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As the November 2018 AGM approaches, and the Society’s 150th anniversary year draws to a close, it is heartening to see the fruits of the labour undertaken by Council members, Officers of the RHS, and Fellows and Members of the Society who have volunteered (or been volunteered!) to serve on our prize panels and working groups or to host an RHS event. I’m tremendously grateful to them for their hard work on our behalf as historians, and sure that Members and Fellows who read the November newsletter will appreciate why.

June saw many of us at Oxford University, beginning with a workshop on strategies for publishing articles and books and navigating the shoals of the postgraduate job market for early-career researchers at Oxford and Oxford Brookes. This was followed by a two-day symposium organised by the History Faculty under the theme of ‘The Future of History: Going Global in the University’. The symposium offered perspectives on connected histories that stretch back for centuries and which provide especially rich opportunities for collaboration between historical professionals in universities and museums. Our meeting with Oxford History Faculty colleagues at the end of the symposium included a lively discussion of a topic that provides a leitmotif of this newsletter: equality and inequalities in the UK discipline. It was interesting to hear about their preparations for an Athena SWAN application and the proactive efforts of several Oxford historians to diversify and enrich the teaching of British history in schools.

In July, Carole Hillenbrand’s excellent Prothero Lecture on ‘Saladin’s Spin Doctors’ built on the Oxford symposium’s global theme. The lecture was followed by our annual prize-giving for early-career scholarly publications. Always a delight to attend, this year’s prize presentation was distinguished by
the inaugural Jinty Nelson Award for Inspirational Teaching and Supervision in History. Named in honour of our 30th President, the Award is (embarrassingly) our first to recognise the central role played by university teachers and supervisors in inspiring the next generation of historians. This year’s recipient was Julie Anderson of the University of Kent. In recognition of the need for the Society to signal its commitment to teaching and learning more emphatically, we plan to offer two prizes from 2019. Details will be available on the website later this year.

August and early September witnessed the Race, Ethnicity & Equality Working Group hard at work and meeting in Bloomsbury to finalise its report, which was launched at City & Islington College on 18th October. Complementing the themes elaborated in this year’s Aylmer Seminar—‘Diversity in the Documents? The Representation of BAME Communities in UK Archives’—the Working Group’s summer research included focus groups and interviews at schools in London and Edinburgh. Drawing on data that included 737 detailed responses to an RHS survey of postgraduate students and academic staff, the report aims to make a substantial intervention into discussions and practices of equality and inequality based on race and ethnicity in UK History.

It makes sobering reading. As a discipline, our record in this respect is poor and must be improved. A generous award from the Past & Present Society will fund a 2-year postdoctoral Fellow to work with us to improve our own practices and the broader record of our field. This is a significant opportunity for the Society to play a leading role in bringing about change within and beyond individual university departments. It is a project that builds on the initiatives begun by my predecessor, Peter Mandler, whose presidency saw the publication of the RHS’s first report on gender and equality in UK university history.
Produced in dialogue with the Race, Ethnicity & Equality Working Group’s report, the Society’s second Gender Report takes stock of how far we have (and have not) come in this respect since 2015. It too deploys RHS survey results that identify alarming levels of bias and discrimination, as well as worrying disparities in workloads. Three years on, however, there is also a wealth of good practice to draw on, and to disseminate through RHS channels. The findings of the two reports are highlighted in this newsletter. Frances Andrews will be shaping a new RHS Vice Presidential portfolio on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the coming year, helping us to build on these reports and to assess the gaps in our current policies and practices.

Neither the Research Excellence Framework (REF) nor the looming UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) Open Access mandate for books receded from RHS attention over the summer, as Vice Presidents Richard Fisher and Jonathan Morris in particular know to the cost of their holidays. The Society has been very active in the past few months both under the radar and in public meetings and media, voicing our concern about the precipitate, unclear and often unreflective mode being employed to extend open access policies to books—the format in which much of the best scholarship in History is published.

We’re delighted that the first volumes of our new open access book series, *New Historical Perspectives*, will appear in 2019. But precisely because the Society is practising open access for our early-career book publications, we’re fully alive to the logistical and financial problems entailed by this mode of publication. Authors who need a refresher on these issues will find the information on open access on our website’s policy pages of value.
Likewise, doing our utmost to advocate for equitable and fit-for-purpose REF criteria for historians and other Humanities researchers remains a priority for the Society. As readers who opt to wade through our responses to Research England’s consultations on REF criteria will see (also available on the policy pages), we have thought long and hard about the best ways to reduce perverse incentives, gaming and policies likely to exclude research or researchers unfairly from the 2021 exercise. It is, frankly, frustrating to have to fight these battles yet again (some, from the ground up).

On a much jollier concluding note, in October a large gaggle of RHS Council members and Officers convened in Scotland. Council members Karin Friedrich and Andrew Roach secured meetings for us in Edinburgh with three MSPs, including the new Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Richard Lochhead, who made time for a substantive discussion with us about History in Scottish schools and universities. For an historian such as myself based in the English system, this meeting was especially striking. The emphasis on continued ties with Europe, qualitative assessment of teaching programmes, socioeconomic inclusion and gender equality contrasts significantly with the dominant themes of policy articulated south of the border. Under devolved governments, not only fee regimes but also broader academic cultures are increasingly divergent, and it was salutary to have an opportunity to explore those differences with the MSPs, each with a different party affiliation.

University of Strathclyde historians then welcomed us to Glasgow, where we met staff and a lively cohort of postgraduate students. We enjoyed a tour of the ‘History village’ in a suite of open-plan offices and rounded the visit off with David Arnold’s illuminating lecture on ‘Death and the Modern Empire: the 1918-19 Influenza Epidemic in India’.

At fewer than 1,500 words, this is inevitably a truncated version of RHS activities since the May newsletter. But I hope that, read alongside the articles that follow and our two 2018 equality reports, it will demonstrate that the Society is working with and for the profession across a wide range of remits.

Margot Finn,
University College London
Friday 23 November 2018 at 6.00 pm
2018 Presidential Address
Margot Finn
‘Material Turns in British History Part II: Corruption: Imperial Power, Princely Politics and Gifts Gone Rogue’
Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL

Friday 8 February 2019 at 6.00 pm
Simon MacLean:
‘Charles the Bald, the Origins of the Medieval Castle and the End of the Carolingian Empire’
Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL

Friday 22 February 2019
The Gerald Aylmer Seminar
in conjunction with the IHR and TNA:
‘Digitality in the Archive: Preservation, Research and Engagement’
The National Archives, Kew

Friday 10 May 2019 at 6.00 pm
Mary Vincent:
‘The ‘Martyrdom of Things’: Iconoclasm and its Meanings in the Spanish Civil War’
Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL
Friday 17 May 2019

*Symposium*
‘Reflections on the Centenary of the First World War’
The Open University

Friday 5 July 2019 at 6.00 pm

*The Prothero Lecture*

Joya Chatterjee:
‘The Refugee as *homo economicus*: Partition, Poverty and the City’
and

Publication, *Fellowship and Teaching Awards*
Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL

5 – 6 September 2019

*Symposium*

‘Charity, Welfare and Emotions in Early Modern Britain’
Nottingham Trent University

Friday 20 September 2019 at 6.00 pm

Penny Roberts:
‘Truth and Justice during the French Religious Wars’
UCL

October 2019

*The Colin Matthew Memorial Lecture for the Public Understanding of History*
in co-operation with Gresham College, London

David Olusoga
London

Friday 29 November 2019 at 6.00 pm

*Presidential Address*
Margot Finn:
‘Material Turns in British History: Part III’
UCL
Alana Harris discusses her experiences using the BBIH to diversify and enrich her curriculum and reading lists.

It is a truism that over the last couple of years most UK History departments have sought to widen their curriculum beyond a narrow focus on Britain and Europe. In some institutions, there have also been concerted efforts to audit existing module offerings to ensure greater representation of people of colour and an integrated approach to histories of empire, race and ethnicity.

Yet as the Royal Historical Society’s just-released Race, Ethnicity and Equality report tellingly identifies, in schools and universities there remains a marked ‘absence of Black British history or (when Black British history is present), a seemingly relentless focus on enslavement, abolition and exploitation’. How can we British historians – and by which I mean, emphatically, historians of the Four Nations and beyond – move our narratives of the past (and our reading lists) beyond tokenistic hagiographies of great men, alienating narratives of unrelenting victimhood, or deafening silences about the violence and abuses of power that accompanied British imperialism?

The Bibliography of British and Irish History (BBIH) might not be first place most of those committed to decolonizing their curriculum think to look. Yet as a unique listing of recent and historical studies of the British past, covering more than 600,000 titles (monographs, journal articles and book chapters) which are exhaustively updated three times a year, perhaps it should be. A quick search across a variety of fields will convince even the most hardened sceptic that there is more scholarship available to ‘liberate’ our
syllabus than realized, if we but move beyond a narrow procession of modern British history topics and outdated modes of engaging with new scholarship.

In recent years, I have contributed to efforts within my own institution to develop new modules and diversify longstanding offerings to ensure better representation of these plural histories. I try to keep abreast of new publications through email alerts, specialist mailing lists, and seminar and conference attendance. So it was with a measure of over-confidence, even complacency that I agreed to search BBIH for new titles relevant to my teaching and research. The results were startling.

Using the search term ‘Black London’, relating to a module launched last year with the Black Cultural Archives, I was staggered to discover a number of just-released titles (and easily missed chapters) to augment a newly-compiled reading list. These included Gemma Romain’s new monograph on race, sexuality and identity in Britain and Jamaica, articles by Flexi Fuhg (on 1960s multi-racial youth culture) and Daniel Renshaw (comparing Edwardian Spitalfields and 1980s Brixton) and Sundari Anitha and Ruth Pearson’s exploration of South Asian women workers and the Grunwick strike. As a historian of religion and gender committed to intersecting my research through the lens of ethnicity, Raibir Singh Judge’s recent exploration of orientalism and desire within London’s Theosophical Society and Harald Fischer-Tine’s account of the YMCA in South Asia were also intriguing finds.

Applying the search term ‘imperial youth’ to a freshly minted module on the history of childhood elicited fascinating comparative offerings in a relatively young and vibrant sub-discipline. These included Rosaria Franco’s article on Chinese refugee children in Cold War Hong Kong, Carol Summer’s unpacking of ‘adolescence’ as a metaphor in colonial Uganda, David Pomfret’s volume exploring trans-colonial childhoods in British and French Asia and a wealth of new scholarship on colonial Australia, including the experiences of juvenile convicts and nineteenth-century elementary school periodicals and literature.

I last used the BBIH database many years ago when I had just arrived from the antipodes to embark upon my DPhil. I needed an authoritative and comprehensive mechanism to quickly master a foreign historiography. In my recent revisit to the database, I have recognized its ongoing utility – using the title of Philip Carter’s recent IHR blog – as a tool not only to maintain the façade of ‘having read everything’ but, more importantly, to ensure that I constantly refresh (and diversify) my module reading lists.

Serving this objective, BBIH’s ‘email alerts’ service for new titles will be added to the other strategies I presently enlist to move modern British history out of its blinkered, stultifying parochialism and to combat its debilitating, indeed dishonest, colour-blindness.

Alana Harris
Kings College London
AYLMER SEMINAR 2018: DIVERSITY IN THE DOCUMENTS?

Andrew WM Smith reports on the annual seminar organised in partnership with the National Archives and the IHR

Archives are not neutral spaces, and both their collection and conservation involve agency and acts of definition. Describing his efforts trying to find an African presence within mainstream archives, Professor Hakim Adi (University of Chichester) gave a stirring plenary entitled ‘Hidden, Lost, Withheld, Destroyed’. He spoke of hierarchies of power in the decision-making around collection and cataloguing that could empower just as it could oppress and erase, calling for revolutions in who takes responsibility for archives. The audience was privileged to hear a 30-year survey of his own personal experience identifying ways to remedy the lack of representation and agency for Black and Asian people, including the creation of the Black and Asian Studies Association, archival mapping efforts, and the 2003 London Mayoral commission on African and Asian Identity. Professor Adi was clear in his message that problems remain despite being repeatedly raised.

Speakers then addressed representation in the archives and the politics of collecting. Abira Hussein from London Metropolitan Archives discussed her project using portraiture as a means of self-definition to give agency to communities often reduced to ethnographic pictures. Here, pictures became a gateway to narratives of migration, trauma, belonging and identity. Hannah Ishmael from UCL then spoke about the development of black-led cultural archives in London, namely the Huntley Archives, the George Padmore Institute, and the Black Cultural Archives. Jennie Vickers of Manchester Central Library likewise profiled a project focused on Manchester’s Kashmiri community, building on the success of their ‘Yemeni Roots, Salford Lives’ project and sharing the goal of giving these stories greater prominence within Manchester’s civic story.

On the theme of collections, Dr Miranda Kaufmann (Institute of Commonwealth Studies) spoke on Black Tudors and Stuarts, emphasising that finding a history before the racism of slavery allowed us imagine a future without it. She discussed the challenges of using tax records and visual sources in which people of colour were often elided during cataloguing.
Dr Sadia Qureshi (University of Birmingham) then demonstrated how ephemera such as posters, leaflets, and adverts could illuminate cultures of racialised display in the nineteenth century. Continuing this theme, Professor Humayun Ansari (Royal Holloway) took researching Muslim lives in UK collections as his theme, exploring how sources, accounts, and objects pushed to the periphery can help recover the voices of the marginalised. Archives, collections, and libraries can play a crucial role in recovering history and agency in the past to contextualise individual lives and stories of black achievement within the framework of broader social narratives. This discussion opened questions about future trajectories of BAME history and the archives, and Iqbal Hussain (TNA) spoke about his work integrating South Asian narratives into the history of the First World War, and outlined how creative practice (such as theatre and fiction) could form a bridge to archival collections and encourage broader participation. Addressing issues of access, Peter Findlay (JISC) showed how digitisation projects could support marginalised voices. Sadiya Ahmed and Tanya Muneera Williams (Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative) then talked about the importance of finding traces of everyday life and representing these in the archival record of the national narrative. Their project and their activism stressed the need to pass the microphone to ordinary people and ask them to represent themselves, ensuring agency and participation across all sectors of society.

This openness was echoed in a final message from the President of the RHS, Professor Margot Finn, thanking participants and calling for the dialogue around the issues of representation, agency, and inclusion to intensify. Reflections on the day addressed the lingering problems outlined in Professor Adi’s plenary and explored throughout the seminar, highlighting the compelling need to move from words to deeds if we are to support and represent as broad a range of history and historians as possible.

Andrew WM Smith
University of Chichester
Sujit Sivasundaram reflects on his work on our recent report into diversity and inclusion within the sector

‘The worst is being the only BME member of staff in a department. Whenever I tried to discuss it with my colleagues (all of whom were non-BME), I was told unequivocally that I was imagining it.’ These are the words of one of the 737 respondents to the RHS survey on Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK University History. The words ring true across the data that the RHS Working Group has assembled and the analysis of our survey returns.

There are entrenched problems of the underrepresentation of BME students and staff (and especially Black students and staff) in History in the UK. This underrepresentation affects our discipline more than most other subjects. It intensifies from school to undergraduate education, from undergraduate education to postgraduate study and further intensifies in the staffing of History units. Note these headlines from our study of the statistical context for UK History:

- University History staff in the UK are overwhelmingly White (93.7%), more so than UK university staff as a whole (85%) and more so than almost every other subject;
- Historical & Philosophical Studies (H&PS) students are also overwhelmingly White (89%), more so than wider university student cohorts (77.3%), and more so than almost every other subject area;
- Postgraduate students in H&PS are more likely to be White than H&PS undergraduates;
- BME pupils appear to be less likely than White pupils to choose History for school examinations.
Our survey returns also pointed to a high level of discrimination and bias in our discipline. 18.8% of our respondents had witnessed discrimination or abuse based on race and ethnicity. The initiators of this discrimination or abuse were predominantly staff within respondents’ departments, followed by students. Over a third of respondents (34.1%) were unaware of the Equality Act 2010’s provisions. This percentage was higher among non-UK staff (47.4%), BME staff (46.4%) and early-career staff (46.2%). Confidence in university equalities policies was low among respondents. Only 40.1% of respondents believed their institution’s policies and processes were fair with respect to race and ethnicity.

These issues of underrepresentation and discrimination and bias with regard to race and ethnicity operate within a landscape of intellectual change, as new research on Black history, histories of migration and ethnicity, and histories of race, imperialism and decolonization transforms our view of the past. A large number of respondents (86.3%) reported that their institutions were widening their curriculum beyond Europe and Britain. This work of challenging the imperial and racial foundations of our discipline needs to continue. Confronting the stereotyping of BME students’ and researchers’ interests, dismissive comments about BME historians’ language competence, funding constraints on research conducted outside the UK and a pervasive unwillingness to grapple with difficult histories all need to be part of this programme of diversifying research and teaching.

Among our key recommendations then for the way ahead for our discipline are the following:

- Significant enhancement of equality and inclusion training in History departments to ensure dignity in the workplace, with attention to discipline-specific characteristics of bias and discrimination in History;

- Improved data collection on the incidence and causes of BME attainment gaps in the discipline, coupled with proactive collaboration with BME students and staff to enhance the equality of experience and attainment;

- Increased understanding and use of Positive Action as a mechanism of change in student and staff recruitment and progression in History, to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of the UK historical community within and beyond universities;

- The imperative need to widen taught History curriculums in schools and universities to challenge the racial foundations of the discipline and to reflect the full diversity of human histories.
If History in the UK is to attract and train the best intellects—thereby enriching both academic and public understanding of the past—significant improvements on our discipline’s existing record will be imperative. Addressing this unacceptable state of play will require substantial structural and cultural change. We present our report to historians in the UK as a step in a long process and to mark the RHS’s 150th anniversary. We look ahead to a profession, a historiography and a curriculum populated by a rich diversity of voices, subject positions and career trajectories.

Sujit Sivasundaram
University of Cambridge

The full text of the *Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History* report is available on our website: https://royalhistsoc.org/racereport
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN UK HISTORY: A SECOND REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

Nicola Miller reflects on the continued efforts to identify and address issues in gender inequality for the benefit of UK historians and the wider field

Our work began five years ago when the RHS created its first Gender Working Group, prompted in part by new government programmes to promote equality and diversity in higher education. As a learned society, dedicated to helping our subject to thrive in all respects, we wanted to collect evidence about the state of gender equality in institutions of higher education and in the other intellectual centres of the historical profession: conferences; seminars; journals, and, not least, learned societies. The findings of our first survey, published in a report in January 2015, identified significant evidence of extensive gender bias and discrimination, both structural and cultural.

The RHS’s 150th anniversary year offered an important opportunity to produce a follow-up report. The Society is strongly committed to regular reviews of gender equality in our subject and also aware that a great deal has happened in relation to equalities over the last three years, in wider society as well as in History and throughout UK higher education. A second survey, conducted in Spring this year, was designed to find out what, if anything, had changed, and to identify the policies helping to bring about greater gender equality. The Second Report provides an analysis of the survey results and a synthesis of the working party’s reflections on both surveys, presented as Recommendations for Good Practice.
The survey results pointed to a striking lack of confidence in the main vehicles of intellectual exchange in History. Gender inequality has been experienced, seen or suspected by over 40% of respondents in all the intellectual activities of our subject: journal editorships (43%); appointments to editorial boards (44%); seminar programmes (49%); learned societies (53%); conference programmes (59%) and keynote lectures (65%). In all cases, women were significantly more likely than men to say that they had observed or experienced inequality. This finding fits with the survey’s overall picture of notable gender differences in attitudes towards inequality throughout the profession, with men consistently more positive about everything.

There is a lot of work to be done to counter the many gendered aspects of historians’ working lives. It starts with awareness. Universities need to do far more to ensure that everyone is well-informed and equipped with the tools they need to understand and to speak out about gender inequality. Alarmingly high proportions of the sample reported being affected by discrimination (48% of women, 16% of men), bullying (40% of women, 34% of men), intimidation (38% of women, 31% of men) and sexual harassment (18% of women, 5% of men). Yet only one quarter of all respondents reported effective policies to address these problems and one-third of the sample said they did not know about equalities policies at all. The comments also revealed concerns about the lack of mechanisms for addressing everyday forms of sexism.

Care-giving was again identified, as it was in the first Gender Equality report, as an area of serious discrimination, with a lack of support, resources or career guidance for individuals with caring responsibilities, whether for children or for other members of the family.

The responses on teaching and learning (an area we could not cover in 2015) indicated disturbing levels of gendered bias not only in the curriculum but also in teaching practice and class discussion. Higher than average experience of such biases was recorded among early-career historians. More research will be needed to understand these problems better but our findings give major cause for concern, especially in light of the increasing importance of the Teaching Excellence Framework.

The most positive finding from the survey was that there is a high level of consensus about the policies and practices that help. In many respects – although not all – there was little difference between women and men about what constitutes good practice. We have the information we need to take rapid and effective steps towards gender equality throughout the historical profession. In the comments, many respondents expressed a strong sense of commitment to transformational change and a cautious degree of optimism that it was possible. The report includes a range of measures that could be implemented over the next academic year. This Second Gender Report is designed to be read alongside the RHS Report on Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History, published in October.
The two reports were written in reference to each other, while mindful of the differences, because of all the sociological evidence that inequalities are shaped by intersectionality (multiple ascribed identities and socio-economic factors that combine to intensify discrimination and disadvantage). Data from the RHS survey on Race and Ethnicity supports the view that gender and race intersect, particularly exacerbating the circumstances of women historians from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

It is heartening that many of the respondents to the gender survey commented on the importance of thinking about all kinds of inequalities and how they reinforce each other. A strong sense also emerged that everyone working in History would benefit from rethinking what we mean by ‘the ideal historian’, in order to replace a full-time, full-on model associated with stereotypical masculinity with a more flexible, diverse and inclusive approach to our subject.

Nicola Miller
University College London

Following the launch of Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History, our second Gender Report is published in November. You can access the full text of the new report, along with the original Gender Equality and Historians in UK Higher Education, on the RHS website at the following address:

https://royalhistsoc.org/genderreport2018
On 18 July 2018 the RHS and Institute of Historical Research (IHR) held the latest in their series of day-long publishing workshops for Early Career Researchers. Previous sessions have taken place in Glasgow, Leeds and London, with this fourth workshop held at the IHR. The day comprised a series of short presentations from historians who are published authors as well as journal or series editors, or have experience of working with academic publishing houses. RHS speakers at the July session included Margot Finn, Richard Fisher, Jane Winters and Penny Summerfield (as a co-convenors of the Society’s New Historical Perspectives series) and the Honorary Co-Director of Communications, Andrew Smith who spoke to a 90-strong audience of research students and recent post-docs.

The principal purpose of this, and earlier, workshops was to demystify the publishing process and offer practical advice to those submitting a first journal article or book proposal. Two morning panels took attendees through the stages that lead to publication—from the conversion of a PhD thesis to a book proposal; advice on which publisher to approach, and how; the publishing cycle for an article or monograph; and the roles for an author prior to and after publication. This was followed by a more focused discussion on working with your publisher once a successful submission has been made. Here subjects included the purpose of peer review, contractual considerations, and what to expect from an editor and what editors will expect of their authors. To have the insight, advice and reassurances of established academics on these topics is a particularly important aspect of the workshop format.
A third panel session addressed new forms of historical communication, with a particular focus on Open Access publishing. Many attending these workshops come with little or no knowledge of OA, its formats and timetables, and the possible consequences for dissemination and re-use of historical writing. Having addressed these points, Penny Summerfield outlined the Society’s (and IHR’s) own Open Access project—New Historical Perspectives—which, from 2019, will see simultaneous publication of first or second monographs by ECRs in print, eBook and Open Access formats. Through the support of the Society and the IHR, commissioned authors will experience the advantages of OA publishing without the need to fund book processing charges.

As with each session in July, Open Access prompted a range of questions in a programme designed to accommodate and facilitate conversation as much between attendees as with speakers. Two final sessions took this further: first with a ‘meet the editor’ discussion involving all of the day’s panellists who responded to pre-submitted enquiries and questions from the floor. The workshop concluded with a series of one-to-one sessions between speakers and 30 audience members who had expressed their interest in discussing a current book proposal in greater detail.

Philip Carter
Institute of Historical Research
NEW HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: AN AUTHOR’S PERSPECTIVE

The first titles from the new Open Access RHS book series are soon to appear. Here, Edward Owen reflects on his experience as an author.

My new monograph *The Family Firm: Monarchy, Mass Media, and the British Public, 1932-53* will be published in 2019 as part of the RHS and IHR’s *New Historical Perspectives* series. One of the major attractions of the NHP series is that all published monographs will be Open Access. This means that my book, and others in the series, will be freely accessible to all who want to read them. Many other publishing houses impose ‘book processing’ costs on authors for producing Open Access publications. But with NHP, no financial burden is borne by the author. This emphasis on Open Access without charges makes the NHP series an appealing platform for Early Career Researchers, like me, who seek to disseminate their research as widely as possible.

That this option is available with the Royal Historical Society and Institute of Historical Research was a further important consideration in deciding to publish in the NHP series. Both have strong publishing reputations that owe much to the support authors receive along the route to publication. Central to the new NHP series is a programme of scholarly editorial engagement and academic workshops designed to sharpen and develop the manuscript between first submission and publication.

I originally submitted my book proposal to the NHP’s editorial convenors in April 2017. In turn they, along with members of the series’ academic editorial board, reviewed the submission and recommended that it be sent for external peer-review. Three months later, I heard back from the NHP editors with the...
comments of the peer-reviewers, which were generally very positive but also included suggestions for improvement. After signing a contract for delivery of a full draft manuscript in spring 2018, I was introduced to a member of the editorial committee, Professor Richard Toye, who has since acted as my main point of contact. For example, when it became clear that, due to personal commitments (the decision to get married!), I would not complete the draft by the agreed deadline, I was able to negotiate a three-month extension through Richard.

At this point, we also agreed a date for my author workshop, which took the form of a meeting at the RHS office with two further historians who had read my complete manuscript – Professors Adrian Bingham and Jo Fox – and a chairperson, Professor Penny Summerfield, one of the two editorial convenors for the series. The constructive feedback that I received on the manuscript from Adrian, Jo and Penny was gratefully received and has been invaluable in shaping my final draft. The reviewers also kindly agreed to look over two parts of the book that have required a more substantial re-write.

As the deadline for my final manuscript nears, I would like to thank all those involved with the project for their help and encouragement. Communication with the NHP editorial team has been quick, clear, and supportive throughout, and I’m pleased and proud that The Family Firm will be one of the first books to appear as part of this exciting and innovative series.

Edward Owen
University of Lincoln

New Historical Perspectives

is a book series for early career scholars commissioned and edited by the RHS, and published by the Institute of Historical Research and the University of London. The series is Open Access, so it’s highly discoverable, and work is published at no cost to authors. Formats include monographs, edited collections, and longer or shorter form works that can be single or multi-authored. Anyone who is within ten years of getting a doctorate from a university in the UK or Republic of Ireland is eligible to submit a proposal.

https://royalhistsoc.org/publications/new-historical-perspectives/
NEW HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: AN EDITOR’S PERSPECTIVE

Heather Shore offers some insight into the editorial and peer-review process involved our Open Access series

As a member of the New Historical Perspectives series editorial board, my role is to consider the proposals that early-career researchers submit, to attend the yearly committee meeting, and to undertake other business pertaining to the series when required.

The whole committee – with representation from scholars across a wide range of periods and approaches – initially assess the applications and provide feedback. Proposals, along with a sample chapter, are then sent out to appropriate readers identified by the committee. This process not only means that the prospective author receives feedback from the committee and external reviewers, but also provides us collectively with a helpful overview of the shape of the series as it develops. I’ve been impressed by the range of proposals we’ve been sent, from subjects as diverse as the early

Mark Rothery (Northampton), Nicola Phillips (RHUL), Penny Summerfield and Sarah Goldsmith (Leicester), with Philip Carter (IHR) behind the camera, discuss Sarah’s NHP manuscript on danger and masculinity on the eighteenth-century grand tour at a workshop in July 2018.
church, the Grand Tour, the monarchy and the press, and the Spanish Civil War. It has been heartening to see the wide range of research in which young scholars are engaged, and the really interesting work that they are producing. It’s been a great pleasure to see some of the earliest proposals that we considered come to fruition.

Another role of the editorial board is to steer and manage the author workshop process (which one of our authors Ed Owens, has described in his contribution to this newsletter). I’ve had the privilege to do this most recently, making sure to approach the best possible advisors for the workshop, and working with the author while they prepare their manuscript. I think this has to be one of the most important features of the series, enabling an early-career researcher to work with senior academics in response to their draft manuscript, and to get their feedback in such an open and constructive fashion. This is a unique experience for academics producing their first monograph or edited collection and a major attraction of the series. I think the series really looks after its authors and the author workshop epitomises this. Working with the committee has been, and I’m sure will continue to be, an education; I encourage Fellows to spread the word about the series and to help make it a success.

Heather Shore,
Leeds Beckett University

The first titles in the New Historical Perspectives series will launch in 2019. Some of the first titles will include:

- Stephen Mullen, *Glasgow’s Sugar Aristocracy: The British-Atlantic World, 1776-1838*
- Sarah Goldsmith, *Danger, Risk and Masculinity on the Grand Tour, 1700-1780*
- Christopher Phillips, *Britain’s Transport Experts and the First World War*
OPEN ACCESS MONOGRAPHS: RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Jane Winters reflects on recent developments surrounding Open Access and the Society’s engagement with consultations on developing policy in this area

Discussions about open-access scholarly publishing have been given new life in recent months by two key developments: the public attention given to the statement by HEFCE (now Research England) in December 2016 that it intended ‘to move towards an open-access requirement for monographs in the exercise that follows the next REF’; and the adoption by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) of ‘Plan S’, which turns decisively away from the hybrid models of open access which have typified journal publishing to date. ‘Plan S’ also includes monographs, although it acknowledges that the aspirational goal of ‘full and immediate’ open access to all scientific publications by 1 January 2020 may not be achievable for books.

The Royal Historical Society has been very active in exploring the impact of open-access policies and models on historical research and history publishing, and continues to contribute to the national (and international) debate about books in particular. In September, several officers and members of Council attended a one-day workshop on open-access monographs, organised by the Universities UK OA Monograph Working Group and the Arts and Humanities Alliance at the British Academy. The day was structured as three plenary sessions – a policy roundtable, a publishers’ session and an authors’ panel – followed by facilitated group discussions around key themes.
The opening roundtable, chaired by Dame Janet Finch, included a presentation by the Society’s Vice-President and Chair of the Publications Committee, Richard Fisher, which emphasised the scale of academic book publishing in the UK alone, in stark contrast to the ‘artisanal’ solutions that have been proposed up to now. The discussions that followed this session indicated that there is a growing and welcome awareness among policy-makers of the unique challenges posed by humanities book publishing in relation to open access. Exemptions and exceptions seem likely to be with us for some time to come.

The publishers’ panel included a particularly interesting presentation from Charles Watkinson, Director of the University of Michigan Press, who highlighted examples of open-access initiatives which give a major voice to scholars. The value of involving humanities researchers directly in open-access publishing was further evidenced in the next session, where authors talked about the benefits of working closely with publishers and of finding new audiences for their work through open access. There were challenges too, including the requirement for authors to be much more aware of the policy landscape and perhaps to be active in tricky negotiations between publisher and university about the payment of book processing charges (BPCs).

The final facilitated sessions tackled subjects such as business models for open-access monographs, disciplinary perspectives on open-access books, the implications of open access for researchers at different career stages, open-access monographs and the university, and the perspectives of learned societies. I was responsible for reporting back on the career stage discussion groups, and was struck by the anxiety that uncertainty around open access and its implementation is still causing among early-career researchers, a number of whom were represented at the event. The Society takes its responsibilities to ECRs in this area very seriously, and will continue to work to support and inform them in their publishing choices, not least through New Historical Perspectives.

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In March 2018, the RHS published a briefing for Historians on Open-Access & the future of book publishing. You can read the briefing on the RHS website at the following address:

https://royalhistsoc.org/oa-briefing-march2018/
The RHS 150th anniversary blog, *Historical Transactions*, includes updates on our activities and publications, as well as features from historians on topics ranging from medieval petitions to the Dutch revolt, and from school curriculums to LGBT history. 

https://blog.royalhistsoc.org
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