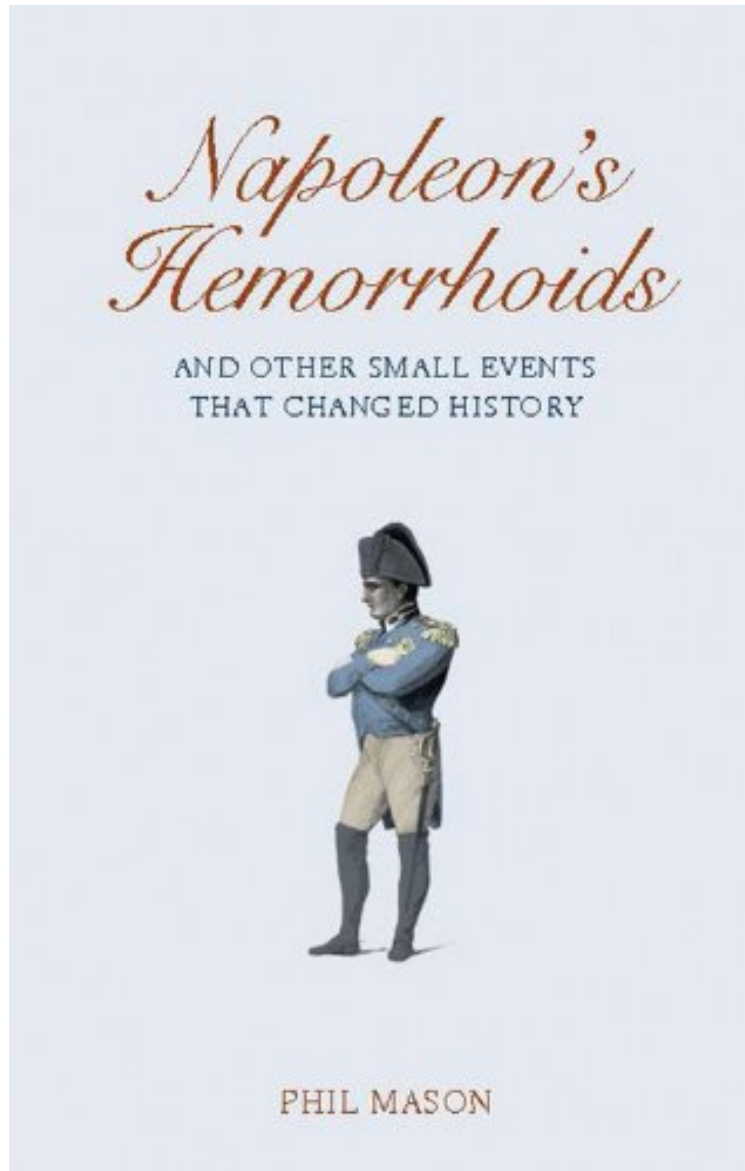


(Ebook free) Napoleon's Hemorrhoids: And Other Small Events That Changed the World

Napoleon's Hemorrhoids: And Other Small Events That Changed the World

Phil Mason

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Events That Changed the World:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. How Chance Changed History By Paul Froehlich People who like history in brief bites will enjoy this book. It contains a couple of hundred snippets about how chance events shaped history. The examples chosen are British-centric, so American readers won't be familiar with many references. Nonetheless, there are a variety of fascinating stories, a few of which are listed below: * Alfred Nobel's will creating the prizes named after him was challenged after his death by his family, who didn't want to lose their inheritance. Because the Nobel family lost in court, the Nobel name is known far and wide. * Marco Polo became known to history only because he spent a year in a Genoan jail with an inquisitive cell mate, who took notes about Polo's travels and published them. * The Eiffel Tower was built for the 1889 Universal Exposition. The building was licensed to occupy the site for 20 years, after which it was to be demolished. In 1909, city officials were persuaded by French telegraph officials that the tower was a useful transmitting beacon due to a single radio antenna at the summit. * According to an authorized biography, when Ronald Reagan was a 27-year-old actor in 1938, he applied to join the Communist Party USA, which some of his closest Hollywood friends had joined. The Party rejected him. * The assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand sparked World War I. It occurred when the driver of his vehicle made a wrong turn, right past the caf where the assassin was having coffee. When the driver put the vehicle in reverse, the assassin took his opportunity. * US Grant had been invited to the Lincoln Theatre the night of Lincoln's assassination. Grant cancelled that day, which may have saved his life since he was also a target. * The belief that spinach has unusual strength-building properties stemmed from a decimal point error. In 1870, a scientist measuring the iron in vegetables put the decimal point in the wrong place, overstating the iron content by a factor of ten. The error was not discovered until the 1930s -- after Popeye cartoons had propagated the myth. * Kokura was the Japanese city originally targeted for the second atomic bomb in 1945. Cloudiness and smoke over the city led to the secondary target of Nagasaki. * Matchbox miniature cars were inspired in 1950, when the designer's daughter complained about a school rule: children were not allowed to have any toy in school that would not fit into a matchbox. Jack Odell made her a miniature car, which led to Matchbox cars, one of the most popular toys in the 1950s and 1960s. We underestimate the role that chance plays in our lives and in history because it's more comforting to believe we have more control than we do. This book provides many memorable anecdotes of how tiny acts of chance shaped significant events. ### 38 of 39 people found the following review helpful. "What if" and other weasel words. By Gerald Farber If you liked the newspaper column "Ripley's Believe it or Not" you might like this book for a short while but soon the weasel words like "might have" or "probably", "what if" and others make you realize that this is a book of amateurish conjecture devoid of a true historical basis, and filled with silly little stories of obscure and stupid "coincidences" that may or may not have actually happened and whose weight if they did happen is ludicrously overrated. And Read Chapter 8 only if you love English Soccer, Snooker or Cricket since it consists of at least 4 stories on Cricket and other "what if's" of accidents and "mistakes" that may have affected an individual performance which may have affected an individual game, which may have...oh you get the idea. Jeremy Irons, in the remake of "The Time Machine" tells the Time Traveler (Guy Pierce) that the most "terrible words" that one could dwell upon was "What if..." That is what this book is all about. I wonder "what if" the compiler had tried to write a real history? It might have been entertaining which this book is certainly not. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fun collection of trivia By Judith Kelsey-Powell, Kindle Customer Primarily from British and American history, this is a collection of small interesting accidents of history, unexpected incidents or entertaining anecdotes about historical figures. Many of the best are cited in the promotional blurbs for the book, but there are plenty of others. My personal favorite regarded the disposal of Thomas Hardy's remains. In a compromise, his ashes are interred in Poets Corner at Westminster Abbey, but according to his wishes his heart was to be buried in the family plot. As the burial was pending, a cat stole the heart and escaped into a nearby forest. It is assumed that the casket later buried contains the heart in some form.

This is a book about tiny events that had huge impacts. Some of these small events even changed the world. As you'll see here in Napoleons Hemorrhoids, much of history turns out to be the consequences of small acts of fortune, accident or luck, good or bad. In the historical anecdote which lends its name to book, Napoleons painful attack of hemorrhoids on the morning of the famous battle of Waterloo keep him from his usual practice of inspecting the battlefield. You'll learn that Marie Antoinette might have avoided execution if she hadn't changed her escape plan at the last minute and how Nixons White House taping system which caused his downfall in the Watergate scandal was revealed by an aide accidentally.

From Publishers Weekly In this collection of historical anecdotes, author Mason illustrates how the smallest details can have far-reaching historical consequences--or at least that seems to be the idea; in execution, there is no commentary, causal connection or even source identification that legitimizes any of Mason's information (he's known as a massive collector of "cuttings and books chronicling the weird and the strange"), so while many stories are funny or

remarkable, they're little better than gossip. Despite a repetitive format, Mason writes well, and readers looking for pithy historical trivia to share with friends will be satisfied. Aimed at a U.K. audience, Mason tends toward topics like British royalty and the nuances of cricket, but there's enough conversational ammunition here for a cocktail party on either side of the Atlantic. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. I started turning pages and couldn't stop. (The Spectator) About the Author Phil Mason has amassed one of the country's largest private collections of cuttings and books chronicling the weird and the strange. His other books include *How George Washington Fleeced the Nation*. He lives in England.