

Henry Fielding was born at Sharpham in Somerset on April 22nd, 1707. His most famous and well loved work is *Tom Jones*. A classic. Fielding's history is certainly colourful and rich in texture. A novelist and playwright, he was not averse to causing controversy or even scandal but he was also a magistrate and helped to establish the Police force. He was educated at Eton College, where he established a lifelong friendship with William Pitt the Elder. After a few romantic problems he journeyed to London to establish a literary career. By 1728 he was off to Leiden to study classics and law. Funds did not last too long and he was forced to return to London and to begin writing for the theatre. Much of his work was witheringly critical of Sir Robert Walpole's government. His satires were always on the edge and the Establishment was not amused. The Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737 seems to have Fielding's activities as one of its targets. Once the Act passed, political satire on the stage was almost impossible. Fielding retired from the theatre and resumed his career in law and, in order to support his wife Charlotte Craddock, whom he had married in 1734, and children, he became a barrister. His lack of financial sense meant that he and his family often endured periods of poverty, but he was helped by Ralph Allen, a wealthy benefactor who later formed the basis of Squire Allworthy in *Tom Jones*. When Charlotte died in 1744 they had produced five children but only one, Henrietta, survived (and she only until age 23). Three years after Charlottes death, disregarding public opinion, he married her former maid, Mary Daniel, who was also pregnant. Society was not impressed but it certainly was in character. Mary bore five children, three daughters who died young and sons William and Allen. Despite the scandal, his consistent anti-Jacobitism and support for the Church of England it led to him being rewarded a year later with the position of Londons Chief Magistrate, and his literary career went from strength to strength. Joined by his younger half-brother John, he helped found what some have called Londons first police force, the Bow Street Runners, in 1749. That same year he published what was to be his literary masterpiece *Tom Jones* together with *From This World To The Next*. It was quite a year. According to the historian G. M. Trevelyan, the Fieldings *were* two of the best magistrates in eighteenth-century London, and did a great deal to enhance the cause of judicial reform and improve prison conditions. His influential pamphlets and enquiries included a proposal for the abolition of public hangings, though he seemed to have less reservation if these were in private. Fielding started a fortnightly periodical titled *The Covent-Garden Journal*, which he would publish under the pseudonym of Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knt. Censor of Great Britain until November of the same year. In this periodical, Fielding directly challenged the armies of Grub Street and the contemporary periodical writers of the day in a conflict that would eventually become the Paper War of 1752-3. He then published *Examples of the interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder* (1752), a treatise in which, rejecting the deistic and materialistic visions of the world, he wrote in favor of the belief in Gods presence and divine judgement,] arguing that the rise of murder rates was due to neglect of the Christian religion. Fieldings commitment to the cause of justice as a great humanitarian in the 1750s coincided with a rapid deterioration in his health. This continued to such an extent that he went abroad to Portugal in 1754 in search of a cure for his gout, asthma and other afflictions. Henry fielding died in Lisbon two months later on October 8th, 1754. He is buried in the citys English Cemetery (Cemiterio Ingles), which is now the graveyard of St. Georges Church, Lisbon.

*The Natural and Supernatural or Man Physical, Apparitional and Spiritual*, Aldo Bakker, Nathan Coley, Total Workday Control Using Microsoft Outlook, Historical Sketches V3 (1897),

Henry Fielding - From This World To The Next: I am content; that is a blessing greater than riches; and he to whom that is given need ask no more.

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