alarms him. The conservative government faced with the loss of empire and economic advantage, the friction between England, Scotland and Ireland, and the changing demographics of its urban and rural society, has, in Wright's opinion, molded and manipulated heritage in an attempt to find a panacea for these changes. In their attempt to deal with Britain's economic and social crisis, the Conservatives have blended "elements and values drawn from 'the sense of historical existence' with the supposed and often administratively

¹⁷ Patrick Wright On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain (London: Verso, 1985) 146.

¹⁸ Wright 2.

¹⁹ Wright 142.

²⁰ Wright 25.

produced facts of the past."²¹ Therein lies the danger; a concentration on a past that has been manipulated, distorted, or politicized does not bode well for either the present or the future of Britain.

Raphael Samuel, a prominent British historian and author of Theaters of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture(1994) and Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity(1989), also sees the politicization of heritage increasing under the Conservative government in the 1980s. This occurred, he maintains, because changes in the fabric of society brought about by the faltering of the labour movement and the disintegration of the class system have led to a rewriting of history, a rewriting that often occurs in the public arena. Samuel asserts that in the political climate of the 1980's, heritage became the leading ideology and tool of the Conservative party. often rewritten and manipulated simply to justify and sanctify the concept of nationalism. In the Conservative view, according to Samuel, nationality and thus heritage is tied up with the "authority--and ideally the majesty--of the British state; with the 'continuity' in national institutions; with defense of the 'national interest,'" and finally "with the existence of alleged permanencies in national character."²² Samuel insists that the Conservatives are so successful at tying heritage to their particular view of nationalism, that heritage can even be considered "Thatcherism in period dress."²³

In the Conservative political climate of the 1980s and early 1990s, heritage assumed the role of offering stability, coherence, and security that

²¹ Wright 168.

²² Raphael Samuel, ed., Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume 1: History and Politics (London: Routledge, 1989) xvi.

²³ Samuel, Theaters 290.

many found lacking in the continually changing fabric of life. A past that fulfilled these needs of the British subjects could be found in the plethora of new museums and heritage attractions of all sorts that were springing up around Britain. Even in a country where heritage appears to be inseparable from the British character, the rising number of museums and heritage sites was remarkable enough to attract a considerable amount of strident criticism from all sides. With a plethora of museums and heritage centres opening yearly, Dr. Neil Cossons, the director of the Science Museum in London complained that the heritage industry had expanded so much that at some point "the whole country becomes one big open air museum, and you just join it as you get off at Heathrow."²⁴ Although Dr. Cossons was exaggerating to make a point, it was estimated that 67 million people visited historical sites in Great Britain in 1990.²⁵ When you couple this fact, with the statistic that one third of these visitors were foreign tourists who brought in over 5 billion pounds in revenue, the magnitude of the heritage industry becomes apparent.²⁶ Now add to this picture the fact that there are 635,000 different sites that are eligible for scheduling by the royal commission on historical monuments, some of which may eventually join the over 2000 sites already open to the public, and the possibility for the further growth of this industry is staggering.²⁷

Many of the new heritage sites were no longer solely concerned with the aristocratic possessions or the stately homes that had dominated the landscape for centuries. Now, in addition to these traditional heritage sites preserved by organizations such as the National Trust, there arose centres

²⁴ Hewison 24.

²⁵ David T. Herbert, ed., Heritage, Tourism and Society (London: Mansell, 1985) 175.

²⁶ Hewison 27.

²⁷ Hewison 25.

dedicated to the populist or "democratized" version of the past. These centres emerged for the sole purpose of preserving and displaying artifacts from the more recent past, a past that was oftentimes within the memory and experience of the visitors. These heritage sites presented, in essence, an idealized and sanitized version of the industrial age which in the present day was rapidly winding down. On the other side of the spectrum, there were heritage centres that focused on much earlier periods of history such as the arrival of the Vikings. Not only were these heritage sites becoming increasingly popular, but also in "vogue" at this time was "playing at the past: Britaineering...Druid dressings up and medieval quaffing and wenchery."²⁸ Thus, both the numbers and variety of these heritage sites were multiplying as the past was being pulled increasingly into the present.

The expanding heritage industry raised the basic question of authenticity, whether the past can be adequately portrayed in the present. We cannot look upon a scene from the past with anything other than a late twentieth century perspective. As Lowenthal has stated, "Everything we see is filtered through present-day mental lenses."²⁹ In other words our experiences, our values, as well as the knowledge of everything between the past and present influences the way we view an historical incident. Even the past itself is subject to interpretation. Lowenthal insisted that it was not possible "to recover or recount more than a tiny fraction of what has taken place," and given this fact, "no historical account ever corresponds precisely with any actual past."³⁰ Furthermore, he declared that "three things limit what can be known," and these three are "the immensity of the past itself, the

²⁸ Peter Fowler, The Past in Contemporary Society: Then, Now (London: Routledge, 1992) 14.

²⁹ Lowenthal 216.

³⁰ Lowenthal 214.

distinction between past events and accounts of those events" and lastly, "the inevitability of bias--especially present bias."³¹

Given this inevitable bias, no historical event or scene can be reproduced in a completely authentic manner. This is as true for a living history where a group of twentieth century citizens reenacts an eighteenth century battle as for a stately home with its twentieth century fabrics meticulously copied from seventeenth century remnants. Ultimately, preserving the past changes it. Lowenthal himself has said, "protective and restorative devices mantle the past in the machinery of the present."³² Yet even if left untouched, the remnants of the past can never appear in our eyes as they originally did centuries before. This is not to say that the past should in all cases be left untouched, but rather the past seen in the present should be recognized as simply that: the past as it survives in the present.

Equally as important is the issue of selectivity, or exactly what is to be portrayed. A heritage site or reenactment must decide what period of history it will focus on, and exactly what it will portray from that period. It is a matter of selecting the artifacts, the costumes, the setting, that will be displayed. It is hard to miss the humor or the truth in the comments of historian Peter Fowler. Speaking for some of the more questionable heritage sites that had sprung up around Britain, Fowler saw a certain pattern emerging:

The familiar recipe for concocting 'dayout' heritage is again apparent: first catch your history (old house, castle, etc.) chuck in a bit of pastness (jousts, bygones, etc.) with whatever else is at hand (crafts, tubeslide, etc.), stir to remove integrity and allow eclecticism to surface, and then simmer until tacky, with froth on top.³³

³¹ Lowenthal 214.

³² Lowenthal xxiv.

³³ Peter Fowler 67.

Not only were writers criticizing these heritage sites with their tourist attracting gimmicks, but they were also expressing concern over the rising number of sites that retouched history. Too often it seems, a heritage site sanitizes history, leaving out unpleasant or cruel aspects of an event or period in favor of an idealized version of what has occurred. This may happen intentionally or unintentionally. David Herbert feared most that the heritage industry would "contaminate or misuse the concept of heritage" in its attempt to market its product to the masses, in essence often favoring profit margins over scholarly research and presentation.³⁴ Among his arguments is the notion that the history of the various sites is often distorted or, even worse, recreated, to heighten the public's interest. And when one keeps an eye on the profit margin, it is perhaps more difficult to display events that will be distasteful or upsetting to visitors. It is easier to give the paying public what they want, a sanitized version of history. Raphael Samuel has explained the possibilities for concealing the historical truth: "'Dark satanic mills' no longer seem horrors when they are exhibited as historical monuments or reassembled in picturesque settings."³⁵ Thus, the selection process of what to present is inherently biased, often excluding negative aspects of the historical presentation while glorifying the positive.

The rise of the heritage industry can be viewed from an economic perspective. At its most basic level, heritage is used to replace dying industries in Britain and to revitalize economically depressed towns. As major industries closed, it became a common practice to convert the physical plants into heritage centers, presenting an idealized version of what had once flourished in Britain. According to Samuel, the date "when the term 'heritage' began its

³⁴ Herbert 10.

³⁵ Samuel, Theaters 304.

inflationary career" was in 1975, the year that "corresponded to the onset of economic recession, the contraction of manufacturing industry and the return of mass unemployment."³⁶ In this age, "when micro-electronics are making almost every form of human skill redundant," Samuel asserted that the heritage industry is "one of the very few forms of labour-intensive employment which is actually growing."³⁷ In a similar vein, Hewison believed,

The economic justification for conservation schemes is often the result of weakness: there is nothing else that can be done with the building except turn it into a museum; there is nothing else to be done with the people except temporarily to employ them as museums attendants.³⁸

Hewison would term this the "museum solution," yet it is at best a short-term solution for a long-term problem.

Yet at the same time, the heritage centres appear to satisfy the psychological needs of the general British population. It is obvious that as more people flocked to the heritage attractions to find what they could not in their everyday lives, the industry simply expanded to meet the demand. In order to satisfy this psychological need, a certain degree of selectivity was required. According to Fowler, that selectivity was directed towards "preconceived visions of some parts of some of our yesterdays."³⁹ Carefully selected visions of the past as presented in heritage centres provide a respite from the chaos of the modern world. As Hewison has explained, the heritage industry "finds a ready market, because the perception of decline includes all sorts of insecurities and doubts." thus making the heritage industry's

³⁶ Samuel, *Theaters* 261.

³⁷ Samuel, *Theaters* 294.

³⁸ Hewison 104.

³⁹ Fowler 6.

"products especially attractive and reassuring."⁴⁰ Similarly, Nick Merriman in his study, Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public in Britain (1991) sees heritage as being marketable because "the past is a resource, not just in material terms...but also in imaginative terms" as it is capable of expressing "ideas, hopes and fears."⁴¹ The past, simply because it is over, creates a sense of security. According to Lowenthal, this termination provides a certain "coherence foreign to the chaotic and shifting present."⁴² Thus, the rise in the number of heritage centres fulfilled not only an economic need but a psychological one as well.

The past is now offered as a separate place in Britain. Whether it fulfills economic or psychological needs, the past is marketed as a place to be visited. Any site that offers up this past must create a bridge between the real and the imaginary. According to Michael Bommers and Patrick Wright, in their article "'Charms of residence': the public and the past," a "National Heritage site must be sufficiently of this world to be accessible by car and/or camera," yet at the same time, it must "provide access to that other 'simpler' world when the tourist/viewer finally gets there."⁴³ It is in this "simpler" world that a utopia is often presented. However, this utopia exists "not as a vision of possibilities which resides in the real," but rather as "a dichotomous realm existing alongside the everyday."⁴⁴ Thus, the visitors can leave their everyday world,

⁴⁰ Hewison 9.

⁴¹ Nick Merriman, Beyond the Glass Case: the Past, the Heritage and the Public in Britain (London: Leichestor University Press, 1991) 29.

⁴² Lowenthal 62.

⁴³ Richard Johnson, Gregor McLennan, Bill Schwarz, and David Sutton (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) ed., Making Histories: Studies in history-writing and politics, Michael Bommers and Patrick Wright, "'Charms of Residence': the public and the past," (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) 294.

⁴⁴ Bommers and Wright 295.

cross the bridge between the real and the imaginary, and escape into the past that is offered by the heritage site.

Robert Hewison is perhaps the definitive commentator on the heritage industry in Britain. Hewison, author of The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline (1987), one of the foremost historians in this field, ties the heritage industry to the role it has come to assume in modern British society. The basis of his thesis is that the rise in the number of museums and heritage sites is indicative of a country "obsessed with its past and unable to face its future," a country that had often replaced its traditional industry with a pseudo-industry built upon a heritage that was consuming considerable private and public resources while it was attempting to "dispel" a perceived "climate of decline."⁴⁵ According to Hewison, a country that ignores its true past in favor of a sanitized, idealized, or even fantasized version of that past is in danger of losing its "capacity for creative change."⁴⁶ In a country faced with the loss of an Empire, recession, rising unemployment, and social upheaval, the compulsion to look back to the past is understandable. Heritage has the ability to provide a "foundation" on which to preserve the "individual and collective identity" as well as "cultural symbols," and the stability necessary in times of crisis to cope with innovation and threatened confidence.⁴⁷ However, the danger is that the past is altered through the "filter of nostalgia," and thus the paramount question for Hewison is not whether to preserve the past, but what type of past "we have chosen to preserve" and what impact it has on the present.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Hewison 9.

⁴⁶ Hewison 10.

⁴⁷ Hewison 40.

⁴⁸ Hewison 47.

Wigan, a city struggling with economic decay, is a case in point for Hewison. To ensure its survival, the city's Council capitalized on the name Wigan Pier, made famous by George Orwell in his work, The Road to Wigan Pier, although they ignored completely the poverty and desperation that was the center of his focus. Rather than concentrating on the revitalization of the town's industry, the Council installed a heritage center because as they saw it, the "past...was virtually all it had left."⁴⁹ As Hewison sees it, the resulting presentation is not so much an authentic recreation of the past, but rather a contemporary creation and an "emotional experience, a symbolic recovery of the way we were."⁵⁰ Nick Merriman has called this a "romanticized fiction," a picture of the past subject to marketing policies.⁵¹ Whether it is termed a "romanticized fiction" or "contemporary creation," Hewison views the Wigan Pier Heritage Centre and other such re-creations as an attempt "to conceal the present under layers of the past."⁵² Furthermore, the Centre is an example of several new trends. According to Hewison, many of the new museums are not about Britain's past military greatness or its development as a nation state, but rather about its industrial past.⁵³ This he finds ironic as the past it sought to glorify is in a severe state of decline. The simple fact remains that heritage was rescuing redundant mills, mines, and even towns, and in the process becoming "a vital part of the economic underpinnings of the country."⁵⁴ Yet, Hewison cannot help but wonder if the heritage industry has constructed "a set of imprisoning walls" upon which "a superficial image of a false past" had been projected, thus creating a population ignorant of the "reality of history"

⁴⁹ Hewison 19.

⁵⁰ Hewison 19.

⁵¹ Merriman 3.

⁵² Hewison 30.

⁵³ Hewison 88.

⁵⁴ Hewison 102.

and "incapable of moving forward because of the absorbing fantasy" before them.⁵⁵

It is obvious that there are certain dangers inherent in the rise of the heritage industry in Britain. When the emphasis is on reconstructing the past as a viable industry in the present, the groundwork for industrial growth outside of the heritage industry is not being laid. Britain cannot survive or even compete in a global economy on its past alone. Lowenthal reminds us that "excessive devotion to the past precludes creative attention to the present if only because time, space, energy, and resources are finite."⁵⁶ In no way can one consider putting redundant workers into unskilled jobs at heritage sites as a long term solution for the rising unemployment situation in Britain. Beyond such tangible issues, there lies an even greater danger to the self esteem of the British people. Perhaps Lowenthal best sums up the situation when he remarks that "reverence for the past is commonly seen to inhibit change, embargo progress, dampen optimism, and stifle creativity."⁵⁷ These are not positive traits for a country hoping to enter the twenty-first century with the same power and prestige that accompanied it into the twentieth.

⁵⁵ Hewison 139.

⁵⁶ Lowenthal 65.

⁵⁷ Lowenthal 65.

Chapter II The Falklands War and the *Mary Rose*

In 1982, Britain fought a war in the Falkland Islands and raised the *Mary Rose* from the silt of the Solent. The connection between these two incidents goes far beyond the obvious, that they are both events in Britain's naval history. The excitement over the *Mary Rose* was due in large part to the climate created by the war, after which echoes of the days of empire reverberated around the country. Britain's naval superiority had long been a cornerstone of British identity and nationalism, and a key component in securing and maintaining a vast empire. For a country which no longer ruled the waves, a victory in the South Atlantic and a returned Tudor warship from its days of past glory were intertwined in a celebration of heritage. Both events encompassed the past and the present, and provided a new hope and optimism for a country bereft of empire. At the time when the *Mary Rose* sank in 1545, England was just beginning to assume its role as an international power, and it still held possession of French territory. Centuries later it would be said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." However, by the middle of the twentieth century Britain would fight for its survival in two major World Wars, and witness its predominance and its powerful empire become but a memory. The *Mary Rose* and World War II could be considered historical bookends. World War II was the last moment of Britain's military supremacy, the foundation of which was laid in the sixteenth century. Prime Minister Thatcher evoked in her speeches during the Falklands War, the spirit that surrounded this military supremacy in an attempt to renew the self-confidence of Britain and her subjects. The task force deployed in 1982 would once again sail out to recapture a British territory, and in doing so, would

ignite the nationalism, patriotic fervor, and pride in their heritage that were symbolized by the Tudor warship.

The war in the Falklands perhaps was best summed up by G. M. Dillon in his book The Falklands, Politics and War(1989). Dillon asserted that the Falkland Dispute was not so much a military or legal problem as it was a "political problem...of post imperial policies" when Britain was forced to reassess its overseas commitment in light of the "new realities of international power."⁵⁸ There were no material interests at risk or "important regional strategic balances" under threat in this dispute over these "islands of little if any strategic value to Britain or Argentina."⁵⁹ The Falklands dispute, according to Dillon, was basically an "uncomplicated international disagreement between two otherwise friendly states" which was "transformed by military gamble and political misjudgment into crisis and war."⁶⁰ However, it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the political misjudgments made by the Conservative government, but rather to analyze the call to heritage Margaret Thatcher made as an incentive and justification for the Falklands War once those decisions had been made.

When the Argentines invaded the Falkland Islands in April of 1982, the British government responded with a task force that was not so much a ploy to retake a small, distant island with eighteen hundred British citizens, as it was an opportunity for Margaret Thatcher to reassert Britain as a power in the eyes of its citizens and the world. Prime Minister Thatcher had rallied the country in support of the invasion with speeches that invoked memories of Britain's National Heritage, the brave spirit of the men who fought in the

⁵⁸ G.M. Dillon, The Falklands, Politics, and War (London: The MacMillon Press Ltd., 1989) 231.

⁵⁹ Dillon 230.

⁶⁰ Dillon 230.

Second World War. Not only could World War II be considered the last great flourishing of British dominance, but it could also be viewed as the last great moment of social cohesion. In her speeches, Thatcher alluded to this cohesion in order to recreate feelings of consensus on the international front as well as the domestic. Just as it had in World War II, "it took the demands of war for every stop to be pulled out and every man and woman to do their best," according to Thatcher.⁶¹ Once again, Britain heard a prime minister declare, "We knew what we had to do and we went about it and did it. Great Britain is great again."⁶² After the war was won, she declared with pride that Britain had "ceased to be a nation in defeat," but rather had "found herself again in the South Atlantic and will not look back from the victory she has won."⁶³ Phrases such as "new found confidence" filled her speeches as she basked in a renewal of patriotism and a victory 8,000 miles away on a small island by the largest British task force assembled since World War II.⁶⁴

In all of her patriotic speeches, however, there appears to be a selectivity of the heritage portrayed. World War II had been a time not only of victories, but also defeats. The deaths, deprivations, and hardships of the war were glossed over in favor of references to the fighting spirit and patriotic fervor that occurred in the past during times of military conflicts. If Thatcher was aware that the Falklands War had the potential to be a military disaster or that countless casualties might be suffered to defend that island of little or no economic or strategic importance to Britain, she did not impart those facts in her speeches made to the British public before, during, or after the war. This

⁶¹ Peter Jenkins, Mrs. Thatcher's Revolution: The Ending of the Socialist Era (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987) 164.

⁶² "Great Britain great again-Thatcher," The London Times 15 June 1982: 15.

⁶³ Jenkins 164.

⁶⁴ Jenkins 164.

fact is not surprising because if she had dwelt upon the risks she would not have been able to rally support for the cause. Instead, she chose to focus on the past, the proud heritage of this once strong power that she felt was within reach once again.

Selectivity and manipulation of heritage factored into Margaret Thatcher's speeches and conduct in yet another way. No matter how she presented it, the conflict facing Britain was not on the scale of World War II. The success of the war depended in some part on her ability to turn it into something that it wasn't, a battle of international importance. But, as long as she could present it as a fight to protect British citizens and to stop foreign aggression, she could rally the country behind the government's position. Although the issues were not of historic proportion, Thatcher declared, "Once again we have had to stand up for the cause of freedom."⁶⁵ Although it was not the Battle of Dunkirk, she still applauded those men who "risked their lives to defend British sovereign territory, the British way of life, and the right of British people to determine their own future."⁶⁶ What seems obvious now, that the war was ultimately not what it was marketed to be, was commented on by very few writers of the time. Peter Jenkins was one, however, who did point out that Britain was "deluding" itself if it imagined that the world considered this dispute involving an "insignificant outpost of a lost Empire as an event on the same footing as the Nazi invasion of Poland."⁶⁷

However, there were certainly writers who shared Thatcher's optimistic outlook, at least in part. Peter Riddell, in The Thatcher Decade: A Study of Britain Under Thatcher, applauded the former Prime Minister for giving the

⁶⁵ Peter Calvert, The Falklands Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs (London, Frances Pinter, 1982) 139.

⁶⁶ Calvert 143.

⁶⁷ Jenkins 161

British back a sense of greatness. Riddell believed her rallying speeches and determination during the war made her a "symbol of revived Britain--Boadicea with a handbag."⁶⁸ He felt that the Falklands War was "a striking symbol of the attempt by Mrs. Thatcher and the Conservatives to arrest the decline of Britain."⁶⁹ Riddell believed that the war had a "wider political significance," agreeing with Nigel Lawson that the Falklands War "showed the world--and, even more important, ourselves--that Britain still possessed a patriotic and a moral fiber that many thought had gone forever."⁷⁰ Even though he recognized the power of her personality and her message in winning the war, he, too, saw that her use of heritage to recall past greatness only partially concealed the realities that Britain was now a second rate power with a host of unsolved problems at home.⁷¹

The question remained whether the manipulation of heritage to produce a victory in the Falkland Islands was a indication of a new role for Britain or simply a personal victory for Margaret Thatcher. Peter Jenkins saw the results of Mrs. Thatcher's manipulation of heritage as more of a personal triumph than a panacea for Britain. Her speeches quoting Churchill and extolling the lasting effect of the war on the nation's morale, industry, and position in the world, Jenkins felt were more "indicative of a state of mind, not of the state of the nation."⁷² In other words, any perceived improvements in Britain's standing as a world power or the state of its industry were due more to the renewed optimistic outlook of its citizens, their mindset as it were, than to any actual improvements or advancements in world standing or technology.

⁶⁸ Peter Riddell, The Thatcher Decade (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 185.

⁶⁹ Riddell 215.

⁷⁰ Riddell 215.

⁷¹ Riddell 218.

⁷² Jenkins 165.

The war would not bring about a "rebirth of Britain," but rather a linkage between the woman herself and a "powerful image of success."⁷³ Jenkins hoped that her strong image could be used to solve domestic problems just as it had a war in the South Atlantic. Perhaps, more important, was Jenkins' admission that he and his fellow critics of the war had greatly "underestimated...the psychological needs of a nation," the need for "a success of some kind, an end to failure and humiliation, to do something well, to win."⁷⁴ He credited Thatcher with making the British people feel better about themselves, although he viewed the victory as "vainglorious posturing in a post-imperial world of Super Powers."⁷⁵ Yet, even while admitting it was posturing, he seemed to take a certain pride in the fact that the British actions and resolve had "aroused genuine admiration around the world and, where not that, reluctant respect."⁷⁶

Other writers also focused on the tenuous connection between Thatcher's role in the Falklands War and Britain's reminder of its noble heritage. In a similar vein, Anthony Verrier, in his book, Through the Looking Glass: British Foreign Policy in an Age of Illusions, exposed the war for what it was, a campaign by a "politician of unique single-mindedness" who "ignored the wider issues" in order to "concentrate on what she saw as the only point of principle: Britain must count in the world."⁷⁷ Yet, Verrier acknowledged that for a period following the war, British subjects welcomed the idea that they were once again a great nation, with a role to play on the

⁷³ Jenkins 165.

⁷⁴ Jenkins 163.

⁷⁵ Jenkins 163.

⁷⁶ Jenkins 163.

⁷⁷ Anthony Verrier, Through the Looking Glass: British Foreign Policy in an Age of Illusions (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983) 342.

international scene. Although Verrier conceded that this "emotion is not ignoble" he also cautioned that "emotions subside, realities remain."⁷⁸

Patrick Wright, in his work, On Living in an Old Country, was equally conscious of the use of heritage to conceal the underlying insecurities inherent in the present reality. Wright believed that in the upheaval of modern times, a "great deal that has been stable and traditional for generations is caught up into question and transformation," while simultaneously, "an anxious 'sense of historical existence'" became characteristic of much everyday life.⁷⁹ According to Wright, it is in this atmosphere of changing ideas and values, that "a desire for continuity develops" because the present time "seems actually to lack the quality, meaning and significance of history," and the "future seems unobtainable or 'utopian' in the wholly negative sense of the word."⁸⁰ Thus, Wright sees the lack of meaning in the present and the lack of confidence in the future as key to the willing acceptance of heritage as manipulated by Thatcher. As Wright would argue, the motivation behind the Falklands War was to project the idea that the British "are still powerful, still capable of rallying to one flag with confidence and moral righteousness, still, above all capable of action."⁸¹ In other words their identity, and thus their national heritage, was closely tied to the outcome of the war in the South Atlantic. Just as Verrier saw the illusions inherent in the Falklands episode hidden in Thatcher's manipulation of heritage, Wright would view it as a fable authored by Thatcher and accepted by the British. In a similar vein, Raphael Samuel, in Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, referred to Mrs. Thatcher's use of

⁷⁸ Verrier 343.

⁷⁹ Wright 167.

⁸⁰ Wright 166.

⁸¹ Wright 165.

the idea of "Nation" as a mobilizing myth. "an ideological fiction" in which the loss of "500 Latin American sailors was treated as a National triumph, the sacrifice of British lives as a restoration of British greatness."⁸²

Although these critics represented Thatcher's use of heritage in the Falklands War as illusion, fable and myth to cover up a growing sense of insecurity in modern Britain, there were those who put her call upon heritage and Britain's situation in a more sarcastic, harsh light. Ferdinand Mount was one who was not caught up in the patriotic fervor. In his article entitled, "The Last Armada" in The Spectator, Mount raised questions about the whole expedition to the Island. According to Mount, "Britain's contribution" to the Falkland Islands had been "ancestors, a governor, a flag, a few marines, an occasional gunboat--and the rhetoric," and yet he was amazed when "almost every British MP was personally prepared to shed his last drop of blood for the Falklands" with "extremities of heroism...promised by all sorts."⁸³ However, Mount reminded Britain of its reduced economic and international position by declaring, "if we cannot provide the means, then we had better stop pretending that we can secure the ends."⁸⁴ Although he had poked fun at the British MPs and their patriotic fervor he admitted that the task force was necessary to deter aggression around the globe. Furthermore, he declared,

This last British Armada is a quixotic but necessary enterprise. The position of the British Government remains at best a highly undignified one. But then discarding an empire tends to be a succession of indignities.⁸⁵

⁸² Samuel, Patriotism X.

⁸³ Philip Marsden-Smedley(ed.) Britain in the Eighties: The Spectator's View of the Thatcher Decade (London: Grafton Books, 1989) 40.

⁸⁴ Marsden-Smedley 40.

⁸⁵ Marsden-Smedley 41.

Thus, given the situation in post-imperial Britain, he found the Falkland campaign not so much a reflection of a glorious naval heritage as much as a necessary indignity to be endured.

The tone of the arguments over the use of heritage in the Falklands War were varied. It was as if Margaret Thatcher's call to heritage was mesmerizing to some of the writers and not to others. As British citizens refitted ships and stood on the shore waving to the troops as they sailed away, perhaps some felt it would not have been patriotic to question the validity of her arguments for sending British soldiers 8000 miles away. The decision to send them had been made by the government, and the British soldiers were already sailing to the South Atlantic. Public sentiment was on her side, and maybe it would not have been considered "good form" by many to be too critical of Mrs. Thatcher and what she was trying to achieve. Perhaps, for most writers, it took some time and some distance to assess her manipulation of heritage and the way she selectively used parts of Britain's past, specifically its proud naval heritage, to justify her actions. From the literature, it is obvious that Margaret Thatcher's recall of Britain's past greatness, in essence, her manipulation of British heritage, and the revived spirit and outlook it brought to British citizens, were inseparable from the total picture of war. She used the past effectively to rally support, and yet its unspoken promise of future greatness was hollow.

One other factor that was completely ignored by most of the authors needs to be mentioned. Because the Falklands War was so tied to the concept of nationalism and the defense of all things British, any discussion of the war and heritage would not be complete without once again mentioning the issue of race. The issue of race becomes a multifaceted one as you are dealing with the concept of race overseas as well as in Britain itself. Thatcher and her ministers were quick to remind the public that the British forces were

fighting for the sovereignty and freedom of the British citizens in the Falklands, who were subjects just like them. Peregrine Worsthorne questioned whether the Royal Forces would have come to their defense if "the Falkland Islanders were British citizens with black or Brown skins, spoke with strange accents or worshipped different Gods."⁸⁶ If this had been true, one could conclude that Margaret Thatcher would have had to market the war much differently. Worsthorne even took the idea of race and "Britishness" one step further, relating it to the multi-racial make-up of Great Britain itself. He saw clearly the situation that existed:

Most Britons today identify more easily with those of the same stock 8,000 miles away...than they do with West Indian or Asian immigrant living next door.⁸⁷

Despite the fact that they lived in Great Britain, these immigrants could never be as British as those Islanders in the South Atlantic in many people's minds. As Gilroy so aptly stated, "There is more to Britishness than a passport."⁸⁸ He, like Worsthorne, realized that the Falklands War "celebrated the cultural and spiritual continuity which could transcend 8,000 miles," and ultimately "call the nation to arms in defense of its own distant people."⁸⁹ What was not specifically stated but only implied was that the new immigrants might possess a legal status but they could never be part of the heritage of Britain. Thus, although the concept of heritage was limitless, there was indeed a limit as to who that heritage applies to.

The war in the Falklands brought back an imperial moment at a time when there was no empire. For the last century, that empire had bestowed upon Britain power, stature, and glory. What the British perceived as an

⁸⁶ Gilroy 51.

⁸⁷ Gilroy 52.

⁸⁸ Gilroy 59.

⁸⁹ Gilroy 51.

imperial moment was, in actuality, merely a task force sent to the South Atlantic to defend an insignificant island against a weak aggressor. Weak or not, there was now an "Other" to confront, and this "Other" served to rally and unite the country. Thatcher, along with the Conservatives, marketed the war in such a way that a victory on a small island would seem like the beginning of a new and glorious era. Although this war was treated with the same sensationalism as any other war, the truth of the matter is that had Britain lost this war, the balance of the power in the world would not have changed. What the war did however was give the British subjects back, even if only momentarily, a sense of identity, an identity that had been forged in their days of empire, that Great Britain was great and that it was a country chosen by God.⁹⁰

Into this climate of euphoria, or some might say illusion, after the Falkland War, a tangible piece of their authentic heritage, the *Mary Rose*, was returned to the British subjects. Like modern battleships, she had sailed in her time to defend against foreign aggression. As the modern ship was going to defend its territory against a Catholic country, Argentina, the *Mary Rose* fought many a battle against the Catholic nations of France and Spain. The *Mary Rose* had been the pride of Henry VIII's fleet in Tudor England, just as the largest fleet to sail since World War II was a source of renewed pride for modern Britain. They were both part of a long unbroken line of naval heritage. Perhaps the campaign in the Falklands that Thatcher used effectively to stir up patriotic fervor and nationalistic sentiment, and vice-versa, the call to heritage and patriotism that she used to gain support for the war, fueled the enthusiasm over the expedition to raise the *Mary Rose*. Pride over the victory in the Falklands and renewed belief, if only momentarily,

⁹⁰ Colley 368.

that Britain was an important player in world affairs, and pride in the twentieth century technology that enabled the marine archaeologists to find, raise and preserve this fragile wreck, were tied together. They were both victories, though perhaps small and insignificant when viewed in a larger context, but victories nevertheless. As Britain was perceived to be in a climate of decline during the 1980s, any victory was significant.

Heritage was developing into a growing industry during this period, and as the *Mary Rose* was certainly an important piece of heritage, the cultural mindset was perfect to receive her and to enshrine her in yet another heritage centre. There was no question over the authenticity of this ruin. Historical records, the salvage operations over the centuries, and preliminary dives had established that the wreck was indeed the *Mary Rose*. And she was filled with artifacts of the everyday marine life of Tudor England. As interest in heritage was expanding from a concentration on the aristocratic homes and treasures to now include the artifacts of the more recent everyday past of the masses, there was an eagerness to accept and enshrine the *Mary Rose's* more common objects.

Patrick Wright is important because he is the only historian to connect the *Mary Rose*, the Falkland War and heritage. Just as the Falklands War had "proved that 'we' are still powerful, still capable of rallying to one flag with confidence and moral righteousness" Patrick Wright believes that the "recovery of the *Mary Rose* was presented as giving 'us' something back—something which 'we' hadn't seen for 437 years."⁹¹ In other words, something from the past was returned to the British people, a sunken sixteenth century warship and a revitalized pride and belief in greatness. For Wright, the two events were connected as they both provided the "resonance

⁹¹ Wright 165.

of tradition and continuity with the past" that ultimately helped the British maintain their "national culture, imagination, and sense of identity."⁹² According to Wright, their significance in terms of heritage was that "for 'us' the contemporary 'historical' event appears increasingly to be the one which marks the *recovery* and reaffirmation of the old ways."⁹³ In this sense, the *Mary Rose* was like a "'time-capsule'--a fragment of idealized history which has borne the national essence and identity down to the present."⁹⁴ Although Wright acknowledged that the raising of the *Mary Rose* helped to complete, on one level, the historiographical record in a factual manner, he believed, on a second and more important level, a "mythically oriented level of interpretation," that the *Mary Rose* was able to reconnect Britain to its threatened national identity.⁹⁵ What concerned Wright was that the contemporary sense of history was more about recovering the national identity as it existed in the past rather than about the making of the future. An identity based solely on the past would not make a firm foundation for the future. Peter Fowler also saw the raising of the *Mary Rose* as one of several incidents indicative of "this intertwining of the past in the present," a present with its "various facets...so entwined and in such curious cross patterning."⁹⁶ To Wright and to Fowler, the *Mary Rose* was not just "new" to this generation, but it was, in essence, a fragment of British heritage, recalling the glorious past, and thus considered part of both time frames.

In order to comprehend fully the importance of the *Mary Rose* to British Naval heritage, it is important to review the historical information that

⁹² Wright 164.

⁹³ Wright 164.

⁹⁴ Wright 179.

⁹⁵ Wright 172.

⁹⁶ Fowler 34.

appeared in contemporary newspaper articles. In the spirit of heritage and nationalism present at that time, the British welcomed yet another symbol of their past glory and power. And the British public needed to be reminded of the illustrious part the *Mary Rose* has played in Tudor England, and Martin Walker and Margaret Rule provided for that need. The *Mary Rose* had been "the noblest ship of sail and as great a ship at this hour as I trow to be in Christendom," according to a report from her Admiral to King Henry VIII.⁹⁷ She was part of a rearmament program that occurred between 1509 and 1512 when Henry VIII had ordered eleven new ships, rebuilt two other vessels, and either captured or purchased a further ten ships. In her book, *The Mary Rose: The Excavation and Raising of Henry VIII's Flagship*, an extract of which was published in *History Today*, Margaret Rule outlined Henry's reasons for this massive rearmament. Having inherited a country economically dependent on the wool trade and only a small fleet to defend it, Henry VIII faced the daunting task of keeping the Channel open and maintaining "a foothold on the French Coast" to ensure not only his "royal prestige" but also a "free passage for the English merchant ship upon which the economic stability of England rested."⁹⁸ He also was forced to deal with the two major powers on the Continent, France and Spain. According to Martin Walker, in his article, "The *Mary Rose*," the combined threats from the Continent and the importance of maintaining open routes for the wool trade led Henry VIII to "the most coherent naval policy that England had known since Roman days."⁹⁹ Henry increased his fleet and built a system of coastal forts, and to support both ventures, hired imported craftsmen to develop new technology and foundries

⁹⁷ Martin Walker, "The *Mary Rose*," *The Guardian* 10 Oct 1983: 14.

⁹⁸ Margaret Rule, "The raising of the *Mary Rose*," *History Today*, Sept 1982: 27.

⁹⁹ Walker 14.

to produce their cannons. However, it was his ships that were the key to his whole defense.

The *Mary Rose*, one of the two most impressive battleships in Henry's fleet, successfully led an attack on the French fleet anchored at Brest in 1512 in her very first battle. Walker believes that this raid and naval battle "changed the history of war at sea."¹⁰⁰ The *Mary Rose*, the flagship of Admiral Sir Edward Howard, led a fleet of twenty-five British ships against two hundred and twenty-two French ships anchored in the harbor at Brest. During the engagement, the *Mary Rose* bombarded the French ship, the *Grand Louis*, with a broadside at close range. This was the first time that "guns mounted low in the hull" would be used in this manner, and "for the next three hundred years, this would be the way the British Navy fought the French."¹⁰¹ After a significant victory that crippled the French flagship, the *Grand Louis*, and took scores of boats and prisoners, the *Mary Rose* led the British fleet home. On its return, the fleet conducted sea-trials in the Channel, and the *Mary Rose* proved to be "the fastest ship of all and the most maneuverable."¹⁰² In 1536, the *Mary Rose*, now a mainstay of the British fleet, was taken into port to be rebuilt and refitted with larger cannons and demi-cannons on an improved gundeck. For the next eighteen years, she would continue to be instrumental in British naval victories including the capture of Boulogne in 1544, which gave Henry a second port from which to control the Channel. The capture of Boulogne, however, set off a chain of events that would eventually lead to the sinking of the *Mary Rose*.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Walker 14.

¹⁰¹ Walker 14.

¹⁰² Walker 14.

¹⁰³ Martin Walker, "The archaeologist who became an underwater star," The Guardian, 10 Oct 1983: 16.

Martin Walker believed that the battle during which the *Mary Rose* went down was "probably a greater threat to Tudor England than the Spanish Armada."¹⁰⁴ At that time, Henry VIII was "faced with that nightmare of Tudor strategy, a war on two fronts."¹⁰⁵ He was battling the Scots on his northern border and the French from the sea. After Henry VIII had captured Boulogne, Charles V of Spain had negotiated a separate peace treaty with the French. Consequently, Henry's troops had been forced all alone to defend Boulogne against siege, while his navy sailed home for the winter. By the spring, Francis I was preparing his French fleet to invade England in the summer. Whereas the Spanish Armada would consist of one hundred and thirty ships, the French fleet that arrived in the Solent in 1545 had two hundred and twenty-five ships that carried approximately thirty thousand fighting troops. Henry had only sixty ships and twelve thousand troops to defend his main naval base at Portsmouth, upon which the wool trade depended. Greatly outnumbered, the English relied upon their two main battleships, one of which was the *Mary Rose*, to protect Portsmouth until fleet reinforcements could arrive from the West Country and the Thames Estuary. According to Walker, the English strategy was to position the fleet "well back under the covering fire of the coastal guns" with "its flanks protected by the shoals and shallow waters between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight."¹⁰⁶ As Henry VIII was in Portsmouth to witness the battle, he watched as his flagship sank into the Solent. Although her loss was certainly grievous to the king, it did not appear to have had any effect on the battle which turned out to be little more

¹⁰⁴ Walker 14.

¹⁰⁵ Walker 14.

¹⁰⁶ Walker 14.

than a "naval skirmish, with a few raids of nuisance and attrition" instead of the "great and bloody invasion" that it might have become.¹⁰⁷

Exactly what caused the *Mary Rose* to sink was a matter of some dispute between the French and the English. According to the French Admiral D'Annebaut's account of the battle, "the *Mary Rose*, one of their principle ships, was sunk by our cannon" and of the "5 or 600 men which were on board only 5 and 30 escaped."¹⁰⁸ Sir Peter Carew, a brother of the commander of the *Mary Rose*, Sir George Carew offered a vastly different account. Carew claimed that the sinking was a result of "a hundred mariners, the worst of them being able to master in the best ship within the realm" who on that day "so maligned and disdained one another that refusing to that which they should do were careless to that which they ought to do."¹⁰⁹ He further declared in his memoirs, that those "knaves...contending in envy, perished in forwardness" as the *Mary Rose* "heeling more and more was drowned with 700 men which were in her with very few escaped."¹¹⁰

Modern historians and archaeologists have come up with their own hypotheses for the *Mary Rose* disaster. Walker, for one, did not agree with either the French or the British explanations. He insisted that the *Mary Rose* sank not as the result of cannon fire or a rebellious crew, but rather for the basic reason that she was top heavy, overloaded with too many foot soldiers and archers on her high castles, as well as a heavy cannon on her upper deck. 'Thus, the *Mary Rose*, who usually sailed with a crew of 495 men was "dangerously overloaded" with 700 men heavily armored to defend against the

¹⁰⁷ Rule 36.

¹⁰⁸ Rule 36.

¹⁰⁹ Rule 36.

¹¹⁰ Rule 36.

French fleet.¹¹¹ Although there is no concrete evidence for his view, Walker suggested that perhaps the soldiers rushed to one side or the cannons broke loose, causing her to list dangerously as she was maneuvering. Margaret Rule offered yet another explanation for the sinking of the *Mary Rose*. After studying the English accounts, Rule concluded that while "hoisting sail and getting under way to assist the *Henry Grace a Dieu*...she suddenly heeled while going about."¹¹² As her guns were in a forward position in the open gun ports, water was able to pour into the ship, and the weight of this water so destabilized the *Mary Rose* that she capsized and sank into the Solent. Regardless of the exact cause of her demise, the *Mary Rose* was important to British heritage for the key role she played in Henry VIII's fleet as well as the technological advances she would inspire.

The *Mary Rose* was indeed a valuable piece of British heritage not only because of her history as a successful defender of Tudor England, but also because she was an important link in the progression of British naval warfare. According to Walker, the *Mary Rose* was built "at that moment when the nature of the warship was fundamentally transformed, and when the force it carried leapt a whole technological generation."¹¹³ She bridged the gap between an era when the fighting ship was loaded with men to sail her and archers to fight the battles from very high castles in the bow and stern, and the later battleships that depended more upon the force of cannons than men. Thus, she was a "hybrid," built to "sink or disable an enemy with the sheer weight of gunfire," yet "designed like some land fortress to be defended by bowmen," a design that led to her disastrous end.¹¹⁴ The sinking of the *Mary*

¹¹¹ Walker 20.

¹¹² Rule 36.

¹¹³ Walker 20.

¹¹⁴ Walker 20.

Rose would inspire a new type of fighting ship with gun ports placed higher, castles built lower, and a crew of men that would be not only the sailors but also the fighters.

The salvage operation to raise the *Mary Rose* began centuries before it ultimately succeeded in 1983. Henry VIII himself hired two Venetians to raise the hull which was sinking further and further into the Solent silt, "almost gluing the ship to the seabed."¹¹⁵ When their plans for the recovery of the hull failed, Henry paid another Italian, Peter Paul, a further hundred and seven pounds to salvage some of the brass and iron guns from the wreckage. For the next three hundred years, the *Mary Rose* lay undisturbed under the silt which had formed a crust over her, only occasionally showing her timbers when tides and storms would combine to move the layers of silt around her. Finally in 1832, the Dean brothers rediscovered her hull and salvaged some guns and pottery shards from the port side which had broken off when she sank. But they became discouraged when they found that the rest of the ruin was buried so deep in the silt that even their explosives could not penetrate the main wreckage. Thus, the *Mary Rose* would lay buried, preserved in the silt until Alexander McKee would discover her again in 1967.

Even though McKee, a military historian and diver, is considered "the father of the *Mary Rose* enterprise," Margaret Rule, the historian, writer, and archaeologist must be credited for much of the success of the project.¹¹⁶ First as an archaeological advisor and organizer, then as an administrator and publicist, her work was key to the new science of underwater archaeology. Perhaps Rule's most relevant contribution to the recovery of the *Mary Rose* was her early acceptance of the fact that she would have "to be in show

¹¹⁵ Walker 14.

¹¹⁶ Walker "archaeologist" 16.

business" if she wished "to make the *Mary Rose* venture a success."¹¹⁷

According to Rule, "We had to convince people, through publicity, that this was something special."¹¹⁸ And convince them, she did. Magazines and newspapers featured articles to raise the public's awareness of and interest in the recovery of the *Mary Rose*. Some of the articles such as those mentioned above dealt with the historical significance of this piece of British heritage from Tudor days; others focused on the formation of the Mary Rose Trust, and still other writers examined the logistics of raising and preserving the *Mary Rose*.

As the secondary phase of heritage had expanded to include the study and preservation of the "everyday," the *Mary Rose* was not only important for her military significance, but also for the unique opportunity to study the everyday life presented by the artifacts on board. This was an extraordinary ship because of her age and her state of preservation, yet it was filled with the ordinary, the day to day objects of a plebeian population. This was not a recovered wreck filled only with vast hoards of gold, but rather a vessel filled with the typical possession of the everyman. Margaret Rule best described the *Mary Rose* as "not so much a time-capsule as a frozen moment of history."¹¹⁹ Dan van der Vat in his article entitled, "Refloating a lost piece of Tudor history," explained that the mud in the Solent preserved not only the hull in excellent condition, but also large quantities of the personal items of the men who were entombed with her that day in 1545. As the silt enveloped her, she became "the remarkable repository" of organic materials, such as leather.

¹¹⁷ Walker "archaeologist" 16.

¹¹⁸ Walker "archaeologist" 16.

¹¹⁹ Hill 8

wood, food and textiles that would have rotted away in the air.¹²⁰ The *Mary Rose* yielded valuable information on early ship compasses, on instruments of warfare such as guns, gun carriages and long bows, on evidence of humane medical practices, on the diet of seamen from their preserved food stocks, and on their leisure activities from games and musical instruments found on board. Thus, the exploration and raising of the *Mary Rose* would provide a unique opportunity for marine archaeologists to examine the seafaring life of Tudor England.

The *Mary Rose* Trust, formed in 1979 with Prince Charles as president, was in charge of raising the ship, preserving the thousands of relics recovered, and finding a permanent home to display her. The Trust was aware that the *Mary Rose* and her artifacts had the potential to be a major tourist attraction in Britain. In order to raise public interest and support, articles appeared in the popular press and in historical journals detailing the complicated process involved in raising the Tudor warship from the silt in the Solent. Margaret Rule wrote one such article in the Illustrated London News. She described in great detail how the hull was to be raised, nestled on a sling in a steel cradle, and towed to Portsmouth where it would have a "homecoming," returning to the port where she was built in the early 1500's.¹²¹

The *Mary Rose* expedition was important for many reasons, not the least of which was to promote and advance the field of marine archaeology. Basil Greenhill, the Director of the National Maritime Museum, also wrote about the recovery of the *Mary Rose* for the publication, Country Life. While

¹²⁰ Martin Walker, "How the sea is wielding secrets of history," The Guardian 10 Oct 1983: 18.

¹²¹ Margaret Rule, "The raising of the *Mary Rose*," Illustrated London News Oct 1982, 46.

acknowledging the value in historical terms of the recovery of the ship and her contents, Greenhill also credited her excavation with producing trained maritime archeologists and bringing the science of nautical archaeology into being as a highly professional and "separate archaeological discipline."¹²² Walker, too, saw the benefits that would accrue from the excavation in very similar terms. Although he realized that the large multi-million sterling scale of the operation to raise the *Mary Rose* might never be duplicated, he felt that its value might be that it served to publicize and legitimize maritime archaeology, while at the same time, its organization would serve as a model for similar projects. The successful raising of the *Mary Rose* was not only a victory for the marine archaeologists who found and raised the wreck, but also a victory shared by the British who had always taken pride in their technological inventiveness.

Although the majority of the articles dwelt more on the positive aspects of the excavation of the *Mary Rose*, there were some that sounded a negative note. Rex Cowen, in his article, "In the wake of the *Mary Rose*," questioned the expenditure of the £4,500,000 spent on preliminary work, the £1,000,000 planned for conservation and a dry dock, and the additional millions required to build a museum to preserve, display, and study the ship and her artifacts. His basic concern was that "the roots and branches of the *Mary Rose* tree, with its justifiable thirst and need for money" would just possibly "exhaust all the resources available."¹²³ Up until the time of the *Mary Rose*, the majority of the funds for underwater exploration had come from the divers themselves, or the sale of recovered artifacts to individual collectors and museums, with just a small percentage of funds coming from the government. Cowan related how

¹²² Basil Greenhill, "Raising the *Mary Rose*," *Country Life* 8 April 1982: 936.

¹²³ Rex Cowan, "In the wake of the *Mary Rose*," *The Guardian* 11 Oct 1982: 7.

archaeologists and museum curators had long argued against the "splitting up of collections" as well as the "breach of the sacred principle that history must not be sold to the public whatsoever."¹²⁴ In this case, the romantic nature of the *Mary Rose* expedition had attracted unprecedented commercial sponsorships and private donations, as well as royal patronage. Cowan wondered if another find, even more important in historical terms, such as a Roman or pre-medieval wreck, could attract these same sponsorships. In addition, he worried that the money needed from other sources for future expeditions to recover wrecks of "great national importance" would "have been exhausted by the needs of the *Mary Rose*."¹²⁵ To combat this potential problem, Cowan proposed that it was time for "a fresh appraisal of the national importance of underwater archaeology" and that some sort of "parity" should be established between the funds spent on this underwater archaeology and the millions of pounds spent annually by the government on land archaeology.¹²⁶ Cowan felt that this aspect of British heritage which still rested under the seas was just as important to the national interest as was the preservation of medieval cathedrals and Roman ruins that were presently under the protection of government agencies.

Despite the cost of raising the *Mary Rose* from the Solent, there was a general consensus that the *Mary Rose* was an important piece of British heritage and thus worthy of preservation. Even before she was brought to the surface, articles appeared detailing the work being done by the *Mary Rose* Trust to secure a proper museum to display her. Richard Harrison, the Executive director of the Trust, wrote one such article, "The *Mary Rose* Tudor Ship Museum," in the Museum Journal of June 1981. According to Harrison,

¹²⁴ Cowan 7.

¹²⁵ Cowan 7.

¹²⁶ Cowan 7.

the aims of the Trust were to raise, preserve and display the *Mary Rose*, and "to promote and develop interest, research and knowledge" relating to the *Mary Rose* and "her place in maritime, naval, military and social history."¹²⁷

Equally important to the Trust, was "to promote and develop interest, research and knowledge...relating to underwater cultural heritage...for the education and benefit of the Nation."¹²⁸ In the case of the *Mary Rose*, Harrison declared that her importance to the history of the British Navy and the development of the fighting ship, in addition to the wealth of knowledge gleaned from the Tudor artifacts found on board, more than justified the raising of the ship and construction of an edifice to house both the ship and her contents.

Portsmouth was a logical choice for the new museum, not only for its proximity to the area of the excavation, but also because it contained an appropriate building site among other heritage facilities. Thus, the museum was set to become a "focal point for a number of less well supported heritage features in Portsmouth " such as the Eastney Pumping Station and the Royal Marines Museum, as well as to provide needed business for the guest houses and hotels along the sea front.¹²⁹

Through the efforts of the *Mary Rose* Trust, the *Mary Rose* and all of her artifacts were moved into their own museum in Portsmouth, becoming part of what was described as "the most impressive world-wide display of naval heritage."¹³⁰ Adjacent to the *Mary Rose* in the heritage area were the H.M.S. *Victory*, H.M.S. *Warrior*, the Royal Naval Museum, and numerous old boathouses and storehouses. Each of the ships was managed by its own

¹²⁷ Richard Harrison, "The *Mary Rose* Tudor Ship Museum," Museum Journal June 1982, Vol. 81, number 1: 11.

¹²⁸ Harrison 11.

¹²⁹ Harrison 12.

¹³⁰ Roger Thomas, "Port in a storm," Museum Journal April 1990: 24.

separate trust, and those trusts together with the Royal Naval Museum and the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust which managed the various buildings, formed the Portsmouth Naval Heritage Trust. According to Roger Thomas in his article, "Port in a Storm," "the intertwining of the city's role in the nation's past with tourism and heritage" gave to Portsmouth "a potentially rich source of revenue and prestige."¹³¹

However, this intertwining of the past and present in modern Britain allowed for a concentration on creating new heritage sites rather than on revitalizing faltering industries. In this particular case, the Portsmouth Dockyard was superseded in 1984 by the Portsmouth Naval Base, which in turn suffered a "series of staggered reductions in British naval defense commitment in the early 1980's."¹³² But in Thomas's estimation, the impact of the "shift to 'heritage'" as the traditional function of the Naval Base diminished was "remarkably successful" in terms of the local economy.¹³³ Thomas related various criticisms of a proposed plan by Sealink British Ferries, a plan which would lead to further commercial development of the heritage site. At a 1988 heritage conference, Merlin Waterson had complained that the introduction of shopping arcades into dockyard buildings would "not only be exploiting imperial history, but trivializing it."¹³⁴ Thomas did not share Waterson's view. He felt it was likely that the naval defense budget would be even further cut, which in turn would reduce the role of the Naval base at Portsmouth. If this occurred, the city would benefit from the introduction of additional commercial and heritage attractions. Either way, there is no way to deny the

¹³¹ Thomas 24.

¹³² Thomas 24.

¹³³ Thomas 24.

¹³⁴ Thomas 24.

commercialization of the *Mary Rose* and the other heritage attractions in Portsmouth.

Embedded in all of the serious scholarly articles on the *Mary Rose*, only one article dealt with the *Mary Rose* in a humorous vein, and perhaps that is why it stood out from all the rest. As George Hill, tongue in cheek, reminded his readers in The London Times, the *Mary Rose* "was a blot on the escutcheon of British naval history, which turned turtle on a calm day in 1545 when sailing into battle against the French" and sank.¹³⁵ Contrary to all the serious publicity leading up to the raising of this warship, Hill's description of the *Mary Rose* after centuries of lying in silt as "not so much a galleon as a fillet of galleon" was rather irreverent.¹³⁶ His article was a combination of humor and factual information about the elaborate plans to rescue Henry VIII's flagship. However, he did make one point that bears further thought: the raising of the *Mary Rose*, sunk in shame, would put "a new gloss on the proverbial preference of the English for forgetting their victories within months, but remembering their disasters with sentimental pride for centuries."¹³⁷ Wright and other historians just briefly mention the *Mary Rose*'s ignoble end in favor of dwelling upon her place in British heritage and national identity. But maybe George Hill had discovered a truth that other historians had overlooked. The euphoria over the victory in the Falklands did not last and brought no real change to Britain, yet the *Mary Rose* Trust continues to thrive and glorify the *Mary Rose*, a piece of British heritage, preserved these many years in silt precisely because of her disastrous end.

Yet, the *Mary Rose* and the Falklands War will forever be linked in any debate over heritage, as the excitement which surrounded the raising of the

¹³⁵ Hill 8.

¹³⁶ Hill 8.

¹³⁷ Hill 8.

Mary Rose cannot be separated from the climate of euphoria created by the war. Both events reaffirmed Britain's sense of national identity, but unfortunately this identity was based more upon the past and the power of its former empire rather than any present reality. The days of imperial glory and industrial power are gone, and a small, insignificant war in the South Atlantic and the return of a Tudor warship, although both symbolic of empire, do not alter the present political and economic situations. A national identity, based upon events that pull the past into the present, does not have a foundation firm enough to survive that which the future holds. Irregardless of the future, the politicizing and commercialization of heritage only emphasized how complex a role heritage had come to assume in Britain in the 1980s.

Chapter III The Fire at Windsor Castle

Ten years after the Falklands War and the raising of the *Mary Rose*, an event took place in one of the most important heritage sites in all of Britain that raised questions over the authenticity of heritage and the role of the twentieth century monarchy. Windsor had been a royal residence for the kings and queens of England since the time of William the Conqueror in 1066, and thus, the fire threatened not only a building but indeed the whole "misty notion of heritage."¹³⁸ This disastrous fire in Windsor Castle in November of 1992 occurred during a political, social and economic climate that was vastly different from just ten years previously when there had been euphoria and renewed hope for glory after a successful war against Argentina in the South Atlantic. Margaret Thatcher, who had seemed politically invincible after the Falkland War, had fallen victim to the stagnant economy and the internal politics of the Conservative party, and was replaced by John Major. And a country that had been celebrating the royal wedding of the Prince of Wales in 1981 and the birth of an heir, Prince William, the following year, now found the latest scandalous escapades of the younger royals on the front page of every tabloid.

The fire in Windsor Castle frames the issue of monarchy. In order to truly comprehend the importance of the issues raised by the fire, a basic understanding of the monarchy's role in modern day Britain is necessary. For many British subjects in the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of monarchy remained fundamental to their definition of not only themselves, but of their nation. Without the monarchy, upon which so much of their national identity

¹³⁸ David T. Herbert(ed) *Pys Gruffudd. Heritage, Tourism and Society* (London: Mansell, 1995) 64.

was based, Britain would cease to be the same country. The British historian Tom Nairn has closely examined the relationship between the British and their Monarch, and he has declared that "the crown ideology is earthed in modern Britain as a surrogate nationalism."¹³⁹ As Britain no longer exists as it had in the past, the monarchy has come to bear more of the burden for the definition of the nation-state. It has come to assume this role precisely because of its nature. Having stood for over 1,000 years, the monarchy has become as much a symbol of Great Britain and its heritage as any castle or monument. David Cannadine also has studied the integral relationship between the monarchy, its ritual, and what they together have bestowed upon the British subjects. In post-war Britain, monarchy and all its rituals have "provided a comfortable palliative to the loss of world-power status."¹⁴⁰ And although the well planned and executed rituals have the appearance of being ancient, they have in truth been instigated in the years since the monarchy gave up any substantial power in the government. Nowadays they appear to offer "the historic continuity with those former days of British greatness" as watching them take place it is almost possible to believe that those days of greatness "have not entirely vanished."¹⁴¹ Nairn himself recognizes the power of the crown, and thus terms it "the totem of greatness."¹⁴² The royals, and the ceremony which surrounds them, thus provide a certain assurance that all is well in Britain regardless of the present conditions.

¹³⁹ Tom Nairn, The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy, (London: Radius, 1988) 277.

¹⁴⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger(edt)The British Monarchy, David Cannadine , "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820-1977." (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 157.

¹⁴¹ Cannadine 157.

¹⁴² Nairn 254.

Despite what many view as the positive aspects in the relationship between the crown and Great Britain, the fire in Windsor Castle illuminated many problems inherent in the institution of monarchy. One of the most prominent symbols of British heritage and national identity, the royal family, was suddenly being questioned. Martin Jacques, a writer for The Times and editor of Marxism Today, raised issues of typical those critical of the monarchy. In his article, "A very British royal family still clinging to the past," Jacques declared that the royal family, "the classic symbol of hierarchy, inherited wealth and privilege," was beginning to be "threatened by the spirit of meritocracy" that had taken root in British society after World War II.¹⁴³ As Jacques' saw it, the prevalent sentiment seemed to be changing to "Self-made men are acceptable, crusty old aristocrats are not."¹⁴⁴ Yet, more importantly, Jacques felt that the royal family which sought to represent the nation clearly did not do so, and at least socially, was "firmly planted in the past, evoking an image of Britain as it was, not how it is."¹⁴⁵ Prevalent among these critics was the sentiment that the monarchy had not developed into a form appropriate to the situations that Britain faced in the late twentieth century. Jacques charged that little had changed throughout the forty years of Elizabeth's reign and that the monarchy retained all the expense, pomp, size and mystique of "an Imperial power" rather than reflecting the true state of the country, a "down-at-heel, medium-sized European nation that has lost all sense of direction and confidence."¹⁴⁶ In this sense, the royal family simply reinforced the British nation's "natural habit of living in the past rather than

¹⁴³ Martin Jacques, "Avery British royal family still clinging to the past," The Sunday Times, 29 Nov 1992: 3.

¹⁴⁴ Jacques 3.

¹⁴⁵ Jacques 3.

¹⁴⁶ Jacques 3.

facing up to the future."¹⁴⁷ Jacques extended this criticism to include the government, members of which take an oath of loyalty not to the country but to the Monarch, for failing to deal in modern terms with the royal family. Thus, he was not surprised that the government underestimated the depth of the public's anger to the announcement by the National Heritage secretary that the cost of rebuilding Windsor would be borne by the taxpayers and not the Queen.

As in the case of the raising of the *Mary Rose*, the cost of restoring Windsor Castle raised the issue of who should be financially responsible for the restoration of any piece of British heritage. The major cost of the *Mary Rose* had been borne by sponsorships and the foundation, but in the case of Windsor Castle, the government originally proposed to pay for the restoration, although the castle was used by the monarchy as a residence. The resulting public outcry over the cost of this burden was duly reported in the newspapers of the day. Robert Lacey in his article in The Sunday Times, "The Peasants Revolt," discussed the resentment of British subjects over their traditional responsibility to "bear the full burden of maintaining their Queen in splendor."¹⁴⁸ It should be noted that by parliamentary law, and in practice, all maintenance of the royal residences had traditionally fallen upon the taxpayers. Yet even a Conservative M.P. Janet Daley protested this tradition, arguing that "while the castle stands, it is theirs, but when it burns down, it is ours."¹⁴⁹ In even stronger terms than Jacques used, Lacey called the public outrage that ensued over the government's proposal to pay the bill to rebuild Windsor, a "defining moment," one that was close to "a national revolt."¹⁵⁰ It

¹⁴⁷ Jacques 3.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Lacey, "The peasants revolt," The Sunday Times, 29 Nov 1992: 11.

¹⁴⁹ Lacey 11.

¹⁵⁰ Lacey 11.

could be said that the fire in Windsor Castle thus served as the catalyst that ignited the public's outrage over the obligations they owed to the most British of traditions, the monarchy.

One of the most crucial questions surrounding the fire in Windsor Castle concerned the issue of the authenticity of the castle itself, a significant component of British heritage. Until the fire, the authenticity of Windsor Castle seemed not to have been questioned, but after the fire a debate raged over what exactly the castle was, and what warranted being saved. Taking into account that Windsor was a record of the changing past over the centuries and not simply a snapshot of one moment in time like the *Mary Rose*, the restoration became more problematic. It was a common practice in castles and stately homes to remodel and renovate in order to incorporate the styles of the time. As a result, it is necessary to review briefly the architectural renovations that had been exposed by the fire in order to understand the complex problems surrounding the issue of authenticity. .

On November 20, 1992, the fire destroyed the east corner of the Upper Ward, including St. George's Hall, originally built in 1363 and remodeled extensively over the centuries. In an article entitled, "What will rise from the ashes?", Hugh Pearman traced the architectural pedigree of this "pseudo-medieval confection" that was partially destroyed.¹⁵¹ Between 1820 and 1830, Sir Geoffrey Wyattville had replaced a "splendid 1686 Baroque chapel" built by Hugh May, the architect of King Charles II, with St. George's Hall, a long 185 foot hall with a "run of the mill gothicky ceiling, made of plaster mimicking wood," coats of arms of the Knights of the Garter, and suits of armor set in pedestals in the wall.¹⁵² In Pearman's estimation, it was all "an old fake, a

¹⁵¹ Hugh Pearman, "What will rise from the ashes," The Sunday Times 29 Nov 1992: Sec 8-2.

¹⁵² Pearman 2.

Georgian fake, but a fake never the less."¹⁵³ Yet, if he detested Wyattville's interiors, almost to the point of being delighted that they had burned down, Pearman was more complimentary on the exteriors that Wyattville had designed. Wyattville had raised the round tower thirty-three feet, added several other towers such as Brunswick, now "famous for going off like a Roman candle at the height of the blaze," and in doing so, turned a "rambling fortress" into the "fairy-tale castle" that eventually became one of the key components of British heritage.¹⁵⁴

According to the common practice of updating buildings to suit the whims or needs of the present occupants, Wyattville's designs themselves were altered in the late 1860s. The Waterloo Chamber and the Queen's private chapel were redesigned by Edward Blore in 1861 according to the tastes of the Victorians. Later that decade, the architect Anthony Salvin constructed a grand staircase over what had once been a courtyard. Admittedly, these nineteenth-century alterations were just a few of the total number that had taken place over the centuries, leading Pearman to declare that "the only constant thing about Windsor Castle for most of its 1000 year existence has been change."¹⁵⁵ For Prys Gruffudd these changes in Windsor Castle raised even more fundamental questions about authenticity. Gruffudd stated in the book, Heritage, Tourism and Society, that "the unmasking of this pastiche building cause[d] stable ideas about history to become unstable."¹⁵⁶ In other words, if St. George's Hall was not purely medieval because of its later restorations, what other ideas held about British heritage were also only half truths?

153 Pearman 2.

154 Pearman 2.

155 Pearman 2.

156 Herbert 64.

Quite simply, whatever was done, Windsor Castle could never be what it was the day before the fire. In an article entitled "All that glitters is not olde," Deyan Sudjic admitted that even if Windsor was restored to its design of 1860, it could never be anything more than a replica, "a 1992 idea" of what Windsor had been.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, Sudjic declared that unlike the past, when buildings that were destroyed by fire were rebuilt in a contemporary architectural style, today a fire in an historic building is "greeted by an attempt to pretend that nothing has happened," as if there is "nothing that craftsmen cannot put right, that fund-raising and government cash won't fix."¹⁵⁸ The amount of money and effort, more specifically, eighty million pounds, that was to go to restoring the castle could be seen as "a measure of Britain's infatuation with its past."¹⁵⁹ Because of this infatuation, Sudjic believed that the British did not want Windsor new or as good as new, rather they wanted the "sense of patina that only comes from age" because to "look new in Britain is to carry the mark of the beast."¹⁶⁰

This particular British attitude towards heritage can be attributed to the influence of William Morris and John Ruskin. Ruskin was a proponent of the philosophy that each period in architectural history, be it gothic or otherwise, was valid for its time, and any attempt to reproduce it in another age was an impossible and fraudulent task.¹⁶¹ Morris agreed with Ruskin's philosophy and formed the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to combat the common Victorian practice of "restoring" medieval cathedrals "to some ideal state of perfection, sweeping away if possible all signs of what has befallen

¹⁵⁷ Deyan Sudjic, "All that glitters is not olde," The Guardian 25 Nov. 1992: 2.

¹⁵⁸ Sudjic "All" 2.

¹⁵⁹ Sudjic "All" 2.

¹⁶⁰ Sudjic "All" 3.

¹⁶¹ Ian Bradley, William Morris and His World (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) 70.

them at least since the Reformation."¹⁶² He recognized that the "old buildings have been altered and added to century after century, often beautifully, always historically; their very value, a great part of it, lay in that."¹⁶³ Morris worried that once these buildings were gone, "no wealth or energy" could ever replace them.¹⁶⁴ So, Morris and his group, "inspired by Ruskin's romantic attachment to the charm of old age," formulated guidelines for the restoration of old buildings and insisted that any alterations done for structural reasons must be clearly identifiable as new work to avoid compromising the original structure. Morris's campaign for conservation over restoration and for the maintenance of the old over the new was to surround the debate over the preservation of heritage for many generations.

Central to the complex problem of restoration in the late twentieth century is the issue of what exactly is worthy of being restored. Once the fire exposed the layers of change that were a undeniable part of Windsor Castle, the question arose as to which of these layers should be reconstructed. Simon Jenkins, pondered this dilemma in his article "Crowning the Castle's Glory," asking "which of the many 'Windsors' should we reinstate?"¹⁶⁵ The question for Jenkins was whether it would be more proper to restore the castle to its original medieval design, parts of which were revealed by the fire, or to the 1824 plan of Sir Jeffrey Wyattville who had completely demolished the Restoration era and older rooms, or to an entirely new design by a contemporary architect. To this already complex debate, Jenkins added the issue that differentiation must be made between buildings worthy of

¹⁶² Asa Briggs(ed) William Morris: Selected Writings and Designs, "The Lesser Arts"(Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1962) 98.

¹⁶³ Briggs 98.

¹⁶⁴ Morris "Anti-Scrape" 81.

¹⁶⁵ Simon Jenkins, "Crowning the castle's glory," The London Times 28 Nov 1992:4.

conservation while they are intact, and those that have enough architectural merit to deserve recreation when destroyed. As "Queens may come and queens may go, but Royal Palaces are for all time," Jenkin's believed that the damaged exterior and St. George's Hall should be reinstated more for their historical value than their architectural merit.¹⁶⁶

This issue of restoration can be further linked to the psychological needs of a nation which places such emphasis on heritage to sustain its national identity. The continuity of the castle and all within it, provided yet another link to what was perceived as its illustrious past. This link could only be sustained if the castle continued to look exactly as it had in the past. As Jenkins felt that life was moving too quickly for the British, they required "momentoes as links in the chain of history," one such momento being Windsor Castle.¹⁶⁷ Jenkins saw this need, not as evidence that the British were "heritage nuts," but rather as a reflection of a sensitivity to their historical as well as geographical surroundings.¹⁶⁸ In that spirit Jenkins advocated the preservation of the exterior and St. George's Hall, yet like George IV, he was willing to hold a competition for the other rooms destroyed in the fire that did not have the same historical importance to the British public. Yet he acknowledged that if no design could be found to add a contemporary component to the "historical medley of royal taste, "and if the only solution was a "reinstatement of Wyattville," it would be a "poor comment on our age."¹⁶⁹

The psychological need for keeping the past in the present makes the issue of restoration even more complex. Like Jenkins and Pearman, Sudjic also

¹⁶⁶ Jenkins 4.

¹⁶⁷ Jenkins 4.

¹⁶⁸ Jenkins 4.

¹⁶⁹ Jenkins 4.

debated the notion of rebuilding heritage and the "illogical" nature of the "presumption of subjugating the present to the past" in his article, "Restoration dramas."¹⁷⁰ He questioned whether the castle should be rebuilt to its design of 1860 or 1400 or even possibly 1991. The fire, in his estimation, provided a unique opportunity to disprove the "deep-rooted assumption that new always means worse."¹⁷¹ Peter Brooke, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, also saw the fire as an opportunity for the contemporary architects not merely to replicate what the fire had destroyed, but to enhance it. In a speech to the Royal Fine Arts Commission that Sudjic related, Peter Brooke had insisted that the Commission's "role should not be confined to merely preserving, packaging and presenting the past," but their charge should also include "buildings which truly represent the age in which we now live."¹⁷²

The conflict, as seen by Sudjic, was over the decision to restore Windsor with new plaster work cast from surviving fragments and made to look new, or new plaster work faked to look old, or a combination of new pieces and old pieces, distinguishable from each other and put together like a mosaic. Sudjic clearly felt that the "rebuild-it-all-as-good-as-new lobby" was not going to follow Morris's past guidance, but instead would choose a course of action to "sweep away history to produce squeaky clean perfection," thus "leaving buildings scrubbed clean of their past and everything that makes them so interesting."¹⁷³ Whatever course will be followed, authentic is not a word that can be used again in connection with the medieval St. George's Hall. However, Sudjic felt Windsor could be made to look old again without any signs of restoration work, a plan which might be most satisfactory to the majority of

¹⁷⁰ Deyan Sudjic, "Restoration dramas," The Guardian 7 Dec. 1992: 7.

¹⁷¹ Sudjic "Restoration" 7.

¹⁷² Sudjic "Restoration" 7.

¹⁷³ Sudjic "All" 3.

the British public who would accept it more readily that way than if it was rebuilt in a modern style.

Once Windsor Castle was recognized as a conglomerate of styles added over the centuries, contemporary solutions were proposed to continue the tradition of rebuilding in the style of the age. In The London Times, Marcus Binney reviewed a book by Mark Girouard entitled, Windsor: The Most Romantic Castle. Girouard had invited architects, artists, lighting engineers, and stage designers to submit their schemes for the restoration of Windsor Castle. Although most of the designs were of a radical nature, they raised the obvious question of what should be conserved and what should be reinstated, especially concerning the damaged plaster work. The proposals ranged from a glass and stainless steel roof which would "be like a winter garden, suggesting the more open monarchy that is to be" by architect Sir Denys Lasdum and sculptor Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, to a plan by Mark Fisher and Stewart Hopps, rock promoters, for a ceiling covered with gold coated film with a long slit "precisely aligned on the flight path to Heathrow to enable the Queen to discuss the flights going over instead of the Garter Arms."¹⁷⁴ Fisher and Hopps took this approach because they believed that the fire had "'destroyed 500 years of self-aggrandizing myth creation' and had 'left the authentic Plantagenet hall and chapel as a ruin.'"¹⁷⁵ But this was not exactly the case, as Binney was quick to point out. He reminded the reader that what was truly exposed by the fire was a compilation of stone and brick of many periods. Rich MacCormac, an architect and past president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, submitted yet another design, consisting of an "elaborate modern counterpart of a gothic ribbed vault, with bronze tracery and polychrome

¹⁷⁴ Marcus Binney, "After the fire, the sparklers," The London Times 6 July 1993:37.

¹⁷⁵ Binney 37.

timber," which would rise from a lower point than Wyatville's.¹⁷⁶ As this concept would necessitate removing the fine bosses which were left intact after the fire, Binney declared that this proposal would have limited appeal. According to Binney, the most "serious" design of this group was submitted by Michael Hopkins and consisted of an "ingenious 3-D timber tracery roof, based on the Garden Star, a plan that Binney felt needed refinement so the roof did not appear oddly juxtaposed against the ancient walls of Windsor Castle.¹⁷⁷

Whatever plan was to be chosen, Binney cautioned that experts must first evaluate the quality of the remaining Wyatville work. He declared that the forty percent of the Wyatville creations that survived the fire, especially the plaster work, was of considerable beauty. In fact, Paul Drury of English Heritage insisted that the figure of St. George located at the end of St. George's Hall had "the quality of the best sculpture rather than decorative plaster work."¹⁷⁸ And the knights on the ceiling corbels were so "exquisitely modeled" that Binney was adamant that photographs of the knights should be displayed to the public to show them "what is at stake."¹⁷⁹ Binney felt that the public, more sophisticated in this age than in Victorian times, could appreciate seeing the original decorative work even if it was only fragmentary, just as much as seeing a complete restoration made to look new. In all truth, Binney knew that the ultimate decision on the design would have to be made by the royal family who, after all, live and work in Windsor. However, he asked them to have an open mind in choosing an architect, to support that architect, and

¹⁷⁶ Binney 37.

¹⁷⁷ Binney 37.

¹⁷⁸ Binney 37.

¹⁷⁹ Binney 37.

to avoid compromise solutions and proposals that would be "continuously amended to appease the whims of yet another committee."¹⁸⁰

By May of 1993, Lord Airlie, the Lord Chamberlain, announced that the decision had been finalized as to the reconstruction of Windsor Castle. This decision was a compromise that incorporated many of the suggestions put forth during the period following the fire. Three of the damaged minor rooms were to be redesigned, but St. George's Hall was to be reconstructed to Wyattville's plan, with the exception of the roof which was to be of a strictly utilitarian design. Mark Girouard, who had introduced the radical design proposals in his book, was extremely disappointed in the government's decision. In an article written in The Independent Magazine entitled "Room for improvement," he lamented the fact that the government had missed a golden opportunity to demonstrate to all that the "Crown, Government, and nation are not clapped out and living in the past, but are capable of patronage in the grand manner."¹⁸¹ Girouard maintained that a more modern solution would have enabled the British artists, architects, designers, sculptors and craftsmen to prove that they were "as good as anywhere in the world, if not better."¹⁸²

Girouard strongly believed that if St. George's Hall had been totally redesigned "in the historic space of Windsor Castle," the public's imagination would have been captured by the project, which in turn would have elicited "far more interest and sympathy than restoring it to what it had been."¹⁸³ Although he acknowledged that the designs for Windsor had been submitted to him hastily in order to meet his book deadline, Girouard insisted that some of

¹⁸⁰ Binney 37.

¹⁸¹ Mark Girouard, "Room for improvement," The Independent Magazine, 10 July 1993: 26.

¹⁸² Girouard 26.

¹⁸³ Girouard 26.

them had real possibilities if developed further. In his estimation, space could have been re-ordered, roofs could have recaptured the spirit of the old timber roofs of medieval times or could have been opened up to the sky or could have been of such creative design as to "make people catch their breath with delight and astonishment" when they entered the hall.¹⁸⁴ Instead of recreating the shields of the Knights of the Garter as they had been in Wyattville's plan, he suggested that they could be retained with a bow to British heritage but in a more exciting manner as a ceiling of stained glass. Above all, Girouard believed that the proposed designs in his book had suggested the "wit and gaiety to be tapped," while the government's solution was "a big yawn, meticulously evoked, at a cost of several million pounds."¹⁸⁵

The complex issues of authenticity highlighted by the fire go far beyond the restoration of a royal residence. In fact the problematic nature extends to every piece of British heritage. Although Peter Fowler completed his book, The Past in Contemporary Society: Then, Now before the destruction of St. George's Hall, he raised the very same concerns about the authenticity of heritage in terms of another fire that had taken place in the late 1980s at the National Trust's great country house, Uppark. Although the fire had gutted the majority of the interior and destroyed the roof, most of the furnishings were saved, so the Trust decided to proceed with an expensive program to restore the house with the salvaged materials to the way it was the day before the fire. However, as Fowler pointed out, Uppark would never again be "the William and Mary house which led the Trust to acquire it for the nation in the first place", but rather it would be a "magnificent monument to late twentieth-century skill and heritage reconstruction."¹⁸⁶ From his debate on the

¹⁸⁴ Girouard 26-27.

¹⁸⁵ Girouard 27.

¹⁸⁶ Fowler 12.

authenticity of heritage and the restoration process in general, he concluded that all large historic buildings, which would include Uppark as well as Windsor, are a composite of many periods and building styles, and thus, any restoration work would necessitate historical, practical and ethical decisions. He felt that this process of "selection" had become even more critical at that time as "the proper function of the past" had assumed a psychological role, "impressionistically reinforcing in a self-perpetuating cycle popular expectations of what the visible, tangible past ought to be."¹⁸⁷

Thus, the fire in Windsor Castle illuminates how complex and problematic the concept of heritage has become in late twentieth century Britain. The questions that surround authenticity and restoration extend not only to other pieces of heritage, but also to other issues that are key to Britain's sense of national identity. Just as the fire exposed the many alterations to St. George's Hall, it also exposed the changed status of the monarchy in twentieth century Britain. The furor over who should bear the cost of repairs was emblematic of the changing role of the monarchy. Once the receptacle of their subjects' unquestioning devotion and allegiance and a symbol of empire and stability, their cost to the country was now being challenged as never before. However, the bigger challenge surrounded the relationship of authenticity and heritage. The fire exposed the layers of restoration of the parts, so much so that the authenticity of the whole was in question. This complex nature of heritage has far-reaching implications. Many of the larger older buildings in Britain, like Windsor, are a conglomeration of architectural styles added over the centuries. When a catastrophe occurs, the question arises as to which of the styles should be restored. And if one particular piece is also a symbol of a nation's past history

¹⁸⁷ Fowler 13.

and heritage, and therefore caught up in its national identity, should it be restored to that fashion, or added to in a modern manner? In the case of Windsor, a compromise was reached. The parts with historical significance were returned to their Pseudo-gothic style while the lesser rooms were modernized.

Conclusion

Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s was a country seeking to shore up its national identity. All that had appeared to define Britain in the last century, the power and prestige of empire and the security of being a leader in the industrial revolution, had disappeared in the post-war age. Heritage had long been a key component of British life; now it was serving as the very foundation for its national identity. Increasingly, heritage was the panacea they turned to in order to face the political, economic and social reality of late twentieth century Britain. It offered stability, coherence, and security, not only as a result of the illustrious past it served to remind the British subjects of, but also for the simple reason that it was past and finished. Without confidence in the present or future, many Britons were able to find in heritage the value and meaning they perceived to be lacking in their everyday life. In this sense, pulling the past into the present served the psychological need of the nation as it permeated the economic, political and social realms.

The demand for what the past had to offer contributed to the rise of the heritage industry in the early 1980s. With the downsizing or closure of many of the traditional industries, the door was left open for heritage to flourish as a major industry. Although this was admittedly only a short-term solution for a long-term problem, many saw it as the panacea for economically depressed cities and towns and the rising unemployment rate. No matter the actual severity of the country's economic situation, what was important was the perception by the British subjects that economically the country was in decline. Ironically, the very industries that had shut down were in many cases being celebrated in a heritage display. Through the presentation of the

industrial past, heritage itself was being democratized to include the ordinary and the everyday. As these heritage centres opened up around the country, history became increasingly commercialized as it was marketed for economic gain. Sterilized and retouched in many cases to make it more appealing to the paying visitor, heritage offered to the public a past that never was. No matter how admirable the intentions or how thorough the research, ultimately the past can never be authentically reproduced as it is of necessity filtered through the eyes of the present. Nevertheless, the heritage centres can be credited for exposing a wider segment of the population to historical material.

The past, as expressed through heritage, did not confine itself to the economic sphere, but at the same time, played a vital role within the political arena. In 1982, Thatcher turned a politically and economically insignificant war in the Falklands into a major event that reignited Britain's patriotism, nationalism and pride. Through speeches filled with references to Britain's illustrious military prowess in World War II, she held out the hope for the reassertion of Britain's power in the world. The British welcomed the idea fostered by Thatcher that "we" were great in the past and "we" can be great again. With the success of the Falklands War, the resulting climate of euphoria framed the return in that same year of a tangible piece of Britain's naval heritage, the *Mary Rose*. This ship was important for many reasons, among them the technological advances that enabled the marine archaeologists to bring this key piece of the past to the surface and the artifacts of everyday seafaring life in the sixteenth century that were recovered in her hull. This Tudor warship marked the beginning of Britain's ascent to world power, a power which she held until the end of World War II and one that the British public would have liked to see reinstated. Both the *Mary Rose* and the war in the Falklands were explicitly tied together, serving

as reminders of an empire which was long gone and only existed now in pieces of heritage or campaigns that echoed Britain's former power and position. Although neither event had any lasting effect on Britain's place in the world order or on its economic position, together they had an undeniable impact upon the British mindset. It reminded them of their illustrious heritage of naval supremacy and imperial glory, both key components upon which their fragile sense of national identity was based.

By 1992, the spirit of euphoria from the Falklands War had long since dissipated and the *Mary Rose* was safely ensconced in her own very successful heritage centre. This time it was a disaster that brought the concept of heritage back to the forefront of the news and public awareness. The fire in Windsor Castle sparked its own firestorm of protest and controversy. This disaster at Windsor Castle which was tied forever closely to the monarchy, raised questions over the role the royal family had come to play in the late twentieth century. The monarchy, a traditional symbol of British heritage and key component of national identity, had provided the British with a sense of continuity and stability in times of crisis. Yet increasingly, the mystique of the royal family was fading and deference to the monarchy was diminishing. Questions raised about the cost of repairing the castle with public funds illuminated the problems the institution of monarchy faced as it moved into the late twentieth century. An even more basic issue raised by the fire, however, was the relationship between authenticity and heritage. In the case of Windsor, a pseudo-gothic edifice and composite of many architectural styles over the centuries, a controversy erupted over what was authentic, what was worthy of being restored, and what did a return to the past say about the modern age. The answers to these questions which surround the issues of authenticity and restoration all relate back to the psychological needs of the

British and subsequently, the importance which they place on heritage. Although it is impossible to reconstruct the castle to the state it was in the day before the fire, the majority of the British seem to prefer the security and familiarity offered by a closely restored pseudo-gothic design to any contemporary solution.

A country without the will to add their architectural stamp to heritage, and indeed, a country whose collective identity rests mainly on echoes of its former economic prominence and imperial glory has to do some soul searching as to where it wants to go in the future. A past which so permeates the present appears to indicate a lack of confidence in today and a lack of direction for the future. However, the future may not be as bleak as these signs indicate. This small island nation produced some remarkable feats in its past and may well once again do so in its future. The technological advances pioneered to raise the *Mary Rose* are just one indication of its potential. Nevertheless, these moments in heritage, set against the background of the ever-expanding heritage industry, appear to raise more questions than they do answers for the future of this once great nation.

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