

ISLE AND EMPIRES

*ROMANOV RUSSIA, BRITAIN
AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT*

STEPHAN ROMAN

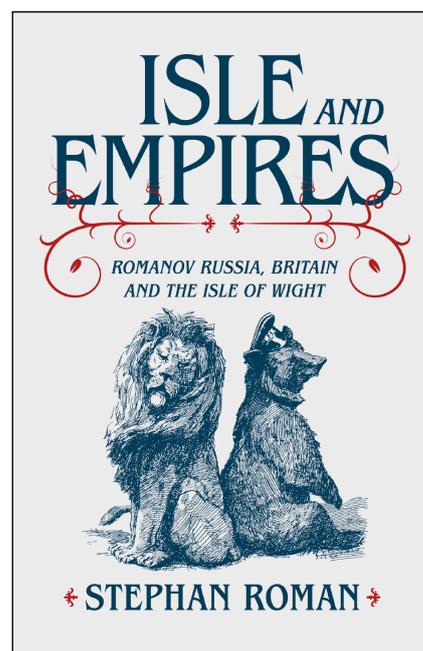
The tumultuous story of the Romanovs and their enigmatic relationship with Britain is brought to life in Stephan Roman's *Isle and Empires*, as he explores the misunderstandings, suspicions and alliances that created an uneasy partnership between two of the world's most powerful Empires.

The Isle of Wight was at the heart of this relationship, an island off the south coast of England that intimately linked the British royal family and the Romanovs. Peter the Great drew inspiration for the first Russian naval fleet from his sailing trips around the Island, and Alexander I was immortalised by a hilltop monument built for him on St Catherine's Down. Alexander II's beloved only daughter, Grand Duchess Maria, spent many years at Osborne House infuriating and irritating her mother-in-law, Queen Victoria. In contrast to the Isle of Wight's imperial and royal connections, Russian revolutionaries also made it their home, establishing a summer colony of radical political thinkers and writers in Ventnor.

In August 1909 the Island hosted the Russian Imperial family during their visit to Cowes Week, then the most glamorous yachting regatta in Europe's social calendar. A new era of Anglo-Russian collaboration was dawning and seemed destined to become a dominant force in 20th century global politics. The Tsar's visit to Cowes was deliberately intended to set the seal on this new alliance. Less than ten years later, the Romanovs had been overthrown, and the British government and royal family stood accused of denying them a safe refuge in Britain.

Isle and Empires is a journey into a world of Imperial glory and power, family rivalry, wars, intrigue and alliances. It is also a story of Russia's revolutionaries, spies and terrorists, and the refugees fleeing Tsarist oppression who found shelter and safety both in mainland Britain and on the Isle of Wight. These events reverberate to the present day and much of what happened when the Romanovs ruled Russia continues to set the pattern for the current relationship between the two countries.

Stephan Roman studied History at the University of Oxford and trained in library and information science at the University of Sheffield. He has held senior positions in the British Council working in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. He became a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George in 2012 and was awarded the Romanian Order of Merit for Services to Culture in 2004.



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