Winters are not normally described as torrid, but that’s the word that comes to mind when I think about the period since the end of November when I succeeded Colin Jones in the presidency. Two issues have dominated our agenda this season, and because they have been so widely aired in the media - and our recent statements can be found on the Society’s website - I will only offer the briefest comment about them here.

First, Open Access publishing. We all owe a debt to Colin for seeing this issue coming long before most of us, and for helping us to steer the debate over Open Access towards positions that will not hurt but will help historians to publish their work and disseminate it to the widest possible audience. There have been particularly encouraging signs from HEFCE and the other higher education funders that they have been listening to our concerns about ‘Gold’ Open Access - which would disfranchise independent scholars and early career researchers in particular - and the need to develop a model for ‘Green’ Open Access which will support moderately-priced, high-quality history journals and yet still ultimately give everyone free access to their contents. We continue to press hard on all the details (where the devil inevitably lurks), with the HE funders and the research councils, and will post regular updates on the website. If all this talk of Gold and Green is still a mystery to you, I refer you back to Colin’s and my special letters on the subject on our website!

Second, the draft National Curriculum for History. Again we have been involved in discussions with government on this question for quite some time, and have been working in close consultation - and impressive levels of agreement - with our colleagues from the teaching profession in the Historical Association. Our concerns have focused on the need to shore up curriculum time for History, to give children a good balance of British, European and world history, and to check the tendency for only modern history to be taught to the older age-groups. From these points of view the government’s draft has proved a disappointment - the new National Curriculum won’t be compulsory for most schools, it says very little about European and world history, and exacerbates the modern bias - no pre-modern history at all will be prescribed at secondary school. All of the main professional bodies of historians have united in criticism of this draft - again our latest comment is posted on our website. More happily, we have welcomed the Secretary of State
for Education’s decision not to proceed with his initial proposals for Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16) and we are hopeful that more pre-modern history can be taught in the revamped GCSE that is now intended for this age group and in the new proposals for A-Level that are still under development.

But while we spend a lot of time going to meetings in Whitehall and Westminster, contributing to consultations, talking to our fellow historians in other societies, to the media and the commentariat, we never forget our responsibility to carry on the traditional functions of a learned society - to promote research and scholarship. We do this in a great variety of ways - offering small research grants to those who need them (especially postgraduates), sponsoring public lectures and symposia, working closely with local-history societies, archivists, librarians and museums, awarding prizes for highly distinguished work - and of course according the fundamental recognition of FRHistS as a kitemark of scholarly achievement. In this newsletter we are highlighting in particular another important part of our scholarly mission, our publishing programme - appropriately at a time when moves for Open Access may be about to transform the publishing landscape. Our task will be to identify ways in which we can preserve and deepen the scholarly quality of a programme that we have been carrying on for over 150 years while making it more accessible to all.

Our oldest publishing enterprise is actually older than the Society itself. The Camden Series of original sources in British history dates back to 1838; the Society assumed responsibility for it in 1897. Over 325 volumes have been published; all are now available and searchable in digital form; we aim to publish two further volumes every year. The Society’s support for such a series gives an important imprimatur to serious editorial work on primary sources which has few outlets elsewhere nowadays. We are making strenuous efforts to broaden Camden’s scope so that it responds to new historiographical interests - evident in recent volumes on Irish history, British relations with Germany, and the East London Mosque. Scholars who have identified important primary sources that would benefit from intensive editorial scrutiny are encouraged to make proposals to the Camden editorial board - details on how to make a proposal are available on the Society’s website.

The Society has also been supporting the Bibliography of British and Irish History for over a century. Such an enormous accumulation of bibliographical material - over 518,000 items are now listed, each painstakingly indexed by an expert so that virtually all writing on British and Irish history since 1900 is searchable for content - is only possible with institutional backing for the long term, of a kind that learned societies (and often only learned societies) are committed to providing. Yet the BBIH has also kept up with - in truth, ahead of - the times, with increasingly complex online searching and linking capabilities.

These two major, long-term enterprises are only part of our publishing programme. Our Transactions of course have been published continuously since 1877 and discussions are afoot with our publishing partner Cambridge University Press about a sustainable way to bring them into Open Access. Arthur Burns writes elsewhere in this newsletter about the Studies in History monograph series and its plans for the future. Council is interested in entertaining proposals for new publishing ventures that will meet new needs for the 21st century. It’s in the nature of a society like ours that it must always keep one eye on the past and one eye looking to the future.

Peter Mandler
The Anniversary Meeting in November 2012 agreed to a rise in the subscriptions charged by the Society from the financial year 2013-14.

The changes will be as follows:

Fellows: currently £40, rising to £50
Retired Fellows: currently £30, rising to £37
Members: currently £25, rising to £30
Postgraduate Members: remains at £10 for the first two years, then rising to £30 from third year
Associates to remain at £30.

This is the first rise in subscriptions for six years. The Society has benefitted from a recent windfall surplus, as a result of an on-going digitisation programme of its back catalogue of publications, which means that it has been able to run a surplus for some years. This surplus will however disappear in the near future and the Society will run an annual deficit over an extended period. The accumulated surplus is being used in part to limit the rise in subscriptions for the next few years.

The Society has in recent years devoted much greater attention to the impact of government policy on the study of History in the UK both at secondary and tertiary levels. Members of Council have been closely involved in dialogue with ministers and civil servants on issues ranging from the impact of higher university fees through to the consequences of Open Access publishing for the historical profession. The Society is also working increasingly closely with other learned societies in order to emphasize to government the importance of the humanities more generally. In expanding its public role, the Society has become ever more conscious of the need to communicate better not only with policymakers but also with the general public and with its own membership. Accordingly it will be investing time and money in improving its communications, both through the complete overhaul of its web presence and in providing more staff time for communications work. Fellows and Members will soon see immediate benefits of this policy in much improved facilities for online payment of dues, purchase of publications, and access to information.

Michael Hughes

The Society continues to provide extensive support for the historical profession in the United Kingdom. It has in recent years greatly expanded its support for postgraduate students, helped by generous donations from Past and Present and the Economic History Society, and now makes available £50,000 per annum in bursaries to support travel and conference attendance. It also provides financial support to holders of a number of post-doctoral awards and co-funds the Bibliography of British and Irish History. The Society maintains an extensive publication programme, in association with Cambridge University Press and Boydell and Brewer, as well as running a full calendar of symposia and lectures around the country.
**Royal Historical Society**  
**Studies in History Series**

**Arthur Burns, Vice-President**

*Studies in History*, the Royal Historical Society’s monograph series, has since the 1970s offered one of the most important publishing outlets for early career historians in the UK. Over its lifetime the series has produced an annual average of more than four books; now the editorial board seeks to publish five volumes a year and over the past decade we have several times surpassed this figure, notably publishing seven volumes in the year around the last Research Assessment Exercise (for recent volumes and listings of earlier Studies, see here: http://www.royalhistoricalsociety.org/sihsrecentvols.php). In a world in which monographs can sometimes appear an endangered species, its commitment to high-quality studies on subjects which other publishers might find difficult to market effectively is perhaps more important than ever before. The series explicitly restricts its remit to the radical transformation of very good theses into books that can assist authors to gain permanent academic posts.

And it works, having helped launch many successful careers: among its authors are pro-vice-chancellors and more than twenty professors, many of whom would otherwise have struggled to get their first book published elsewhere - quality not being the sole criterion of commercial publishers. The importance in this respect of the series is recognised in the significant subventions it receives from both the Past and Present Society and the Economic History Society. Representatives of both serve on the Board. We have also been fortunate in our commitment to this approach in the collaboration of the publishers Boydell and Brewer, whose familiar series designs for Studies adorn the covers of many seminal works in a wide range of historical fields, the one shared characteristic being the quality of the research and writing between the covers. One explanation for this, apart from the intrinsic merits of the scholarship, is the fact that every author is mentored through the process of conversion of thesis to book by one of the dozen Fellows of the Society who serve on the Editorial Board. This leads to a level of encouragement and support far beyond what is normal. The series also has in Christine Linehan (who has edited every book in the series since 1982), a copy-editor and proof-reader of wholly exceptional ability.

How is the series faring in these difficult times for academic publishing? Certainly sales of the volumes have steadily declined over the years in line with all monograph sales: whereas fifteen years ago the books averaged nearly 400 hardback sales over the first three years, the figure is now just over 200. If anything this is slightly above the norm for such volumes these days. The collective reputation of the series helps ensure that volumes
start with an added advantage when it comes to purchasing decisions in academic libraries, and the publicity they receive in mailings to the Royal Historical Society’s fellowship gives another headstart. Moreover, recent developments in technology increase the availability of the Studies in other forms. Boydell are now making many books from the backlist available as well-produced and attractive print-on-demand paperbacks, very competitively priced at £17.99. Twenty titles have been published in that format so far, and sales are distinctly encouraging. If the climate of academic publishing is increasingly difficult, changes to the early stages of the profession also pose significant challenges. The REF cycle itself can lead to uneven patterns of submission of proposals, and can also promote the production of journal articles as a priority over the inevitably longer-term project of finishing the first book; patterns of casual employment make it harder for early-career researchers to find the time to devote to work on the transformation of a thesis into a book. This in itself is now a more demanding process, with publishers keen not to replicate theses often now available directly to researchers, and in many cases less readily convertible to monograph form than those completed when pressure to complete within four years was less severe. We suspect such factors explain a decline in the number of proposals currently coming before the editorial board. If the demands of reworking manuscripts into book form make the editorial support the series provides more valuable than ever, we recognise that authors may nonetheless be nervous of the additional work this may require on their part before they get into print. The editorial board has therefore recently reviewed its procedures to ensure that the path from proposal to publication is as smooth and expeditious as possible. This in particular means a determined effort to ensure readers of proposals report within the two-month period allowed for this process, and expediting decision making on the back of such reports so that authors no longer have to wait for formal meetings of the board to receive a decision on their proposal. In addition contracts are now issued to authors at the outset of the revision process rather than upon completion, meaning that authors can show potential employers that their book is on its way. Readers who sit on appointment panels will be in no doubt that when it comes to considering candidates it is still quality that counts well above quantity when assessing research, and that for all the pressure to publish that undoubtedly now exists, it remains vital to the early-career researcher that they get their first book ‘right’.

In this respect the editorial support the series provides remains an invaluable asset to first-time authors. We hope that those reading this who act as PhD examiners or who have their own able doctoral students beginning to think about the afterlife of their dissertations will encourage them to think seriously about putting in a proposal to the series (details of the process can be accessed here: http://www.royalhistoricalsociety.org/sihsproposals.php). As we enter the post-REF stage of the academic life cycle, there is every prospect of a well-conceived proposal making it into print relatively swiftly, and, once there, the marketing and reputational benefits to the early-career researcher of seeing their book appear in Studies in History are self-evident. Arthur Burns
The volumes for the Camden series this year will be *Observing Vatican II: The Confidential Reports of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Representative, Bernard Pawley, 1961-5*, edited by Andrew Chandler and Charlotte Hansen, and *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon* edited by Gemma Allen. Details of these publications can be found on page 7 of this newsletter.

We are keen to ensure that we maintain the high quality of the Camden series, and we are pleased that in recent years we have been able to publish volumes both by senior scholars and by early career academics. But after a glut of proposals a few years ago, we seem to have entered a lean patch, so if members have ideas of their own about documents they would like to edit, or know of younger scholars with viable editorial projects, we would like to hear from you. Our contact details can be found on the RHS website.

There was some discussion last year about the possibility of diversifying the series into non-British history, but it was felt that the existing brand identity should be retained. On the other hand we are very keen to broaden the range of documents and issues covered. The recent east London mosque volume took us into new territory domestically, and we would like to stress that our interpretation of the series remit is fairly broad. For instance, we have in the past published colonial and imperial documents, and we would be happy to receive more proposals in that area, including those relating to non-metropolitan imperial societies. That said, in previous generations the running was made by editions of medieval documents, but there have been fewer of those in recent years, and we would be delighted to see more proposals coming forward from our medieval colleagues too.

Ian W. Archer
Emma Griffin
President de Gaulle famously called the Second Vatican Council ‘the greatest event of the twentieth century’. Vatican II established a landmark not only in Roman Catholic theology, ethics and worship, but also in its ecclesiology and its ecumenical relationships with other traditions. Many commentators at the time saw the council as nothing short of revolutionary and the later judgements of historians have upheld this view.

A defining dimension of Vatican II was the presence of a number of observers invited by John XXIII to represent other traditions and to report the workings of the Council to their own leaders. But it was often felt that they exerted influence, too. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, employed a full-time representative at the Vatican Council. This was Bernard Pawley. Pawley’s confidential reports, and his correspondence with Ramsey, have often been quoted in secondary studies, and they have achieved a considerable stature in the eyes of scholars. This book makes them available to scholars, the churches and the interested public at large.

The letters of the learned and indomitable Lady Anne Bacon (1528-1610), mother of the philosopher, Francis Bacon, are made accessible for the first time in this edition. Bringing together nearly two hundred letters, scattered in repositories throughout the world, her correspondence sheds fresh light not only on the activities of early modern elite women, but also on well-known Elizabethan figures, including her children, her privy councillor relatives, such as William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and controversial figures, including the earl of Essex. Translations of Lady Anne’s frequent use of Latin, Greek and Hebrew reveal the impact of her humanist education on her correspondence and a substantial introductory chapter allows a detailed picture of Anne’s life to emerge through her surviving letters.
It is some time since the Bibliography of British and Irish History last featured in these pages. We are pleased to say that, for once, the adage that ‘no news is good news’ does apply. The transition to a subscription service, supported jointly by the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of Historical Research, and published by Brepols, has secured the bibliography for the foreseeable future. Subscription levels have exceeded expectations; almost all United Kingdom universities with history departments have subscribed, as have many abroad. The number of new records added each year has also exceeded expectations: nearly 15,000 new records were added in 2012.

We also hope that the offer of reduced-price subscriptions for Fellows and Members of the RHS, and for Friends of the IHR, has helped to meet the anxiety that was felt all round about access for independent and retired scholars. These discounted subscriptions will be offered annually. Members and Fellows will be alerted through the usual Society mailings when the offer becomes available again (making it available only for a limited period each year helps to reduce the associated administrative work, which is kindly done by the RHS office.) We hope that we can now look forward to a period of steady improvement in the functionality of the bibliography. In this we benefit from the development work that Brepols carry out for all their bibliographical products. Last year saw the introduction of email alerts, enabling users to register searches covering areas of interest, and to receive an email each time that the bibliography is updated with new records that match the stored searches. Later in 2013 Brepols will introduce a ‘metrics’ module (already implemented in the International Medieval Bibliography) making it possible to see how a particular author’s publications, or the contents of a particular journal, break down by date of publication or subject, and to see which authors and journals have published on a particular subject. Profiles for authors and journals will also be accessible from search results. This facility will help scholars to find the appropriate journal to which to submit an article, and will help journal editors to find the ideal reviewer for a book.

Behind the scenes, we are now working with Brepols on new software for record storage and editing that will be shared across all Brepols’ bibliographies. This will be a complex project but should make it easier to exchange appropriate material with other bibliographies published by Brepols, and will also reduce the time currently spent on application maintenance and development. The bibliography is guided by an advisory board which includes, in addition to the President of the RHS and the Director of the IHR ex officio, a wide range of history scholars and librarians, and a representative of the Digitale Bibliografie Nederlandse Geschiedenis to give an international perspective. The bibliography’s team of academic section editors continues to play a vital role in ensuring that it remains attuned to scholars’ needs, in terms of both content and indexing. More information about the bibliography is available at http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/bbih (where a feedback page enables you to send comments or corrections, which are always welcome); enquiries about subscription rates (with the exception of the discount schemes for RHS Fellows and Members, and for IHR Friends) can be sent directly to Brepols at brepolis@brepols.net.

Stephen Taylor
Preserving the Past: The Work of the British Records Association

Anthony Smith
Chairman, British Records Association

The British Records Association, which was founded in 1932, is a charity that exists to encourage and assist the preservation, care, use and publication of historical records. Its members include owners, custodians and users of archives in general as well as professional archivists and historians of all kinds. One of our main aims is to assist in the preservation of historical records, through the activities of our Records Preservation Section, which is entirely run by volunteers. The main purpose of the Records Preservation Section of the Association is to facilitate the transfer of historical records to suitable places of deposit when their owners or custodians are no longer willing, or able, to retain them. We have premises at Finsbury Library in London in which we are able to store records temporarily whilst we determine which record office or other suitable location is both appropriate for them and willing to receive them. The underlying aim is to provide a mechanism whereby we can ensure that papers of historical importance are preserved for the future rather than lost or destroyed when those responsible for their custody cease to look after them. From its foundation, the Association has had an enduring relationship with legal firms, especially those in the London area, but we are not infrequently offered records from other sources too. Amongst recent cases involving the latter, we have recently completed a project to deposit the huge archive of the architectural firm Carden & Godfrey in appropriate record offices and we have assisted Sir Roy Strong to find a suitable home at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for an extensive and important collection of family papers of the historian Sir Charles Oman, which had descended to him.

We most often receive material from law firms or retired legal practitioners. Both the records of firms themselves and the clients’ papers that they retain are likely to be of considerable scholarly value for historians and others with an interest in the study of the past. The former will be of use to business historians and historians of the legal profession. Clients’ papers can throw important light on the history of particular places and families and can contribute to the study of economic, social, political and local history. Clients’ papers of a particular propertied family may well be closely related in an archival sense to associated groups of that family’s papers surviving elsewhere; they may form part of a wider web of archives worthy of study by researchers interested in that individual family and its activities in the past. Hence historical papers of these kinds are certainly worth taking the trouble to preserve. One of the key aims of the British Records Association is to give assistance to law firms and other owners of records faced with making decisions about the future of historical records in their custody. We have storage space and can remove records from premises at short notice; we are able to arrange for the records to be distributed to record offices and libraries in which they will be suitably preserved. Over the years large quantities of records have been transferred in this way. During the ‘heroic’ period of the Records Preservation Section in the Second World War, important archives were on occasion rescued from bomb damaged offices; and many more archives have been transferred to places of safety since 1945. But numerous historical records still remain with existing legal firms and other owners or custodians of records; and threats to them, though of a far less dramatic nature than acts of war, endure. Moments of particular risk for historical records can occur with the closure or merger of firms, with a move to new offices, or where there is mounting pressure in an office on the limited available accommodation for the staff, when it comes to seem a luxury to dedicate space to the storage of ‘old’ papers that might appear to some to be of doubtful relevance to current...
business needs. Private individuals also often have pressures of space, which make it difficult to keep papers they have acquired or inherited, while others are unaware of their value. Sadly, ignorance of the value of old records for the future study of history is sometimes a threat to the survival of important archives, even nowadays.

Over and above this role, the Association offers further services to custodians of historical records. For instance, we are very happy to make visits in order to advise on the storage, care, preservation, conservation and listing of historical records as well as on where records might be deposited, providing that the places to be visited are reasonably accessible from London; and we are pleased to facilitate contact with record offices and libraries. A visit would normally be followed as a matter of course by a short report and letter of advice. We are always glad to act as intermediaries in assisting owners and custodians to obtain specialised advice from others, for instance on specific conservation matters or on issues connected with records management and digital archives. We are pleased that the Law Society, which itself receives some enquiries from legal practitioners about the management and preservation of legal records, is happy to recommend us as a potential source of advice and support. Since we are a charity committed to our core aims of the preservation and understanding of historical records, the services that we offer come free of charge, and we hope that this fact provides an added incentive for potential clients to contact us. Having said that, we do exist on a proverbial ‘shoestring’, so offers of support, whether financial or in kind, are always welcomed, as these contribute to meeting the costs we incur in doing our work.

For the last year, we have been engaged in an important new project in partnership with the Law Society. The Law Society, through its regulatory role with regard to legal practitioners, now exercised by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority, has accumulated large quantities of archives of solicitors’ firms. Volunteers from the Association are now engaged in assessing these, in order to determine which are of historical importance and to advise as to where they might be deposited on long-term loan, so that they will be available to researchers for the first time. This project is likely to continue for several years because the quantity of historical records involved is immense. The Association has also recently published a major new report ‘Records at Risk’ highlighting the many threats currently facing historical records and archives in the United Kingdom, both those held by archives services and record offices and those remaining in private custody. The report is based on extensive research carried out on the situation in the Greater London and East of England regions. There are two documents, a short Executive Summary with recommendations and a full report with detailed statistical and other appendices. These documents can be found on our website (http://www.britishrecordsassociation.org.uk/pages/news.htm) and we encourage everyone who takes an interest in British historical records and archives to look at them.

Readers might be interested to hear something about other aspects of our wider range of activities. The Association organises an annual conference on an archival theme every year; the most recent one, held on 10 December 2012, at Swedenborg House in central London, had as its title ‘Jewels in the Crown’? The Archives of Empire. Our keynote speaker was Peter Hennessy, Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield. Our next conference, which we intend to hold in Bedford in early December 2013, will be on...
the theme of travel related records. We also offer training days, of which the most recent was a well attended session at the University of London’s Institute of Historical Research on the research value of twentieth century deeds, a class of historical record that is frequently treated most casually by owners, custodians and archivists at present. A newsletter is issued regularly and a scholarly journal (Archives), containing articles, reviews and news, appears twice a year. Specific topics are dealt with in our series of occasional publications. The ‘Archives and the User’ series is made up of short introductions to particular types of historical source material, of which the two most recent are N.W. Alcock’s Documenting the History of Houses (2003) and Elizabeth A. New’s Seals and Sealing Practices (2010). The Guidelines series of pamphlets provides guidance on practical issues, such as those outlined in Deposit Your Own Deeds - And Help Preserve Our Archival Heritage or in Sale of Pre-registration Deeds by Solicitors and Others, which are two of a number of similar advisory publications in the series that are also available online through the Association’s website. The Association acts as a lobbying or pressure group from time to time, by seeking to prevent the unwarranted or thoughtless destruction, sale or dispersal of historical papers, by speaking up for archival services under threat from financial cuts and by promoting an understanding and appreciation of the value of historical archives.

Further enquiries about the British Records Association and requests for advice with regard to archival matters may be addressed in the first instance to: Ms Maria Evans, British Records Association, Finsbury Library, 245 St John Street, London EC1V 4NB (telephone 020 8833 0428; email info@britishrecordsassociation.org.uk).

Dr Anthony Smith

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**Forthcoming Events**

**Friday 27 September 2013 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Venue: UCL**

Professor Ann Hughes (University of Keele)

‘Preachers and hearers in revolutionary London in the 1640s and 1650s’

**Friday 18 October 2013**

**RHS Symposium**

**Venue: Bath Spa University**

‘Intimacy, Power and Authority in European Perspective’

**Contact: Dr Bronach Kane (b.kane@bathspa.ac.uk) for further details**

**Tuesday 29 October 2013**

**The Colin Matthew Memorial Lecture for the Public Understanding of History**

in co-operation with Gresham College, London

**Venue: London**

Dr Joe Moran (Liverpool John Moores University)

‘The Private Diary and Public History’

**Friday 22 November 2013**

**Venue: UCL**

**Presidential Address**

Professor Peter Mandler

‘Educating the Nation. I: Schools’
Forthcoming Events

The Prothero Lecture

Professor Chris Wickham (University of Oxford)

Wednesday 10 July 2013 at 6.00 p.m.
Venue: Cruciform Lecture Theatre 1, UCL

‘The feudal revolution and the origins of Italian city communes’

The ‘feudal revolution’ debate in the 1990s focussed on the years around 1000 and on France, and was an argument about whether or not that rough date marked a major change in political structures, with more privatised local powers focussed on castles and an effectively total breakdown of the ‘state’. It ended in something of a stand-off, with more extreme versions of both sides largely set aside, but no real consensus. Italy was not a major part of this debate; but the crisis years of the late eleventh century produced a similar breakdown of traditional political structures in the centre-north of Italy around 1100, and the emergence of local powers in much the same way as in parts of France. The most dominant of these local powers were, however, not private lordships, but cities. The question is what difference this makes to our understanding of how a version of the ‘feudal revolution’ might work in Italy; and also whether this ought to make us rethink how we interpret the emergence of the bodies which ran these autonomous cities, the city communes.