



PRESS RELEASE

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## When Russian Royals and Radicals came to the Isle of Wight

With Putin's invasion of Ukraine straining Anglo-Russian relations to the hilt, the reprint *Isle and Empires: Romanov Russia, Britain and the Isle of Wight*, couldn't come at a timelier juncture. The book, now in paperback with a new preface from author Stephan Roman reflecting current events, gives fascinating insight into the historic relationship between the two countries – and the intriguing role the Isle of Wight plays in the story.

In the new preface, Roman notes: "As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is more important than ever to understand the way in which history has shaped the world in which we now live. This second edition of my book, with its insights into the complex relationship between Imperial Russia and the British Empire, demonstrates that the events of the past continue to echo in powerful and disturbing ways."

At the heart of the book is the 1909 visit of Tsar Nicholas II and the Imperial Family to the Isle of Wight for Cowes Week, the most glamorous yachting regatta in Europe. At the time, this seemed to presage a new era of Anglo-Russian relations, but less than ten years later the Romanovs were overthrown in the October Revolution and executed by the Bolsheviks in Yekaterinburg.

Roman's book also relates how, a century later, the killing of the Tsar and his family was marked by the unveiling of a memorial to the Romanovs in Jubilee Park, on a hill overlooking East Cowes.

The remarkable links between the Isle of Wight and Russia extend much further than these two incidents, one hundred years apart. The island's strong seafaring tradition led to Peter the Great recruiting Cowes-based shipwright, Joseph Nye, when he wanted to rebuild his fleet and transform Russia into a major maritime power in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The two men became good friends with the Englishman appointed Captain-Commodore, giving him noble status. On Peter's death, Nye, played a prominent role in the Tsar's funeral procession.

The Isle of Wight's Russian links weren't purely royal. Some half a century before Nicholas II visited Cowes and Osbourne House, the favourite residence of Queen Victoria, on the north of the island, Ventnor on the south coast was home to a coterie of Russian radicals. Among them was writer Ivan Turgenev who began penning his novel *Fathers and Sons* while living in the seaside resort in 1860.

Roman's book, however, begins on a more poignant and personal note. It recounts how, in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, his own family were refugees awaiting their fate on the banks of the Dniester River, having fled from Moscow through Ukraine to Moldova.

*Isle and Empires: Romanov Russia, Britain and the Isle of Wight*, is available on all major e-Book platforms. Hard copies can be ordered from [Isle and Empires \(2022 Paperback Edition\) - Medina Publishing LTD](#) on the UK, and [Isle and Empires \(casemateipm.com\)](#), in the US.

**For review copies, author interviews and further information contact [press@medinapublishing.com](mailto:press@medinapublishing.com).**

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