

Spain sent armada after Welsh spy tip from Hugh Owen

Isambard
Wilkinson, Madrid

Friday February 19
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The Times



Hugh Owen influenced the sending of at least one armada against England between 1585 and 1604

ALAMY

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A Welsh spymaster and his network of Elizabethan Catholics used court moles to give Spain intelligence about England's forces and played a hand in an attempted invasion.

Hugh Owen influenced the sending of at [least one armada against England](#) and handed Philip II of Spain copies of government documents, according to a study by Jonathan Roche, of the

University of Nottingham. Roche's work, based on Owen's reports in Spanish archives, suggests that the espionage had an impact on Spanish military strategy during the Anglo-Spanish War from 1585 to 1604. Owen's network included Jesuits and a double agent said to have worked for the Earl of Essex.

“We remember Elizabethan Catholics as martyrs, executed brutally for practising their faith, or as terrorists hell-bent on re-establishing the Catholic church in England through extreme acts such as the Gunpowder Plot, but the discovery of this English Catholic spy network and the intelligence it sent to Spain highlights a far more subtle and sophisticated method through which English Catholics sought to realise their dream,” Roche said.



Philip II's third armada, inspired by Hugh Owen, came within miles of Cornwall in 1597 but was thwarted by the weather
ALAMY

In 1597 Owen, who co-ordinated his network

from Brussels where he had fled after his part in the Ridolfi Plot to assassinate Elizabeth I, told Spain that Essex had taken most of the frontline fleet to the Azores to intercept a treasure fleet, leaving England undefended.

His report led to the immediate deployment of the third Spanish Armada, which failed only because of storms off the Scilly Isles. “The Armada of 1597 came within miles of landing in Cornwall and, if it weren’t for a storm, who knows what might have happened?” Roche said.

Papers that may have pointed to his involvement in the first armada, of 1588, have been lost. In 1605 London accused Owen of involvement in the Gunpowder Plot and demanded his extradition from the Spanish Netherlands. He was arrested but his Spanish protectors freed him. He died in exile in Rome in his eighties.

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Comments (79)



J

Add to the conversation...

J

June Kirk 6 MINUTES AGO

Living the comments today! Let's thank whoever you pray to, that they didn't succeed. Instead of renaissance and our scientific excellence to come, we'd have had the Inquisition. Don't you just love Henry VIII - yeah I know armada was later, before you reply!

Reply

Recommend

Report

J

June Kirk

6 MINUTES AGO | ← June Kirk

S

Seizeherinfamy 1 HOUR AGO

Loving not living - bloody spell check! Cornish weather turned the Spanish visitors back!

Reply

Recommend

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2 Recommend

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N

Nick Ratcliffe

2 MINUTES AGO | ← Seizeherinfamy

Still does.

P

Paul C 1 HOUR AGO

Some funny comments today. Worth a read.

Reply

Recommend

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Recommend

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H

Hev 1 HOUR AGO

A spy ring against England based in Brussels.....Plus ca change !!!

Reply

38 Recommend

Report



Pedlar 1 HOUR AGO

I had no idea there had been a third armada. Nor had I any idea that, presumably, that means there was a second? Must do a bit of googling...

Reply

12 Recommend

Report



Thomas Young

31 MINUTES AGO | Pedlar

Is your first name Dominic?



David Gard 2 HOURS AGO

Reply

Recommend

I imagine that 16th century Catholic's would have been, if transposed to the 21st century, avid Remainer's.

Reply

13 Recommend

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Maddie 2 HOURS AGO | David Gard

Pointless comment

Reply

7 Recommend

Report



2Twin 2 HOURS AGO | Maddie

Not really, it was humorous. Possibly accurate too!

Reply

3 Recommend

Report



Tanjore 2 HOURS AGO | [← David Gard](#)

No, the 16th century catholics were campaigning to go back to the good old days (even though the good old days never really existed) and were lying and being sneaky and getting foreign help to achieve their aims of a worse Britain. It's a perfect analogy for brexit.

[Reply](#) 15 [★ Recommend](#)
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2Twin 2 HOURS AGO | [← Tanjore](#)

“lying and being sneaky and getting foreign help” defines Remainers!

[Reply](#) 6 [★ Recommend](#)
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james S 46 MINUTES AGO | [← 2Twin](#)

You've destroyed the economy.

[Reply](#) [★ Recommend](#)
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Howard Gleave
24 MINUTES AGO | [← Tanjore](#)

Apart from the fact that the investigation of the allegation of Cambridge Analytica collusion with Russia found no evidence at all.

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David Gard 2 HOURS AGO | [← Tanjore](#)

You had to crowbar that scenario in to fit.

[Reply](#) 9 [★ Recommend](#)

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Nick Ratcliffe 1 MINUTE AGO | [← David Gard](#)



Jeremy Westhead 3 HOURS AGO
Suppose your illiteracy is an indication of your intelligence?
Sophisticated traitors are more like

[Reply](#) [Reply](#) [★ Recommend](#) [Report](#)

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John Rhys-Davies 2 HOURS AGO



David Bridge 49 SECONDS AGO | [← Nick Ratcliffe](#)
I find it astonishing that my comment is awaiting approval.

[Reply](#) 1 [★ Recommend](#) [Report](#)

There may be an errant apostrophe which does not signify illiteracy I

wonder what faux intellectual



John Rhys-Davies 2 HOURS AGO | [← John Rhys-Davies](#)
superiority signifies?
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There often seems to be no rhyme or reason as to why a comment is held



Tony Perryman 49 SECONDS AGO | [← Nick Ratcliffe](#)
up. I have discovered that we can say
“bugger” though. Seems the software is American and they don't know what But they were in the minority it means.

[Reply](#) 1 [★ Recommend](#)

[Report](#) 11 [★ Recommend](#)

[Report](#)



Oldstead Show 1 previous replies | [← David Gard](#) 35 MINUTES AGO

Oh for God's sake give it a rest.

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[Report](#)



Thomas Young

Bordergrump | [← David Gard](#)

29 MINUTES AGO | [← Jake](#)

Either that or just pro-freedom of speech and religion. So you can! Well, bugger the cat they can't have that.

[Reply](#) [★ Recommend](#)

[Report](#) | [★ Recommend](#)

[Report](#)



causam dico

Jake | [← Thomas Young](#)

In Catholicism? You're 'avin' a larf!

[Reply](#) [★ Recommend](#)

Haven't felt so free since my school abolished caps and I fed mine to a goat on the way home! True story.

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[Report](#)



Oldstead | [← Jake](#)

I once had a post blocked automatically because I used a four letter word for excrement. Even though that very word was used in the article without any deletions. I reposted using shIt instead and it got through.

Worth noting that in the article the offending word was used to describe the Prime Minister.

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Jake | [← Oldstead](#)

He is a piece of cap.

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[Report](#)



Thomas Young

25 MINUTES AGO | Oldstead

An article about Winnie the Pooh?

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[Report](#)



Just-a-Bloke

26 MINUTES AGO | Jake

You can't say f * g sorry cigarette paper : I was painfully deleted yesterday

[Reply](#) [Recommend](#)

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Jake

21 MINUTES AGO | Just-a-Bloke

Take a look at my comments about Gerard Baker's column today. He correctly used the N-word but then, redundantly, went on to say it rhymed



De Nada

2 HOURS AGO | [with "bigger"](#).

It seems we were sold short and life would have been ~~lowered to battle for it~~ ~~if it had been there~~, any ~~Welsh/Carnegie/Spiral~~ ~~Victory~~ ~~lasting~~ ~~to the glory that is the Hyde Park~~ ~~included~~.

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GrubStreetGeezer
Tony Perryman

2 HOURS AGO | John Rhys-Davies
49 MINUTES AGO | De Nada | Edited

There is beyond doubt a roaming Perhaps News of Ten would have been comment sniper, which picks off at introduced , Noson Dda o Brifddinas random entirely inoffensive posts. Caerdydd. Now that would have been Some eventually are approved, but a joyous event. others just vanish without trace.

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G Gareth Jones 1 HOUR AGO | De Nada

Have you noticed that there are tabs

A Aidan 24 SECONDS AGO | John Rhys-Davies
for Scotland and Ireland but not for Wales? Looks like we'll just have make I suspect the 'Rhys' in your name has do with old news.

set alarm bells ringing and background checks are currently underway.

Have you holidayed in Spain recently

N Nick Ratcliffe 16 SECONDS AGO | De Nada

R Redmond 3 HOURS AGO
Oh dear. Really?

if it weren't for a storm, who knows what might have happened?" Roche said.

Sequence-of-tense-nazi alert!

J Just-a-Bloke 7 HOURS AGO | John Rhys-Davies

J John Adsett 33 MINUTES AGO | De Nada
If it hadn't been for a storm
Maybe the delay is because your name suggests you may be welsh snd your IP or just tedium?

W Wilberforce 1 HOUR AGO | Redmond | Edited

is in Brussels..... kidding :)
"Had it not been for a storm..." would have been even better. "Were it not for a storm..." better still.

Reply 6 Recommend Report

M Mr Steven French 25 MINUTES AGO | Redmond

T trevor crow 3 HOURS AGO | Edited
if my aunty had testicles, she'd be
Enough of the history of the defeat of the

Amanda by Elizabeth I, perhaps one of the most important events in British history.

Did Essex own slaves?

And if he did shouldn't we rename the country?

Reply 18 Recommend Report



Paul C | 1 HOUR AGO | trevor crow

And whatever would TOWIE have been called!!

Reply | Recommend
 Report



Oldstead | 27 MINUTES AGO | Paul C

The same. The Only Way Is Eisteddfod.

Reply | 2 Recommend
 Report



Rob36Ev | 1 HOUR AGO | trevor crow

Just wondering what was in your post before you edited it, but was it a fight between Amanda and Liz, or perhaps something more ladylike?

Whatever, but Essex must have realised it was a high stakes match to wager changing England's name on the result, any idea?

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J **John Rhys Davies** 7 HOURS AGO
33 MINUTES AGO | ← Rob36Ev | Edited
Treason. There was a real threat to England
I originally wrote
from catholics like Owen, and the spy-catchers
were not just torturing innocents. Even in our
time and my industry there is still a breathless
reverence paid to the Hollywood Blacklisters
like Trumbo and the recently deceased
Bernstein. They were wonderful writers but
they were committed to the overthrow of the
United States government and Constitution, at
the service of a foreign government. If they had

T **Tom Bloomfield** 7 HOURS AGO
hundreds of thousands of dead Americans.
Gunpowder plot "Elizabethan"? I think not.
They all got off lightly.
Spain had slaves more in
the Caribbean than the English. I

M **Mark Thomson** 7 HOURS AGO
don't see anti-slavery agitation in
Spain, though. ← Tom Bloomfield
Study history? I think not.
Report Reply 6 Recommend Report

K **Kechria** 49 MINUTES AGO | ← Mark Thomson
Elizabeth I (7 September 1533 - 24
March 1603)[a] was Queen of England
and Ireland from 17 November 1558
until her death on 24 March **1603**.
The Gunpowder Plot was in **1605**. Post
elizabeth.
Report Reply Recommend Report

R **Richard Jackson** 7 HOURS AGO
Noone expected the Spanish Inquisition
Report Reply 9 Recommend Report



Mark Thomson

2Twin 11 MINUTES AGO | ← Kechria

1 HOUR AGO | ← Richard Jackson

Irony, literary device used for
“Noone” or “No one”
humourous or comedic effect - circa

5th Century BC Recommend

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Mark Doggett 9 HOURS AGO

A successful Spanish conquest and occupation
might have spared Britain from centuries of
Spotted Dick. This is no small thing.

Reply

12 Recommend

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2Twin 1 HOUR AGO | ← Mark Doggett

End.ess paella instead? No thanks!

Reply

4 Recommend

Report



Halfords Laner

1 HOUR AGO | ← 2Twin

I'd prefer an endless paella pan to a
magic porridge pot any day of the
week!

Reply

3 Recommend

Report



2Twin 1 HOUR AGO | ← Halfords Laner

Everyman has his own poison!

Reply

Recommend

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