

By reference to British values, what are the best values for humans to aspire to?

In late July 2025, I launched a campaign called ‘Bar2Bar’: a 323-mile cycle challenge between Barsham in Suffolk and Barmouth in Wales over 6.5 days. I did this to crowdfund my living expenses for my upcoming year studying the Bar Course in London, after all other efforts to either raise or borrow the funds had failed. With my future at the Bar of England and Wales in the balance, I raised a modest budget to complete the challenge from additional cash tips I receive in my current job. Buoyed up by the encouragement of family and friends, I spoke up about my story online for others to see, and perhaps even be inspired by.

Much like the cycle challenge itself, this essay is unconventional. It is, in part, a reflection on my experiences cycling across central Britain. It is also a formal case for three ‘British’ values I believe all humans should aspire to, drawing on the real people and places I encountered. Each section sits in fruitful dialogue with one of the Three Pillars informing Sikh jurisprudence, as formalised by Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

The ‘British’ values I have selected are as follows: first, collective recognition of the dignity of different homes, livelihoods and communities (corresponding with *Kirat Karō*; ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰੋ); second, living beyond ourselves as individuals, and as a species, through environment stewardship (*Nām Japō*; ਨਾਮ ਜਪੋ); third, a culture of service and ‘paying forward’ knowledge, opportunities and good fortune to others (*Vanḍ Chakō*; ਵੰਡ ਛਕੋ).

These values are not unique to Britain. Britain has countless unique characteristics and traditions worth cherishing, but I am not satisfied that any values are uniquely British. Nevertheless, I refer to these values as ‘British,’ as each section is grounded in a social history which binds the nations together and is worthy of our care and attention.

I: Dignity (*Kirat Karō*)

‘[T]he house of every one is to him as his Castle and Fortress as well for defence against injury and violence, as for his repose.’¹

-- Edward Coke, b.1552 in Mileham, Norfolk (1604)

An Englishman’s home is his castle, as the proverb goes. Few know that this famous saying originated at the Bar, in a 1604 judgment given by Sir Edward Coke. Primarily, it is an expression of privacy and autonomy: simple yet fundamental rights under English common law. Early American jurists seized upon the ‘castle’ element: the right to defend one’s home, including by force.² The enduring appeal of this proverb in Britain, however, reflects a quieter, more rounded interpretation of Coke’s original statement. By connecting home, livelihood and community to ancient legal principles, Coke enshrines legal power and fundamental dignity into these aspects of everyday life. British legal commentary reflects this broader interpretation. According to Lord Denning, Pitt the Elder famously echoed Coke’s words in a Parliamentary speech of 1763, stating:

¹ *Semayne’s Case* [1604] 77 E.R. 194; accessed via <<https://vlex.co.uk/vid/r-v-semaynes-semayne-802159885>>.

² For more information on the American ‘castle doctrine’, see <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/castle_doctrine>.

*'[the] poorest man may, in his cottage, bid defiance to all the force of the Crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storm may enter; but all his force dares not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement.'*³

For Pitt the Elder, the dignity of one's home and an honest living are unassailable features of British life, irrespective of material wealth or success. This broadly reflects the difference between American and British interpretations of Coke's words. The American tradition takes Coke at face value: the home is a 'castle' to be defended. The British tradition examines the ideas underpinning it: a 'house' can only be a 'castle' in a community that recognises it as such. Coke's concept of a home is broader than a single 'fortress'; it implies a community built on strong bonds of mutual respect. Without this underlying foundation of dignity, there can be no individual 'castle.'

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*'We all need space; unless we have it we cannot reach that sense of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us gently.'*⁴

-- Octavia Hill, b.1838 in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire (1875)

The longest individual leg of the cycle challenge was on Day 1: from Barsham to Wisbech, a market town in north-east Cambridgeshire. Wisbech is the birthplace of one of history's greatest yet unsung Britons: Octavia Hill. Where Coke and Pitt the Elder articulated the dignity of even the 'poorest man' in the 'ruined tenement,' social reformers like Hill gave real substance to that dignity by improving living conditions for all.

³ William Pitt, Parliamentary speech (March 1763), quoted in Lord Brougham, *Historical Sketches of Statesmen in the Time of George III* (1845), vol.1. Quoted by Denning MR in *Southam v Smout* [1964] 1 QB 308 at [320].

⁴ Octavia Hill, 'Space for the People', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 32.190 (August 1875), 328-333 (p.332).

Octavia Hill's childhood coincided with the greatest period of social upheaval in British history to date: the Industrial Revolution. Real wages for working people doubled between 1819 and 1851; however, the unforgiving pace of economic transformation led to spiralling poverty rates.⁵ Hill was both witness to, and victim of, this febrile economy. Raised in a 'comfortable townhouse,' Octavia's father was later 'declared bankrupt [...] and subsequently abandoned his wife and children.'⁶ Aged 14, Octavia saw the consequences of abject poverty in her first job at the 'Ladies Guild, a Christian [...] co-operative' in London.⁷ This sparked a lifelong mission to affect change. Over multiple decades, Hill built an innovative social housing scheme by purchasing 'neglected and decaying' properties, 'overhauling them and transforming their tenants' lives.'⁸ Hill's scheme was unprecedented for two reasons: first, it was compassionate and socially progressive; second, to the bewilderment of her landlord contemporaries, it was an attractive and profitable investment opportunity.⁹ By 1874, Hill's scheme covered '[3000] tenancies around London.'¹⁰ Hill's social housing legacy continues through Octavia Housing, a charity providing 'homes, support and care for people in central and west London.'¹¹

⁵ Clark Nardinelli, 'Industrial Revolution and the Standard of Living', Econlib Economic History Collection Online, at paragraph 4. Accessed via: <<https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/IndustrialRevolutionandtheStandardofLiving.html>>.

⁶ William Whyte, 'Octavia Hill: her life and legacy', National Trust website, at paragraph 4. Accessed via: <<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/history/people/octavia-hill-her-life-and-legacy>>.

⁷ Ibid, at paragraph 5.

⁸ Ibid, at paragraph 7.

⁹ For more information, see Peter Malpass, 'Octavia Hill', in *Founders of the Welfare State*, 1st edn (ed. by Paul Barker), (London: Heinemann, 1984), pp. 31-36.

¹⁰ William Whyte, Op. cit., at paragraph 9.

¹¹ For further information about the ongoing work of Octavia Housing, see: <<https://www.octaviahousing.org.uk/about-octavia-housing>>.

Octavia Hill's commitment to improving universal living standards not only meant renovating existing buildings, but also curtailing relentless development. Working with a solicitor named Robert Hunter, Hill successfully campaigned for the preservation of vital green spaces across the capital, including Parliament Hill Fields, Vauxhall Park and Hilly Fields.¹² Over 130 years later, these public parks continue to provide free, accessible open space in Central London. It is well documented that such spaces, and greenness in general, are conducive to increased creativity and improved mental and physical health, with a disproportionately positive effect among disadvantaged communities.¹³

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*'I need these housing associations [...] to know I have no intention of going absolutely anywhere until it's sorted.'*¹⁴

-- Kwajo Tweneboa, b.1998 in Lambeth, London (2022)

Hill's legacy as a social housing reformer reverberates right down to the present day, her dynamism and compassion reflected in the work of contemporary British charities relieving homelessness, including Shelter, St Mungo's and Centrepont. Her unyielding commitment to social justice is heard in the demands of Karim Mussilhy, vice chairman of Grenfell United, for a stronger accountability framework after 'negligence, greed and institutional failure' caused the devastating, and utterly avoidable, Grenfell Tower fire eight years ago.¹⁵ Hill's fierce written advocacy can be seen in the tenacious Twitter campaigns of Kwajo Tweneboa,

¹² William Whyte, Op. cit., at paragraph 13.

¹³ Rebecca S. Geary et al., 'Ambient greenness, access to local green spaces, and subsequent mental health: a 10-year longitudinal dynamic panel study of 2.3 million adults in Wales', *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 7.10 (October 2023), 809-818 (p.809).

¹⁴ For more information, see: <<https://guap.co/i-can-only-stop-when-im-no-longer-getting-dms-from-tenants-how-kwajo-tweneboa-is-holding-housing-associations-across-the-uk-accountable/>>.

¹⁵ Karim Mussilhy quoted by Ayshea Buksh and James McCarthy, 'Call for justice eight years on from Grenfell fire', BBC News, 15 June 2025, at paragraph 9. Accessed via: <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1dederw1w5o#:~:text=London%20monuments%20were%20lit%20up,disaster%20a%20%22forgotten%20scandal%22>>. For more information about Grenfell United, see: <<https://grenfellunited.org.uk/about-us>>.

whose experiences of poorly maintained temporary accommodation prompted him to shame housing associations into action via social media, to great (positive) effect.¹⁶

Tweneboa and Hill's lives embody the first 'British' value I believe all humans should aspire to: eschewing individualism and striving to recognise the dignity of different livelihoods and communities. Their unrelenting work to improve universal living standards typifies the Sikh pillar of *Kirat Karō*. Not only have Hill and Tweneboa dedicated themselves to a pure and honest livelihood, they have also helped others to realise their dream of doing the same. Hill's non-exploitative rental system provided a model for a sustainable business free from greed and corruption, prioritising the fundamental dignity and spiritual worth of others regardless of their material means. Meanwhile, when offered an MBE for his activism in 2023, Tweneboa respectfully declined the honorific, stating that he 'could not accept [...] receiving a title off the back of an issue, which realistically, should never have existed.'¹⁷ If an Englishman's home is truly his castle, it is only through the arduous work of these individuals and organisations – and many others I am regrettably unable to include – that Coke's original words retain their relevance in contemporary Britain. Coke's words set a benchmark for what must yet change to ensure that each British citizen is of equal voice and dignity.

II: Empathy (*Nām Japō*)

¹⁶ For more information about Tweneboa's campaigns, see: <<https://www.orwellfoundation.com/homelessness/kwajo-tweneboa/>>.

¹⁷ For Tweneboa's original LinkedIn publication, see: <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kwajo-tweneboa-6b0236b6_last-month-i-was-offered-an-mbe-i-made-activity-7075741306056011776-oHQy>.

*'[To] think deeply about the future is necessarily to consider the legacies we are leaving [...] "Are we being good ancestors?"'*¹⁸

-- Robert Macfarlane, b.1976 in Halam, Nottinghamshire (2021)

During my cycle challenge, I encountered 32 different rivers: centuries-old names like Mease, Gwash and Vyrnwy that were entirely new to me. Tracing these rivers, my mind would often turn to the devastating statistic, published last year, that only 14% of England's rivers have a 'good' ecological status. None have a good chemical status.¹⁹ I would return to that vital question: are we being good ancestors?

The Sikh pillar of *Nām Japō* (ਨਾਮ ਜਪੋ) invites us to reflect on a broader question: as well as 'good ancestors,' are we being good neighbours to all that surrounds us in the present? Octavia Hill's work to improve social housing and preserve natural spaces was a response to that question. But Hill was not alone in her work. Her efforts relied on the second 'British' value all humans should aspire to: collaboration and empathy. In other words, living beyond ourselves not only as individuals, but as a species.

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*'To apprehend things, walking on a hill, seeing the light change [...] using the whole of one's body to instruct the spirit [...] I am no longer myself, but a part of a life beyond myself.'*²⁰

¹⁸ Emmanuel College, Cambridge, "Are we being good ancestors?" A journey through deep time with Prof Robert Macfarlane, YouTube, 30 June 2021 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_CWIHS5mjM> [01:01-01:28].

¹⁹ Nicola Newson, 'River pollution and the regulation of private water companies', House of Lords Library, 19 February 2024. Accessed via: [<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/river-pollution-and-the-regulation-of-private-water-companies/>].

²⁰ Nan Shepherd, quoted in James McCarthy, 'Nan Shepherd: An Early Geopoet' (The Tony McManus Geopoetics Lecture 2017), available online at: <<https://www.geopoetics.org.uk/the-tony-mcmanus-geopoetics-lecture-nan-shepherd-an-early-geopoet-by-james-mccarthy-heriot-watt-university-18-november-2017/>>.

-- Nan Shepherd, b.1893 in Peterculter, Aberdeen (1940)

The London parks Hill preserved were the genesis of a broader national vision. Together with Robert Hunter and an Anglican priest named Hardwicke Rawnsley, Hill founded the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty in 1895. The National Trust, as it is now called, is a major guardian of the Lake District, and protects some of Britain's most iconic landmarks, including the White Cliffs of Dover, the Giant's Causeway, Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall. It also preserves the homes of certain notable Britons – such as Paul McCartney, Beatrix Potter, Winston Churchill and Isaac Newton – for public access.²¹ The Scottish writer and poet Nan Shepherd, quoted above, was profoundly inspired by walking in Mar Lodge: Britain's largest national nature reserve in the heart of the Cairngorms. Mar Lodge is maintained by the National Trust of Scotland which, although distinct from the National Trust, shares the same core ethos as Hill's creation.

The unspoken triumph of Hill's then-radical philosophy is that, in 2025, we largely take the preservation of these spaces for granted. Yet their accessibility – 'for everyone, for ever,' as the National Trust state – was never guaranteed. Rather, it was the result of tireless campaigning, founded on the core belief that natural spaces are sacred and should be universally accessible to present and future generations. In 2025, Hill's efforts are sustained by a team of over 14,900 employees and over 40,000 volunteers across Britain.²²

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²¹ For more information about the provision of the National Trust, see: <<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/about-us/fascinating-facts-and-figures>>.

²² For more information about the National Trust's employee and volunteer base, see: <<https://www.nationaltrustjobs.org.uk/our-story>>.

*'It is [...] the duty of all of us, to support and protect nature. Our life support system, our interconnectedness, our interdependence.'*²³

-- Dara McAnulty, b.2004 in Newcastle, County Down (2020)

Teamwork, collectivism, community spirit – this second ‘British’ value has many different guises; each captures a collective willingness of people to come together in the interests of shared beneficial outcomes, even when those outcomes will not be felt for generations.

Today, Britons are coming together to deliver positive change on one issue more than any other: safeguarding the environment and biodiversity. Climate change has become an increasingly polarised issue in other Western nations, yet public opinion in Britain remains steadfastly in favour of pro-environmental policies. Such support is exhibited by voters across all main political parties, according to polling by CBI Economics.²⁴

At a time of rampant economic inequality, dismantling of social infrastructure and an acrimonious online and media ecosystem, 81% of Britons over 16 still feel a strong sense of social cohesion in their local area.²⁵ Traditional conceptions of community and identity are not dissolving, but *evolving*. Formal volunteering in Britain has generally declined since the turn of the millennium, yet more British people are taking action to safeguard their local environment than ever before. Between 2000 and 2022, there was a 36% net increase in voluntary conservation activities across all socio-economic groups, 8% of which was

²³ Dara McAnulty, *Diary of a Young Naturalist* (Ford, Dorset: Little Toller, 2020), p.207.

²⁴ For more information about CBI Economics' 2024 report, see: <<https://eciu.net/analysis/reports/2024/the-uks-net-zero-economy-2024>>.

²⁵ For more information about the Department for Culture, Media & Sport's 'Community Life Survey 2023/24: Neighbourhood and community', see: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication/community-life-survey-202324-neighbourhood-and-community#local-area-cohesion>>.

recorded between 2021-22.²⁶ This upsurge, of course, reflects increased global awareness of human-induced climate change. It is also a response to governmental shortcomings, reflected in a string of landmark legal victories by Friends of the Earth in recent years.²⁷ For most Britons, however, this increased sense of environmental responsibility is not purely ecologically minded. Rather, it reflects a quiet yet powerful aspect of British life which algorithmic social media does not amplify: pride in one's community, built on empathy for others.

Cycling across Britain, I witnessed how community pride compounds when it is harnessed into action. In Upton Fen near Norwich, land management volunteers have reintroduced an endangered species of fen orchid which has reversed years of habitat deterioration by promoting biodiversity. The Mersey, once considered 'biologically dead', is now home to almost 40 different species of fish; after decades of collaboration between charities and volunteers, the campaign has been hailed as 'the greatest river recovery in Europe'.²⁸ Prees Heath, a former wartime airfield in Shropshire, has been restored to heathland and provides a vital refuge for rare species of butterfly.²⁹ At the end of my cycle journey in Barmouth, I met locals who have joined Surfers Against Sewage's 'Million Mile Clean-Up,' a grassroots

²⁶ For more information, see: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/england-biodiversity-indicators/taking-action-for-the-environment-volunteer-time-spent-in-conservation#:~:text=The%20amount%20of%20time%20people%20spend%20volunteering,conservation%20activities%20in%20England%20increased%20by%2036%25>>.

²⁷ For more information about Friends of the Earth's successful litigation, see: <<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/legal-and-planning/latest-court-cases>>.

²⁸ For more information about the ecological recovery of the River Mersey, see: <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-68215462>>.

²⁹ For further information about conservation on Prees Heath, see: <<https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/reserves/prees-heath-common-reserve-shropshire>>.

marine conservation project.³⁰ Individually, these volunteers are being good ancestors and neighbours for their immediate community. Collectively, however, their efforts keep environmental issues on the political agenda and drive national change, including a 53% reduction in territorial greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2023 – the fastest major global economy to do so.³¹ By living beyond ourselves, we not only enrich our communities in the present, but safeguard what makes them special for the future.

III: Service (*Vaṇḍ Chakō*)

‘Even in the present overcrowded state of the railways, you can leave your overcoat on the seat and come back ten minutes later to find your place still empty. The other passengers will have respected your prior right to it [...] put a dozen [Britons] together, they form themselves into a queue almost instinctively.’³²

George Orwell, b. 1903 in Motihari, India (1946)

In every town and city I visited on my cycle challenge, I witnessed at least one queue of more than 20 people. Once you become aware of this phenomenon, it is difficult to unsee it. But is

³⁰ For further information about Surfers Against Sewage’s Welsh chapter, see: <<https://www.sas.org.uk/region/wales/>>.

³¹ For more information about decreases in UK territorial GHG emissions, see: <<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6604460f91a320001a82b0fd/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-provisional-figures-statistical-release-2023.pdf>>.

³² George Orwell, *Essays*, ed. by John Carey (London: Everyman’s Library, 2002), pp.1016-7.

Britain truly a nation of queue-lovers, as so many other countries – and perhaps even George Orwell – paint it out to be? The answer, in my view, is a resounding ‘no’.

A queue can signal overwhelming demand, as anyone who has tried (and failed) to secure concert tickets in Britain will know.³³ A queue can also be an expression of solemn respect: the lying-in-state of Queen Elizabeth II attracted a line of such length and duration as to be crowned ‘*The Queue*’ by the world’s media, with an estimated 250,000 people participating over 6 days.³⁴

Despite this, British people bear no great affection for queues. The general existence of a queue is a clear sign that, somewhere in a system, something is not working. What British people *do* like about queues, what makes them tolerable, is their unspoken ideology: if inconvenience must exist, then everyone should be inconvenienced in equal measure. The act of queuing relies on a system of fairness, solidarity and decency. Orwell was not reinforcing a national stereotype, but tracing the third ‘British’ value I believe all humans should aspire to: a culture of service.

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‘We shall never have all we need. Expectations will always exceed capacity. The service must always be changing, growing and improving – it must always be inadequate.’³⁵

Aneurin Bevan, b.1897 in Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent (1948)

³³ Search ‘queue’ on Google and, omitting dictionary definitions, the top three *worldwide* search results all relate to *British* cultural events: Wimbledon; Glastonbury Festival and Oasis’s recent reunion tour.

³⁴ For more information about ‘The Queue’ for the lying-in-state of Queen Elizabeth II, see: <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-62872323>>.

³⁵ Aneurin Bevan, speech to the Royal College of Nursing, Central Hall, Westminster, 2 June 1948, reported as ‘Mr Bevan at the Royal College of Nursing’, *Nursing Times*, XLIV.24 (12 June 1948), p. 426.

The ‘service’ referred to by Bevan is, of course, the National Health Service, shortly before its official foundation in July 1948. Then Minister of Health, Bevan was describing how the new publicly funded healthcare system must readily adapt to societal, medical and technological change. 77 years later, the NHS continues to adhere to this philosophy. But Bevan’s words capture a broader truth, reflected in the Sikh pillar of *Vaṇḍ Chakō*: the work of serving others is never truly complete.

Serving others was a core value of my Bar2Bar campaign and my personal ethos. Before starting the ride, I expressed a cast-iron commitment to ‘paying forward’ my education and opportunities to others, reciprocating the generosity and encouragement I received from the campaign. I intend to achieve this in two main ways: first, through financial pledges to two social mobility charities, Bridging the Bar and The 93% Club; second, by making time to mentor aspiring barristers throughout my career.³⁶

The campaign generated a small but impactful online conversation about the value of sharing one’s education and good fortune with others, in the spirit of service and *Vaṇḍ Chakō*. I was moved by messages from younger people who said that Bar2Bar had inspired them to openly celebrate their background and community, as much as their accomplishments. I owe my intended career at the Bar to the generosity of both my Inn and the community of people – most of whom have never met me – who donated to my campaign.

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‘We are obsessed with elevating token success stories which [...] skew the complex picture that exists in deprived communities. [...] [R]eal success [...] often boils down to a complex

³⁶ For more information about Bridging the Bar, see: <<https://bridgingthebar.org/about-us/>>. For further information about The 93% Club, see: <<https://www.93percent.club/about>>.

*combination of circumstances: luck, sustained stability, the right teachers at the right time, and even not experiencing moments of grief at critical, destabilising junctures.*³⁷

-- Hashi Mohamed, b.1983 in Nairobi, Kenya (2017)

Although my recent campaign has been a success, I am deeply conscious that British social mobility is more stagnant now than ‘at any point in over half a century,’ as reported by the IFS, and will continue to worsen.³⁸ For those younger people I mentor, the opportunities to follow a similar career trajectory, even from remarkably ordinary working-class backgrounds like mine, are vanishing at an astonishing rate.

No-one is entirely self-made. No matter what socio-economic position you are born into, any success or accomplishment is the result of individual hard work *and* countless influences, interactions, and good fortune at propitious moments. That is why, regardless of background, it is essential to pay forward one’s privileges – whether that is by sharing knowledge, creating learning opportunities, donating to good causes, or some other means of creating an impact. Service to others in these ways may not singlehandedly reverse inequality of opportunity, but it may just create the conditions for talented young people to build a fairer, more equitable society.

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‘This [VE Day] week [...] reminded me of a wartime child who, along with her contemporaries, will soon be gone, taking our painful memories with us. I look back with some pride at the way that generation of adults survived, drained but determined to make the

³⁷ Hashi Mohamed, ‘Telling children “hard work gets you to the top” is simply a lie’, *Guardian*, 14 April 2017, at paragraphs 10-11, <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/14/children-hard-work-social-mobility-estate-background>>.

³⁸ For further information on the Institute of Fiscal Studies’ 2023 report, see: <<https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Intergenerational-mobility-in-the-UK.pdf>>

*world a better place. And they did. [...] We must not forget and we must never let it happen again.*³⁹

-- Sheila Hancock, b.1933 in Blackgang, Isle of Wight (2025)

This year's essay question is occasioned by the 80th anniversary of VE Day. In this context, 'service' carries a different, altogether more complex weight. But it also demonstrates this third 'British' value at its best, and why this is a value all humans should aspire to.

Service is courage and determination in the face of the unknown. It means resisting the self-mythologising activity that so often distorts and distracts from the challenges we face. Reflecting on VE Day 1945, actress Sheila Hancock described how the atmosphere was not one of glorious, triumphant elation but of 'muted celebration, full of uncertainty' for the future. 'Then, as now,' Hancock states, 'we faced a long struggle towards a better world.'⁴⁰

Service is a responsibility. 'Our beautiful planet,' she writes, 'is under threat in many ways. History shows that the solution is definitely not to be found in autocratic leadership. Let us aim to unite the available worldwide wisdom to tackle the global crises together. Time is running out.'⁴¹

Above all, service is a privilege. It is a core aspect of a meaningful life. Towards the end of my cycle, I met a kind stranger, a war veteran, who shared their philosophy: 'I'd rather be the

³⁹ Sheila Hancock, 'My VE Day was nothing like our image of it today. I hope we can honour what it really meant', *Guardian*, 3 May 2025, at paragraph 10, <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/03/ve-day-second-world-war-sheila-hancock>>.

⁴⁰ Ibid, at sub-heading.

⁴¹ Ibid, at paragraph 9.

only person to lose, than the only person to win.' By sharing what we have with others, we create the conditions for hope to thrive and progress to be achieved.

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