This newsletter marks the launch of the Society’s new website, which you can access either by going to our old address (www.royalhistoricalsociety.org) or our new one (www.royalhistsoc.org). Now don’t stop reading! In the next thousand words or so I hope to persuade you that this represents a novel and genuinely useful departure not only in the way the Society communicates with the wider public but also in the way you, our Fellows and Members, relate to the Society. Certainly the new website will begin to realize our ambition to become a ‘one-stop shop’ for information about the state of historical research and the historical profession. We have made available an archive of documents - our own, and others from national institutions, funding bodies, think-tanks - on a wide range of issues from research strategy to the school curriculum to open access publishing (go to ‘News and Policy’, or put a search term into the search box on the home page). For the last few years we have begun video recording of our public lectures, and so there is already a nice stock of highlights available now - Chris Wickham’s Prothero lecture on the origin of medieval Italian communes, Ann Hughes on radical preachers in mid-17th century London, Tim Blanning’s Prothero on Wagner and the German Empire, and Mark Cornwall on the meaning of treason in Austria-Hungary during the Great War - just a sample (see ‘Videos of RHS Lectures’ on the home page). Many more to come. We’ll also increasingly be providing video of our policy seminars and symposia. A special section of the site has been created for early-career historians, in consultation with the postdocs’ group History Lab Plus, offering professional advice on presenting work, teaching, grants, publishing and the shape of a career. Elsewhere on the site you’ll be able to find our other contributions to professional development - our code of practice for the employment of temporary staff (recently hailed by the AHRC as the kind of initiative subject associations ought to be taking), or, coming soon, the results of our survey on gender equality and a report with recommendations for action. Information sheets on open access spell out in plain English the terms of the research councils’ and funding councils’ policies and the requirements they set out for recipients of AHRC or ESRC funding and for all academics who expect to submit to the next REF. The site will provide a facility for historians of all stripes to advertise forthcoming events around the UK - this too will be searchable, so that enquirers can find events on specific topics and under general headings that match their interests. As more of you, the Fellowship and Membership, log on and record your
own interests and expertise (see below!), the site will also give the media and interested members of the general public an encyclopedic Directory of Expertise through which queries can be directed. In short - there won’t be much going on in the world of historical scholarship that the website doesn’t advertise, record, and archive for posterity. But it will also, I hope, make it easier for you to enjoy the full benefits of your membership in the Society. As of next year, you’ll be able to renew your subscription on the website, and to pay for subs and books online with your credit card, or to check your existing direct debit - easier to do online than to fill out paper forms which are increasingly difficult to draft to cover all of the many options offered to you. There will also be a facility for you to donate above your subscription level to the Society - and at a time when the Society’s ambitions to promote quality historical scholarship and defend its interests with politicians and the public are growing rapidly, stretching our voluntary leadership and our small hard-working staff, we need your donations badly, large and small. Unlike many learned societies, we do not make a substantial income by sponsoring journals published by commercial publishers - a good thing, as it turns out, given pressures to reduce profit-taking for academic journals - but as a result we will need to rely much more on your generosity in maintaining and expanding our work on your behalf. We also hope you will visit the site before your subs are due next year, and supply us with the personal information that we need to serve you better. There is also the option – entirely at your discretion, of course - to specify your area of research expertise for our Directory, if you’d like to profile your work for the information of press, programme makers and other researchers. The more specific you can be about your expertise the better, to ensure that it reflects your own work and interests as accurately as possible. Our office staff get many enquiries from researchers seeking historical expertise, and having your information publicly available will also allow us to know whether you would welcome referrals and if so along what lines. In future we expect to offer a chance for you to specify, too, what kinds of information you’d like the Society to email to you directly, and what not, thus relieving some of the pressures on your inbox. For those of you who are postgraduate students, or who supervise them, we are also migrating our popular research-support schemes to the website. Again this ought to simplify considerably the process by which eligible early-career historians apply for, get supervisors’ endorsements for, and receive our small grants for research and conference attendance.

It ought also to advertise the availability of these small grants more widely. They are among our most important and most appreciated contributions to the discipline. As costs rise and research funding shrinks, we can step in and help with small grants that make a big difference. Thanks to support from the Past & Present Society and History Workshop Journal, we’ve been able to boost our funds available, and to increase the size of the average grant made, and we hope that with additional donations from you we’ll be able to meet growing demand in future. Finally, we want to use the website to encourage more of you to involve yourself in the life and governance of your Society. Voting for Council will go online next year. We intend to post more of our internal governance documents - agendas and minutes of Council and its committees, think-pieces from its working groups. Last year a record number of Fellows put themselves forward for election to Council. Long may that trend continue. This website is naturally a work in progress. You’ll discover bugs and you’ll have ideas for improvement. Please pass them all on to Sue Carr (s.carr@royalhistsoc.org) or Jane Gerson (j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org) - and note the new email addresses, too, though the old ones will continue to work for some time. And, for those of you who prefer the traditional comforts of hard copy, we’ll continue to communicate with you by that means as well.

Peter Mandler
November 2014

Biographical information for Society Officers and Committee members is now available online at: http://royalhistsoc.org
The Society has recently published a Code of Good Practice for Employing Temporary Teaching Staff. This short document arose from discussions between History Lab Plus, the network for Postdoctoral Researchers based at the IHR, and the Society. It is based on the results of a survey of over 200 postdocs and research students carried out by History Lab Plus in late 2012, which showed that a few simple things, such as being included on email lists and invited to seminars, could make a big difference to the experience and morale of temporary teachers. A summary of the survey results will soon be available on our website: http://royalhistsoc.org. This resulting Code of Good Practice has been drawn up in close consultation with History Lab Plus, which has formally endorsed it, as has History UK.

We are aware that formal conditions of employment are often beyond the control of Heads of Department; we are also aware that many departments are exemplary in their treatment of temporary teachers. We hope that this Code of Good Practice will serve as a helpful reminder of policies that can help temporary teachers, many of whom will become permanent academics and all of whom are crucial to the vitality and high standards of the profession. We invite Departments to use it as a checklist or a template and/or to incorporate it appropriately into departmental policies.

This initiative was taken as part of the RHS’s commitment to representing different constituencies within the profession and the Code of Good Practice will be subject to continuing reflection and refinement. We would be particularly interested to receive feedback, in order to monitor the situation, to draw upon existing good practice within the sector and to make suggestions for further improvements (please send to Jane Gerson, Research and Communications Officer, j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org).
It is still the case that only 21% of History professors are women, even though academic staff are 40% women/60% men and the gender balance is roughly equal among students, both undergraduate and postgraduate (HESA data). Recent research into the gender equality across the arts and humanities shows that the problem is by no means confined to science subjects. In response to this growing body of evidence, the Equality Challenge Unit has created a Gender Equality Charter Mark scheme, known as GEM, which is analogous to the Athena SWAN awards for promoting gender equality in science and engineering. Twenty arts and humanities departments around the UK have taken part in a pilot study this year, which mainly involves a self-audit and the development of policies to address any gender imbalances identified. The awards will be announced next year. It was in the context of this work that the Society decided to make its own enquiries into gender equality, not least because there has been very little research done specifically on History. We also thought that there might well be arenas in which bias was operating, such as conferences, journals or learned societies, which would not be picked up by an audit carried out in individual university departments or equivalent units. With over 3,500 Members and Fellows, the Society is in a good position to review the practices across the historical profession.

Our survey on Gender Equality, which was distributed to all History departments and to all Fellows and Members, attracted responses from over 700 historians working in UK higher education, i.e. over 20% of the 3,330 academic historians recorded by HESA. Nearly everyone, both men and women, identified a number of barriers to gender equality, both formal and informal. Many of these barriers are within institutions, the most significant of which was identified as a ‘macho work culture’ in which 24/7 availability is both expected and assumed. Great concern was also expressed about promotion decisions, where 39% of women respondents and 12% of male respondents detected bias. It is clear that the universities are the main focus of concerns about gender discrimination. Many of them have satisfactory policies in place, but implementation is clearly highly variable. Moreover, there is widespread lack of awareness of the problem of invisible bias, despite the increasing body of research from experimental psychologists that provides convincing evidence about its power to thwart even the best of intentions to treat all colleagues equally. Beyond the individual institutions of higher education, there are, as we suspected, other barriers that operate across the discipline and in its many sub-fields. In economic history, for example, the Economic History Society, which has long had a Women’s Committee, reports that both its membership and attendance at EHS events routinely divides 75/25 men/women. Significant numbers of respondents perceived gender bias to be evident sometimes in matters such as the appointment of journal editorships, invitations to deliver keynote lectures and in conduct of meetings in general.

The findings of the survey, both quantitative and qualitative, will be presented in a Society report, along with Recommendations for Action, specifically geared to different areas of the profession, e.g. Heads of Department, journal editors, conference organisers, learned societies, and so forth.

In order to ensure that the recommendations for action were as realistic and precise as possible, an event was held in London on 18 September to discuss the survey results and to debate draft recommendations. Participants included people from all
different stages of an academic career. We started out with a talk from an early career historian, Bronach Kane, from the University of Cardiff, who spoke eloquently about the problems faced by her generation. Peter Mandler, President of the Society, talked about the need for continuing cultural work to create the conditions for gender equality. After a general discussion, participants divided into four groups to discuss recommendations for action on Invisible Bias, Promotion, Effective Mentoring, and work/life balance. It was evident from the report-back session that all the groups had a lively and constructive discussion, which will feed into the redrafting of recommendations. A similar event will be held at the Centre for Gender History in Glasgow on Monday 17 November.

The final report, Gender Equality and Historians in UK Higher Education, will be published in December 2014 (look out for the announcement in our regular mailings or on our website). It will be sent to all members and fellows and all History departments. We encourage everyone to distribute it as widely as possible and to discuss it: in departments, learned societies, journal editorial boards and all other decision-making fora. Consciousness-raising is a crucial part of the work that we all need to do, in order to promote good practice in relation to gender equality throughout the historical profession. Gender equality is not just a problem for women.

Our work on gender has offered a valuable opportunity to reflect upon the culture of the discipline as a whole. Many respondents to the gender survey pointed out that there are other persistent inequalities in the profession. The Society plans to establish an Equalities Working Group to continue our work in this area. Please do get in touch with our Research and Communications Officer, Jane Gerson (j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org), if you have any suggestions to make about any aspect of equalities among historians in UK higher education.

Nicola Miller
Vice-President (Research Policy)

Read more about the Society’s investigation of gender equality within the profession and other key policy initiatives and news online at: http://royalhistsoc.org
In 2012 the Royal Historical Society embarked on a project to update its communications with Fellows and Members, the wider historical community, policy makers, and the media, in the UK and beyond. A working group in the Society considered the needs of the Fellowship and Membership and our external profile. Its work resulted in the creation of a new website, our engagement (for the first time) with social media (@RoyalHistSoc on Twitter), and the appointment of a part-time Research and Communications Officer (Jane Gerson), whose work has been central to the website project and to important policy initiatives, such as our work on gender equality and for early career historians (see, for example, the articles in this edition of the newsletter).

Our approach to communications respects the fact that the Society places special emphasis on its long-term stability and reliability, and above all its reputation for upholding principles of academic freedom and scholarly quality, which have become ever more valuable to our Fellows and Members in a period of growing commercialization and bureaucratization in the higher-education sector. The Society takes seriously its commitment to academic rigour and upholding the quality and diversity of historical scholarship, protecting the independence of the profession, and investing in the future of the discipline. The Society is keen to defend these enduring values at a time of rapid change, to communicate its values and its activities better not only to the scholarly world but far beyond, and to ensure that the Society remains nimble enough to grasp and meet new challenges and opportunities as they arise. These values lie at the heart of our enhanced
content on the new website. The new website, as Peter Mandler notes in his Presidential letter, provides a portal into the activities of the Society, contains policy updates that assist our Fellows and Members in understanding national developments and how they affect our work within and across institutions, introduces new mechanisms for collaboration and networking among historians, and links those in higher education with the museums sector, archives, and the media. You will find that the website retains many of the traditional items of interest to our Fellows and Members: the archive of past communications and newsletters; details of our lectures, events and publication series; policy documents and briefing papers; and information on our grants and prizes. However, we have added new features on topical historical issues (such as a forthcoming piece by Matt Johnson on the recent media coverage of the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War). There is an interactive calendar of seminars, conferences, and workshops, and videos of Society lectures for use in research, teaching, and for viewing by those who cannot attend our events. In time, we hope to bring all our administrative processes online too - from registering the research interests of our Fellows and Members (should they wish to do so) and the processing of book orders to the application for grants and submissions for the Society’s prizes. A new facility for voting and subscription renewal will soon be made available online. In future the Society plans to extend members’ ability to specify what kinds of information they wish to receive by logging onto the website. We hope that you will find these developments helpful in managing your information and in increasing your engagement with the work of the Society. This newsletter will also undergo some transformations in the coming year. It will become available in electronic form, while a hard-copy newsletter will continue to be available for those who prefer it. We hope to keep the content of the website and the newsletter fresh and up-to-date, and we are always looking for new ideas for features. We are keen to promote the work of archives, museums and societies across the whole range of the discipline and to draw attention to new developments in learning, teaching and research. If you have received a grant or prize from the Society, we are eager to hear how the award assisted your research or the development of your career (Kimberley-Joy Knight, for example, recounts her experiences at a postgraduate and early career workshop on the Textometry of the historical sources organised by the École française de Rome and the Centre of Comparative Studies “I Deug-Su” of the University of Siena, in collaboration with the Laboratoire de Médiévistique Occidentale de Paris in this newsletter). Finally, the website exists to serve the interests of our Fellows and Members, as well as the profession as a whole, so we are more than happy to receive feedback on the new website and newsletter. Please let us know your views (email: j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org).

Jo Fox
Honorary Director of Communications
The Royal Historical Society, in collaboration with the Public History Seminar at the IHR, is pleased to announce a new prize in public history. This prize is intended to promote the field of public history by recognising work that enhances public understanding of the place of the past in today's social, political and cultural life. The initiative comes from the Public History Seminar, now in its second year at the Institute of Historical Research, London, and the Society.

Entries will be invited in the following categories:
- Museums / exhibitions
- Broadcasting
- Film
- Web-based projects
- Print publications for general audience, including a body of journalistic work.

Selection will take place in two stages, first a short list of category winners, then the overall winner of the Public History Prize.

Anyone is free to make a nomination, which is a simple, straightforward process. Nominations will be encouraged from the fellowship of the Society, subscribers to History Today, and members of the HA. Nominations will also be welcome from interested members of the public. Details of the nominations process are available on the Society website at: http://royalhistsoc.org/prizes/public-history-prize/

The judging panel will be Professor Mary Beard (Cambridge); Dr. Alix Green (Hertfordshire); Professor Aled Jones (National Library of Wales); and Professor John Tosh (Roehampton). It is chaired by Professor Ludmilla Jordanova (Durham).

The specially designed prizes take the form of a logo, which can be displayed on stationary and websites, and a plaque. They will be given at a dedicated public event, where the overall winner will be invited to present their work.

For further details please visit: http://royalhistsoc.org/prizes/public-history-prize/

The prize will be awarded for the first time in the Autumn of 2015, and will recognise work from July 2014 to the end of June 2015. Thereafter it will awarded every two years.
“The convenors of the Institute for Historical Research Public History Seminar are delighted to be collaborating with the Royal Historical Society on the first national prize for public history in the UK. We see it as a great opportunity to raise the profile of a new, vibrant and fast-growing field. There is excellent work being done across the country to engage people with the past in innovative and exciting ways, everything from museum exhibitions to historical film and theatre, from community heritage projects to digital resources. But this work can often be unknown outside the area in which it’s done. The convenors and the Society saw the need to raise the profile of public history and were keen to set up a prize to bring the kind of recognition to the best of these activities that awards in literature and the arts have achieved. We hope not only to entice new audiences to history in all its forms, but also to help the field of public history develop by connecting people and celebrating success. The IHR Public History seminar was set up in 2012 to provide a forum for historians of all kinds - academics, students, professional practitioners and the interested public - to discuss history’s many roles in public life today.”

Alix Green

“I am very excited to be one of the judges of the new Public History Prize. In a way it was a great ‘public historian’ who got me into my own career in the first place. I was five years old and being taken to the British Museum for the first time. I remember straining to see a piece of ancient Egyptian carbonised cake high up in a case -- when this curator came by, with some keys and unlocked the case, and got it out so I could see it properly. It may not be quite what we usually mean by ‘public history’, but for me it crystallizes many of its qualities. Someone literally wanted to open the past up for me, he went the extra mile, he brought the past to me without talking down to me -- and it was an encounter I never forgot. I’m really looking forward to seeing some of the great, and very different, entries we’ll be getting -- from all sorts of periods and places. Inspirational one and all.”

Mary Beard

“As a historian who now heads a national public cultural organisation, I feel passionately about the value of public history and its capacity to change lives. Our history is ever-present, and the richness and diversity of the ways it is conveyed to us, across a dazzling range of fields and media, is something that should rightly be celebrated. The Public History Prize will draw national and international attention to the brilliant work being done up and down the country, in small and major venues, to keep us all in touch with our past.”

Aled Jones

“In addition to its contribution to culture and leisure, Public History is a resource for the critical citizen concerned with a wide range of public issues that invite historical perspective. Newspaper columnists, political analysts and professional historians all make significant contributions to a historically informed public discourse. Britain’s ‘unwritten’ constitution, western policies in the Middle East, and the long history of experiments in welfare are just some of the questions that can be illuminated in this way. Dissemination - in digital form, on TV and on radio - can fuel critical debate, as well as establish a more reliable historical basis for interpreting the present. The Public History Prize therefore welcomes nominations that recognise well-founded historical contributions to current public discourse in any of these media.”

John Tosh
In June, funding from the Society enabled me to attend a postgraduate and early career workshop on the Textometry of the historical sources organised by the École française de Rome and the Centre of Comparative Studies “I Deug-Su” of the University of Siena, in collaboration with the Laboratoire de Médiévistique Occidentale de Paris (CNRS-Université Paris 1). The 4-day workshop focussed on the application of computing tools for textual analysis in historical and philological research. The workshop was both theoretical and practical. Each morning, leading specialists from a number of European institutions demonstrated the latest software for textual analysis (PALM, Hyperbase, TXM, Stylometry and Lexicon). In the afternoons, as junior research fellows, we had the opportunity to present our research in the form of a case study and to road test the different tools with the support of the software designers, historians and philologists.

Having recently successfully defended my doctoral thesis at St Andrews, on the Gift of Tears in thirteenth-century hagiographies, this workshop was highly valuable in formulating the approach for my postdoctoral research plans. My new project, which I will pursue at the University of Sydney with the Centre for the History of Emotions, will explore the relationship between love, desire, sexuality and marriage in Medieval Norway and Iceland (c.1100-1500). The focus of this research will be to analyse how love, sexuality and desire were understood, expressed, and enacted during the high-late medieval period and to assess in what ways they were conditioned by new Christian doctrines. Comparative textual analysis of Latin and Old Norse texts will form part of my research and it is in this area that software such as TXM (presented by Serge Heiden, École Normale Supérieure, Lyon), Lexicon (Francesco Stella, Università di Siena) and Stylometry (Mike Kestemont, Universiteit Antwerp) will help to identify word patterns and develop thematic statistics. As many authors of Old Norse texts are unknown, it is often uncertain in which geographic locations they produced their works. Using specialist software may allow me to further my synchronic analysis of the language and draw important conclusions about the location of compilation. At the workshop I presented a case study that compared the Latin and Old Norse versions of the Life of Marie d’Oignies, a thirteenth-century Beguine from the Low Countries. Having had the opportunity to apply the different tools to my test case, I am convinced that some of the software available could be used for the study of vernacular rewrites.
and greatly enhance our research findings. Understanding new quantitative measures for the analysis of medieval textual sources may allow us to extract data in new ways and expand our toolkit as historians.

In addition to the generous funding from the Society, I was awarded a junior research fellowship by the École Française de Rome. I am grateful to both bodies for their support and to Jean-Philippe Genet, Francesco Stella, Stéphane Gioanni and Monique Goullet for organising such a stimulating and valuable workshop.

Kimberley-Joy Knight

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 12 November 2014 6pm
The Colin Matthew Memorial Lecture for the Public Understanding of History in co-operation with Gresham College, London

Professor Tim Hitchcock, University of Sussex
and
Professor Robert Shoemaker, University of Sheffield

“Making History Online”
Venue: Museum of London

This lecture will assess how recent innovations in making historical resources available online, and in the crowdsourcing and co-creation of research materials, have effectively reconfigured the relationship between the academy and the public. We can all be historians now. Despite limitations, and online dialogue between academic history and the public is not only inevitable, but also desirable.

Monday 17 November, 2014 2pm-5pm
RHS Gender Equality Seminar
Venue: Centre for Gender History, University of Glasgow

Speakers include Lynn Abrams, Nicola Miller, Peter Mandler and Bronach Kane. The seminar will be an opportunity for further consultation to contribute to the Society’s report on Gender Equality and Historians in UK Higher Education, with workshops on work/life balance, effective mentoring, invisible bias and promotion/career opportunities. The findings of our gender equality survey and consultation seminars will be published in the report later this year.

For an interactive and up-to-date calendar of upcoming events, go online at: http://royalhistsoc.org
Presidential Address

“Educating the Nation. II: Universities”

Professor Peter Mandler

Friday 28 November 2014 6:00 pm
Venue: Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL

In his first lecture, Peter Mandler argued that ‘meritocracy’ was an unstable basis on which to found universal secondary education, as from the early years of compulsory secondary education in the 1950s most people wanted one kind of education for their children - ‘the best’ - much as they only wanted ‘the best’ health service. The same cannot quite be said about post-compulsory education, the subject of his second lecture. A wider range of considerations went into the expansion of higher education - technocratic (what kind of higher education did the nation’s society and economy need?), meritocratic (who was capable of benefiting?), and democratic too (shouldn’t everyone have equal access?). This mixture of motives, as well as a complex set of economic, demographic and fiscal considerations, will be brought together to explain the strange go-stop-go pattern of expansion of higher education in Britain from the 1960s to the present.