For 70 years, this picture has been used to tell the same story – of inequality, class division, "toffs and toughs". As an old Etonian closes in on Downing Street, it is being trotted out again. But what was the story behind it? Ian Jack investigates ...

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Almost since its invention, photography has had the habit of turning people into symbols by accident. A painter might spend a year on a canvas, working up the personification of an abstract idea to its full visual glory ("Truth Triumphant" or "Temptation Denied"), but a camera could capture a scene in a fraction of a second, and if the scene was somehow striking and memorable – in its composition, its subject matter, its light – it might become "iconic", meaning that its particulars might be understood to suggest much more general emotions, conflicts and problems. When the shutter clicked, such a metaphorical future was rarely suspected either by the photographer or his subjects, who might not even be aware that a picture had been taken. The moment could be ordinary or extraordinary: a couple kissing in a Paris street, a sharecropper and her children in California, a burning child running down a road in Vietnam. It could happen anywhere, to anybody. It might happen even at an old-fashioned English cricket match.

By 1937 England's two most celebrated private schools, Eton and Harrow, had been playing each other at cricket for 132 years. It was, and remains, probably the oldest regular fixture in a game that has the richest and longest traditions of any team sport played with a ball. In the first match, a few months before the battle of Trafalgar, Eton won easily, despite or because of the presence in the Harrow side of Lord Byron, whose bad leg meant that he had to bat with a runner. "Later to be sure," Byron wrote, "we were most of us very drunk and we went together to the Haymarket Theatre where we kicked up a row, as you may suppose when so many Harrovians and Etonians meet in one place."

As the 19th century progressed, a more gracious atmosphere prevailed. Together with the racing at Ascot and the rowing at Henley, the Eton-Harrow match at Lord's became a highlight of the social season. It lasted two days and attracted big crowds – over 30,000 during its Edwardian heyday. To use a violent modern image, a bomb dropped on this crowd would have obliterated many of the most powerful people in England. Past and present pupils of the two schools were joined by their families, so there were judges, diplomats, popular (and unpopular) novelists, landowners, MPs, stockbrokers, bishops and dukes: wealth, privilege and distinction of all kinds. Out of their carriages would come picnic hampers and iced sorbets and Champagne, and cushions to soften the ground's wooden benches. Male spectators wore toppers and tails, and women their summer hats and frocks.

The Harrovians and Etonians themselves came in their most formal outfits – "Sunday dress" as Harrow called it – which only a very able student of the English social system could differentiate. The pupils at both schools wore, with minor variations in style, the clothes that at some point in the 19th century had become the uniform of the well-dressed English gentleman: a top hat, a tail coat, a silk waistcoat, a cane.

On the morning of Friday July 9th 1937, Peter Wagner and Thomas Dyson stood dressed in this way outside Lord's. They were Harrow pupils, aged 14 and 15. It was the opening day of the match. The event had lost some of its social eminence in the years since the Great War, but the crowd strolling into the ground that morning was still large and smart. It included the Anglican Dean of Durham, the gin magnate Walter Gilbey, the wife and son of the eminent military strategist Basil Liddell-Hart, and the exotic Alake of Abeokuta, a friendly Nigerian potentate who posed for photographs quite glorious in his African robes. Local boys, porters for the day, unloaded wicker hampers from spectators' cars and carried them into the stands. There were quite a few photographers about. But where in this mêlée was the Wagner family, Peter's father, mother and older sister?

The Wagners had made an arrangement. Peter and his friend Thomas Dyson (known as Timmy or Tim) would come down from Harrow with their cases packed so that after the first day of the match they could go straight to the Wagners' house in the country for the weekend. The match started at 11am. A little before then the two boys would meet the Wagner party at the Grace Gates. There could be no mistaking the rendezvous. The Grace Gates were easily the most splendid entrance to Lord's, remodelled in the previous decade by the imperial architect Herbert Baker to honour the memory of the legendary Victorian cricketer W.G. Grace. This was also the first entrance that the Wagners, motoring east up St John's Wood Road, would see.

The two boys waited, the minutes ticked away. No sign of the car. Peter had started at Harrow barely three months before, at the beginning of the summer term; Tim had arrived the previous year. They were in different forms and different houses – Peter at The Park and Tim at West Acre. Peter was the smaller and the younger and also, perhaps, the cleverer boy, because he had won a scholarship and Tim had not. They knew each other through their

parents – the Wagners moved in different circles from the Dysons, but a meeting on a cruise had established a friendship. We can speculate, therefore, that waiting gave Peter more anxiety. To judge by his later troubles, he was probably the more nervous boy in any case. Now the burden of responsibility (his parents, their lateness) made him turn his back on Tim and stare westwards down the likely route of his parents' car. Impatiently, he jiggled his right foot on his empty hatbox and tapped his cane on his weekend case.

Tim, meanwhile, had other distractions. Three local boys were staring at him and a man stood on the edge of the pavement pointing a camera in his direction. Some things will never be known. We can't know if the man with the camera asked the local boys to take up their position or if they just happened to be there; or if they jeered or sniggered at Dyson and Wagner; or if the photographer instructed Dyson to look slightly away from his lens; or if the moment made Dyson and Wagner acutely conscious of their appearance – their top hats, waistcoats, floral button-holes and canes. The photographer took pictures from at least two positions. At one point, according to later evidence, he asked the local boys to "stand a bit closer". Dyson gripped the top of a stone bollard; Wagner continued to look away. The film caught a stance that suggested majestic indifference to the poorer boys at their side, as though these boys were subjects as well as spectators.

The moment passed, the morning moved on. The photographer and the local boys disappeared and the Wagner car at last rolled up. The match began. Harrow, who hadn't won the contest since 1908, went into bat first and were soon out cheaply for 118 runs. Heavy showers interrupted play that day and the next, and slippery patches of mud made bowling harder than batting. For that reason, Harrow had a much better second innings – "Wisden" records that R.A.A. Holt "pulled and hooked superbly" to score a century – though Eton, enjoying the same advantage, reached their target easily with seven wickets to spare. But this is sporting minutiae. The match's lasting contribution to history had come before a ball had been bowled, in the fraction of a second that a lens opened to freeze an image of five boys. The next day, July 10th, the *News Chronicle* ran the picture across three columns at the top of the front page under the headline "Every Picture Tells a Story". The caption said no more than "Outside Lord's, where the Eton-Harrow match opened yesterday".

What story did this particular picture tell? Its minimal presentation left all interpretation to the reader, but as the *News Chronicle* was a left-leaning newspaper – fiercely anti-Franco, for example, in the Spanish civil war – the implication was clear enough: the picture exemplified the scandalous gulf between Britain's rich and poor.

When the Wagner family first saw the picture, their reaction was rather different. "We probably laughed," Peter Wagner's sister Penelope told me, "because they both looked so fed up." But in the years that followed, her amusement faded. The picture, she said, was

known "for all the wrong reasons". Like several others connected to it, she referred to it quite tetchily as "that photograph"; which is what happens when a loved one is transformed over seven decades – in newspapers, in magazines, on book jackets – into an anonymous symbol of arrogant privilege. During the Crewe and Nantwich by-election of 2008, Labour Party activists dressed in top hats and tails to mock the upper-class origins and expensive educations of the Tory candidate and leadership, particularly David Cameron, who went to Eton. The stunt is thought to have misfired – at any rate, Labour lost – but this did nothing to curtail the career of an image that still remains the best visual shorthand for "toff". Other more recent photographs reveal a much greater sense of boastful entitlement in the young men they portray; the posed group shots of Oxford's Bullingdon Club, for example, with the embryonic Tory politicians Cameron, George Osborne and Boris Johnson looking lofty in their finery. Wagner and Dyson, however, are the boys who have been woven into the national psyche.

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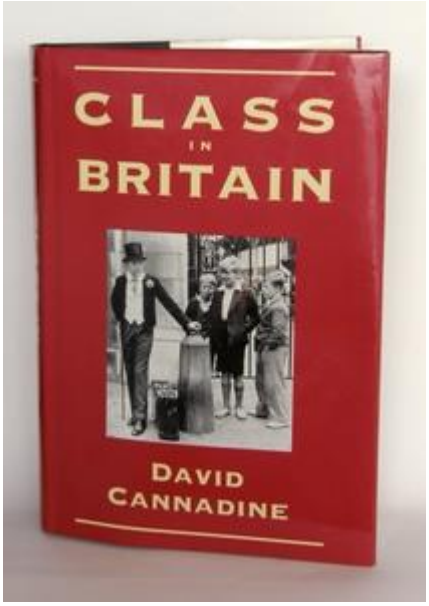
There are three popular misconceptions about the Lord's photograph: that it shows a pair of Etonians; that it was taken by one of Britain's greatest documentary photographers, Bert Hardy; and that the other three boys are "scruffs", "toughs" or "urchins". The Eton mistake crept in early. On August 2nd – only three weeks later – *Life* magazine in New York published a double-page picture essay on the match as part of a series called "The Camera Overseas". The essay didn't take the game and its social rituals too seriously, treating both as a kind of anthropological curiosity that the American reader might find exotic and amusing. Cricket was "a slow-moving, nonviolent game" with a simplicity obscured by "a multitude of petty rules, precedents and conventions". A favourite word in *Life*'s description was "snob". The Alake of Abeokuta was the "greatest snob", while an Eton snob was "the world's snobbiest snob". Perhaps for this reason, aggravated by a forgivable ignorance of the small differences in dress between the two schools, Life's caption identified the grandees Wagner and Dyson (unnamed) as young Etonians, who stood outside Lord's and "ignored village boys".

The picture differed slightly from the *News Chronicle*'s; it was taken further to the right, so that the angle is more acute and Wagner has his back to the camera. These were early days in *Life*'s career as the world's leading magazine of photojournalism – its transformation had happened only the year before – but even the most inexperienced judge can see that the *News Chronicle*'s picture is far superior. So why did *Life* choose it? A clue lies in the picture credits lurking towards the back of the issue. Ten of the 11 Eton-Harrow photographs are credited to Pictures Inc. Only one – the five boys – is credited to Associated Press. We can speculate, reasonably, that when *Life*'s editors in London (in Dean Street, Soho) saw the picture in the *News Chronicle* they knew they simply had to have it for their forthcoming

essay. We can also speculate that the agency that held the rights couldn't sell *Life* a photograph it had already sold to the News Chronicle, so instead provided a different frame from the same spool. We can even speculate, less reasonably but not wildly, that it was the *News Chronicle* picture that gave *Life*'s men in Dean Street the idea for their essay, and that they then rounded up pictures from other photographers who had covered the event. To editors, the five boys have always had a powerful appeal.



The photographer, a much less celebrated figure than Bert Hardy, was Jimmy Sime. Sime worked for London's Central Press agency, which probably sold its American rights through Associated Press, hence *Life*'s credit. The fact that this is certainly his most famous picture shouldn't obscure the fact that he was a skilled news photographer, with a successful career that started before the outbreak of the first world war and ended in the mid-1960s. A sense of the bewildering social change that swept through that 50-year span can be measured by Sime's first and last pictures in the archive of Getty Images. In the first the suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst is being arrested outside Buckingham Palace in January 1914; in the last, taken in November 1965, a Mr George Ruffel is taking possession of a Kenwood dishwasher after winning the Good Housekeeping Institute's prize for "Husband of the Year". In between, Sime covered every kind of news event: Neville Chamberlain at a Downing Street microphone, Jackie Kennedy leaving Heathrow, Noel Coward in rehearsals, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby on the golf course, ship launches, coronations and criminal trials. To a newsman who already had a quarter-century of work behind him, the Eton-Harrow match must have seemed a routine and unpromising assignment. And then he saw something in the contrast between two kinds of boys – something so theatrical it might have appeared in a Charlie Chaplin film – and his mind and his instrument went click.

Four years went by. Then the five boys surfaced again in *Picture Post* in 1941, the same year that Bert Hardy joined the magazine (which may help explain the idea that the picture was Hardy's). In the January 4th issue, the picture prefaced a piece calling for a reform of the English education system. The author was A.D. (later Lord) Lindsay, the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, who argued that Britain needed to become a different and more socially equal country after the war was won. This belief was prevalent – it carried the Labour Party to victory in 1945 – and *Picture Post* was among its most earnest advocates. According to Lindsay's opening sentence, the thing "most obviously wrong" with English education was

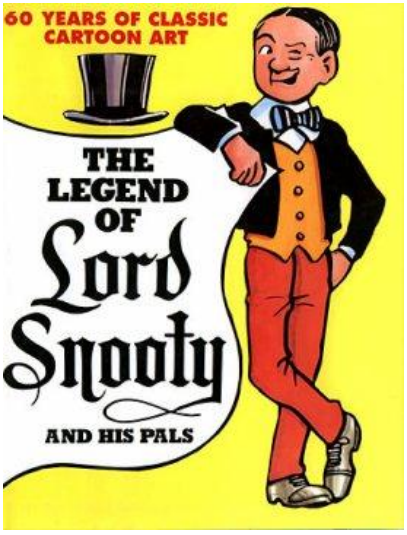
that there was one system for the rich and another for the poor. The picture caption expanded the point: "Between the two groups is a barrier deliberately created by our system of education. Our task is to remove the barrier – to bring the public schools into the general scheme." In terms of detail rather than argument, the caption was remarkably vague – no schools were specified, and "top-hatted" and "bare-headed" were the only phrases used to identify each group. The *News Chronicle*'s headline, "Every Picture Tells a Story", had merely been suggestive. From *Picture Post* onwards, nobody could be in any doubt of the story being told. England was still hopelessly divided by class.

It seemed in the 30 or 40 years after the war that this was a problem on its way to being solved. Some of *Picture Post*'s vision of the post-war future was realised: sharp class boundaries began to soften, social elites felt threatened, universities expanded and state schools sent them more students. In the 1970s wealth was more equally distributed in Britain than ever before or since. Then neo-liberal economics intervened in the transformative epoch begun by Margaret Thatcher and continued by Tony Blair, and the consequent disparities revived the old concerns. When the publishers Routledge wanted a cover image in 1993 for Michael Argyle's "The Psychology of Social Class", Sime's picture, now more than 50 years old, was the image they chose. Five years later Yale University Press did the same for David Cannadine's "Class in Britain", and by cropping poor Wagner out of the frame made Dyson look singularly haughty.

Newspapers, needing to humanise feature articles about class division, would sometimes turn for illustration to the John Cleese-Ronnie Barker-Ronnie Corbett sketch ("I'm upper class, I look down on him and him"), but as a still, shorn of its soundtrack and movement, it made a dull image, of poor reproductive quality. The five boys came to the rescue here, too. In 2008 and 2009, to pick two random years, Sime's picture accompanied a *Guardian* feature on modern educational inequalities, a *Sunday Telegraph* column headlined "That old class system is still manufacturing bourgeois guilt", and a piece in the *Daily Telegraph* arguing for wider access to Eton, sending Wagner and Dyson once again to the wrong school.
Digital archives and electronic transmission have made old photographs far easier to find and deliver. Blogs that touched on the subject of class could rarely resist reproducing Sime. Such was his picture's celebrity that in 2004 it was published as a jigsaw puzzle in a series of "Black & White Classics" ("Collection Noir et Blanc", "Collectie Zwart-Witfotografie"; this was a trans-European production) that also included the famous shot of skyscraper builders having their lunch while perched on a girder hundreds of feet above Manhattan. By now the picture had a title. "Toffs and Toughs" appeared on the jigsaw's box and in the online catalogue of the Getty archive. As a way of summarising England's complicated cross-currents of money and manners – a jigsaw if ever there was one – it was remarkably binary: as simple a division of English society as that between Lord Snooty and his enemies the Gasworks Gang in the *Beano*'s weekly comic strip (which started – was there something in the air? – the year after Sime's picture was first published). As a way of describing the boys themselves, their circumstances and position in the hierarchy, it was also remarkably untrue.

In 1998, the journalist Geoffrey Levy published a fine piece in the *Daily Mail* that for the first time named all five. The "toughs" in the picture turned out to be George Salmon, Jack Catlin and George Young, three 13-year-olds who lived close to Lord's and were in the same class at a Church of England school, St Paul's Bentinck, a few minutes' walk away in Rossmore Road. According to Levy's account, all three had been to the dentist that morning and then decided to skip school and hang around instead outside Lord's, where the Eton-Harrow match offered money-making opportunities to any boy willing to open taxi doors and carry bags, or to return seat cushions to their hirers and claim the threepenny deposit. "We did OK that day," George Young told Levy. "I think we made about two shillings each. We didn't really think about the way the toffs were dressed – we just assumed they were rich. And suddenly there was a photographer saying: 'Just stand a bit closer together while I take your picture.' "

Young was the eldest of six children who shared a two-bedroom flat with their mother and father. George Salmon was one of nine children who shared a four-bedroom flat with their parents and grandfather. Jack Catlin had a sister and three half-brothers from his mother's previous marriage; how many bedrooms they occupied isn't known. Young's father was an asphalter, spreading tar on roads. Salmon's was a foreman in a butter-blending factory. Catlin's worked as a clerk in the Post Office. All of them lived in the hinterland of Marylebone railway terminus, in the typically straitened circumstances of the old London working class. In the picture, the biggest boy, Catlin, may be wearing a suit jacket handed down from his father, while Young's trousers need some growing into. But toughs? They have open-necked white shirts and what could be tennis shoes. This is the way many if not most boys looked from Land's End to John o' Groats in the 1930s. "Toffs and toughs" is a false opposition; the real contrast is between the costume and bearing of an elite public school and everyday, ordinary England.



In 1998, when Young and Salmon were in their 70s, Levy asked them if they'd resented the boys in the top hats. "Nah," Young replied. "We had our lives, they had theirs." Salmon said, "In those days you accepted what you were and what they were, and got on with it."

There was, however, a lot to be resentful about. The differences that money makes to a life can be measured in many ways: a list that stretches all the way down from bigger and more sanitary houses (one child to a bedroom rather than six) to the trivial business of wearing a top hat at school on Sundays. There is also the simpler matter of height, which needs only a ruler. In 1936 the distinguished nutritionist John Boyd Orr published a ground-breaking study, "Food, Health and Income", which showed that 14-year-old boys at a certain public school (later revealed to be Eton) were on average five inches taller than 14-year-olds

measured at some council schools. There are no figures for Harrow, but it would be reasonable to assume a similar difference. A more exact study showed that an Etonian aged 13 and a half in 1937 averaged 5ft 3ins while a London County Council schoolboy of the same age in 1938 averaged 4ft 10.7ins – a difference of 4.3ins. Only in the 1960s did the average English state-school boy reach the same average height as his Etonian contemporary.

Many people, like Young and Salmon, accepted this as the natural order of things. When Boyd Orr's findings were discussed by a sub-committee of the Ministry of Health, some committee members couldn't understand what the fuss was about. The minutes record the following exchange between J.N. Buchan, a medical officer of health, and E.P. Cathcart, professor of physiology at Glasgow University:

Buchan: "Is there any greater value in height or weight? I cannot see any great advantage in it."

Cathcart: "Industrially, height is a drawback…Industrially, it is not an advantage. I see recruiting people, and they have a height of 5ft 8ins [in mind] and that is all they want. They [recruits no higher than 5ft 8ins] are more comfortable amongst machines."

Heredity is an important factor in determining height, as Boyd Orr understood, but what the comparison between Etonians and London schoolboys clearly showed was height's relationship to nutrition: the chances in childhood were that the more good food you ate, the taller you grew. As a symbol of this most physically obvious difference between public schoolboys and the rest, Sime's picture is rather contrary. Wagner was a small boy who grew into a small man (but his mother was also small – "tiny" to the people who remember her). The local boy Catlin, at 13, was nearly as tall as the Harrovian Dyson at 15. But particular examples of people are often unhelpful to general arguments about class, and this is nowhere better illustrated than in answering the question, what became of them all?

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One winter afternoon I took the train through the snow to a village on the edge of the North Downs in Surrey, where Peter Wagner's sister, Penelope Waley, lives in a bungalow at the end of a cul-de-sac. Considering her dislike of "that photograph", it was good of her to see me, though she'd forgotten I was coming. "I've had a fall, you see, and I just can't think properly," she said as she stood in the doorway, resting on her Zimmer. At 3.30 on a December afternoon it was already dusk. The cars zipping along the M25 slip road at the back of her house had their headlights on, and their beams flickered through the trees. We went into a room lit sparely with yellow light. There was a glass of red wine on the coffee table that she'd forgotten to drink with her lunch. A grand piano sat next to the window and one wall was lined completely with old books: many volumes of the "Dictionary of National

Biography" and a nice edition of Robert Louis Stevenson with silver palm trees on the spines. Mrs Waley's late husband had been an antiquarian bookseller. She said he was an Etonian, just like his father and just like their son. The Wagners, on the other hand, had been a Harrow family for two generations – she said, laughing, that it had been "very embarrassing" when they turned up in Harrow colours to sit with the Waleys at Lord's after the war.

The Wagners, pronounced with a w not a v, had reached England from Germany via a long detour to South Africa in the late 19th century. "It just means wheelwright," Mrs Waley said. "In England we'd have been known as the Wrights." Her father, Richard Harry Wagner, had been sent to Harrow on a scholarship in 1907, perhaps because it was more welcoming than other public schools to new migrants and new money; a school where Anglicanism, titles and land counted for less. Richard earned his money at the family stockbroking firm but also dabbled extensively in radio electronics. A strong scientific streak ran in the family, Mrs Waley said – an uncle had worked with the great German physicist Wilhelm Rontgen, and she herself graduated in natural sciences from Cambridge and, before marriage closed her professional career, helped in the early trials of automatic-pilot technology. During the 1914-18 war her father won the Military Cross serving with the London Regiment, though his family never knew what it was for (Mrs Waley implied some hush-hush activity in 1917) until he was dead.

The Wagners lived in Hampstead. Penelope was born there in 1920 and her brother Peter in 1923. By the time Peter followed his father to Harrow – another Wagner with a scholarship, another Wagner in The Park's dormitories – the family had moved to a country villa, Russ Hill, near Charlwood in Surrey, which had a tower and water gardens and where the senior Wagner built a tennis court. He was rich. He had splendid cars. First he bought a Minerva, a luxurious Belgian saloon for people who couldn't quite afford a Rolls-Royce, and then a Rolls itself. Penelope recalled that it was "terribly expensive" – £2,000. It was in one or other of these cars that the teenage Penelope and her parents drove from Russ Hill to Lord's on July 9th 1937, to find Peter and his friend Timmy standing irritably outside the Grace Gates. Sime and the local boys had gone by then. And later? "I expect we came home to Russ Hill. I expect Timmy came too."

After Peter left Harrow in 1940 he followed his sister to Cambridge and read natural sciences at Peterhouse. He was called up to the Royal Corps of Signals in 1943 and became a lieutenant, after some debate among his superiors (according to his sister) over whether he was fit to be an officer. Things then began

to go wrong. He had some kind of breakdown, never saw active service, and was invalided out of the army in 1945, having spent most of his time in Perthshire, at the Gleneagles Hotel, which had been converted to a military hospital. "In the army", his sister said, "he got very ill – then he went a bit sort of bonkers. The first time I noticed it was when I took him a box of chocolates, and he opened the box and finished the lot in five minutes. He was always a bit mental after that, and in the end he was ga-ga – I never knew how badly."

This was Peter Wagner's life as his sister remembered it, or as much as can be remembered by a nearly 90-year-old woman who's just had a fall, in the space of an hour on a dark afternoon in December. His wife, however, has a different version. She was a dozen years younger than Peter, married again after he died, and lives now as Mrs Pauline Barker in another bungalow, not far from Mrs Waley in a village across the Sussex border. "Health was not Peter's metier," she said crisply when I telephoned her. It had started in the army with pericarditis, a painful inflammation of the sac around the heart, but there had been no mental problems until he reached his late 40s. They married in 1953 and set up home on a 500-acre farm near Crawley. Every morning Peter caught the train from Crawley to the family broking firm in the City. Every winter he went skiing in Wengen. He smoked a pipe, interested himself in fine wines and the farm's sheep and cattle, played with his three daughters. Only in the 1970s did his wife begin to notice signs of mental instability.

"It's very difficult to know when mental illness starts," Mrs Barker said, "but by 1978 it was clear that something was wrong and by 1979 he was definitely unbalanced – he'd be unreasonable and irascible and we had to do things like hide the car keys from him." She said it was important to be honest about what happened next. "I had three young daughters and I had to protect them. We couldn't go on living as we were." First he was sent "to an establishment in Hastings which looked after people who were irrational", but then the police in Lewes found him wandering around one night and telephoned her, so that she might bring him home. She had to deny him. "I said no, he belongs in Hastings." After that, he moved to what Mrs Barker described as "a custom-built asylum" at Hellingly in East Sussex, where he spent two and a half years in a locked ward. He died there on Friday April 13th 1984, aged 60.

Mrs Barker's throat caught for a moment as she described these events, and then she carried on cheerfully to her three daughters and seven grandchildren, who had all turned out very well. "They're good, good girls," she said of her daughters. Two of the three had gone to state schools, which is what Peter Wagner wanted for them. "Harrow was quite difficult for Peter," she said. "I sometimes think he hated it."

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A well-known quality of old photographs is their poignancy. All kinds of fate await the people in them; endings that we know and they don't. Peter Wagner looks leftwards out of the picture, perhaps anxiously, but towards the traffic on St John's Wood Road rather than the gates of Hellingly. As to Dyson of the princely stare, his is the shortest and saddest story.

Tim Dyson's father, George St John Armitage Dyson, was a professional soldier who, like Wagner's father, had won an MC in 1917. Also like Wagner's father, he was an old Harrovian who believed that the school would do well by his son. Perhaps this was all they had in common – enough to bond them when, according to Penelope Waley, the Wagners and the Dysons met on a cruise liner. The Wagners were almost certainly the wealthier parents. St John Dyson came from a well-to-do family in Huddersfield, rich enough to send him to Harrow but not to keep him in style. He joined an unglamorous regiment, the Royal Field Artillery, and climbed slowly up the rungs from lieutenant to major and, eventually, lieutenant-colonel. On a posting to India he met his wife, Mona, an Australian woman who was touring the country with her parents. They had one child, Thomas Norwood Armitage, known as Tim, and back in England moved from barracks to barracks until new orders returned husband and wife, but not Tim, to India. In 1938, quartered in an officer's bungalow in the army cantonment at Trimulgherry near Secunderabad, they arranged for their only child to join them during the summer holidays. Tim sailed by P&O to Bombay at the end of the summer term and then took the train across the Deccan plateau. It was August, towards the end of the monsoon; a foetid, sluggish season in India, well known for its fevers. Tim began to feel very ill. Doctors came to the bungalow. Diptheria was diagnosed. Tim died in Trimulgherry on August 26th 1938, aged 16. His father was captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore and died in a Korean prison camp on November 22nd 1942, four years after he buried his only child.

What kind of boy was Dyson? The last surviving relative who knew him is a cousin, Colonel Tom Hall, whose mother was St John Dyson's sister. The Halls had a grander lineage. They owned an ancestral manor house at Cricket St Thomas in Somerset and sent their son Tom to Eton (he is now vice-president of the Cavalry and Guards Club in Piccadilly). When I spoke to him, he remembered that in the 1930s Tim would often spend his holidays with the Halls at their manor for the same reason that he went to the Wagners' house after the match in 1937 – because he was temporarily orphaned by parents who were out of reach in India. Asked about his character, Colonel Hall had nothing but warm feelings for a boy who was "almost like an older brother to me", but it was hard to say much beyond that; 1937 was a very long time ago.

It is. But then, when it seemed that nothing else could be known, I had a letter from Margaret Baynham. Some years ago, Mrs Baynham had written to Roy Seymour, an old Harrovian and keen student of the school's history, after a letter of Seymour's about Sime's photograph had been published in the *Daily Telegraph*. Seymour gave me her ten-year-old address and I wrote to her in Whitchurch, Hampshire, hoping she still lived there – hoping she were still alive. Six or seven weeks passed, and then a letter came in which Mrs Baynham remembered scenes and events that are now around 80 years old.

She wrote: "My parents (Field) and the Dysons were at Larkhill around 1926, possibly on the Long Course – Larkhill [on Salisbury Plain] as you know is the home of the Royal Artillery…We lived in a WW1 [first world war] hut on stilts…the Dysons lived in a brick house – small [and] not

too far from the RA Mess. My parents were fond of St John Dyson and possibly Mona. I believe that was her Christian name. People kept in touch by letter, as you know, so when my father was posted to the XP [experimental unit at] Shoeburyness, Essex, we children were pleased when the Dysons came to visit. Tim was more exciting because his mother was Australian. Not everybody liked her accent – more pronounced in those days than [it would be] today. While the parents were out of the way, he [Tim] naturally taught us to smoke!"

Mrs Baynham said that her mother "had a common bond" with the Dysons as her father and brother had also been at Harrow. "We were very upset about Tim's death. It didn't seem possible as we, the Gunners, were [like a] family. One picked up if one met again so easily." Finally: "Tim was a splendid character [and] would have done well in the SAS or a similar adventurous group."

So there it was. Tim, the little prince in Sime's photograph, had grown up in a modest brick house on the edge of an artillery range, to the rolling thunder of guns finding their targets across the open spaces of Salisbury Plain. His mother's accent marked her out from other officers' wives, and it might also be that she spoke straightforwardly, in the Australian way, and caused awkward moments at bridge parties. Perhaps this was the bond with the Wagners: that, like them, the Dysons were not quite in tune with the upper reaches of English society. In the archive at Harrow School I discovered, as much by luck as by judgment, a photograph of the boys of West Acre house posed in rows on the school lawn, around their housemaster, his wife and his dog. Tim stands at the far right, this time minus a hat, tails and cane. He smiles, he looks shy. What has he done with his life so far? Played games, climbed trees, listened to loud artillery and his Australian mother, taught little girls to smoke.

The photograph was taken at the end of the summer term in 1938. What does he see beyond the photographer fussing at his tripod? Perhaps only a big white ship of the P&O line waiting for him at Tilbury. A month or two later he was dead.

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The lives of the boys labelled as toughs took a different path. When Levy met Young and Salmon in 1998, both had been married for 53 years. Both left school at 14 and both served in the Royal Navy and saw action on destroyers and frigates. Later, Salmon worked as a foreman for Imperial Metal Industries and helped the firm establish a network of warehouses across Europe. Young started a window-cleaning business and set up his four sons in the same trade. Levy went to see Salmon in his flat near Lord's, bought from the council, and described fitted carpets, regency-striped chairs and gilt mirrors. Levy also found Young's flat in the Barbican "smart and comfortable". Between them, the two men had accumulated a great number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. "We've always been jolly happy," Young told Levy, "just as we were when I was a kid. You don't need to be rich. We've had a very rich life."

Twelve years later, in the London locations mentioned by Levy, I couldn't find a trace of either man. The third boy, Jack Catlin, settled in Weymouth long ago, but when I called him there his wife said he was too unwell to come to the phone, adding that in any case he was never happy to talk about "that photograph". This was the second Mrs Catlin – he remarried in 1989, after being widowed – and from what she said and from the little Levy had found out (he, too, had found Catlin unwilling to talk) I formed an impression that Catlin had perhaps been more ambitious and socially aware than his two schoolfriends. According to Levy, he had felt uneasy about what he called "tipping my hat to toffs". According to Mrs Catlin, his family quit central London for the suburb of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire a few years after Sime took his picture. "They made good," she said. He, too, spent the war in the navy and then joined the Civil Service, where he rose to a senior position in the Department of Health and Social Security. There were two children from his first marriage. In retirement he was a contented, active man. "He loved sport – cricket, football, squash," Mrs Catlin said. "He was playing badminton in his 70s." He was now 85, and sometimes, if he felt well enough, he and his wife would still set off from Weymouth for a walk in the Dorset countryside.

In striking contrast to Wagner and Dyson, all three men had reached old age and a plateau of contentment. But Catlin hadn't maintained contact with Salmon and Young. His wife said that when a newspaper (perhaps the *Daily Mail*) had asked the three men to get together to reconstruct the picture at Lord's, or at least their part in it, Jack had refused. I could see why. To be stereotyped as a poor London boy – a tough even – may have irritated a man who had made good and probably felt no nostalgia for the pre-war streets of his childhood.

The houses on those streets were demolished years ago and replaced by blocks of flats surrounded by grass and car parks. Nor have the haunts of the young gentlemen been spared. Russ Hill, the Wagners' country home in Surrey, became a hotel, handily placed for travellers using Gatwick Airport. The manor house at Cricket St Thomas, where Dyson spent several summers, was sold by his cousin Tom Hall in 1963. So much of England's history lies there. From 1979 to 1981 the BBC used the house as a setting for the class-bound sitcom "To the Manor Born". Later the BBC entertainer Noel Edmonds leased the grounds and turned

them into a theme park, Crinkley Bottom, a name inspired by his game show. Crinkley Bottom was unsuccessful and short-lived. Today, as a hotel, the manor prefers to tell guests of its associations with Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton rather than Mr Blobby.

As for the Eton-Harrow match, it was cut from two days to one in 1982. Hardly anyone attends apart from the pupils, some very reluctantly, and the dress code is "smart casual": if a photographer wanted to re-create Sime's picture now he might be faced with five boys dressed much the same, in jeans and brand names. Giving a superficial impression of equality, the picture would be even more of a lie than before.

Everything changes and nothing changes. At school outfitting shops on Harrow hill, you can still buy tailcoats, waistcoats, top hats and canes, because monitors wear them, and others too for special occasions. A tailcoat costs £155, a top hat £95, a cane £32 – mere trimmings on top of fees of £28,500 a year. And what do you get for your money? A good education, a place at a good university, social connection, confidence, and all the other things largely confined to one small section of society that make Britain among the most unequal countries in the developed world. As I was writing this piece, yet another report confirmed that fact. According to the government's National Equality Panel, quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, the widening divide between the rich and the poor "may imply that it is impossible to create a cohesive society". Parents of privately educated sons could expect their children to be paid 8% more by their mid-20s than boys from state schools; more than half the children at private schools went on to study at leading universities; in Europe only Italy, Greece and Spain had greater rates of poverty. And so on.

Nearly 70 years have passed since *Picture Post* protested at exactly this state of affairs. I looked at the picture that accompanied the *Daily Telegraph*'s report in January 2010, and it was the same one *Picture Post* had published in January 1941. Sime's, of course. There they were again: Wagner, Dyson, Salmon, Catlin, Young, doomed for ever to represent a continuing social tragedy.

See Ian Jack's postscript, published in the summer 2010 issue of* Intelligent Life*: My piece about Jimmy Sime's famous photograph contained two mysteries" ...

(Ian Jack is a columnist on the *Guardian*, a former editor of *Granta* and the *Independent on Sunday* and author of "The Country Formerly Known as Great Britain". Beatrice Perry provided additional research for this article.)

Picture credit: Peter Wagner, Thomas "Tim" Dyson, George Salmon, Jack Catlin and George Young, outside Lord's, 1937; Jimmy Sime/Getty

think I remember one of my university lecturers claiming that E. H. Carr once said that a historian is very much like an angler. Fish are like historical facts, the fish you catch depends on the bait you use and the place on the river where you decide to stand.

As D. H. Lawrence once said, every philosopher ends at his fingertips. E. H. Carr was in fact describing his own approach to history. One of the problems of all historical research is that the historian starts with a theory of what happened. This theory is greatly influenced by the historian's ideology. This of course restricts the facts that the historian discovers.

For example, in the 1930s E. H. Carr was a strong supporter of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy. He therefore looked for historical facts to support this view. He of course found them. He believed that the Treaty of Versailles had ensured that someone like Hitler would emerge as leader of Germany. Therefore, the only way to deal with Hitler was to appease him. In other words, appeasement could be justified as an attempt to rectify the mistakes made at the end of the First World War.

Events at the end of the 1930s convinced Carr he had been wrong. His ideology now changed dramatically. He became converted to Marxism. For the rest of his life he spent his time explaining (justifying) events in the Soviet Union. He also searched for facts to confirm his belief that the UK and all the over advanced industrial countries would eventually experience a communist revolution. Once again he got it wrong.

E. H. Carr was obviously a flawed historian. The main reason was that he was inflexible. Like all historians he started off with a theory. However, all good historians are willing to adapt their theory when the evidence suggests that the original one was incorrect. This means that like the good angler you have to use different baits and try different places on the river bank.

Over the last 25 years Robert A. Caro has been writing about the life and career of Lyndon B. Johnson. In the last couple of months I have read the first three volumes: The Path to Power (1982), Means of Ascent (1990) and Master of the Senate (2002). It is as detailed as you can get. Each book is over a 1,000 pages long and so far he has only reached his period as vice president.

One of the reasons that Caro is such a great historian is that he has been willing to change his views on Johnson. As he has struggled with this wealth of archive material, he has realised that Johnson had skilfully projected an image of himself that was not true. This has encouraged him to go searching for further information (at first he was too reliant on the assistance of the Lyndon Johnson Library papers).

Of course Caro has now got access to the LBJ tapes. LBJ recorded most of his telephone conversations in order to help him write his memoirs. He died of a heart attack before he completed his work. He had instructed his personal assistant to destroy these tapes. For the sake of history she kept them. Except for the 6 per cent that have been kept back by the FBI, these tapes are now available to historians. Their contents have caused several historians to be embarrassed by their previous assessments of Johnson. The poor historians, are still reluctant to change their mind about Johnson.

I am eagerly awaiting the publication of volume 4 of Johnson's biography as it will be dealing with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The LBJ tapes that have been released so far on this topic have been fascinating. I would love to find out what the other 6% contain.

Although I will be reading Caro I will not be wasting my time on the work of Carr.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/10/lyndon-b-johnson-robert-caro-biography