



Among those responding to the opening feature of our Freedom 80 series - 'the girl in the picture' - was Mark Lamerton, a published historian who has researched the man behind the camera on that famous day. **Simon De La Rue** takes a look at some special photos by American George Holt, which Mark has kindly supplied to us

Putting names to faces



WITHIN hours of launching our Freedom 80 series with the story of how we finally found 'the girl in the picture' after a 20-year search, I missed a call from Jersey because I was answering a social media message from the granddaughter of somebody else in the picture. There'll be much more on Bill de Carteret - let's call him 'the man in the flat cap' - in a future feature. For now, let's focus on the subject of that missed call from Jersey-based historian Mark Lamerton. He was calling to tell me that the photograph we had featured was taken by an American who had travelled to the Channel Islands with Force 135 - would we be interested in seeing some of the other images he had taken in St Peter Port that day? Well, certainly, Sir - don't mind if we do!

Crowded pier

There's a certain irony in the photo of a crowded pier taken by Technical Corporal Grade 5 George Holt of the US Army Signals Corps - it depicts a moment of liberation, as friendly troops form up to march into an island riddled with the enemy, expecting no resistance due to a surrender signed less than an hour earlier. Yet it also shows a bunch of Tommies absolutely hemmed in - the

'Omelette' advanced party of Operation Nest Egg, trapped by the elated and curious crowd. And then there's the foreground - an image of restriction and threat, with thin-looking islanders peering over curls of wire. Because nothing says 'model occupation' like barbed wire around a clock tower that's already been bombed once. Our imaginations can fill in the colour of those flags on the pier, as Mum points to the photographer and her baby resolutely looks the other way. So too the Union Jack being waved beside the truck on St Julian's Pier, brought to a halt with an equally stationary car just behind it. They wouldn't get away with that now, without a port permit. 'Among the crowd of welcoming islanders can be seen 18 British soldiers with Capt Hill, Royal Artillery, facing them,' Mark says. 'Guernseyman Lt Rex Ferbrache is in front of the soldiers and smiling at the crowds.'

He numbers five Guernsey police officers in the throng, along with a member of the Order of St John in front of that truck. 'Even a young boy on roller skates came to greet the Liberation troops,' he says. Indeed, the eight-wheeled child appears to be caught on camera in about the same spot that is now occupied - if that's the right word - by the Liberation Monument. Little did that child know that 50 years later, to the day, a future king of England would unveil a sundial obelisk right there, placed according to the calculations of another local child who would - in the intervening years - work for the people who would put men on the moon. But more about the late David Le Conte in another future feature.

Salute close-up

Perhaps this photo shows the true value of bringing an American photographer along on HMS Bulldog. While all the assembled look to be lost in the sound of God Save The King and the raising of the Union Jack outside the Royal Court after five years of Nazi oppression, George Holt is pointing his lens the other way and capturing it for posterity. Pictured with bowler hat in hand and cane in the other is Bailiff Victor Carey. Beside him is Lt-Col Edwin Stoneman, Commander 618 Regiment, Royal Artillery - erroneously listed as 'Lt E.D. Coleman' on the reverse of the copy obtained by Mark, which was marked as having been cleared through the field press censor of European Theater of Operations



GUERNSEY SPORTSMAN

Sgt. "Nobby" Hamon Interviewcd

Among the first contingent to come ashore was a Guernseyman, Sgt. "Nobby" Hamon, of the Hampshire Regiment. He had been offered the opportunity of being a member of the re-occupation forces: "I was lucky to be one of the first, I believe others are coming later today," he observed. "Nobby," (whose bronzed features contrasted sharply with those of the Islanders gathered at the Court Steps to witness the historic unfurling of the Union Jack) was a well-known sportsman in the Island before the War, and somewhat naturally, the topic of conversation strayed to sports.



Right: A Guernsey police officer helps a British soldier to unload equipment on 9 May, 1945, including one of the war correspondents' cameras. (Guernsey Museums)



Welcome home 'Nobby'

Guernsey's very own Sgt 'Nobby' Hamon greets two friends from Sark - Messrs Le Feuvre and Hamon - while self-consciously glancing towards George behind the camera. Nobby was a well-known footballer before the war, playing for Rangers. He then served with the Hampshire Regiment, Mark tells us, from 23 July 1940 to 17 May 1946. Our edition of 10 May 1945 reported that he was the second islander to step ashore after Lt Ferbrache. 'I was lucky to be one of the first, I believe others will be coming later today,' Nobby said. Our article of the day was entitled 'Guernsey Sportsman - Sgt "Nobby" Hamon Interviewed' and the reporter contrasted Nobby's 'bronzed features'

with the islanders who surrounded him for most of the day. On the front page he is described as a former Rangers 'outside-right' but on page four that becomes a 'wing forward'. Regardless, he played centre-forward when representing his battalion, ever since scoring four on his debut. He also represented the island in water-polo inter-insulars.

■ Liberated by Force 135 is a two-volume, 1,175-page history by Mark Lamerton covering the planning, reoccupation, reorganisation and rehabilitation of the Channel Islands, with 900 illustrations and photographs. It is available from Blue Ormer publishing and at the German Occupation Museum, The Lexicon, Writer's Block and the Guernsey Museum.

HQ 45. Jurat the Rev. John Leale, the president of the States Controlling Committee during the Occupation, can be seen over Lt-Col Stoneman's left shoulder. The sharpness of the usher's shadow against the wall on the left reminds us that the original Liberation Day was a sunny affair. And its position in relation to the usher tells us this is still early morning.

Striding along the seafroat

Thanks to Margaret Le Cocq, who helped us to launch this Freedom 80 series, we can put a few more names to faces than were previously available in this Liberation Day photo - albeit tentatively, in some cases. She, as little Margaret Courtenay, is striding along on the right, holding the hand of a fellow tenant of the Cressard's of Bosq Lane. He's talking to Margaret's uncle John Hall, while her mum's friend Aline is ahead of them. The aforementioned Bill de Carteret is front and centre, with his raincoat and flat cap, alongside Inspector Lamy and Lt Ferbrache. But there's more... 'In the background,' says Mark, 'on the back of the lorry, are two American war correspondents in uniform,

recording the event. The one on the right holding a camera is probably Jimmy Gemmell, a Paramount News cameraman, and the one on the left Frank King - a Press Association war correspondent.' This little posse of pedestrians was almost upon its destination - the States' Offices (seen to their right), where a flagpole would soon accommodate that Union Jack whipping in front of the camera, held by an unseen hand.

Raising the flag

The Union Jack was raised by Gunner Edward Bright, one of the Royal Artillery Guard of Honour - a 19-year-old from Camberwell,' says Mark. 'The crowds in front of the Court House burst into singing the National Anthem... followed by a thunderous outburst of sustained cheering.' As with the other prints from Mark Lamerton's collection which are seen here, the reverse is stamped as 'passed for publication' by the field press censor, dated 12 May 1945. Within days of the liberation, many were available to the UK press to accompany reports of the end of occupation in the Channel Islands.

