



Paedagogica Historica >

International Journal of the History of Education

Volume 53, 2017 - [Issue 6: Special Issue: Images and Films as Objects to Think With: A Reappraisal of Visual Studies in Histories of Education](#)

213 | 0

Views | CrossRef citations to date | Altmetric

General Articles

The “Mad Hatter’s” adventures in education: Joseph King (1860–1943) and the impact of personality

Amy Palmer

Pages 783–798 | Received 07 Nov 2016, Accepted 07 Feb 2017, Published online: 07 Mar 2017

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2017.1296473>



Sample our
Humanities
Journals



>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

Full Article

Figures & data

Citations

Metrics

Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

Share

Abstract

Joseph King (1860–1943), known as the “Mad Hatter” because of his appearance and eccentric manner, was a man who cared very much about education in a wide range of arenas. He was a founder of Mansfield House University Settlement in London and of the peasant arts movement, both philanthropic organisations which aimed to improve the lot of the poor, in part through increased educational opportunities. He was a member of his local education committee during the stormy period around the introduction of the 1902 Education Act and a member of the UK parliament between 1910 and 1918, in which role he made many contributions to political debates about educational matters. He was not an original or a great thinker but he was an enthusiast who allowed ideas to take hold. This article examines his work in all these spheres,

building a picture of how one man sought to influence the world around him. Using psychologist David G. Winter's broad-based definition of "personality", it asks how the unique characteristics of Joseph King impacted on what he could achieve. It concludes that his connections and his money, the privileges of his class and gender, were significant factors in his successes. However, his distinctive traits were also important, for better and for worse. His forceful manner and pomposity were limiting factors, but his impressive energy and powers of persistence enabled him to make a contribution in his own time and to leave a legacy which can be felt today.

Keywords:

Biography

personality

political influence

university settlements

arts and crafts

Notes

¹ "'Mad Hatter' MP Dead," Evening Despatch, August 26, 1943, 1.

² "Ilford By-Election: Women Voters Organised," The Times, August 26, 1920, 7.

³ "About Us," Aston Mansfield, <https://www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/Pages/Category/about-us> (accessed 22 September 2016).

⁴ "The European Peasant Art Collection," Haslemere Educational Museum, http://www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk/humanhistory_files/peasant-arts/Peasant-Art-Collection.html (accessed 22 September 2016).

⁵ Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian London* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007); Katherine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Class in London, 1918-1979* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Alla Myzelev, "Craft Revival in Haslemere: She, Who Weaves...", *Women's History Review* 18, No. 1 (2009): 597-618.

⁶ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, March 18, 1918, vol. 104 cc674-779.

⁷ Amy Palmer, "Nursery Schools or Nursery Classes? Choosing and Failing to Choose between Policy Alternatives in Nursery Education in England, 1918-1972," *History of*

Education 45, No. 1 (2016): 103–121.

⁸ Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.

⁹ Jane Martin, “Interpreting Biography in the History of Education: Past and Present,” *History of Education* 41, No. 1 (2012): 96.

¹⁰ Michael Rustin, *Reason and Unreason: Psychoanalysis, Science and Politics* (London: Continuum, 2001).

¹¹ Martin, “Interpreting Biography in the History of Education,” 96.

¹² Jane Martin, “Reflections on Writing a Biographical Account of a Woman Educator Activist,” *History of Education* 30, No. 2 (2001): 163–176.

¹³ Kevin Brehony, “Lady Astor’s Campaign for Nursery Schools in Britain 1930–1939,” *History of Education Quarterly* 49, No. 2 (2009): 196–210.

¹⁴ *Who Was Who*, Volume IV 1941–1950, 5th ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1980).

¹⁵ Roy Hattersley, *David Lloyd George: The Great Outsider* (London: Abacus, 2012).

¹⁶ Lauren E. Duncan, “Using Group Consciousness Theories to Understand Political Activism: Case Studies of Barack Obama, Hilary Clinton and Ingo Hasselbach,” *Journal of Personality* 78: 6 (2010): 1601–1636.

¹⁷ David J. Jeremy, “Late-Victorian and Edwardian Methodist Businessmen and Wealth,” in *Religion, Business and Wealth in Modern Britain*, ed. David J. Jeremy (London: Routledge, 1998), 71–85.

¹⁸ Paula R. Backscheider, *Reflections on Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 90.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁰ Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²¹ Richard Holmes, *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer* (London: HarperPress, 2011), 174.

²² Jeffrey J. Mondiak, *Personality and the Foundations of Political Behaviour* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

²³ Margaret MacMillan, *History's People: Personalities and the Past* (London: Profile Books, 2016), xii.

²⁴ David G. Winter, "Things I've Learned about Personality from Studying Leaders at a Distance," *Journal of Personality* 73, No. 3 (2005): 557–584.

²⁵ David G. Winter, *Analysis and Interpretation of Lives* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996), xi.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁸ David G. Winter, "Philosopher-King or Polarising Politician? A Personality Profile of Barack Obama," *Political Psychology* 32, No. 6 (2011): 1063.

²⁹ Ben Pimlott, "Brushstrokes" in *Lives for Sale: Biographers' Tales*, ed. Mark Bostridge (London: Continuum, 2004), 169.

³⁰ Frederick Rockell, "Knights of the Long Table: An Account of the Social Work of Mansfield House University Settlement, Canning Town, London E.," *The Millgate Monthly: A Popular Magazine Devoted to Association, Education, Literature and General Advancement*, VII, part 1, 1912, No. 77 (1912): 301.

³¹ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, trans. Lilian A. Cowell (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914).

³² Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870–1920* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965), 78.

³³ Mark Freeman, "'No Finer School than a Settlement': The Development of the Educational Settlement Movement," *History of Education* 31, No. 3 (2002): 245–262.

³⁴ Scotland, *Squires in the Slums*.

³⁵ Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890–1914*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984).

³⁶ Percy Alden, "The University Settlement in Relation to Local Administration," in *The Universities and the Social Problem: An Account of the University Settlements in East London*, ed. John Knapp (London: Rivington, Percival and Co, 1895), 67–86.

³⁷ Scotland, *Squires in the Slums*.

³⁸ Michael Rose, "The Secular Faith of the Social Settlements: "If Christ came to Chicago",," in *Settlements, Social Change and Community Action: Good neighbours*, ed. Ruth Gilchrist and Tony Jeffs (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2001), 22.

³⁹ Minutes of the Executive Committee June 1890–September 23 1896, Executive Committee Meeting, November 20, 1894, Mansfield House University Settlement, C/AM/3/1/10/1 [30/4], Newham Archive and Local Studies Library, London.

⁴⁰ "Social and Personal" *Western Daily Press*, January 28, 1910, 6.

⁴¹ Mansfield House Residents, *Life at Mansfield House* (London: Mansfield House, 1892).

⁴² Minutes of the Executive Committee June 1890–September 23 1896, C/AM/3/1/10/1 [30/4], Mansfield House University Settlement, Newham Archive and Local Studies Library, London.

⁴³ Minutes of the Executive Committee June 1890–September 23 1896, Executive Committee Meeting, January 18, 1894, Mansfield House University Settlement, C/AM/3/1/10/1 [30/4], Newham Archive and Local Studies Library, London.

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Executive Committee June 1890–September 23 1896, Executive Committee Meeting, June 28, 1894, Mansfield House University Settlement, C/AM/3/1/10/1 [30/4], Newham Archive and Local Studies Library, London.

⁴⁵ Minutes of Annual General Meetings, September 23, 1896–December 10, 1924, Mansfield House University Settlement, C/AM/3/1/6/1 [28/6], Newham Archive and Local Studies Library, London.

⁴⁶ Mansfield House University Settlement in East London, 4th Annual Report, September 30, 1894, Mansfield House University Settlement, C/AM/3/2/1/3, Newham Archive and Local Studies Library, London.

⁴⁷ Winter, *Analysis and Interpretation of Lives*.

⁴⁸ Scotland, *Squires in the Slums*.

⁴⁹ Emma Shepley, “The Haslemere Context” in *The Lost Arts of Europe: The Haslemere Collection of European Arts*, ed. David Crossley and Lou Taylor (Haslemere: Haslemere Educational Museum, 2000).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Stuart Macdonald, *A Century of Arts and Design Education: From Arts and Crafts to Conceptual Art* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2005).

⁵² Myzelev, “Craft Revival in Haslemere.”

⁵³ The Peasant Arts Fellowship, *Peasant Arts Fellowship Papers No 1* (London: The Vineyard Press, 1911), 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁶ Ethel Blount and Maude E. King, *Our Experience of the Influences of Handicraft Upon the Workers*, *Peasant Arts Fellowship Papers No 10* (London: The Vineyard Press, 1913).

⁵⁷ Kate Sperling, *My First Year’s Work for the Peasant Arts Fellowship*, *Peasant Arts Fellowship Papers No 13* (London: The Vineyard Press, 1913).

⁵⁸ Diana Hawkes, preface to *The Lost Arts of Europe: The Haslemere Collection of European Arts* ed. David Crossley and Lou Taylor (Haslemere: Haslemere Educational Museum, 2000), 2.

⁵⁹ Greville MacDonald, *Reminiscences of a Specialist* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932), 375.

⁶⁰ Shepley, “The Haslemere Context,” 5.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Letter, Joseph King to E.W.Swanton, May 6, 1939, LD.5.102, Haslemere Educational Museum (Library and Archive), Haslemere, Surrey.

⁶³ Letter, Joseph King to May Morris, November 6, 1936 (postmark), Haslemere Educational Museum (Library and Archive), Haslemere, Surrey.

- ⁶⁴ Joseph King, *A Handbook to the Peasant Arts Section of the Haslemere Educational Museum* (Haslemere: The Haslemere Educational Museum, 1927).
- ⁶⁵ Manuscript of Lecture “Iceland’s History and National Traditions”, to be given on 10th March 1937, Joseph King, LD.5.1025, Haslemere Educational Museum (Library and Archive), Haslemere, Surrey.
- ⁶⁶ E.W.Swanton, *A Country Museum: The Rise and Progress of Sir Jonathan Hutchinson’s Educational Museum at Haslemere* (Haslemere: Haslemere Educational Museum, 1947).
- ⁶⁷ MacDonald, *Reminiscences of a Specialist*.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 375.
- ⁶⁹ Peasant Arts Fellowship, *First Public Meeting of the Peasant Arts Fellowship*, Peasant Arts Fellowship Papers No 9 (London: The Vineyard Press, 1913).
- ⁷⁰ Draft of lecture “A Peasant’s Arts Museum: Its characteristics and values”, approx. date 1925, Joseph King, LD.5.977, Haslemere Educational Museum (Library and Archive), Haslemere, Surrey.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² “Former MP for North Somerset Dead,” *Western Daily Press*, August 27, 1943, 4.
- ⁷³ Isabelle Anscombe, *Arts and Crafts Style* (London: Phaidon Press, 1991), 215.
- ⁷⁴ Peasant Arts Fellowship, *First Public Meeting of the Peasant Arts Fellowship*.
- ⁷⁵ MacDonald, *Reminiscences of a Specialist*, 382.
- ⁷⁶ Anscombe, *Arts and Crafts Style*.
- ⁷⁷ “The Arts and Crafts Movement”, Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-arts-and-crafts-movement/> (accessed 22 September 2016).
- ⁷⁸ *Surrey County Council Reports 1898*, Surrey County Council, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.
- ⁷⁹ United Kingdom Parliament, *Education Act*, 1902.

⁸⁰ Surrey Education Committee Minutes, March 3, 1903–April 24, 1912, Surrey County Council, CC767/40/1/1, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey; Surrey County Council Reports 1903, Surrey County Council, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.

⁸¹ Surrey County Council Reports 1904, Surrey County Council, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.

⁸² Elementary Sub-Committee Minute Book, March 24, 1903–June 30, 1905, CC767/40/3/1, Surrey County Council, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.

⁸³ “Surrey County Council Elections: The Nominations,” The Surrey Mirror and County Post, February 26, 1904, 5.

⁸⁴ “Onlooker”, “Topic of the Day,” The Surrey Mirror and County Post, August 21, 1908, 5.

⁸⁵ Joseph King, The School Manager (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 26.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁷ Joseph King, “The Surrey County Council”, The Surrey Mirror, December 28, 1906, 3.

⁸⁸ Hattersley, David Lloyd George.

⁸⁹ Joseph King, “Nonconformists and Education in Surrey,” Surrey Mirror, July 31, 1903, 7.

⁹⁰ “Dorking British Schools: The Annual Meeting: Speeches by Lord Farber and Mr. Joseph King,” Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, March 28, 1903, 5.

⁹¹ Onlooker, “Topics of the Day,” Surrey Mirror, February 14, 1908, 5.

⁹² Joseph King, Letter, Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, January 26, 1907, 8.

⁹³ A.W.Chapman, Letter, Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, January 19, 1907, 7.

⁹⁴ “Surrey Men at the Polls: Successes and Defeats,” Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, January 29, 1910, 4.

⁹⁵ “Onlooker”, “Topics of the Day,” Surrey Mirror, August 21, 1908, 5.

⁹⁶ Joseph King, Letter, Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, January 19, 1907, 7.

- ⁹⁷ Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*. Volume II 1886–1918. A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1978).
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ “Mr King MP asked to retire,” *The Times*, March 7, 1917, 3.
- ¹⁰⁰ “Attitude of Mr J. King MP to the Government: Resignations from the local Liberal Association,” *Manchester Guardian*, April 14, 1916, 10.
- ¹⁰¹ “An Indiscreet MP – Letter that mentioned munitions – Penalty £125,” *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 21, 1916, 4.
- ¹⁰² Stenton and Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*.
- ¹⁰³ Ian Packer, *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–1915* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁵ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, April 13, 1910, vol 16 cc1245–6; United Kingdom; *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, May 8, 1912, vol 38 cc399–400; United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, May 14, 1912, vol 38 cc981–1092.
- ¹⁰⁶ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, October 24, 1912, vol 42 cc2394–5 W; United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, December 10, 1912, vol 45 cc228–9.
- ¹⁰⁷ Joseph King, *Filius Nullius (Nobody's Child)* (London: St Catherine's Press, 1913).
- ¹⁰⁸ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, April 10, 1913, vol 51 c1505.
- ¹⁰⁹ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, July 18, 1916, vol 84 c956.
- ¹¹⁰ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, March 10, 1911, vol 22 cc1789–80.
- ¹¹¹ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, March 7, 1912, vol 35 c587.
- ¹¹² Joseph King, “The “Social Taint” in Primary Schools,” *The Times*, May 16, 1913, 10.
- ¹¹³ United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, July 27 1914, vol 65 cc908–9.

- ¹¹⁴ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, April 10, 1913, vol 51 cc1501–8.
- ¹¹⁵ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, June 6, 1912, vol 39 cc398–421.
- ¹¹⁶ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, April 24, 1913, vol 52 cc525–9.
- ¹¹⁷ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, March 18, 1918, vol 104 c774.
- ¹¹⁸ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, March 18, 1918, vol 104 c775.
- ¹¹⁹ “North Somerset Liberals: The Annual Meeting Address by Mr J. King,” Western Daily Press, April 24, 1911, 3.
- ¹²⁰ “By the Way,” Portsmouth Evening News, November 5, 1934, 6.
- ¹²¹ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, June 30, 1910, vol 18 c1203.
- ¹²² “Parliament in Profile: ‘The Buffoon of the House’,” Lincolnshire Echo, January 25, 1913, 4.
- ¹²³ John Foster Fraser, “Peeps in Parliament,” Cheltenham Looker-On, June 29, 1912, 5.
- ¹²⁴ “The Mad Hatter,” Daily Mirror, December 3, 1915, 12.
- ¹²⁵ “Parliament in Profile: “The Buffoon of the House”,” January 25, 1913, 4.
- ¹²⁶ “Somerset MP Fined £100. Mr. Joseph King’s Grave Offence. Breach of Defence of the Realm Act. How He Escaped Going to Gaol,” Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser, October 25, 1916, 1.
- ¹²⁷ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, May 30, 1918, vol 106 c1028.
- ¹²⁸ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, June 30, 1910, vol 18 c1207.
- ¹²⁹ “Big Gathering at Council Schools: Mr. King and the Irish”, Western Daily Press, May 2, 1910, 5.
- ¹³⁰ Joseph King, “Cabinet Government,” The Times, October 22, 1913, 10.
- ¹³¹ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, March 18, 1918, vol 104 c776; United Kingdom Parliament, Education Act, 1918, clause 26.
- ¹³² United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, July 15, 1918, vol 108 c749.

- ¹³³ United Kingdom Parliament, Education Act, 1918, clause 19.
- ¹³⁴ Kevin Brehony, "Stat och förskola i England och Wales, 1900-1918," in *Förskolans aktörer: Stat, kär och individ i förskolans historia*, ed. Johannes Westberg (Uppsala: Författarna, 2011), 23–47.
- ¹³⁵ United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, July 1, 1918, vol 107 cc 1475–89.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid.
- ¹³⁷ Palmer, "Nursery Schools or Nursery Classes?"
- ¹³⁸ Letter, Pelham to Phipps, April 13, 1918, Board of Education and predecessors: Private Office: Papers (Series 1), ED 24 760, National Archives, Kew; Letter, Dale to Phipps, May 10, 1918, Board of Education and predecessors: Private Office: Papers (Series 1) ED 24 760, National Archives, Kew.
- ¹³⁹ Michael Rush, *The Role of the Member of Parliament since 1868: From Gentlemen to Players* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- ¹⁴⁰ Prime Minister's Office and David Cameron, "David Cameron announces 31 new free schools on final visit as Prime Minister", press release, July 12, 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/david-cameron-announces-31-new-free-schools-on-final-visit-as-prime-minister>; "House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 06972, 14 October 2015: Faith Schools: FAQs", Robert Lang and Paul Bolton, www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn06972.pdf (accessed 22 September 2016).

Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by

Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#) [Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#)

[Accessibility](#)

 Taylor and Francis Group

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG