

Dorling, D. (2023) Sir, Is Lord Sumption (Oxford Magazine, No. 452, Nought Week, TT, 2023) aware that the Roundheads won? Oxford Magazine No. 453, Second Week, Trinity Term, <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/oxford-magazine>

In Response to: Oxford Magazine, No. 452, 0th Week, TT, The New Roundheads”

“Sir, Is Lord Sumption aware that the Roundheads won?
 Danny Dorling
 St Peters College”

Which elicited this reply in the next issue of the Magazine.

Sir – Danny Dorling (Letters, Oxford Magazine, No. 453, Second Week, Trinity Term 2023) could usefully extend his thinking. The Roundheads, having won the Civil War, then managed to cling to power for barely an arid decade. In 1660 Restoration of the monarchy was followed immediately by foundation of the Royal Society, along with initiation of a new golden age of English literature, philosophy, music and the performing arts, comparable to that of the Tudors.

The Great Plague and Great Fire of London (1666) were tragedies along the way, but did not overshadow the cultural achievements.

In 2023 the challenge going forward is to ensure that Irene Tracey’s assumption of office proves likewise to be a Restoration not merely of approaches to the Vice-Chancellorship, but of academic priorities in the governance of the University.

Yours sincerely,
 Peter Oppenheimer
 Christ Church

I decided that discretion might possibly be the better part of valour, and did not reply in turn.

There is much that could be said about arguments which appear superficially clever, but are not bright. On the ‘golden age’, said to have begun after 1660, the views of people from elsewhere in the world might well be worth extending our thinking to, including those places not directly under the rule of the newly golden lands, such as China. Many billions of people had their destines hugely altered by those few who thought themselves so very superior to all others around them.

[Right – map of the extent of the British Empire. much of a Caribbean was initially, or mostly ‘settled’ at the start of the ‘golden age’.]

