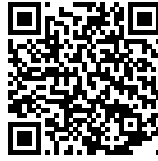


# A FORGOTTEN INTERLUDE

*Posted on February 1, 2022 by Ronald A. Knox*



*What follows is the script of a broadcast which Ronald Knox made on January 16th, 1926, on the BBC, which purportedly gave a "live report" of a revolution taking place in London, with all the usual havoc and pandemonium. The broadcast set off a nation-wide panic, since memory of the Russian Revolution was still fresh in people's minds.*

*The broadcast is a classic piece of satire, which was later imitated by Orson Welles in his famous [War of the Worlds](#) broadcast of October 30th, 1938.*

---

Bzz! Bang! Bzz!

*(Indistinct voice of an elderly don is heard in the middle of a lecture)*

...weached itth perfection in Gway'th Elegy. The dithtinctive note, then, of eighthteenth thentuwy litewature ith that of technical perfection within a vewy limited wange of performanth. It wath time, perhapth, that the Fwench Wevolution came to dithturb the thecure domination of thothe conventional ideath which were thweatening the human geniuth with thtagnathion. Amid much that wath wegwettable in that movement, thith at leatht ith to be put down to itth ccredit, that it opened the way to a weadjuthment of litewawy valueth and a higher thenthe of the poththibilitieth of human achievement.

*(A prolonged cough, followed by silence).*

(The Operator): London calling! That was Mr. William Donkinson, lecturing to you on Eighteenth Century Literature. Mr. William Donkinson. We are now continuing the news bulletin since half-past six. The Test Match. The closing score when stumps were drawn in the Test Match was as follows: Australia 569 for seven wickets. The English team, it will be remembered, was all out for 173. Plucky waterman saves life at Chiswick.

This morning, at a quarter past ten, shouts of help were heard from the Embankment close to Ponder's Row, Chiswick. James Bates, a waterman, whose attention was called to the cries by a bystander,

jumped into the water, and rescued Susie, the five-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, of 17 Sunbury Place, Chiswick. The little one is believed to have fallen into the water accidentally while playing.

The Unemployed Demonstration. The crowd in Trafalgar Square is now assuming threatening dimensions. Threatening dimensions are now being assumed by the crowd which has collected in Trafalgar Square to voice the grievances of the Unemployed. Mr. Popplebury, the Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues, has been urging the crowd to sack the National Gallery. The desirability of sacking the National Gallery is being urged by Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues... One moment, please...

London calling; continuation of news bulletin from reports which have just come to hand. The crowd in Trafalgar Square is now proceeding, at the instigation of Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues, to sack the National Gallery. The National Gallery was first erected in 1838, to house the famous Angerstein collection of pictures, and has been considerably added to since. A new wing, designed by Mr. E. M. Barry, R.A., was added in 1876. It contains many well-known pictures by Raphael, Titian, Murillo, and other artists. It is now being sacked by the crowd, on the advice of Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues. That concludes the news bulletin for the moment; you will now be connected with the band at the Savoy Hotel.

*(Dance music on the gramophone).*

Hullo, everybody! London calling. You will now be given the weather report for tomorrow. The weather report for tomorrow now beginning. Fine generally, with occasional showers in the South and a continuous downpour in the North. The wind will be violent in England, and in Scotland will probably assume the dimensions of a hurricane. High tide at London Bridge 7.15. That was the weather report for to-morrow.

Continuation of the News Bulletin. The Test Match.

The latest weather reports from Australia announce that a light rain is falling, and the wicket will probably be somewhat sticky when the Australians take the field tomorrow morning.

The Unemployed Demonstration. The crowd is now pouring through the Admiralty Arch, and is advancing towards the back of the Government Buildings in Whitehall in a threatening manner. The Admiralty Arch is being poured through by a crowd, lately collected in Trafalgar Square, and the back of the Government Buildings in Whitehall is being approached in a threatening manner. The Admiralty Arch, designed by Sir Aston Webb, was erected in 1910 as part of the national memorial to Queen Victoria.

One moment, please... The crowd has now collected in the neighbourhood of the artificial water in St. James' Park, and is throwing empty bottles at the water-fowl. Empty bottles are being discharged by the crowds at the water-fowl on the artificial water in St James' Park. So far, no casualties have been reported. That concludes the News Bulletin for the moment.

Sir Theophilus Gooch, well-known for his many philanthropic schemes, will now address you on the Housing of the Poor. A lecture on the Housing of the Poor will now be delivered by Sir Theophilus Gooch, K.B.E. Sir Theophilus, it will be remembered, has for many years been chairman of the Committee for the Inspection of Insanitary Dwellings, and speaks with authority on his subject.

Eh, what's that? One moment, please...

From reports which have just come to hand it appears that Sir Theophilus Gooch, who was on his way to this station, has been intercepted by the remnants of the crowd still collected in Trafalgar Square, and is being roasted alive. Born in 1879, Sir Theophilus Gooch entered the service of Messrs. Goodbody, the well-known firm of brokers. He very soon attracted the notice of his employers. However, nothing was proved, and Sir Theophilus retired with a considerable fortune. His retirement did not mean idleness; he has been prominent during the last ten years on many Committees connected with social improvement. He is now being roasted alive by a crowd in Trafalgar Square. He will, therefore, be unable to deliver his lecture to you on the Housing of the Poor. You will be connected instead with the Savoy Band for a few minutes.

*(Gramophone).*

Hullo everybody! London calling. Continuation of News bulletin. Famous film actress arrives at Southampton. Miss Joy Gush, the well-known film actress, landed this afternoon at Southampton.

Interviewed by the Press, Miss Gush said she had had a capital crossing.

Unemployed Demonstrations in London. The crowd has now passed along Whitehall, and at the suggestion of Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues, is preparing to demolish the Houses of Parliament with trench mortars. The use of trench mortars for demolishing the Houses of Parliament is being recommended by Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues.

The building of the existing Houses of Parliament was begun in 1840. The designs were those of Sir Charles Barry. The structure roughly forms a parallelogram, 900 feet in length by 300 in width. The internal decorations, frescoes, and statues are deservedly admired. The building is made of magnesian limestone from Yorkshire, a material which is unfortunately liable to rapid decay.

At present, in any case, it is being demolished with trench mortars under the influence of Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues. The three towers are 300 feet, 320 feet, and 346 feet high respectively.

The Clock Tower, 320 feet in height, has just fallen to the ground, together with the famous clock. Big Ben, which used to strike the hours on a bell weighing nine tons. Greenwich time will not be given this evening by Big Ben, but will be given from Edinburgh on Uncle Leslie's repeating watch.

Uncle Leslie's repeating watch will be used for giving Greenwich time this evening, instead of Big Ben, which has just fallen to the ground, under the influence of trench mortars. One moment, please...

Fresh reports, which have just come to hand, announce that the crowd have secured the person of Mr. Wotherspoon, the Minister of Traffic, who was attempting to make his escape in disguise. He has now been hanged from a lamp-post in the Vauxhall Bridge Road. One of the lamp-posts in the Vauxhall Bridge Road has been utilized by the crowd for the purpose of hanging Mr. Wotherspoon, the Minister of Traffic.

The crowd is now returning along Whitehall. One moment, please...

The British Broadcasting Company regrets that one item in the news has been inaccurately given; the correction now follows.

It was stated in our news bulletin that the Minister of Traffic had been hanged from a lamp-post in the Vauxhall Bridge Road. Subsequent and more accurate reports show that it was not a lamp-post but a tramway post which was used for this purpose. A tramway post, not a lamp-post, was used by the crowd for the purpose of hanging the Minister of Traffic.

The next three items in our programme are unavoidably cancelled; you will now be connected up with the Savoy Band again. (More gramophone, which stops suddenly with a loud report).

Hullo everybody! London calling. The Savoy Hotel has now been blown up by the crowd. That noise which you heard just now was the Savoy Hotel being blown up by the crowd, at the instigation of Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues. One moment, please...

The more unruly members of the crowd are now approaching the British Broadcasting Company's London station with a threatening demeanour. A threatening demeanour is being exhibited by the crowd which is now approaching the B.B.C.'s London station. One moment, please...

Mr. Popplebury, Secretary of the National Movement for Abolishing Theatre Queues, with several other members of the crowd, is now in the waiting room. They are reading copies of the Radio Times.

Good-night everybody; good-night.

---

*Featured image: "Rissa in galleria ("Riot in the Gallery")", by Umberto Boccioni, painted in 1911.*

