J. B. Priestley’s *An Inspector Calls* Field Guide
Remy Bumppo, December 2013

Featuring Greg Matthew Anderson and Nick Sandys

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John Boynton Priestley: A Biography
Samantha Bauer, Artistic Intern of Remy Bumppo

J. B. Priestley was an accomplished English novelist, playwright and speaker, achieving widespread popularity and critical success in his time. Even today, theatre companies such as Remy Bumppo eagerly take on his works because, to put it simply, they are beloved and reliably entertaining.

CHILDHOOD

Long before his literary accomplishments, Priestley came from humble roots. Born September 13, 1884, John Priestley would be the only child of Jonathan Priestley, a schoolmaster, and Emma Holt, a mill girl. Despite the early passing of his mother in 1886, Priestley enjoyed a relatively peaceful youth in a small suburb of Bradford, West Yorkshire, England. Though a gifted student, Priestley soon grew bored at school, leaving at age 16 to work as a clerk in one of the many Bradford wool firms. Soon after, he joined the Labour Party and took his first writing position as a columnist for their newspaper The Bradford Pioneer.

WWI

On the outbreak of World War I, Priestley took a detour from his writing career, joining the Duke of Wellington’s Regiment of the British Army. In the fall of 1915, Priestley was sent to the Western Front to fight in the Battle of Loos, wherein the British would first use poison gas. Though the British casualties neared 60,000, Priestley survived unscathed. He would not remain so lucky. The summer of 1916 sent Priestley to Vimy Ridge, where he would suffer one of the heaviest German offenses of the war, a staggering 70,000 Germans shells fired within 4 minutes. Due to a terrible injury from a German mortar shell, Priestley was returned to England to heal for 6 months. Upon recuperation, Priestley reluctantly accepted an officer’s commission, sending him back to the front lines in France. However, shortly after his arrival, he would be terribly gassed and forced, once again, to return to England, where he would spend the remainder of the war in administrative positions.

THE TIME BETWEEN

As the First World War came to a close in 1919, Priestley enrolled at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. There he studied History and Political Science in addition to writing for the Cambridge Review, thus regaining footing on his path to literary success. In the midst of his schooling, Priestley met Pat Emily Tempest. They wed on June 29, 1921, and by 1923 they would see the birth of their first child, Barbara. However, with the birth of their second child, Sylvia, in 1924, it was discovered that Pat was suffering from terminal cancer. As Pat grew weaker and weaker, Priestley too weakened, beginning an affair with Jane Wyndham Lewis. This affair resulted in the birth of Priestley’s third child, Mary, in 1925. In a whirlwind of tragedy and betrayal, Pat
would die the November of that year. A year later, Priestley would marry his second wife, the same Jane Wyndham Lewis.

Despite the drama of his personal life, Priestley had been hard at work, writing novels as early as 1922, though none attained the enormous popularity achieved by his 1929 novel, *The Good Companions*. Quickly a British best-seller, *The Good Companions* follows the nomadic journey of three discontented strangers joined together to refloat a travelling band in the midst of economic depression. This novel earned Priestley the James Tait Black Memorial Prize and would later be adapted for stage and screen. In 1930, Priestley released another best-seller entitled *Angel Pavement*, what many have considered to be the best novel of his career. At this point, Priestley’s novels had made him a household name. The 1932 debut of his play *Dangerous Corner*, premiering at the Lyric Theatre in London, would earn him a reputation as a popular playwright as well. Up until the beginning of the Second World War, he would write many more plays, including *Eden End* (1934), *I Have Been Here Before* (1937), *Time and the Conways* (1937), *When We Are Married* (1938) and *Johnson Over Jordan* (1939).

**WWII**

In 1940, Priestley was asked to speak for a BBC radio series entitled *Postscripts*. Presented in prose style, Priestley discussed the state of the nation in the midst of the war, often integrating his leftist politics. The Sunday night broadcasts drew an immense audience, second only to those of Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, though the socialist core of Priestley’s program made him subject to criticism from the political elite. For more on Priestley’s *Postscripts* series, click here.

Priestley’s political engagement was not limited to his radio broadcasts. His passion for politics led to his establishment of the 1941 Committee. This was essentially a leftist think-tank which sought to plan for an improved nation post-war. Later, in 1942, he and Richard Acland formed the socialist Common Wealth Party, operating on three principals: Common Ownership, Vital Democracy, and Morality in Politics. In essence, Priestley dreamed of a better England and made bold moves in an effort to bring this dream to fruition.

**POST-WAR**

At the close of the Second World War, Priestley completed and debuted what many consider his most successful play, *An Inspector Calls*. This, along with his earlier *Dangerous Corner* and *Time and the Conways*, are among what many consider Priestley’s “Time Plays.” In these plays, Priestley metaphorically and theatrically integrates various aspects of time theory, often based on the theoretical works of J. W. Dunne and P. D. Ouspensky.

Though Priestley maintained an active political and literary life, his private life was no less tumultuous. In the early 1950s, he began a passionate affair with Jacquetta Hawkes, the wife of well-known archeologist Christopher Hawkes. The subsequent messy divorces made Priestley
the topic of national press. Regardless, he and Jacquetta were wed in July of 1953, and would remain happily married for the balance of his life.

**THE FINAL CHAPTER**

Priestley continued to write plays, articles, and novels into his later years, including two autobiographical works: *Margin Released* (1962) and *Instead of the Trees* (1977). In 1977, the culmination of his outstanding literary contributions earned him a membership in the Order of Merit, one of the most exclusive honors bestowed by a reigning Sovereign. Finally, on August 14, 1984, J. B. Priestley passed away at the age of 89.
Priestley’s *Postscripts*

Samantha Bauer, Artistic Intern of Remy Bumppo

By the time J. B. Priestley began his wartime broadcasts for the BBC, he had already been through one world war. In 1915 he had fought at the Battle of Loos in the Somme, and in 1917 he had been gassed by the Germans. By 1919 his turn in battle was over and he was finally free to pursue his writing career. And yet, Priestley’s wartime contributions were not over.

In the initial phase of World War II, the BBC began a ten-minute broadcast entitled *Postscripts* following the 9 o’clock news. Although the segment originally featured lawyer and author Maurice Healy, the war took a turn for the worse and the BBC felt a serious change was needed. J. B. Priestley, already well respected for his novels, plays and journalism, was asked to fill the role. On June 5, 1940, following the evacuation of Dunkirk, J. B. Priestley began his weekly *Postscripts* broadcasts, a series which would attain enormous popularity, second only to the broadcasts of then Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (to listen to a clip of Priestley’s first broadcast, click [here](#)).

Through the summer and into October, Priestley would continue to make these ten-minute segments following the news, reacting to wartime events, reflecting on the lives of civilians, and calling for democracy, social justice, and human decency. An open socialist, Priestley often spoke for the far left, and as his talks progressed they became bolder, ruffling some feathers in the process.

Despite the widespread popularity, Priestley ended his *Postscripts* talks. In his final broadcast of 1940, Priestley bid farewell to his listeners and addressed the conclusion to the segment. Firstly, he claimed he did not want listeners to become weary of his talks, recognizing their distinct style and sentimentality. Secondly, as the immediate threat of invasion became less likely, he felt his purpose had run its course. Though some suggested foul play on the part of Churchill (pictured right), threatened by Priestley’s popularity and socialist political alignment, Priestley adamantly stood by his statements that the cancellation of *Postscripts* in 1940 had been entirely his decision.

The 1941 series, however, was a different story. Returning for a second run of his *Postscripts*, Priestley took an edgier liberty with his talks, picking up where he had left off in 1940. Shortly after the talks began in 1941, Priestley’s *Postscripts* were again cancelled. Blame came in the form of two letters to Priestley, one from the Ministry of Information and one from the BBC, both pointing the finger at the other. In Priestley’s autobiography *Margin Released*, he believed the confusion of these letters was meant to conceal the truth: that the order for his cancellation had come from somewhere else entirely. Though he makes no specific accusation in the autobiography, his implications suggest that the government felt threatened by his increasingly potent leftist ideologies. A popular, respected socialist with national influence was certainly no friend to a conservative government in the midst of war. They sought stability, and he demanded change.
The cancellations and tumultuous relationship with the government notwithstanding, Priestley’s *Postscripts* were critically acclaimed and made him a household name, a beloved public figure in the face of war. However, in *Margin Released*, Priestley discloses that he felt the praise and love resulting from his *Postscripts* work was undeserved, even fraudulent:

“I didn’t see then – and I don’t see now – what all the fuss was about. To this day, middle-aged or elderly men shake my hand and tell me what a ten-minute talk about ducks on a pond or a pie in a shop window meant to them, as if I had given them *King Lear* or the *Eroica*. I found myself tied, like a man to a gigantic balloon, to one of those bogus reputations that only the mass media know how to inflate.”

- J. B. Priestley, *Margin Released*

Regardless of whether Priestley could accept it, his talks were vital to the British spirit in the midst of the Second World War. Just ten minutes every Sunday evening had the power to inspire a nation, cutting across class and bringing together a country in one of the worst periods of its history.

*Still Want More?*

The University of Bradford has created a fantastic blog as part of their J. B. Priestley archive, which features an in depth look at each of Priestley’s broadcasts in 1940. You can access this special collection entitled “Priestley’s Finest Hour” [here](#).

A pamphlet by Priestley’s stepson, Nicolas Hawkes, entitled “The Story of J. B. Priestley’s *Postscripts*” divulges further details behind the scenes of the *Postscripts* series. This work is published by the J. B. Priestley Society and available for purchase on [their website](#), a fantastic resource for those interested in the life and works of J. B. Priestley.

Audio of Priestley’s *Postscripts* can be tough to find, selections are occasionally released by the BBC archives. However, one can easily access the complete series in print. One publication, simply entitled *Postscripts*, was published shortly after Priestley’s last broadcast in October and succinctly compiles the entire 1940 series. A second publication, entitled *Priestley’s Wars*, provides historical and biographical information on Priestley’s life in addition to a complete collection of his *Postscripts* talks. Both publications are widely available in libraries, online and in second hand bookstores.

**Priestley’s Parlourmaid**

Samantha Bauer, Artistic Intern of Remy Bumppo

On first impression of J. B. Priestley’s *An Inspector Calls*, it is tempting to classify Inspector Goole as the most mysterious character of the play. He is, admittedly, shrouded in unanswered questions: who is he, what is he, where did he come from, and how does he know so much? However, as dominating voice of the play, Inspector Goole could be considered the most well-defined character; given Priestley’s socialist tendencies, we can deduce the Inspector’s values and intentions.
In fact, the character about whom we know the least and from whom we hear the least is the parlourmaid, Edna. With a scant seven lines, typically three words or less, Edna barely makes an impression apart from her stereotypical role as maid. Even less is said of her appearance or personality. Stage directions merely describe her silently crossing the room or discreetly appearing and withdrawing from scenes. However, with the playwright’s political views in mind, we know she is not simply a prop. Edna has a purpose, and a rather important one at that: she enforces the defining hierarchy of the Birling’s upper-middle class home. Without Edna, the Birling’s suddenly become less powerful, less entitled, less oblivious to the world they inhabit. Though we know next to nothing about her, Edna is significant to the moral and dialectical strengths of the play.

To glean a deeper understanding of Edna’s thematic significance, it is useful to delve into the economic atmosphere of the period in which the play is set. Situated in the fictional factory town of Brumley in the North Midlands of England, the implied success of Priestley’s Birling family most certainly derives from the industrial revolution and the processes of capitalism and market competition. The late 19th century saw a servant class boom in response to the new wealth of the industrial revolution. It became fashionable in the late Edwardian era for those upper-middle class homes to mimic the aristocracy, hiring cooks, maids and housekeepers regardless of real need. Edna symbolizes this trend.

Unlike the grand estate of fictional Downton Abbey, which required an army of staff to function, the Birlings most likely lived in a moderate town house requiring only a few staff hands to maintain their home. One of few, a maid like Edna might only earn a yearly wage of £20, roughly equal to an annual salary of $2,100 today. For such meager pay, Edna could expect to work a long, lonely day with little or no recognition for her hard work. A winter’s day might have the following structure:

6:00am – Edna quickly wakes, washes, and dresses. As the employers continue to sleep for another hour, Edna begins her work for the day with the opening of shutters and curtains to let light in. She then prepares the fireplaces by collecting cinders, laying coals and tinder, dusting the furniture of soot, and polishing the brass and steel work.

7:00am – After lighting the fires, Edna takes her breakfast in the kitchen, while gathering the breakfast to be served to the waking employers in the dining room. Breakfast is typically toast, tea, and perhaps some bacon.

7:30am – Edna brings jugs of hot water to the washbasins of her employers. She might help Mrs. Birling and Sheila dress and brush their hair.

8:30am – Edna brings breakfast into the dining room, where the whole family gathers.

9:30am – Edna clears away the dining room and begins on housework, including dusting, sweeping, and making beds. She then collects oil lamps and takes them to the kitchen to clean and refill them for the day.
12:30pm – Edna returns home with the necessary ingredients, grabbing a midday meal for herself, typically cold turkey or ham, and serving the same to the employers in the dining room.

11:00am – Upon completion of her morning duties, Edna confers with the cook to determine the day’s menu. She then makes a list of items to purchase at the greengrocer’s and butcher. Milk and fresh bread may have been delivered to the house already.

1:30pm – Edna returns to her housework and caters to the employers’ requests and needs. The cook begins to prepare the evening meal.

5:00pm – Edna serves tea to the employers in the drawing room.

6:30pm – All employers return from duties in town, and dinner guests may arrive, at which time Edna greets them and show them into the drawing room. She serves drinks at their request.

8:00pm – Dinner is served by Edna in the dining room, maintaining their glasses.

9:00pm – Dinner ends and Edna clears the dining room once the employers and guests move to the drawing room. She takes a dinner of leftovers or bread and cheese in the kitchen.

10:00pm – Edna cleans the shoes of her employers and makes her rounds to the fireplaces to ensure they are safely lit or put out. She helps Mrs. Birling and Sheila to undress and prepare for sleep.

11:00pm – Edna turns down the oil lamps and locks the windows and doors in the house before finally taking to bed herself.

Despite the tedium of such a day, for a girl of modest upbringing, this work was much preferable to the other options available. A domestic service position ensured women self-sufficiency, a roof over their heads, regular meals, and the potential for advancement, given good employer references. At the turn of the 20th century there were roughly 1.5 million servants, outnumbering those that worked on the land and in factories. Edna would certainly consider herself more fortunate than the poor factory girl, Eva Smith.

To the rigid classist society of 1912 England, however, Edna and Eva would be regarded as of the same class. Moreover, both Edna and Eva were victims of an economic system that used and abused women in support of the landed and mercantile upper classes, represented by the Birling family. That said, one wonders what Edna might have felt when Priestley’s Inspector came calling. His attempts to improve the awareness and moral character of the Birlings, and his call for social responsibility hint at the major social changes to come as a result from suffrage and union movements, and most notably the First World War. Death removes all difference. It would take considerable social changes for Edna to finally find appreciation and respect from her employers, changes still in process today.
Smith and Suffrage
Samantha Bauer, Artistic Intern of Remy Bumppo

J. B. Priestley’s *An Inspector Calls* hinges upon a central figure who never appears but whose haunting presence represents the playwright’s demand for social responsibility and a dismantling of class barriers. This symbolic figure is Eva Smith, whose life as a factory worker, shop girl, and prostitute concludes in a grisly, desperate suicide. Caught at the intersection of gender and class oppressions, Eva represents the case of many women of the time. However, the time itself was not a hopeless one for women. In fact, the first few decades of the 20th century saw significant efforts and progress for women’s rights in the UK. Principal among these movements was women’s suffrage.

Though women’s voting rights did not begin to achieve legal results until 1918, the issue had been debated in British society from the early-1800s. Women were not alone in their distaste for UK voting law. Men, too, felt their own rights were being squandered and ignored. Parliament was not entirely deaf to the voice of the country, and in turn passed two reform acts before the dawn of the 20th century. In both cases, however, they were to expand the voting rights to sectors of working class men. It seems the only voice audible to Parliament was essentially male. As time progressed and women received no response to their appeals for voting rights, their frustration finally reached a breaking point. Suffragist groups began to surface all over the country. These suffragist groups, in contrast to the later suffragettes, prided themselves on their efforts to procure voting rights in a constitutional and peaceful manner.

One of the most prominent suffragists of the movement was Millicent Garrett Fawcett, leader of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies. The wife of a Member of Parliament, Henry Fawcett, Garrett was privy to parliamentary procedure. Often she would sit in the Ladies’ Gallery, among other such ladies of wealth or privilege, and watch political debates in the House of Commons. Created in 1834, the Ladies’ Gallery was made to allow certain well-connected women to view the debates. With the lure of courtesy for women, it was in fact a small cramped room with a large, obstructive grate. Garrett once wrote of the Ladies’ Gallery:

“One great discomfort of the grille was that the interstices of the heavy brasswork were not large enough to allow the victims who sat behind it to focus... it was like using a gigantic pair of spectacles which did not fit, and made the Ladies’ Gallery a grand place for getting headaches.”

These oppressive, manipulative grilles became a symbol of women’s exclusion from Parliament, and stoked the fire of an angrier movement in women’s suffrage; from the ashes of the suffragists’ mild-mannered efforts rose the militant “suffragette.” Some of the brightest flames of this suffragette movement came from the middle-class Pankhurst family. In 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) together with her three daughters, Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela Pankhurst. The WSPU motto, “Deeds, Not Words,” was a particularly appropriate one. Women everywhere were tired of talking. They had been talking
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for nearly 70 years, and had no results to show for it. Actions by women, and by the government, were their demand.

The WSPU sought to achieve voting rights by any means possible. Often, their methods manifested in civil disobedience and disruption. One such incident was the WSPU orchestrated “rush” on Parliament. In October of 1908, the organization encouraged the public, women and men alike, to invade the House of Commons. Though the police kept the crowd from entering the building, there was an astounding turnout of 60,000 in support of the organization.

Members of Parliament were not entirely passive to the increasingly aggressive suffrage movement. As a would-be solution, Conciliation Bills were presented annually to the House of Commons between 1910 and 1912, each seeking to extend the right of vote to women. However, each year the proposed bill was snuffed out. It became clear that, despite the few efforts on the part of MPs, the government was complacent and unwilling to change. In response, the WSPU took on more violent strategies. They began blatantly to defy the law, with destruction of property and reckless behavior. After the resulting arrests, suffragettes then engaged in hunger strikes. This tactic gained the public’s attention, as guards were made to force-feed the starving suffragettes.

To such a dangerous and pitiful display, even the government was provoked to respond, implementing the “Cat and Mouse Act” of 1913. This legislation allowed that when the hunger striking women became too weak in prison, they were given early release until their health improved, at which time they would be taken back to prison to finish their sentence. Such a process would run on repeat in the course of a single sentence for a hunger striking suffragette. Though the government had not yet succumbed to the demand for the women’s vote, they had been moved to parliamentary action; this, in itself, was a kind of victory.

As illustrated by the hunger strikes, members of WSPU had earned a reputation for dangerous, even life-threatening behavior, though perhaps none paid so dearly as Emily Davison. On June 4, 1913, Emily Wilding Davison attended the Epsom Derby wherein the King’s horse, Anmer, was to compete. As Anmer sped round the track, Davison breached the barrier, sprung onto the horse and was trampled unconscious. Soon thereafter she was brought to the hospital, in which she died four days later of a cracked skull. In a morbidly serendipitous twist of fate, the tragic accident was captured on film by Pathé News, who had merely set out to record the race (you can view it here).

Though rumors of suicide simmered amongst the public, it was later deduced that Davison had been merely attempting to pin a WSPU flag to the horse’s bridle. Alongside a return train ticket, two WSPU flags were found on her person at the time of the accident, as well as a report from her sister that Davison had recently sent a postcard with the suggestion that she come for a visit for an upcoming holiday. It seems clear now that Davison was not seeking martyrdom. This, instead, was a fatal accident in attempt to bring attention to her cause. Regardless of whether Davison set out to become a martyr, it is clear from the response of her sister suffragettes that she had indeed become one.
At the outbreak of World War I, Emmeline Pankhurst, and many other suffrage activists, decided to place women’s suffrage on the backburner, and instead turned her efforts to the enhancement of women’s wartime contributions. It was certainly a busy time for women. From 1914 to 1918, two million women replaced men in the workforce, increasing their presence from 24% in 1914 to 37% in 1918. By the end of the war, the loss of life compounded with the disqualification of many soldiers from voting due to their extended residence out of the country meant that the war had severely depleted the available electorate. In short, the Parliament was hard up for voters. In a way, the tragedy of the First World War provided new opportunities for women: it expanded their presence in the workforce, and for the first time, the government saw female voting power as a national asset.

The Representation of the People Act of 1918 finally offered some lawful relief to women’s suffrage. This piece of legislature provided that women may be eligible to vote under the following conditions:

In truth, only 40% of UK women met these criteria. In this same Act, men’s voting rights were also extended, expanding the male electorate to all men age 21 and over. In truth, the purpose of the act was not to benefit women’s rights. That was simply a means to an end. The true purpose of the act was to restore the UK electorate. In that regard, it was a success. By this Act, the number of eligible voters grew from 8 million to nearly 21 million.

However, women’s suffrage was not over. Those like Eva Smith, the nation’s young working class women, were still deemed superfluous by the government. It would not be for another ten years that the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 would finally extend voting rights to all women age 21 and over. This Act resulted in the increase of the female electorate to 15 million and the ultimate achievement sought by all suffragists and suffragettes of the UK: true voting equality between men and women.
Playing with Time

Samantha Bauer, Artistic Intern of Remy Bumppo

One of the unique themes of the works of J. B. Priestley is his fascination with time theory, resulting in what many consider a collection of Time Plays. Alongside An Inspector Calls, his Time Plays include Dangerous Corner, Time and the Conways, and I Have Been Here Before, each of which utilizes an aspect of time as a critical theme or plot device. Chief among his influences was the theoretical work of J. W. Dunne, perhaps best known for his essay An Experiment with Time (1927).

J. W. Dunne

Born in South Africa in 1875, John William Dunne was the child of a British army family. As a young man, Dunne worked in agriculture before serving in the Imperial Yeomanry in the Second South African War. Soon after, he moved to Britain to work for the War Office as an aeronautical engineer, developing gliders and planes. In his work with them, Dunne excelled, inventing the stable, tailless airfoil in 1904, and building and flying the first British military airplane in 1905 and 1906, respectively.

It was not until 1927, upon the publication of his essay An Experiment with Time, that Dunne’s theoretical work would gain national attention. In this essay, he discusses the predictive nature of dreams, offering the results of a self-experiment as example. In review of his findings, Dunne found that some of his dreams foresaw news articles he read in the days following. He argued that although we often dream of past experiences, our dream state also allows us access to future experiences. He encouraged those that read his essay to partake in the experiment as well, convinced they, too, would find their dreams could predict future events. This phenomenon, he explained, is due to a truer sense of time in sleep, one that allows us to access the entire expanse of our lives, past, present and future. He theorized that all of time occurs at once, and that it is only the effect of the human consciousness that limits us to a linear perception. Dunne modeled his theory using a set of two Observers. Our conscious state of mind, termed Observer 1, only permits us to digest time at a fixed rate, whereas Observer 2, the unconscious mind typically achieved in sleep, is free to access our entire life experiences.

Dunne’s Influence

Though undeniably popular throughout the 1930s, J. W. Dunne’s theories were not necessarily valued for their scientific approach. In fact, the notions of An Experiment with Time were often considered a passing novelty by the intellectuals of the period. It is generally accepted that Dunne’s work found greater appreciation in the community of creative thinkers. Writers, poets and philosophers often found inspiration in his theories.

J. B. Priestley’s Time and the Conways specifically and openly calls upon Dunne’s theories in the construction of its storyline. Act One begins on an evening at the Conways in 1919, celebrating Kay Conway’s 21st birthday. In the end of Act One, Kay slips into a reverie and has a vision of the future. Act Two opens in the year 1937 and finds the Conway family in shatters.
In the eighteen years since the night of Kay’s birthday, the Conways have sustained broken marriages and dreams, squandered fortunes, and even a death in the family. At the close of Act Two, Kay’s brother Alan, quietly calm among the chaos, consoles Kay:

“But the point is, now, at this moment, or any moment, we’re only cross-sections of our real selves. What we really are is the whole stretch of ourselves, all our time, and when we come to the end of this life, all those selves, all our time, will be us – the real you, the real me. And then perhaps we’ll find ourselves in another time, which is only another kind of dream.”

-J. B. Priestley, *Time and the Conways*

This is a transparent reference to the theories of J. W. Dunne. Not only is Kay’s glimpse of the future found in a kind of dream state, but her brother Alan relays Dunne’s notion that the entire expanse of our life in time is simultaneous and ever present. As suggested by Dunne and enunciated by Priestley, our linear experiences of time are essentially “cross-sections” of us. In the final Act Three, Kay awakens and returns to the celebrations, a bit shaken by her daydream. As the guests depart, Kay finds herself again with her brother to whom she confesses her anxieties about the future. Although he cannot seem to quell her fears, he promises her that one day “there will be – something” he can tell her to give her peace.

Also among Dunne’s enthusiasts was friend and popular science fiction writer H. G. Wells (pictured left). His book *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933) is written as a future history. In the introduction, Wells frames the book as an edited manuscript from the notes of a late Dr. Phillip Raven. Wells explains that Dr. Raven recorded a recurring dream in which he read a history book from the year 2106, following the model of J. W. Dunne’s experiment. *The Shape of Things to Come* is considered entirely science fiction, with many false predictions, such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s failure to implement the New Deal. However, Wells also gets some things right, including the anticipation of a World War with Germany beginning in 1940, roughly seven years after the book’s publication. Regardless of factual relevance, *The Shape of Things to Come* remains an interesting example of Wells’ explicit fascination with Dunne’s work.

**Dunne’s Residual Impact**

Some may classify J. W. Dunne’s popularity as a phenomenon of the British interwar years. Though his original works are seldom read today, we must acknowledge that his work is not truly forgotten. His belief in the predictive power of dreams and his notion to challenge our perceived linearity of time have inspired great writers, whose literature still circulate today. As we continue to read these works, Dunne’s unique and provocative theories live on.
A Closer Look at 1912

What else was happening in the world in 1912?

Jan 1st - The Republic of China is established
Jan 6th - New Mexico becomes 47th state in the U.S.
Jan 10th - Caillaux government in France resigns
Jan 14th - Raymond Poincaré becomes premier of France
Jan 17th - Robert Scott expedition arrives at South Pole, 1 month after Amundsen
Jan 29th - Martial law declared in textile strike in Lawrence, MA
Feb 12th - Last Ch’ing (Manchu) emperor of China, Hsuan T’ung, abdicates
Feb 14th - Arizona was admitted to the Union as the 48th state
Feb 26th - Coal miners strike in England (settle on 03/01)
Mar 1st - Isabella Goodwin, 1st US woman detective, appointed, NYC
Mar 5th - Spanish steamer “Principe de Asturias” sinks NE of Spain, 500 die
Mar 5th - Italian forces are the first to use airships for military purposes, using them for reconnaissance behind Turkish lines
Mar 12th - Helen Hayes Theater opens at 238 W 44th St NYC
Mar 14th - King Vittorio Emanuel III of Rome injured during assassination attempt
Mar 16th - Mrs. William Howard Taft plants 1st cherry tree in Wash DC
Apr 9th - 1st exhibition baseball game at Fenway Park (Red Sox vs Harvard)
Apr 9th - Titanic leaves Queenstown, Ireland for NY
Apr 14th - HMS Titanic hits an iceberg at 11:40pm off Newfoundland
Apr 15th - Titanic sinks at 2:27 AM off Newfoundland as band plays on
Apr 18th - The Cunard liner RMS Carpathia brings 705 survivors from the RMS Titanic to New York City
May 1st - Beverly Hills Hotel opens
May 5th - Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda begins publishing
May 7th - Columbia University approves plans for awarding the Pulitzer Prize in several categories The award is established by Joseph Pulitzer
May 13th - Royal Flying Corps forms in England
Jun 4th - Massachusetts passes 1st US minimum wage law
Jun 26th - Gustav Mahler’s 9th Symphony premiers in Vienna
Jul 15th - British National Health Insurance Act goes into effect
Aug 18th - District Alaska becomes an organized incorporated territory of the United States
Sep 3rd - World’s 1st cannery opens in England to supply food to the navy
Sep 23rd - 1st Mack Sennett “Keystone Comedy” movie released
Sep 29th - French/British troops lands on Samoa
Oct 18th - Beginning of 1st Balkan War – Balkan League vs. Ottoman Empire
Oct 18th - Italo-Turkish war ends
Oct 19th - Tripoli (Libya) passes from Turkish to Italian control
Oct 20th - Cort Theater opens at 148 W 48th St NYC
Nov 5th - Arizona, Kansas & Wisconsin vote for female suffrage
Nov 12th - Robert Scott’s diary & dead body found in Antarctica
Dec 16th - Austria-Hungary engage in conflict with Serbia
Dec 28th - National Council of Young Israel convenes
Dec 28th - The first municipally owned streetcars take to the streets in San Francisco, California
Tools of the Trade: A Dramaturg’s Sourcebook

Want to feel like a part of the cast and crew? Here’s the inside scoop!

Below are some juicy selections from Remy Bumppo Dramaturg Skye Robinson Hillis’s Sourcebook for *An Inspector Calls*. It’s chock full of fascinating excerpts and sources to help our production get in the right state of mind. Enjoy!

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**GLOSSARY**

DRAWING ROOM: a formal room that is used for spending time with guests or relaxing.

FOREMAN: a person who is in charge of a group of workers.

GALLANT: nobly chivalrous and often self-sacrificing.

GOOGLE-EYED: with the eyes very open in a way that shows surprise, amazement.

HAUNT: a place habitually frequented.

IDLER: one not occupied or employed.
IMPUDENT: marked by contemptuous or cocky boldness or disregard of others.

INFIRMARY: a place where the infirm or sick are lodged for care and treatment.

INQUEST: an official investigation to find the reason for something.

INQUIRY: an official effort to collect and examine information about something.

IMPERTINENT: rude and showing a lack of respect.

OFFICIOUS: volunteering one’s services where they are neither asked nor needed.

PRETENSE: a false reason or explanation that is used to hide the real purpose of something.

ROGUE: a dishonest or worthless person.

SCRUPLE: an ethical consideration or principle that inhibits action.

SOT: a person who is often drunk.

SQUIFFY: drunk.

TRIFLE: to some small degree.

**EDWARDIAN ERA**

The Edwardian Era in its strictest form, lasted from 1901 to 1910, during which Edward VII (1841-1910) reigned as King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions and Emperor of India. However, in its broader interpretation, the spirit of the Edwardians—which was indelibly inspired by Edward VII during his tenure as Prince of Wales—stretched from 1880 until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914.

In the Western world, this time period was both one of great social change and a solidifying the power and luxury of the ruling elite. With their elegant and perceptive turns of phrase, the French characterized the years between 1880 and 1914 as *La Belle Époque* (the beautiful epoch) and *Fin de siècle* (a period of degeneration, but at the same time a period of hope for a new beginning), and certainly no other time has witnessed such decadence and pessimism, and optimism and hope. Nevertheless, the appeal of the Edwardian era is expected: wealth was abundant and nearly income tax-free; society was no longer a small, exclusive circle confined to those of aristocratic birth; the arts (theater, opera, ballet, painting, literature, music, etc) produced genius and modern movements; travel was cheap and easy, since one needed no passport or visa until the Russian or Ottoman borders; and the technological advances were thrilling and amazing.

More importantly, Great Britain was the most powerful nation in the world. The maxim coined originally for the Spanish Empire of the 16th and 17th centuries now ran true for the British
Empire, and from Greenwich to Malta, to Cairo to Cape Town, to Aden to Bombay, to Sydney to Vancouver, and back again, the sun never set on the Union Jack waving with both vigor and sublime assurance. Granted, there were a number of small skirmishes throughout the nineteenth century, which tested the mettle of the British Army (and the Second Boer War was unpopular, unexpected, and embarrassing), but Jolly Old England was still “Home” to millions of subjects of various creeds, colors, religions, and class.

The Edwardian period was characterized by the class structure of British society. Britain was generally divided into the very wealthy upper class, the comfortable middle class and the poorer working class. There was a much bigger gap in wealth between the upper and working classes than today. Whilst the poor struggled to find work, money, a home and food, the rich lived a life of luxury and richness. They had large beautiful homes, servants, fashionable clothing and as much food as they liked. Whilst the rich elite generally did not need to work, living off their land, the middle and working classes did. Most members of the middle class either owned their own businesses, i.e. shops or worked in the professions, i.e. teaching. The majority of the working class however were only able to find casual work as a labourer. They usually took up whatever work was available albeit in a factory in a town, or in the country as a farm labourer. Many also fled to docks like Southampton in the hopes of finding a job.

Typically seen as the last hurrah of the aristocracy, the Edwardian period was full of social turmoil. Political groups abounded, some violent and some not: Anarchists, Nihilists, and Socialists, whose agitations of and attractions to the working classes upset the delicate balance of the haves and have-nots. Not only was Parliament swiftly becoming to domain of progressive, Liberal politicians who had no pretensions to advancing into the aristocracy, as middle-class men formerly desired, but they were fighting to pass laws to shorten work hours, institute income tax, death duties and worst of all, in England at least, old age pensions, unemployment benefit and state financial support for the sick and infirm (per Lloyd George’s “People’s Budget”).

By the mid-1900s, there came a schism between the young and their elders, whose wants, needs and desires had long reigned supreme. This “cult of youth” found young men and women creating a separate life from that of their parents, disrupting the notions that only married, settled men and women mattered in society. The suffragist/suffragette movement helped to shatter the lingering ideals of womanhood. Though women entered into the workforce in the 1880s and 1890s, it wasn’t until the 1910s that young women from well-to-do backgrounds thought of attending college and striking out on their own.

On both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, suffrage for both men and women moved increasingly towards violent demonstrations, and people began to challenge the right of rule for the “elite” in parliaments across the globe. Nationalism clashed with imperialism, and the oppressed chafed under the yoke of colonial expansion and began to question their status within their respective empires. The overall image of the Edwardian age is that of an era of opulence, but once you scratch the surface, it was also an era of change, where the rumble of automobiles and planes, champagne and lavish ocean liners, the frenetic syncopation of ragtime, and the pomp of the aristocracy and royalty, coexisted with civil rights and independence movements, Socialism, immigration, and technological advances.
POVERTY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

In 1914, only about 20% of the English population was middle class.

At the beginning of the 20th century surveys showed that 25% of the population were living in poverty. They found that at least 15% were living at subsistence level. They had just enough money for food, rent, fuel and clothes. They could not afford ‘luxuries’ such as newspapers or public transport. About 10% were living in below subsistence level and could not afford an adequate diet.

The surveys found that the main cause of poverty was low wages. The main cause of extreme poverty was the loss of the main breadwinner. If dad was dead, ill or unemployed it was a disaster. Mum might get a job but women were paid much lower wages than men.

Surveys also found that poverty tended to go in a cycle. Workers might live in poverty when they were children but things usually improved when they left work and found a job. However, when they married and had children, things would take a turn for the worse. Their wages might be enough to support a single man comfortably, but not enough to support a wife and children too. However when the children grew old enough to work, things would improve again. Finally, when he was old, a worker might find it hard to find work, except the most low paid kind, and be driven into poverty again.

FACTORY LIFE AND THE RISE OF THE UNIONS

Elizabeth Bentley, called in; and Examined (1833)

What age are you? — Twenty-three.


What time did you begin to work at a factory? — When I was six years old.

At whose factory did you work? — Mr. Busk’s.

What kind of mill is it? — Flax-mill.

What was your business in that mill? — I was a little doffer.

What were your hours of labour in that mill? — From 5 in the morning till 9 at night, when they were thronged.
For how long a time together have you worked that excessive length of time? — For about half a year.

What were your usual hours when you were not so thronged? — From 6 in the morning till 7 at night.

What time was allowed for your meals? — Forty minutes at noon.

Had you any time to get your breakfast or drinking? — No, we got it as we could.

And when your work was bad, you had hardly any time to eat it at all? — No; we were obliged to leave it or take it home, and when we did not take it, the overlooker took it, and gave it to his pigs.

Do you consider doffing a laborious employment? — Yes.

Explain what it is you had to do? — When the frames are full, they have to stop the frames, and take the flyers off, and take the full bobbins off, and carry them to the roller; and then put empty ones on, and set the frame going again.

Does that keep you constantly on your feet? — Yes, there are so many frames, and they run so quick.

Your labour is very excessive? — Yes; you have not time for anything.

Suppose you flagged a little, or were too late, what would they do? — Strap us.

Are they in the habit of strapping those who are last in doffing? — Yes.

Constantly? — Yes.

Girls as well as boys? — Yes.

Have you ever been strapped? — Yes.

Severely? — Yes.

Could you eat your food well in that factory? — No, indeed I had not much to eat, and the little I had I could not eat it, my appetite was so poor, and being covered with dust; and it was no use to take it home, I could not eat it, and the overlooker took it, and gave it to the pigs.

You are speaking of the breakfast? — Yes.

How far had you to go for dinner? — We could not go home to dinner.

Where did you dine? — In the mill.
Did you live far from the mill? — Yes, two miles.

Had you a clock? — No, we had not.

Supposing you had not been in time enough in the morning at these mills, what would have been the consequence? — We should have been quartered.

What do you mean by that? — If we were a quarter of an hour too late, they would take off half an hour; we only got a penny an hour, and they would take a halfpenny more.

The fine was much more considerable than the loss of time? — Yes.

Were you also beaten for being too late? — No, I was never beaten myself, I have seen the boys beaten for being too late.

Were you generally there in time? — Yes; my mother had been up at 4 o’clock in the morning, and at 2 o’clock in the morning; the colliers used to go to their work about 3 or 4 o’clock, and when she heard them stirring she has got up out of her warm bed, and gone out and asked them the time; and I have sometimes been at Hunslet Car at 2 o’clock in the morning, when it was streaming down with rain, and we have had to stay until the mill was opened.

So back again to another factory, this time to ‘His Master’s Voice’, now ‘E.M.I.’. I was employed on a machine for drilling metal discs, a day’s work being a full truck-load. Men were engaged on the same job on the night shift using the same machines, but they did not fill their trucks. Although I never met any of the men, I used to exchange notes with the young man who worked my drill. On one occasion I told him in a note how lazy I thought he was and mentioning the difference in our pay. In his reply he said, “If I get twice as much as they pay you and they are making a profit out of me, how much profit do you think they’re making out of you?”

Starting factory work at such a young age we were teased unmercifully, a factor being that we were all much smaller for our age group than the present generation. I was often told, “As a girl, keep your place”, but I was never quite sure where my place was. And on my way home from the factory I was shouted at by passers-by, “Girls taking men’s jobs”. It was all so confusing. Whilst working we would be sent from one department to another on spurious errands such as “Go and get the key of the boiler” and “Go for a long stand” and then shouted at by the charge-hand for standing about. Then we would be teased about sex, which had little significance for us immature girls. One rough woman who cleaned the boss’s office told us “Oh, I put oil of wintergreen on my husband when he starts anything; I’ve got a right to, after bringing up five kids”. It was quite some time after that before I realised that she had used the linament as a form of birth control.

-Growth of Union Power

Between 1888 and 1918 trade unions grew at a faster rate than at any other time in their history. Membership figure stood at roughly 750,000 at the beginning of the period, rising to six and a half million in 1918. Inspired by the successes of the women match workers’ strike at the Bryant and May factory in 1888 and subsequently by the Gasworkers’ and Dockers’ strikes of 1889,
trade unionism among unskilled, semi-skilled, white collar and professional workers spread rapidly. Led by socialists like John Burns and Tom Mann (with Eleanor Marx as secretary to the strike committee), the dockers’ struggle captured the public imagination. Their strike, which lasted 5 weeks, was over the issue of casual working (they demanded a minimum of 4 hours per day) and for a minimum wage of 6 pence an hour (the ‘dockers’ tanner). They won their latter demand. Their victory was ultimately ensured by the financial support received from other trade unionists, including a £30,000 donation from Australia.

Meanwhile the new unionism had been gaining ground among the working classes. The leaders of the movement would appear to have had the double aim of consolidating a Socialist vote in parliament, and of coordinating aggressive action on the part of trade unions, so that the battle should no longer be between isolated employers and their dissatisfied employees, but that the whole forces of associated trades should be brought to bear to force the whole body of employers to accept the men’s demands. A series of great trade disputes were adjusted by the disputants’ acceptance of the mediation of the Board of Trade and the arrangement of compromises between masters and men. But in 1911 it began to be realised that in certain cases the general public as well as the particular antagonists were materially affected by the disputes.

**Strikes**

Trade Union membership grew rapidly between 1910 and 1914. This growth – a product of the extraordinary militancy of the pre-war years – exploded in a huge wave of strike action, dubbed ‘the great unrest’. The printers’ strike of 1911 was the occasion for the establishment of a new workers’ daily newspaper in April 1912 – the Daily Herald edited by George Lansbury.

The organisers of these pre-war strikes were hostile to the leadership of the industrial and political wings of the labour movement, which they condemned as class collaborationist. Instead they were inspired by syndicalism. Syndicalists were a minority current in the labour movement, but nonetheless they offered a simple alternative to the continued employers’ offensive – that of direct action in order to regain some form of workers’ control over workplace pay and conditions by utilising the strategy of the mass strike and rapid trade union recruitment.

**Women workers**

Although the number of women in trade unions had increased by 1914, 90% of all trade unionists were men and over 90% of women workers remained unorganised. Of the 10% of organised women, almost half were members of unions in the textile industry (the only industry in which they had maintained continuous organisation), and a high proportion of the remainder were members of teaching, clerical and shop workers unions.

Although the periods of growth in women’s trade union membership usually coincided with overall union expansion, the unions themselves cannot claim the sole credit for organising women workers. As in the previous period, that task fell to women themselves. The Women’s Trade Union League (formerly the Women’s Protective and Provident League founded in 1874) became more militant and abandoned some of the policies of its predecessors. The secretary of the League, Clementina Black, moved the first successful equal pay resolution at the 1888
Trades Union Congress (TUC). The League supported strikes and encouraged women to join existing trade unions. It reversed the WPPL policy of opposing protective legislation for women and instead campaigned for its extension. The League became an unofficial Women’s TUC and was dissolved in 1921 when the TUC agreed to take on its functions by forming the Women Workers’ Group.

In membership terms, the two most important women’s organisations were the Co-operative Women’s Guild formed in 1883 (by 1931 it had 67,000 members organised in 1,400 branches) and the National Federation of Women Workers, founded in 1906.

The National Federation of Women Workers

The National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW) was formed in 1906 by Mary Macarthur. The Federation had close links with the Women’s Trade Union League, with Gertrude Tuckwell serving as president of both organisations from 1908. The NFWW saw strikes as the chief means of unionising unorganised workers and probably did more than any other organisation (including trade unions) to unionise women especially during the mass strike wave of 1910-1914. The Federation was entirely unself-seeking, in that its efforts were purely for the benefit of the unions rather than its own prestige. Although its membership had risen to 20,000 by 1914, its leaders never intended that the NFWW should remain permanently as a women’s union. In fact in 1921 it quietly merged with the National Union of General Workers (now the GMB).

The Federation, along with many of the other women’s organisations, campaigned to expose the evils of the sweated trades. Their propaganda was very effective and played a major part in inducing the Liberal government to pass the 1909 Trade Boards Act which was an attempt to fix minimum wages in certain of the most exploitative trades, usually the ones in which women predominated.

-TUC History Online

WORLD WAR ONE IMPACT

Before WWI: World’s greatest power, largest colonial empire. Primary concern – increasingly aggressive Germany.

During WWI: Remains dominant at sea, keeping German navy in check. Instrumental in defeating Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. Substantially supports France along western front.

After WWI: Victorious, gains even more territory (especially in Middle East), but weakened due to high loss of life and financial damage. Experiences increasing difficulty in controlling its overseas empire. While distracted with WWI, Ireland begins Independence movement, leading to Irish Independence in 1921.

United Kingdom Casualties:

Total Deaths: 994,138 (Rank = 7 / 16)
J. B. Priestley’s An Inspector Calls Field Guide
Remy Bumppo, December 2013

Total Deaths % of pop.: 2.2% (Rank = 9 / 16)

Troops: 7,100,000 (Rank = 5 / 16)

Troops % of pop.: 15.6% (Rank = 6 / 16)

Military Deaths: 885,138 (Rank = 5 / 16)

Military Deaths % of Troops: 12.5% (Rank = 9 / 16)

Civilian Deaths: 109,000 (Rank = 10 / 16)

Civilian Deaths % of pop.: 0.2% (Rank = 13 / 16)

**BRITAIN BEFORE THE WAR:**

Britain before World War I had enjoyed almost a century of unparalleled peace and prosperity. Despite the rapid advances of the United States and Germany, Great Britain remained the most technologically advanced nation on Earth, the crucible of the Industrial Revolution, the source of the greatest inventions of the age. The development of steam engines revolutionised British manufacturing, transport, labour and society. Gigantic factories were filled with steam-powered machinery, capable of mass-producing all manner of products. Britain became the manufacturing centre of Europe, importing raw materials from its colonies and trading partners, to be turned into goods for sale. British shipbuilders were the busiest in the world, constructing thousands of vessels for trade and defence. Within Britain itself, a vast network of canals allowed longboats to move cargo; in the mid-1800s canal boats were superseded by trains and railways, another local development.

Beyond its own shores lay Britain’s empire, a vast sprawl of territories and possessions on which ‘the sun never sets’. The empire spanned 35 million square kilometres, or a quarter of the globe; its showpiece colonies of India, Australia, Canada and South Africa were the envy of the world. During the 1870s Britain began to acquire even more territory, as British settlers and invaders employed new technologies, like railways and improved weapons, in their pursuit of colonisation. Most of the gains in this period were in Africa, where Britain acquired new colonial possessions: from Egypt in the north, to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the south. Colonisers dreamed of an Africa controlled by Britons, from Cairo in the north to the southern Cape. Plans were even drawn up for a British railway running the entire north-south length of the African continent. This vast British Empire was, first and foremost, an economic concern. The colonies supplied a wealth of raw materials and produce, such as gold and silver, other metals, diamonds, cotton and wool, meat and grain, timber and tea. Britain’s domination of foreign trade was matched by its naval power, with the Royal Navy the world’s largest naval force through most of the 1800s. The showpiece of British progress was the Great Exhibition of 1851. Held in the Crystal Palace, a gigantic glass building in London, the exhibition was attended by more than six million people and featured more than 13,000 exhibits.
Britain was not without its problems, both domestic and imperial. Rapid industrial growth during the 1800s had lined the pockets of the middle- and upper-classes – but the industrial working classes toiled for long hours in difficult conditions, with no rights or protections. Industrialisation and rapid urban growth spawned all manner of social problems: poverty, crime, prostitution, child labour, urban living conditions, inadequate sewage, poor sanitation and disease were rampant in British cities, particularly London. Writers like Charles Dickens highlighted the social ills of the age, while reformers like Henry Mayhew and Matthew Arnold urged fundamental social and economic change. There were also demands for political reform. The British parliament was democratically elected, but only those with a minimum amount of property were entitled to vote (by the mid-1800s this was only around one in seven males). In 1819 a crowd of 70,000 gathered in St Peter’s Square, Manchester to demand political reform. They were charged by soldiers on horseback and more than a dozen were killed; the event became known as the Peterloo Massacre. In the 1840s a working-class movement called Chartism began demanding universal suffrage, the secret ballot and other reforms. The British union movement began to take shape in the 1850s, seeking to improve the rights of workers. A left-wing group, the Fabian Society, emerged towards the end of the 1800s. Members of this group participated in the formation of the British Labour Party in 1900.

At the dawn of the 20th century Great Britain remained a commercial and maritime empire without equal... But the ‘weary titan’ faced new challenges, as British vulnerabilities became apparent, forcing a major diplomatic realignment. The Boer War, which dragged on from 1899 to 1902, had demonstrated the dangers of diplomatic isolation and revealed the inefficiency of its army. Even more serious for an empire whose survival depended on command of the sea was the building of strong navies by the United States, Japan and Germany.

Despite Britain’s industrial and naval strength, its politicians generally avoided war for most of the 1800s, adopting a foreign policy of ‘splendid isolation’. Its main imperial rival during the 19th century was Russia. London and St Petersburg competed for territory and influence in a number of regions, particularly China and Central Asia. In 1853 the two went to war in the Crimea, southern Russia, as London attempted to prevent the expansion of Russian naval power into the Mediterranean. Britain emerged victorious: the Crimean War would be her only major conflict of the 19th century. Relations between England and Russia remained sour for the rest of the century, the pair reaching the brink of war several times. Only the emergence of a new rivalry eased Anglo-Russian tensions.

The unification of Germany in 1871 re-focused British suspicion and paranoia. London’s foreign policy analysts soon realised that Germany, driven by its strong nationalism, rapidly growing industrial economy and powerful military, might come to dominate continental Europe. The 1888 coronation of Kaiser Wilhelm II, a hot-headed young man with imperialist ambitions, strengthened this paranoia. The rise of Germany and its imperial ambitions coincided with internal problems in Britain’s own empire. Dutch-speaking South African farmers challenged British authority, leading to the Boer War (1899-1902); Britain was victorious in this conflict, though at great cost. The turn of the century also saw the federation and independence of Britain’s Australian colonies, plus growing Irish demands for home rule. By the start of the 1900s, Britain had abandoned its policy of European neutrality and began to play a hand in the ‘great game of alliance’. British diplomats forged the Entente Cordiale with France, another
continental power with whom Britain was previously on hostile terms. In 1907 Britain and Russia reached a successful agreement on territorial disputes. That same year produced the Triple Entente, a three-way alliance between France, Britain and Russia.

- Worldology & Alpha History

Events Leading Up to World War One

1871 – Following the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, Germany is unified as an Imperial federation of states, led by the King of Prussia (Kaiser Wilhelm I). This spurs a new era of population growth and rapid industrialization. The Germans also forcibly annex the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine from France.

1882 – Germany, Austria-Hungary (Hapsburg Empire) and Italy form the Triple Alliance.

1891 – The Russian Empire and France form their own alliance in reaction to the Triple Alliance.

1898 – Germany begins to build up its navy to challenge the British Navy’s long-standing global supremacy.

January 1902 – Britain and Japan form a naval alliance.

April 1904 – The British reach a strategic agreement with France which includes mutual military support in the event of war.

January 1905 – Troops of Russian Czar Nicholas II fire upon peaceful demonstrators in St. Petersburg killing hundreds in what comes to be known as Bloody Sunday.

May 1905 – Russia suffers a military defeat at sea by newly industrialized Japan, thwarting Russia’s territorial ambitions toward Manchuria and Korea.

October 1905 – Continuing political unrest in Russia, including a general strike, results in the creation of a national legislative assembly (Duma) by the Czar.

February 1906 – H.M.S. Dreadnought is launched by Britain, marking the advent of a new class of big-gun battleships. The Germans follow suit and begin building similar battleships as an all-out arms race ensues between Germany and Britain.

August 1907 – The British reach a strategic agreement with Russia.

October 1908 – Austria-Hungary, backed by Germany, annexes Bosnia-Herzegovina. Neighboring Serbia, with the backing of Russia, voices its objection in support of the Serbian minority living in Bosnia.
March 1909 – Germany forces Russia to endorse the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary.

1910 - Germany surpasses Britain as the leading manufacturing nation in Europe. The United States remains the world leader, surpassing all of the European manufacturing nations combined.

October 1912 – The Balkan War erupts in southern Europe as Serbia leads an attack by members of the Balkan League (Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece) against the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire to drive the Turks out of Europe.

May 1913 – The Balkan War ends with the Turks driven out of southern Europe. A peace settlement is then drawn up by the major European powers that divides up the former Turkish areas in southern Europe among the Balkan League nations. However, the peace is short-lived as Bulgaria, desiring a bigger share, attacks neighboring Greece and Serbia. Romania then attacks Bulgaria along with the Turks. This Second Balkan War results in Bulgaria losing territory and the Serbians becoming emboldened, leaving the Balkan region of southern Europe politically unstable.

June 28, 1914 – Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife, visit Sarajevo in Bosnia. A bomb is thrown at their auto but misses. Undaunted, they continue their visit only to be shot and killed a short time later by a lone assassin. Believing the assassin to be a Serbian nationalist, the Austrians target their anger toward Serbia.

-The History Place

THE LOCALE

The North Midlands is a loosely-defined area of England. It is typically held to include the northern districts of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and in some definitions also covers southern Cheshire, parts of Lincolnshire and Staffordshire.

The Birlings’ town of Brumley is most likely based on Priestley’s hometown, Bradford. Here is an overview.

Welcome to Bradford, an industrial city on the edge of the moors of the Britain’s West Yorkshire Pennines and in the heart of Bronte Country - where the Bronte sisters were born and lived and wrote their classic novels.

Founded sometime around the time of the Norman Conquest, the original village of Bradford sprang up around the “Broad Ford” crossing Bradford Beck at church bank, by the site of Bradford Cathedral on the edge of what is now known as Little Germany. [The stream now passes through underground tunnels on its way to meet the River Aire near Shipley en route to Leeds and beyond.] However, it was not until the industrial revolution, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century that Bradford grew and gained importance as a major producer of textiles and became known as the woollen centre of the world.
To support the textiles mills and machinery a large manufacturing base grew up in the city, leading to diversification with different industries thriving side by side. Today most of the older textile mills and some of the heavier industries have closed, but Bradford remains one of the north’s important cities, with modern engineering, chemicals, digital media, I.T. and financial services (especially building societies) replacing the “dark satanic mills” of the industrial revolution.

Owing to its heritage as an international trading centre, Bradford boasts some fine Victorian buildings, including the Wool Exchange (now converted into a bookstore and cafe), Manningham Mills, and the nearby industrial village of Saltaire (now a UNESCO designated world heritage site) as well as a fine Victorian cemetery at Undercliffe.

Despite its industrial past, the city of Bradford is situated near to the very edge of the West Yorkshire conurbation, with the wide open spaces of Baildon Moor and Rombalds Moor (just above Shipley, Saltaire, Baildon, Bingley and Keighley respectively) lying very close by, the wild Pennine moors of Haworth and the heart of Bronte Country lying immediately to the west, and the stunningly beautiful Yorkshire Dales (designated as one of England and Wales’ national parks) beginning only about fifteen miles away to the approximate north west.

The city is well connected with the outside world, having a short motorway (the M606) linking it to the M62 trans-Pennine route, and having no less than two main railway stations at Forster Square and Bradford Interchange in the city centre (the latter also containing an integrated and recently refurbished bus station). Leeds Bradford International Airport is close nearby at Yeadon, serving internal flights as well as scheduled and charter flights to mainland Europe and beyond.

Bradford itself is famous as the birthplace of the composer Delius, the author and playwright J.B. Priestley, the novelist John Braine (one of the 1950s “angry young men”, and author of “Room at the Top”), the artist David Hockney (whose works are included in the 1853 Gallery in Saltaire, and (of course) the Bronte sisters, (who were born at what is now known as the Bronte Birthplace in the village of Thornton - now a suburb of the city to the west) before moving on to live at Haworth (where they grew up and wrote their classic novels – including “Wuthering Heights” and “Jane Eyre”).

With its rich industrial heritage, diverse cultural background and stunning scenery close by the city of Bradford has formed the backdrop for countless movie and TV productions, and in 2009 was awarded the prestigious title of UNESCO City of Film.

-City of Bradford

**CURRENCY**

£1 (also shown as 1 l.) was 20 shillings.

1 shilling (1 s.), was 12 pence. Also often known as a ‘bob,’’ as in “I paid six bob for this.”

Thus there were 240 pence (20 x 12) to every pound.
1 guinea was £1 1s. (or 21 shillings) – ie. a pound with an additional shilling.
1 crown was five shillings. (and half-crown two and a half shillings, of course)
A half-sovereign ten shillings.
1 farthing was a ¼ penny.

Two farthings = One Ha’penny.
Two ha’pennies = One Penny.
Three pennies = A Thrupenny Bit.
Two Thrupences = A Sixpence.
Two Sixpences = One Shilling, or Bob.
Two Bob = A Florin.
One Florin and One Sixpence = Half a Crown.
Four Half Crowns = Ten Bob Note. Two Ten Bob Notes = One Pound (or 240 pennies).
One Pound and One Shilling = One Guinea.

The first paper money was issued by the Bank of England in the 1690s. But it was not widely used or trusted. Banknotes began to be issued in quantity in 1797 when an economic crisis stopped the Bank making payments in coins for more than £1. It issued the first £1 notes in March that year. Notes for £2, £5, £10, and £15 are also known.

-Victorian Web

**RECOMMENDED READING**

- *The House of Mirth* or *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton
- *Pocket Guide to Edwardian England* by Evangeline Holland
- *Edward VIII: The Last Victorian King* by Christopher Hibbert
- *The Edwardians* by Roy Hattersly
- *The Social Calendar* by Anna Sproule
- *The Edwardians* by J.B. Priestley

**RECOMMENDED VIEWING**

- *An Inspector Calls* – 1954 film
- *Downton Abbey: Season One* (set in England, 1912)
- *A Room with a View* – 1986 film
- *My Fair Lady* – 1964 film
- *Mary Poppins* 1964 film
J. B. Priestley’s An Inspector Calls Field Guide
Remy Bumppo, December 2013

- Howards End – 1992 film
- A Little Princess – 1995 film
- Titanic – 1997 film (come on, why not?)
- Iron-Jawed Angels – 2004 film

Edwardian Era Films Available on Netflix Instant:

- The Hours
- A Room With a View
- The Buccaneers
- Enchanted April
- Wings of the Dove
- Carrington

RECOMMENDED LINKS

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CaieEwEuiw – Footage from the year 1912
- http://www.edwardianpromenade.com/the-edwardian-era/
- http://edwardianera.tumblr.com/
- http://www.edwardianpromenade.com/resources/a-glossary-of-slang/
- http://www.bradfordtimeline.co.uk/190049.htm
- http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz111329cc0e80.html
- https://sites.google.com/site/livinginindustrialbradford/
Snackable Sources: Feed Your Brain!
Samantha Bauer, Artistic Intern of Remy Bumppo

Still hungry for more? These selected sources provide some delicious and nutritious reading. Eat up! Your brain will thank you.

The City of Bradford’s Official Website featuring the History of Bradford (Priestley’s hometown).


British online newspaper Mail Online has a great article chock full of fascinating photography of the now-derelict Wool Mills of West Yorkshire, England (including Bradford). The article discusses the environment of these mills in the heyday of England’s second industrial revolution, which gives life to the backdrop of Priestley’s “Brumley,” modeled off such towns of industry.


The following two sources provide more information that you ever thought you wanted to know about J. B. Priestley. Beware, once you’ve read it all, you may develop a relentless thirst for Priestley knowledge. Fortunately for you, there exists a quenching remedy: you can become a Member of the J. B. Priestley Society!

http://www.jbpriestley.co.uk/

http://www.jbpriestleysociety.com/

To read more on Priestley’s Postscripts, the following source, entitled Priestley’s Finest Hour, provides blow-by-blow recap and analysis of each of Priestley’s 1940 broadcasts with the BBC. Really dedicated, thorough work in this Special Collection by the University of Bradford.

http://specialcollectionsbradford.wordpress.com/priestleys-finest-hour/

For those who enjoyed reading about Priestley’s Postscripts, we think this source is a very special treat. Take a listen to a clip of Priestley’s first wartime broadcast:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/dunkirk/14310.shtml
Cited and linked below, this scholarly article explores the role of J. W. Dunne’s dream and time theories on the literary culture of the 30s and 40s. A very interesting piece on one of J. B. Priestley’s most notable influencers.

**J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture in the 1930s and 1940s by Victoria Stewart**


Last but not least (you may have seen this coming), the works of J. B. Priestley! Though not comprehensive, this list provides a delectable sampling of his plays, fiction and non-fiction publications. Peruse at your leisure. One or two are sure to strike your fancy!

**Plays**

*Dangerous Corner* (1932)

*Laburnum Grove* (1933)

*Eden End* (1934)

*Cornelius* (1935)

*Time and the Conways* (1937)

*I Have Been Here Before* (1937)

*When We Are Married* (1938)

*Johnson Over Jourdan* (1939)

*The Long Mirror* (1940)

*They Came to a City* (1943)

*An Inspector Calls* (1945)

*The Linden Tree* (1947)

**Fiction**

*Adam in Moonshine* (1927)
Benighted (1928)

The Good Companions (1929)

Angel Pavement (1930)

Faraway (1932)

Wonder Hero (1933)

They Walk in the City (1936)

The Doomsday Men (1937)

Let the People Sing (1939)

Blackout in Gretley (1942)

Daylight on Saturday (1943)

Three Men in New Suits (1945)

Bright Day (1946)

Jenny Villiers (1947)

Festival at Farbridge (1951)

Low Notes on a High Level (1954)

The Magicians (1954)

Saturn Over the Water (1961)

The Thirty-First of June (1961)

Salt Is Leaving (1961)

The Shapes of Sleep (1962)

Sir Michael and Sir George (1964)

Lost Empires (1965)

It’s an Old Country (1967)
J. B. Priestley’s *An Inspector Calls* Field Guide
Remy Bumppo, December 2013

*The Image Men Vol. 1: Out of Town* (1968)


*Found Lost Found* (1976)

Non-Fiction

*English Journey* (1934)

*The Arts Under Socialism* (1947)

*Out of the People* (1941)

*Midnight on the Desert* (1937)

*Journey Down a Rainbow* (1955)

*Margin Released* (1962)