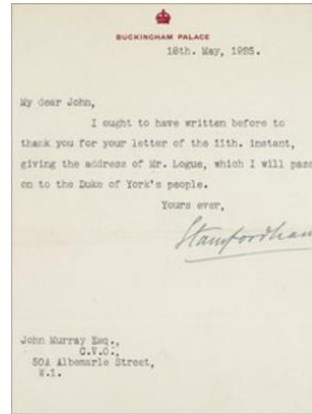




0. LIONEL LOGUE - SPEECH THERAPIST - Story Preface

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A Scottish publisher named John Murray V—who was known as “Jack”—had a nephew with a stammer. John (‘Jock’) Murray VI—who ultimately became Jack’s heir—was greatly helped by Lionel Logue. From a letter discovered in Jack’s papers, maintained at the National Library of Scotland, it seems likely that it was Jack Murray who suggested Lionel Logue as a person who could help Prince Albert, the Duke of York.

The letter dated May 18, 1925—which was about five months before the Duke of York’s difficult address at Wembley on October 31st that year—acknowledges a discussion about Logue. It was sent to Jack Murray by King George’s private secretary Baron (Lord) Stamfordham.

Fifteen years older than the Duke of York, Lionel Logue was born in Adelaide, South Australia on the 26th of February, 1880. While in high school, he discovered poetry. Finding that he loved the rhythm of words, Logue began to concentrate on speaking them well.

Soon he began to give public recitations, at a time—before the days of radio and television—when people enjoyed such events. He, and his work, became very popular.

In 1907, Lionel married Myrtle Gruenert. Several inches taller than her husband, Myrtle—like Logue—loved amateur dramatics. “Liney” (as Myrtle called her husband) once described his partner to a news reporter:

My wife is a most athletic woman. She fences, boxes, swims, and golfs, is a good actress and a fine wife. (Mark Logue, *The King’s Speech*, page 20.)

The pair shared a love of travel but found they enjoyed being in Australia the most. In their home country, at the end of World War One, Logue thought he could help returning soldiers with speech injuries caused by gas attacks and shell shocks. (The plight of those, and other WWI soldiers, is today commemorated as ANZAC Day.) In July of 1919, the *West Australian* published an article about his success, entitled “The Dumb Speak.”

Some of the soldiers Logue helped had been told they would never speak again. Logue disagreed. If people who endured gas attacks had uninjured vocal cords, why couldn’t they learn how to use them again? Logue tested his theory on soldiers with nothing to lose:

Logue described the treatment (which he made clear to the newspaper that he’d provided without charge) as “patient tuition [training/tutoring] in voice production combined with fostering the patient’s confidence in the result” ... As such, it was in sharp contrast to rather more brutal methods, including electric shock therapy that had been tried on patients in Britain - apparently to no avail. (Logue, *The King’s Speech*, page 31.)

Using a combination of physical and psychological assistance, Logue successfully helped six “lost cause” soldiers to regain their speech. One of them—G. P. Till, who’d been gassed at Villers-Bretonneux during the battle of the Somme—told his story to the *West Australian* reporter:

When he came to see Logue on 23 April that year [1919], Till’s vocal cords weren’t vibrating and what voice he could muster had a range of just two feet. Logue discharged him on 17 May after he appeared to have made a full recovery. “In fact, I could not stop talking for about three weeks,” Till told the newspaper. “My friends said to me, ‘Are you never going to stop talking?’ and I replied, “I’ve got a lot of lost time to make up.” (Logue, *The King’s Speech*, page 31.)

In the fall of 1926, the Duke of York also had time to make up since his father, the King, was sending him and the Duchess on a six-month world tour. One of his jobs, on that tour, was to open the new Commonwealth Parliament House in Canberra, Australia.

Not only would Bertie have to give a speech, as he opened Parliament, he had to give an address which was

symbolically significant to the British Empire. The *Daily Telegraph* likened its importance to the proclamation Queen Victoria gave in 1877, when she was Empress of India.

How would the Duke of York be able to give such a speech when he had trouble responding at dinner parties? How could he deal with the pressure when his memory of the Wembley fiasco was still fresh in his mind?

It was time for the Duke of York to meet Lionel Logue.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LIONEL-LOGUE-SPEECH-THERAPIST-The-King-s-Speech>

Media Stream



Adelaide, South Australia

Photo of Adelaide, South Australia (in 2005) by Doug Barber, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Location of Adelaide - South Australia

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Lionel Logue and His Wife Myrtle

Photo of Lionel and Myrtle Logue, online courtesy the Logue family. It is also featured in Mark Logue's book, *The King's Speech*.

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