Welcome to the second issue of Past and Future from our temporary home in the south block of Senate House. As I write, scaffolding continues to envelop the old IHR and, with the University architects, we are adding the final touches to the design and layout of the Institute’s exciting redevelopment project. The modernisation will preserve the original ethos of the old IHR while enhancing our capacity to deliver events, training and teaching, and provide space for visiting academics and projects. The Institute is also using the opportunity afforded by the works to raise funds here in the UK and in North America, for some new academic programmes: a Chair in the History of London; more junior fellowships (especially for overseas scholars); a digital library of colonial American sources; and support for our seminars and conference activity.

2012 is the year of the Olympics and, it would seem, every other conceivable anniversary. Among them the diamond jubilee looms large, as is noted elsewhere in the magazine. It is of special significance to the Victoria County History, originally conceived in the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. To mark the occasion, HM the Queen has agreed to rededicate the VCH. Henceforth, all red volumes and other VCH publications will carry the new wording alongside the original dedication on their title pages. As symbolic gestures go, this is a wonderful boost for the national treasure that is the VCH. Throughout June, along with colleagues across the VCH community, we will be celebrating the rededication in fitting style, culminating in the Marc Fitch lecture on 25 June.

As you can read in the magazine, other IHR departments are flourishing. The library moves have inspired Jennifer Higham and her colleagues to investigate and showcase parts of the collection via the website, revealing the hidden depths of our research collections. Two long-running IHR research projects – Early English Laws and the History of Education (on the teaching of history in schools since 1902) – came to an end in the autumn with high-profile events to present their findings. Our MA enrolment has been the highest for many years and has been superbly run, in Dr Matthew Davies’ sabbatical absence, by Professor Vivian Bickford-Smith. Vivian now returns to South Africa after four years at the IHR, during which time his international range and convivial collaboration have added a spark and a sparkle to the work of the Centre for Metropolitan History.

May I use this space to thank all IHR users for your support during the move and adjustment to our new surroundings. It is a huge credit to the IHR’s library, administrative and reception staff that the move went so smoothly, but everyone working in the Institute is grateful for the support, praise and well-wishes received since last autumn. Thank you. And please don’t stop there. As we turn our attention to the move back into the modernised IHR next year, your support will be as important as ever.

Miles Taylor
February 2012
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## Past and Future

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*Cover image: Athena wearing the ægis. Sardonyx cameo, late first century BC; mount: enamelled gold by Josias Belle, late 17th century. This year’s Anglo-American conference explores the relationship between ancients and moderns. © Image by Marie-Lan Nguyen, 2006/Wikimedia Commons*
IHR news

VCH Oxfordshire 16 launched

VCH Oxfordshire Volume 16 (Henley-on-Thames and Environs) was formally launched on 1 October, at a gathering attended by over 100 friends and supporters. The event was hosted by the VCH Oxfordshire Trust (now the principal local funder) and by the chairman of Oxfordshire county council, Councillor Patrick Greene, who spoke of the council's continuing relationship with the VCH. Other addresses were made by the Trust chairman Dr Kate Tiller, the Lord Lieutenant Tim Stevenson (president of the VCH Oxfordshire Trust), and the former director of the VCH, Professor John Beckett.

Through the kindness of the owners, the launch was held at Harpsden Court, one of the historic houses featured in the book. It is a complex building of several periods, which began as a medieval manor house. The main event took place in the large panelled hall, and guests were able to see some of the house's hidden medieval features and its 18th-century domed music room.

The new 375-page volume provides comprehensive coverage of Henley-on-Thames and of the surrounding Chiltern parishes of Bix, Harpsden, Rotherfield Greyes and Rotherfield Peppard. Famous now for its annual regatta, Henley began as a planned medieval town and inland port shipping grain to London, developing later into a coaching centre and (from the 19th century) upmarket resort and commuting town. A substantial introduction sets the area in its historical and geographical context, and, for the first time in an Oxfordshire VCH volume, there is a section of full-colour photographs, supplementing the numerous maps and text illustrations. The book (ISBN 978 1 904356 38 7) is available from all good booksellers, or direct from Boydell & Brewer (www.boydellandbrewer.com).

Historical Research

Alex Watson's and Patrick Porter's article 'Bereaved and aggrieved: combat motivation and the ideology of sacrifice in the First World War' (Historical Research, 1xxiii, no. 219) was one of the scholarly articles presented for debate in Wiley-Blackwell's successful virtual conference on 'The changing face of war' (14–20 November 2011). Conference papers and the online discussions they sparked are still available to view at http://tinyurl.com/historical-research-virtual-c. Look out for more Historical Research contributions to future Wiley-Blackwell conferences.

Pollard and Neale Prize reminders

Entries for the 2012 Pollard Prize (sponsored by Wiley-Blackwell) must be submitted by 25 May. All papers presented at an IHR seminar by postgraduate students or by researchers within one year of completing a PhD are eligible. Submissions must be supported by a reference from the seminar convenor. First prize is fast-track publication in Historical Research, and £200 worth of Blackwell books. Enquiries and submissions should be directed to the executive editor, Historical Research (jane.winters@sas.ac.uk).

The Neale Prize is awarded to a historian in the early stages of his or her career for essays of no more than 8,000 words on a theme related to Tudor history. The prize is £1,000, with an additional £500 in support of the winner's scholarly career. Winning entries are published in Historical Research. The closing date is the end of April. Further information can be obtained by emailing james.lees@sas.ac.uk.

Ten years of online bibliography

The Institute of Historical Research and the Royal Historical Society have cooperated for many years in the production of bibliographies of British history. The summer of 2012 will see the tenth anniversary of the Bibliography of British and Irish History (formerly the Royal Historical Society Bibliography) being placed online, having been launched at the 2002 Anglo-American conference. It was initially supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council; with the end of this funding in 2009, the IHR and the RHS entered into a partnership with Brepols Publishers to publish the bibliography as a subscription service from 2010 onwards, although the IHR and the RHS also increased their financial contributions in order to keep subscriptions as low as possible.

The online bibliography was launched with around 300,000 records; the number of records in the database passed the 500,000 mark during 2011. This growth partly reflects the increase in publications in British and Irish history (not least of articles in collections of essays, which the bibliography continues to list but which are otherwise so difficult to locate). However, the growth also reflects our increased thoroughness in collecting material, helped by the use of electronic downloads from the British Library and from publishers' sites. Significant contributions have also been made by partner projects, especially Irish History Online and London's Past Online, which enriched the database in their specialist areas. We are also cooperating with the Scottish Historical Review Trust to strengthen the coverage of Scottish history.

As historians and publishers make more use of the internet, so the bibliography has become a gateway to other online services. We began by adding links to online reviews and library catalogues, but the main change has resulted from the development of OpenURL resolvers – we can now link our users to online copies of many of the journal articles in the database and ensure that the copy offered is one to which their institution
New acquisitions for IHR Library

The Library continues to purchase a wide variety of books, augmented by the generosity of the Friends. Recently ordered items include a work on female writers of history in early modern England; the story of Richard II and the royal treasure; Jewish responses to persecution; and a collection of Grand Tour correspondence.

Recently catalogued acquisitions by the library include:

- Anthropology: unsettling knowledge, questioning discipline | E.146/Mur
- Crusading and chronicle writing on the medieval Baltic frontier: a companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia | EB.3
- Diccionario biográfico de España, 1808–1833: de los orígenes del liberalismo a la reacción absolutista | ES.1241/Gil
- Pádraig Ó Ríain, Dictionary of Irish saints | BI.122/Ria
- Richard Chartres, Early Jacobean charitable giving | BL.541/Cha
- Ceremonial de la coronación, unción y exequias de los reyes de Inglaterra | B.2961/Ram

For more information on the last item, visit collection librarian Michael Townsend’s ‘in focus’ piece on the IHR library website: www.history.ac.uk/library/collections/coronation-ceremony.

Podcasting the past: digital and urban highlights on History SPOT

The IHR has built up a vast repository of podcasts derived from our research seminars, conferences and workshops, and hosted on History SPOT (Seminar Podcasting and Online Training) since September 2011. Certain themes and topics have cropped up time and again, forming a useful set of resources. These are made more useful because they are events directed towards an audience of peers, rather than undergraduates. The content of these podcasts, therefore, represents the latest thought, research and interests in the field of historical research.

One of the themes regularly explored on History SPOT is that of digital historical resources. The digital history seminar group is regularly streamed live on Tuesday evenings and has looked at various digital projects. In May last year, Richard Rodger (Edinburgh) argued for an ‘anti-GIS’ approach for historians looking at urban spaces. In November 2011, Matt Thompson (York) spoke on digital presentation and analysis for early 20th-century railway marketing, while Valerie Johnson and David Thomas (The National Archives) asked an important question: does digital change anything?

On one occasion, Adrian Bell (Reading) and Andy King (Southampton) discussed the digital output from their project ‘The soldier in late medieval England’. This is a searchable online database, derived from the muster rolls, of soldiers serving in England in the 14th and 15th centuries. The success of this project was due in part to the usefulness of the site but also to their heavy promotion of it outside of academia, online and in the media. Successful projects, including and derived from the Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online, have also received similar promotion. In June last year, Tim Hitchcock (Hertfordshire) discussed text mining of data in the Old Bailey proceedings. In December, Peter Rauxloh (Museum of London Archaeology) spent the final part of his paper discussing the complexities of creating a properly geo-referenced map of 18th- and 19th-century London for the Locating London’s Past website. A workshop walk-through of this site is also available on History SPOT, presented by Robert Shoemaker (Sheffield).

This project is an example of another of the regular themes encountered on History SPOT: urban history. Two podcasts have discussed pollution in industrial London from different perspectives. In February 2011, Stephen Mosley (Leeds Metropolitan) described the polluted skies of London as a ‘disaster in slow-motion’ and discussed how coal-fired hearths were partly responsible for the ‘great smog’ of 1952. In October, Joseph de Sapio (Oxford) added the writings of tourists in London as a source for understanding the fog in terms of experiencing Victorian London. The IHR’s ‘Blocked arteries’ conference examined issues of road congestion across time and place. Looking at the issue of pollution from...
an alternative vantage point, Clare Hickman (Bristol), Carole O’Reilly and Matti Hannikainen have all discussed the emergence of ‘healthy’ spaces in urban landscapes such as parks and gardens.

Another aspect of urban history to have emerged out of the podcasts is the use of space. Francis Boorman (IHR) has examined the built environment of Chancery Lane; Carry van Lieshout (KCL) has looked at 18th-century water management; Joanna Marchant (CMH/IHR) has investigated the civic environments of London museums; Dhan Singh, the underground railways of Buenos Aires; and Nick Piercey (UCL) the routine movement of football fans within Rotterdam city before the outbreak of the First World War.

History SPOT also hosts a range of podcasts looking at the history of health and philanthropy, imperial history, sport history and politics. The history of education is well represented and we have recently begun to record seminars on the topic of the home and on Latin American history. Free registration gives you access to the entire archive and to our growing online research training presence, so do take a look. History SPOT can be found at historyspot.org.uk and its blog at http://ihrprojects.wordpress.com.

IHR events

Oral history spring school
26–28 April 2012

Agency: History Lab annual conference
13–14 June 2012

Marc Fitch lecture by Dr David Starkey: “‘Head of our morality’: why the 20th-century British monarchy matters’
25 June 2012, Chancellor’s Hall, Senate House, 6.30pm
Followed by a wine reception. Free admission and all are welcome to attend. RSVP to VCH.Events@sas.ac.uk.

Summer school in local history
25–27 June 2012

‘Ancients and moderns’: the 81st Anglo-American conference of historians
5–6 July 2012, Senate House
www.history.ac.uk/aach12

Teaching history in higher education, co-hosted with the Higher Education Academy
11–12 September 2012, Woburn suite, Senate House

Anglo-Chinese conference
September 2012, Senate House

For further details, visit www.history.ac.uk/events.

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or contact Dr Matthew Davies:
Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU
Tel: 020 7862 8698 Fax: 020 7862 8793 Email: matthew.davies@sas.ac.uk
Olympic renascences: how democratic were the Ancient Olympics?

Paul Cartledge, professor of Greek culture, University of Cambridge

‘You were born here’, proclaimed a Greek national tourist organisation poster in the 1970s; ‘come to Greece, birthplace of democracy’. Fact or myth? The modern Olympics are a revival, a renascence, of the Ancient Greek original. Fact or myth? For my forthcoming talk at this summer’s Anglo-American conference, in this Olympic year of 2012, I thought it might be interesting to juxtapose and explore rather more deeply, from a historical point of view, these two claims – or factoids.

Let’s take first the relationship between the Ancient and the modern Olympics: were the Ancient Games revived in 1896, or were they, rather, reinvented? What must soon strike any reader of the torrent of books on the Ancient Games that are cannily released to coincide with (almost) every new Olympics is just how untraditional the modern Games have in fact been. In what Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger in 1983 labelled the ‘invention of tradition’, the modern Olympic ‘movement’ has witnessed a series of innovations introduced in the name of, and often allegedly inspired by, the supposed precedent and model of the Ancient Greek Games.

Consider just one of the most visually memorable, and not the least symbolically significant: the ‘tradition’ of the Olympic flame. In an ever more complicated process, this ritual begins with the ceremonial lighting of a torch from the reflected rays of the sun within the sacred space of Olympia, on 25 March (Greek independence day) of the Olympiad year. It continues with a torch relay, sometimes across whole continents, by land, sea and air, though this year that aspect has been much reduced, for security and other political reasons. It concludes with the ceremonial lighting of the flame – the eternal flame, so to speak – that will burn at the host site of the particular Games in question. In the case of Athens in 2004, the relay lasted some ten weeks and covered 78,000 kilometres across 33 countries and five continents. The flame was conveyed in a steel and wood torch designed in the symbolic shape of an olive leaf and was carried on planes, trains, cars, bicycles, an elephant and a camel; its transfer involved hundreds of athletes and other bearers of various descriptions, at a cost of £25m in all.

Over the years, between the invention of that particular tradition and the London Games of 2012, the torch/flame ceremony has become overloaded with a whole truckload of symbolic associations: the crackling fire of inspiration; the steady, gemlike flame of remembrance and the cleansing heat of purity; the enlightenment of the so-called Olympic spirit, characterised above all by a supposed common striving for peace (hence the olive-leaf shape of the 2004 torch). This latter aspect is promoted most obviously and assiduously by the associated International Olympic Truce movement, based, like the International Olympic Committee and its museum, in Lausanne, Switzerland. And yet within the modern Olympic ‘movement’, ceremonies did not begin with any Olympic flame of any description; that was an innovation made for the Amsterdam Games of 1928. Nor was...
there any form of Olympic torch-relay before the notorious 1936 Berlin Games. There had indeed been a torch-lit procession after dusk during the inaugural 1896 Games in Athens, and the symbol of a torch was used to adorn the winners’ medals in the 1900 Paris Games. But the idea for the torch relay instituted in 1936 sprang fully armed from the head, not of the goddess Athena, but of the all-too-human Carl Diem (1882–1962), an admirer of Classical antiquity, especially Ancient Sparta, and a Classical revivalist. The ageing Pierre de Coubertin, founding father of the modern Games, was unable to be present at Olympia for the lighting ceremony in 1936, but he did send a message that typically included a paean of praise for ‘an eternal Hellenism that has not ceased to light the way for the centuries’. After the 12 Greek ‘priestesses’ had lit the flame, they recited odes by Pindar, the greatest celebrator of victorious ancient Greek athletes. Leni Riefenstahl, too, in her famous – and notorious – documentary film, entered into the same pseudo-antique spirit of things and chose to show some of the Greek torchbearers in ancient, not modern, settings.

How much, if any, authority or inspiration for this modern Olympic invention could be drawn from ancient Greek Olympic precedent? Strictly speaking, absolutely none. Of course, fire had been crucial to the successful performance of the ancient Games, not least the fire that cooked the hecatomb of cattle sacrificed to the greater glory of Zeus Olympios on his ever-growing ash-altar, in what was arguably the central ritual of the entire five-day festival. But this only reminds us of yet another fundamental difference between the ancient and the modern Games: the former were, at their heart and core, religious. In antiquity, however, there was no dedicated Olympic Games flame, lit only every four years, nor had there been any torch relay, not even a torch-lit procession, before or during the ancient Olympics.

In a sense, however, that is nothing less than we should expect. The ancient Olympics were originally a Panhellenic affair: all-Greek but also only-Greek, and always held at the same, eternally sanctified location in southern mainland Greece. There was no need, therefore, for a preliminary ritual designed, as today’s chiefy is, simultaneously to emphasise the Games’ truly multinational and international character, and to highlight the focal role of the ever-changing host city within that globalised athletic universe. Besides, the torch relay’s idealised function of emphasising harmony, solidarity and peace, or at least the cessation of war, was fulfilled differently in antiquity: by a genuinely religious ritual, namely the declaration of the Olympic Truce by the host city of nearby Elis and the transmission of that declaration by word-of-mouth throughout Hellas by specially-appointed Eleian sacred ambassadors. It might be urged, therefore, that there was no need or place for the invention of such a quasi- or fake-religious ritual as the modern Olympic torch relay.

A similar comparison and contrast may be drawn between modern and ancient forms of ‘democracy’. Our English word – like its French, Bulgarian or Kazakh equivalents – is derived from a term coined in ancient Greece, some time in the fifth century BC and most probably in Athens, which had pioneered the world-shatteringly innovative governmental form in the late sixth century BC. But for ancient Greeks, demokratia did not mean the same thing as our ‘democracy’, that is, it did not have the identical semantic or pragmatic range, either in theory or in practice. In theory, the compound abstract noun demokratia – formed from the two words demos and kratos – could mean one of two things: the kratos (literally ‘grip’, hence final and sovereign authority) of the demos in the sense either of ‘the People’ (in the vague, Lincolnian usage at Gettysburg, ‘government of the people by the people for the people’) or, much more specifically, ‘the majority of the poor citizen people’. If one was an ideological democrat, as more and more Greeks were becoming as the fifth century BC turned into the fourth, then one favoured the Lincolnian understanding: under a demokratia, the people (citizens) ruled themselves in their collective best interests. But if, on the other hand, one was not a member of the poor ‘many’, and one belonged to the wealthy and/or aristocratic elite ‘few’, then demokratia was liable to be construed as the tyranny of the poor majority over the elite minority, something much more like Lenin’s dictatorship of the proletariat, in fact, than anything that is typically understood as or by ‘democracy’ today.

The full force of that theoretical, class-based, antagonistic understanding of such a basic political concept was expressed, in practice, by the fact that the ancient Greeks deployed direct, face-to-face politics and governmental decision-making by mass meeting. They would have had no notion of any such modern concept as ‘separation of governmental powers’ between a separate and counterposed legislature, judiciary and executive. The Athenian people, for instance, ruled as such in all those three spheres; the very same citizens might first vote for a measure in their assembly, then sit on the jury that decided a lawsuit arising from the prosecution of the citizen who had proposed that measure, and then execute the decision that eventuated from the process. To us, Athenian democracy may now seem not just confusing but contradictory, and it is not difficult to think of decisions made by the Athenian people, whether sitting in assembly or as a jury court, that stand as lasting blots on the democratic escutcheon. But for them it worked.

Moreover, despite these stark differences in conception and pragmatic application, ancient Greek democracy has played a key role as a potential model for imitation, since the late 18th-century French and
American revolutions, and especially in modernising 19th-century Britain. And though the ancient Olympics were nothing like the modern, it is possible to find an element of democratisation both within and spreading out from the ancient Olympic ‘movement’.

From the start, in the early eighth century BC, only free-status, free-born and citizen (male) Greeks had been permitted to compete at the Olympics. Not unnaturally, in an age dominated by aristocrats whose claim to rule rested on a fictive genetic descent from a hero or a god and an all-too-real possession of superior landed and other wealth, the first athletic competitors at Olympia were themselves aristocrats. But between 700 and 500 BC, ideas of equality, including the notion of equality of opportunity, steadily gained ground, especially in cities where aristocratic rule proved either incompetent at best or at worst viciously detrimental to the interests of the poor majority of citizens. And by 500 BC, as noted above, a system of self-government that was democratic, in conception and practice if not yet in name, had actually emerged at Athens. Democracy, ancient-style, held two core values dear: equality and freedom. Combining the two with a democratic spin, it held that, if one was of free and full citizen status – being both non-slave and not obligated to another in a dependent relationship as in that of a client to his patron – then one was entitled to the privilege of full political equality, as expressed in the possession and exercise of an equal vote on the most fundamental matters of state. Did this democratic understanding of politics extend also to the ancient Greeks’ – not just the Athenians’ – understanding and practice of athletics and hippics?

Competitions involving horses can be dismissed at once, for surely only the extremely wealthy could even begin to contemplate competing, vicariously as owners, in the chariot and horse-race events; besides, even a woman could win at these (and the first one to do so was a Spartan princess). Or can they be so easily ignored? In 415, a leading Athenian politician was able to deploy his spectacular success in the four-horse chariot race at the most recent Olympics as a supporting argument in favour of his proposal to attack the Sicilian Greek city of Syracuse, itself also a democracy. The democratic Athenian assembly found all of his arguments persuasive – to their later, crippling, cost. However, so far as direct personal participation in the athletic and combat events went, there was nothing to say that, in principle, a poor man might not carry off the crown. But what of the practice?

We know that at least a select bunch of competitors, some of the victors in the Olympics and other ‘crown’ (no value-prizes) games, simply had to be elite and rich because they could afford to commission Pindar or another expensive poet-composer to write and have performed a celebratory ode for them. On the other hand, we know that some cities, democratic Athens among them, offered both material and symbolic rewards for successful Olympians. It might be thought, therefore, that such rewards would have partially offset the great costs involved in achieving such success – including time off for dedicated training, special diets, hiring a trainer – so that, if a poor athlete without resources got lucky thanks to his native and materially unsupported talent, his future might be assured. The leading fourth-century democratic statesman and orator Demosthenes addressed a popular Athenian jury thus: ‘from time immemorial you [Athenians] have given the richest rewards to those [Athenians] who win crowns in the athletic games; nor, because such honours are necessarily confined to a few, have you grudged or stinted the honours of the victors on that account … In other words, though it was in principle un-democratic to single out a few citizens for special reward, athletic victors constituted a recognised exception to that rule, because their success, by extension, conferred honour on their city in the ever-present inter-city competition for prestige. And yet, though this exception might, in principle, have included ordinary, poor Athenians, Demosthenes does not say so; as far as the positive evidence for such upward athletic mobility goes, it is very thin on the ground indeed, almost to the point of non-existence.

Further reading

Mark Golden, Greek Sport and Social Status (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008); has a chapter entitled ‘Olive-tinted spectacles: myths in the histories of the ancient and modern Olympics’.

Anecdotes – none of them relating to Athens, incidentally – tell of relatively humble and untrained Greeks winning against expectations at Olympia, but they are simply anecdotes, lacking in solid supporting evidence. This leaves us with the unavoidable final inference that in ancient Greece, successful direct participation in sport at the very highest inter-state competitive levels was an affair of the social and economic elite only, even in a consciously, axe-grindingly democratic city such as Classical Athens.

Paul Cartledge is the AG Leventis professor of Greek culture, University of Cambridge, and acting master of Clare College. Professor Cartledge will give a plenary lecture at the B1st Anglo-American conference of historians on ‘Ancients and moderns’ to be hosted by the IHR on 5-6 July 2012. See www.history.ac.uk/aach12 for a full programme and more information.
Biography and its importance to history

Jonathan Haslam, professor of the history of international relations, University of Cambridge

Biography at its best is a good read and the older one gets, the more attractive and entertaining biography becomes. This is not hard to explain. Not only does it appeal to a natural human instinct for gossip, but it answers a real need within us to understand each other better. Youth may reach adulthood believing that people are easily understood. Yet experience sooner or later corrects such a pleasing, but deceptive, assumption. Trust can prove expensive and not just to the pocket. And it is a noticeable achievement of biography in modern times to begin from the premise that human nature is complex.¹

Many also take heart from pursuing in print the life of another for the inspiration and encouragement it offers in times of adversity. That applies to certain biographers, of course, as much as to readers. Winston Churchill wrote the life and times of his ancestor Marlborough at the nadir of his political career. One does not have to look far to see that certain parallels were in mind.²

Apart from curiosity common to all and encouragement open to all, two good reasons also exist for historians – certainly those in politics and international relations, if not in economic or demographic history – to take biography seriously.

First, history explains the interaction between man and environment over time. The state of mind, as well as the state of affairs, may be critical to explaining events. To that extent alone, it is a necessary focus for research. ‘Human error is a constant, and not an incidental, factor in history’, Harold Nicolson wrote, somewhat tongue in cheek, having had unparalleled experience in and grasp of modern diplomacy. ‘Everybody is an ass sometimes, and most people are asses all the time. Human willpower is an intermittent factor, and history has been made more frequently at moments when people had no idea what they wanted than at those rarer moments when some individual wanted something definite.’³

Here, the biographer has an estimable advantage in focusing attention on recorded motivation, if not exclusively, then predominantly. Moreover, for those who work on state papers classified as top secret, the unwritten assumptions shared by those taking the decisions are critically absent. These may be uncovered only through interviewing individuals subsequent to events or through diaries and letters; Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain wrote only to his sisters to spell out his anti-Communist outlook. Here, the skills of the biographer and of the imagination are in greater demand than in working purely through public records.

Motivation is only one consideration, however. Knowledge of illness in a statesman at times of crisis is surely also of significant concern. What of Anthony Eden’s state of mind on narcotics during the disastrous Suez campaign?⁴ President John Kennedy was heavily dependent upon the drugs prescribed to him by his doctor to alleviate excruciating back pain. That knowledge magnifies our image of his strength of character, particularly during the great international crises of 1961–2.⁵ It matters that Stalin’s brain was atrophying at an accelerated pace in his last years, which made him ever more paranoid; that the quick-witted Nikita Khrushchev was functionally illiterate and could not even write his own name on the documents he had to sign, yet, like Cassius Clay, had a phenomenal memory to compensate.⁶

Nicolson’s reflection that history is made more frequently by people who had no idea what they wanted underscores the importance of prevailing circumstances: the fact that human beings were ‘straws in the stream’ of history. The best biographer is thus also likely to be the better historian. This is epitomised in Nicolson’s own tender, but acute, portrayal of Lord Curzon.⁷ A well-tempered ability to appraise the role of the individual in history – history in microcosm – will require a powerful capacity to strike the right balance between agency and circumstances, not least, but not confined to the material conditions prompting behaviour.

The second reason to take biography seriously follows from the admonition of E.H. Carr, another former diplomat who was also an accomplished biographer and historian: study the historian to evaluate the history. After all, ‘The
Knowledge of the historian, and thus biography of historians, allows us a healthy corrective to pure subjectivism. It is often our only tool for scraping away the French polish to get to the unvarnished truth beneath.

Among historians, it is surely important for us to know, for instance, that Hugh Trevor-Roper, for all his snobbery and association with the establishment, was not unsympathetic to Marxist approaches to historical explanation.\(^\text{13}\) And does it not matter that Isaiah Berlin did, in fact, purposefully forestall Trotsky’s biographer, Isaac Deutscher, from obtaining a Chair at Sussex University, despite repeated denials that he had done this?\(^\text{14}\) This and his ardent support for the US war in Vietnam certainly call into question his iconic status as a moral authority. This is not to suggest that we should, as a result, go a step further and indulge in biography as a hanging judge, like Lytton Strachey, ‘with a definite point of view’ on the Victorians, or, more recently, the journalist Christopher Hitchens, who put on the black cap for various miscreants, including Henry Kissinger and Mother Theresa. Such self-indulgence, however witty, is unlikely to lead to anything productive. The artist’s task, wrote Chekhov, is only to outline the problem, not resolve it. Likewise, the biographer is perhaps better employed ‘exposing’ rather than ‘imposing’ moral judgement.\(^\text{15}\)

A key problem with full-scale biography, however, is that it takes a great deal of time to be done properly; from germination to full growth usually requires years of incubation. It is more like wine than tea. It should be a lengthy process, allowing time for the author to assimilate as much information as possible and to reflect on it carefully.

To some, this may diminish the stature of the subject. The historian should not, however, be dismayed at this loss of status, even when confronted by the physicist as critic. He should never forget that eminent natural scientists also took leaps of the imagination – John Dalton guessed the constitution of the atom – when the evidence has yet to be proven. Therefore, when the physicist criticizes, the historian, like John Dalton, should not surrender to the then-fashionable ‘the map’ and ‘the painted landscape’.\(^\text{10}\) He thought it vital not to surrender to the then-fashionable historical novelist the capacity ‘To make the past present, to bring the distant near, to place us in the society of a great man or on the eminence which overlooks the field of a mighty battle, to invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory ...’\(^\text{11}\)

We should not seek to fight the problem. Instead, we should estimate as accurately as we can how wise is this or that historian’s judgement. How accurate are the insights? Are they not ultimately a product of the educated imagination? These we need to know.

And what better way of finding out than through putting the historian under the lens.

Historian, before he begins to write history, is the product of history.\(^\text{16}\) But why should this matter?

History, as written, results from judgements as to the significance of events. In this sense – here Carr reaches back to Benedetto Croce via R.G. Collingwood – the historian chooses, and ultimately determines, from a multitude of frequently conflicting sources the constituent facts of history. This element is most striking in attributing cause and effect, the critical conclusion in history writing. And what surely makes the work cohere, what gives it an underlying framework – the anatomy of history, if you like – is imaginative reconstruction.

On this side of history lies an entirely subjective realm. Thomas Macaulay believed that history lay between two worlds: the world of science (in the larger, Victorian or continental sense of the word)\(^\text{9}\) and the world of the imagination (‘the map’ and ‘the painted landscape’).\(^\text{10}\) He thought it vital not to surrender to the then-fashionable historical novelist the capacity ‘To make the past present, to bring the distant near, to place us in the society of a great man or on the eminence which overlooks the field of a mighty battle, to invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory ...’\(^\text{11}\)

These themes will be picked up in the IHR’s winter conference in 2013.

Notes


2. ‘Every taunt, however bitter; every tale, however petty; every charge, however shameful, for which the incidents of a long career could afford a pretext, has been levelled against him.’ For all his achievements, ‘fame shines unwillingly upon the statesman and warrior whose exertions brought our island and all Europe safely through its perils ...’ W. Churchill, Marlborough: his Life and Times (London, 1933), p. 17.

3. ‘How I write biography,’ Saturday Evening Review, 26 May 1934.


6. See the author’s Russia’s Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall (New Haven and London, 2011).


11 For the latest: M. Ignatieff, in their own right.


14 M. Ignatieff, Isaiah Berlin: A Life (London, 1999) p. 235. Denials were repeated to Tamara Deutscher on several occasions after her husband’s death and later reiterated to the author.

15 Maurois, Aspects, p. 98.

16 Guardian, 18 August 2011.
Royal jubilees, past, present and imperial

Professor Miles Taylor investigates the cult of monarchy at the time of the last diamond jubilee

As Britain prepares for the diamond jubilee bank holiday weekend at the beginning of June, it is instructive to recall that the country has been here before. Queen Elizabeth II has, of course, already celebrated her silver jubilee in 1977 and, in 2002, became only the sixth British monarch to reign for 50 years, her golden jubilee celebrations of that year overshadowed by the deaths of the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. Only one other British sovereign has enjoyed a diamond jubilee: Queen Victoria, in 1897. Buckingham Palace has carefully studied Victoria’s two jubilees in planning this summer’s programme of events. In 1897, as now, there was a thanksgiving service at St Paul’s Cathedral. In 1887, as now, bonfire beacons were lit across the four corners of the United Kingdom. This year’s jubilee lunch recalls the spirit of neighbourliness and charity displayed when treating poor children to a grand picnic in Hyde Park as part of the 1897 activities. Other events this year invoke even older royal spectacle. The waterborne pageant harks back to the Restoration when Charles II transformed the Thames into a royal river with fireworks celebrations to mark his coronation and his marriage. These precedents are salutary. They are a reminder of the importance of tradition, both actual and invented, in the maintenance of monarchy in the modern world. However, much was unique in Queen Victoria’s jubilees and would be impossible to emulate. On an unprecedented international scale, they took place at a time when voluntary organisation and philanthropy were at their peak.

The story of Queen Victoria’s two jubilees is reasonably well known. The golden jubilee of 1887 most resembles this year’s activities, simply because Queen Victoria took a more active part in the whole programme, which began in mid May with a visit to London’s East End to open the People’s Palace (now Queen Mary, University of London), reached a crescendo with the thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey on Coronation Day (21 June), and continued to the end of July with receptions and formal dinners at Windsor and Buckingham Palace, and with reviews of the armed forces. In 1897, by contrast, an infirm Victoria was limited in her movements and, apart from the carefully choreographed drive through London to St Paul’s Cathedral on 22 June, she was confined to the Palace and Windsor where she received dignitaries and addresses. Her wish was that the jubilee ceremonies should not be grand state occasions – just as well since Parliament was reluctant to foot the bill. However, as the grandmother of many of the ruling houses of Europe, queen of the United Kingdom and its dependencies and Empress of India, it was inevitable that both jubilees would probably involve the greatest gathering of heads of state the world had ever known.

Away from the ceremonial, measuring the extent to which the jubilees were genuinely popular occasions is made a little easier by consulting the huge range of addresses, memorials and telegrams from 1887 and 1897. We know from holdings in The National Archives that over 800 addresses were sent to Queen Victoria in 1887, and over 2000 in 1897. In 1887, the bulk of these addresses came from around the UK: from municipal corporations, church bodies, universities and learned societies (including one from the Royal Historical Society) and a huge range of voluntary organisations from the very grand to the most humble, such as the Lancashire and Cheshire Beekeepers Association and the boys on board the reformatory ship, the ‘Cornwall’. In 1887, a congratulatory address even came from the Emperor of China, wrapped in yellow silk (and accompanied by ornaments of jade and two boxes of tea). Telegrams poured in as well: one every other minute was received by the Palace on 21 June 1887, including several from the cheeky telegraphists themselves. In 1897, addresses flooded in again from local authorities in Britain – most being illuminated letters and many presented in ornate leather cases – and it is probably no exaggeration to say that no English, Welsh or Scottish corporation omitted to send an address, although the response from Ireland was less comprehensive. There were also hundreds of overseas addresses, principally from the colonies, but also from British residents overseas in places as far flung as Japan and Chile. Indeed, the 1897 jubilee was observed at ceremonies around the world, from Afghanistan and Akron, Ohio through to Jeddah and Jerusalem and onto Yokohama, Zanzibar and Zurich. Behind many of these addresses lay enormous subscription collections and mobilisation of thousands, even millions of people. In 1887, a small group of aristocratic ladies led by Lady Strafford and Lady...
Cork commandeered the women of Great Britain's jubilee offering, raising £84,000 from over three million female subscribers towards an anniversary present for Queen Victoria; to their evident annoyance, she chose a statue of the late Prince Consort as her gift, setting aside the surplus for better provision of nurses. There were similar tributes from overseas: for example, an address from the women and girls of New South Wales (containing 24,000 signatures and requiring an iron wrench to unravel), a Burmese women's jubilee offering, and a jubilee cabinet made of 150 different varieties of wood from the women of Trinidad. Subscriptions were also raised for enduring memorials to the Queen: from the largest of all, the Prince of Wales' pet project, the Imperial and Colonial Institute (nowadays Imperial College London), to the hundreds of libraries, schools, hospitals, housing settlements, drinking fountains, public parks and gardens that were dedicated in both jubilees to the Queen. A small, but significant, slice of the built environment of late Victorian Britain remains an important legacy of 1887 and 1897. And across the colonial world Queen Victoria became immortalised in stone as cities erected statues from subscriptions raised in her honour; in New Zealand, cities competed to see who might put up the largest, or as Bernard Shaw later tartly observed, the ugliest.

India was the part of Victoria's world that was foremost in its response to the 1887 and 1897 jubilees. Several Indian princes attended the thanksgiving service and other formal occasions in 1887, and in both jubilees a so-called 'native' cavalry guard was in attendance on the Queen. In India itself, the jubilees were celebrated in as inclusive a fashion as in Britain. The cult of Queen Victoria, which had grown steadily since the transfer of the government of India from the East India Company to the Crown in 1858, appears to have reached new heights during the jubilee years. Vernacular popular biographies of the Queen, as well as poetical odes, songs and tributes, were produced in all of India's main cities, although Tamil, Bengali and Urdu publications tended to be the most common. The biographies, using text often adapted from similar books published in England, emphasised Victoria's virtues as mother, widow and benign empress. Tributes frequently praised her known sympathy for her Indian subjects and singled out her reported expressions of sadness at times of famine and other catastrophes, and her simple gestures of generosity, such as arranging for quilts to be sent to Indian troops serving in Egypt in the early 1880s. Some writers made creative attempts to present Victoria as an incarnation of various Hindu gods and goddesses (particularly Durga, the mother of the universe, and Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity), while Muslim writers compared her favourably to Akbar and earlier Mogul rulers. Some biographies were illustrated in ways that highlighted Victoria's imperial status - or even delineated her with enhanced facial features, making her appear less European. From Calcutta, a movement established by Sourindro Mohun Tagore to introduce the British national anthem to India gathered momentum in 1887. India contributed most of the funding for the Imperial and Colonial Institute, and jubilee addresses, presents, and memorials of all sorts of shapes and sizes were sent to Britain during both anniversary years. In 1887 there were almost 1,100 addressees from India, double the combined total from the rest of the colonial empire. Many of these Indian addresses are beautifully presented illuminated parchments enclosed in specially made caskets. The British Library has retained a collection of around 100 of these addresses – most of the more precious caskets are held in the Royal Collections, on permanent display in the Durbar Room at Osborne House, Queen Victoria's Isle of Wight home.

Almost without exception, the various states of India celebrated both of Queen Victoria's jubilees. This is, perhaps, surprising. In 1887, the Indian National Congress was newly formed and demands for political and judicial reform were gaining strength. In 1897, much of India was beset by famine and epidemic disease, resentment of British officials was running high, and in a notorious assassination two plague commissioners were killed in Pune in the Bombay Presidency at the time of the jubilee. We know, however, that festivities to mark both jubilees were remarkably uniform and consistent across the sub-continent, for the British administration kept incredibly detailed records. The Indian government wished for spontaneous demonstrations but also closely monitored the events and addresses. A circular from the Viceroy in January 1887 summed up its attitude: 'We do not want to take the initiative, but wish to know as early as possible what is intended'. Throughout India, in both 1887 and 1897, most places held a durbar at which the British resident officer or other acting official spoke alongside the local chief. There were also special ceremonies in mosques, temples and churches, and everywhere some kind of procession (often with images of Queen Victoria held aloft); school-children's recitals of poems and songs of loyalty written for the occasion; games and sport; illuminations of public buildings; distribution of sweets to the poor; release of selected prisoners; and remission of local duties. Subscriptions and donations were used to establish schools, hospitals, libraries and other amenities, including bathing tanks. The government of India was most concerned about controlling the presentation of loyal addresses. In 1887, it was stipulated that addresses to Victoria could only come from authorised bodies (largely native chiefs, religious communities and municipal bodies) and the government must approve the wording. In 1897 the rules were tightened further, with restrictions being placed on the deputations accompanying the addresses. Instead of submitting these in person in Bombay, Calcutta, Agra or Madras, deputations could only be presented to the Viceroy at the remote hill-town of Simla (the Viceroy's summer residence). It proved an unpopular disincentive, and the only prominent deputation to go north was that led by the Aga Khan, leader of the Ismaili community.

Printed programme for the diamond jubilee celebrations, Bangalore (Mysore), 1897: Karnataka State Archives, G.M. Files. Image courtesy of the author.

It is hard not to conclude that the government of India mismanaged its jubilee celebrations on both occasions, overplaying its hand, and turning what was a genuine, although by no means unconditional, display of loyalty into a stage-managed orchestration of obedience to the Raj. Historians should not make the same error.
Rededicating the Victoria County History

Elizabeth Williamson, executive editor, VCH

The diamond jubilee year officially begins on 6 February 2012, the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen's accession to the throne. It is also the start of a very special year for the Victoria County History. We will be celebrating the jubilee with a rededication of the series to the present Queen, who has graciously permitted the University of London to mark the occasion in what, for us, is a particularly appropriate way; for the VCH series was originally dedicated to the present Queen's great-great grandmother and it was she who gave the history the title, which we are retaining.

Check the VCH website (www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk) and in the local press for news of the events that the counties involved in VCH work will be putting on to celebrate the diamond jubilee with a rededication of the series to the present Queen, who has graciously permitted the University of London to mark the occasion in what, for us, is a particularly appropriate way; for the VCH series was originally dedicated to the present Queen's great-great grandmother and it was she who gave the history the title, which we are retaining.

Find out more on the VCH website or contact Manjeet Sambi (email: manjeet.sambi@sas.ac.uk) for a leaflet.

Finally, a great surprise for all those interested in locality has been the way in which, thanks to David Hockney, the Yorkshire Wolds have hit the headlines. All local historians who have been or plan to go to his exhibition at the Royal Academy will want to know more about the places he paints, and three VCH Yorkshire East Riding volumes cover the history of the suddenly famous Yorkshire Wolds: volume VIII on Sledmere and the northern Wolds, volume IV on the southern Wolds, and the forthcoming book on Driffield. We hope that many more people will be introduced to local history and the VCH in this diamond jubilee year, and help us through their support to keep the series alive until each English parish has its own Victoria History.
Locating London’s past

Dr Matthew Davies, director, Centre for Metropolitan History (CMH)

There has been much discussion in the last few years of the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in the humanities, with scholars taking advantage of digital mapping tools and the web to bring new perspectives to research in history, literature and cultural studies. In December 2011, a new website, Locating London’s Past (www.locatinglondon.org) was launched by the Universities of Sheffield and Hertfordshire and the Centre for Metropolitan History (CMH) at the IHR. Funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (under its eContent programme 2011), the website provides an innovative online interface for mapping and visualising historical data for early modern and 18th-century London using a geo-referenced version of John Rocque’s famous map of the city from 1746. The project directors were Professor Robert Shoemaker (Sheffield), Professor Tim Hitchcock (Hertfordshire), and Dr Matthew Davies (IHR), while Dr Mark Merry provided historical and technical input at the CMH. The project also involved a new collaboration with Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA).

The technical challenges involved were considerable and are described in detail in the ‘about the project’ pages on the LLP website. Rocque’s map was originally published in 24 separate sheets, which had to be stitched together to create a single digital image, taking account of minute differences in the size of the sheets, and shrinkage over time. The image then had to be warped to fit onto a modern geographical framework, achieved by identifying 48 common points on Rocque and on a modern OS map. The results were surprisingly good, indicating that Rocque’s surveying techniques were generally very accurate. His innovative method relied on combining ground level surveying with ‘ascertaining the position and bearings of the churches and other remarkable buildings by trigonometrical and other observations from the tops of steeples, towers and other places’, and so the main problem came when he ventured out into what was still rural Middlesex, Surrey and Kent, where church towers were few and far between. The result is a map that is distorted in the north-west and south-east, but still very recognisable, and relatively unaltered for the built-up areas of the City and Westminster.

The project now had a map that fitted on to a modern framework, which meant that a single point or a defined shape (‘polygon’) representing a street, parish or ward could be displayed on Rocque, on the earliest reliable OS map (1869-80), and on a modern Google map – or indeed on any other geo-referenced map added later. The next task was to create polygons for all the streets, wards, parishes and other places that are included on Rocque. The polygons were derived from the OS map and edited to reflect the street-pattern and boundaries of 18th-century London. Intersections between streets, parishes, wards and other places were also taken account of, so that mapping could be as accurate as possible. The result of all this labour was a complex digital map of the capital’s streets, spaces and administrative units (29,000 polygons in total) - itself a unique resource.

Next, the project needed to make existing data mappable. The team decided to use a mixture of ‘textual’ sources, where places had been marked-up, such as the Old Bailey trial proceedings, ‘structured’ datasets such as the CMH’s own data from the Bills of Mortality of 1665 and the Hearth Tax of 1666, and archaeological data from MOLA. In total, some 40 million words of narrative text, and 100,000 lines of data have been included from a range of sources for early modern and 18th-century London, providing around 2.3 million place-name instances. Hundreds of thousands of references to places were matched successfully, enabling them to be mapped on the site in a variety of ways.

For the users of the site, a range of tools are available to interrogate and display the data. Maps are displayed within a Google Maps environment, familiar to many online users, and results are plotted using different kinds of visualisation techniques, such as pins and shading. Each dataset has its own search form, so that for the Old Bailey trials it is possible to map particular types of crimes and the gender of defendants and victims, as well as to put in keywords. For instance, murder trial reports where swords are mentioned can be mapped, or pick-pocketing along major streets. The CMH data from the Bills of Mortality reveal the progress week-by-week of the 1665 Great Plague through the city. All results can be moderated using detailed population statistics compiled for the first time by the project for every parish at intervals between the 1690s and 1801.

The site demonstrates the potential as well as the complexities of mapping historical data online. The team plans to expand the site to include earlier and later maps and datasets, such as William Morgan’s map of 1682 (currently the subject of another CMH project), and to add new functionality to the site so that users can save and export maps and search results, and also upload their own data. Beyond this, there are exciting possibilities for collaborating with teams working on other cities, and engaging with scholars in other disciplines working on areas such as material culture, literature and linguistic change, where the spatial dimension is proving ever more intriguing.
Development news

The IHR redevelopment

The top priority for the development office over the next 18 months is to secure around £4.6 million for the IHR redevelopment and associated expansion of activities, which will transform the Institute for the 21st century and put us on the road to financial self-reliance.

At present, about 30 per cent of our income comes from government, down from 60 per cent ten years ago. For the rest, we are reliant upon research council grants and philanthropic funding, and as public spending on universities continues to fall, we are looking increasingly to new sources of income generation and additional donor support to guarantee our sustainability.

Our current business plan sees us becoming less reliant on government funding by 2018 and achieving significant increases in our income from events, membership, tuition and consultancy fees, service subscriptions and research project overheads. At the centre of these plans lies the modernisation of our Senate House headquarters.

The University has embarked on a £3 million redevelopment of the Institute, and, in the autumn of 2013, we shall move back into a refurbished building, equipped with new conference and research training suites, enhanced library and research facilities, and an expansion of space for our fellows and postgraduate students. The new space will sympathetically preserve the original ethos and layout of the Institute, whilst expanding our capacity to deliver more events, training and teaching, as well as allowing the IHR to become the home of choice for new research projects and centres.

Our new layout will also be welcome news for the traditional library-user. A unique single-site history library will be created, with the University history borrowing collection housed at the top of the building, and the IHR’s research collections below.

The University expects the Institute to match their commitment to our future with some fundraising of our own, and this is where we hope you will help. We need to raise around £4.6 million to provide the bespoke fitting out of our space and to reinvigorate and add to our range of academic activities.

| International fellowship schemes | £2,500,000 |
| Chair in the History of London | £550,000 |
| Library, training & conference facilities | £500,000 |
| Seminar programme | £350,000 |
| Library fellowship sabbatical scheme | £300,000 |
| VCH redevelopment & managing editor | £200,000 |
| Colonial American records online | £150,000 |
| Conference programme | £125,000 |

The international fellowship schemes will support a five-year programme for young researchers from countries such as China, Russia, South Korea, Japan and South Africa to come and use the Institute for periods between three months and one year. The Library fellowship sabbatical scheme will bring overseas scholars to use the IHR and other local libraries for short periods. Support for our seminar and conference programmes will allow us to put more staff investment into marketing and online delivery and, in particular, transform the Anglo-American into ‘the’ national history event of the calendar. The Colonial American records project will conclude our major digitisation projects, and the Chair in the History of London and VCH redevelopment will provide senior academic positions and support for our two long-running research projects, the CMH and VCH.

The Andrew W Mellon Foundation in New York has extended their generous Mellon challenge grant so we are still able to offer 2:1 matched funding on all donations received up to a maximum of US $1 million.

Now and in the coming months, we will be asking all of our existing supporters to pledge a three-year commitment to the IHR. This will allow us to ensure the redevelopment is completed on time and move us in the direction of financial stability.

For more information, please contact Heather Dwyer: 020 7862 8791 heather.dwyer@sas.ac.uk.

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Friends of the IHR, Annual General Meeting

At their Annual General Meeting, held on 5 October 2011, the Friends welcomed guest speaker Juliet Gardiner, author and historian. She specialises in British social history from Victorian times to the 1950s. Her lecture, ‘The Blitz, Bloomsbury and 999 informers’, was warmly received.

The Friends elected a new committee member, James Dixon, who is a mature student at Royal Holloway and former tax adviser in the City. The Friends also welcomed back Dr Roland Quinault, senior fellow of the IHR, from a sabbatical year. He was a Fulbright-Robertson visiting professor in British history at Westminster College in Fulton Missouri.

The Friends income for the financial year ending July 2011 was £27,012, up 15 per cent from the previous year, and it was agreed to support the following projects and activities:

- £6,000 toward the IHR redevelopment
- £4,000 for development office support
- £4,000 for Friends bursaries
- £1,000 for the Friends seminar travel bursaries
- £500 toward the launch of the VCH digital website

We are also happy to report that the number of British Friends increased by just over 10 per cent from 446 to 494, as measured in January. We hope to see this trend continue and that all of our Friends will renew their memberships and encourage others to join the group.

Friends’ events

The Friends of the IHR have been running a series of popular social events each year, including film evenings and outings to places of historical interest. These events are open to all, not just existing Friends, and they provide an excellent opportunity for Friends to socialise and introduce new people to the IHR.

This past November, the Friends hosted a film evening featuring the pioneering WWI battlefield documentary, The Battle of the Somme. The film was shot at the beginning of the battle and captured one of the most disastrous moments in British military history. It was released less than six weeks after being filmed and was viewed by an estimated 20 million people across the UK. The iconic nature of the film was recognised in 2005 when it was added to the UNESCO ‘Memory of the World’ register.

Over 60 people attended the event and contributed to an illuminating discussion about the film’s many aspects: the start of the genre of battlefield documentaries; film used as a propaganda tool; the film’s technical aspects; the mental state of the soldiers in the field; and the impact on the home front.

The Friends will be hosting an Olympic-themed film event in the spring, an outing in early September and a Dickens-themed film evening in the late autumn. Please find further details on the events section of our website: www.history.ac.uk/support-us/get-involved/events.

For more information about the Friends’ activities, please contact Michelle Waterman: 020 7862 8791, ihr.development@sas.ac.uk.

IHR Annual Fund

We are entering our third year of the IHR Annual Fund, which has been very successful in providing a steady stream of unrestricted income to the IHR. Thanks to our generous donors, the fund has raised just under £80,000 in its first two years.

The Annual Fund is one of the most important sources of funding for the IHR because it underwrites everything that we do.

All donations to the Annual Fund are matched 2:1 through the Mellon challenge grant, a US $1 million grant from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. This extra leverage makes a huge difference and means that there has never been a better time to support the IHR.

This year money raised through the IHR Annual Fund will support the IHR’s conference line-up, which includes the Anglo-American conference in July 2012 ‘Ancients and moderns’, the broad seminar offering and the vital fellowship programme. Please give if you can!

For more information about the Annual Fund, please contact Michelle Waterman: 020 7862 8791; ihr.development@sas.ac.uk.
In Kabylia, the region of north-east Algeria where I work, history is elusive. Kabyles say that the region’s history has been written by outsiders – usually colonising powers – and in outsiders’ languages. Berber, the language spoken in most of Kabylia, is still primarily oral despite codification attempts; Arabic and French remain the sources of written – scriptural, historical and legal – authority. Arguing that Algeria’s post-independence regime has imposed an artificial Arabist identity on the indigenous Berber Maghrib, Kabyle politicians and activists speak of the ‘confiscation’ and ‘burial’ of Algeria’s true history.

For an oral historian, this negative definition – what history is not, and where I would not find it – was frustrating. When I started fieldwork, Kabyles repeatedly apologised that they could not tell me anything about Kabyle history, assuring me that I would soon be able to tell them more than they knew. But at the same time, I was getting to know another area where I could read more between the lines: activist song. Playing violin with Kabyle singers, I had access to the texts, and to the café music evenings and political events where they are performed. Here, denials gave way to lively debate about the substance, rather than the gaps, of Algeria’s history. The past may have been ‘confiscated’ by a corrupt regime; but what history to reinstate in its place?

The dissident singer Lounès Matoub, assassinated in 1998 and since made a martyr to the Kabyle cause, sang in his native Berber and in French. Singers today credit Matoub with diffusing history otherwise unavailable to Kabyles, and making the past comprehensible with local references and anecdotes. But when Matoub punctuated his texts with passages in French, local anecdotes gave way to declamations on the essence of Kabyle modernity: ‘Tell them that democracy was the first taste in our mouths; that we drank it in with our mothers’ milk. Sing of our thirst for justice and freedom.’

Here we find echoes of the ‘Kabyle myth’, the French colonial ideology of Berber-Arab hierarchy in which Kabylia was the centre of the Latin Mediterranean. To a generation of colonial ethnographers and military men influenced by utopian socialism, Kabylia’s sedentary mountain communities invited ancient comparisons. Village councils were likened to Greco-Roman cités, autonomous structures each with its customary code of government. Kabyle villages were said to be ‘just like ours … organised as miniature republics’ and their inhabitants open to French influence, having ‘known the pleasures of owning property … yet communicated little with the outside world … and never learned the language of the Koran’. In short, the Kabyles were attractive ‘not merely in their own right, but because we can find in them an elementary form of what we have learned to admire in ourselves’ – and what, at the time, was the next front for converting ‘peasants into Frenchmen’.

This vision of Kabyla as home both to progressive values and ‘elementary’ authenticity may be seductive to today’s activists, but it does not answer the demand for native Berber history. Matoub’s Berber lyrics offer a different solution: relating history in the language of local codes of family and honour. Matoub reinstates a sense of the Kabyle past as something lived, transmitted down generations and based on the honour of the spoken word rather than the sanctified knowledge of official (Arabist) history. Throughout his output, Matoub personified Algerian history as a dialogue between mother – the nation – and her revolutionary son. In these representations of Algeria as ideal woman, we also find the ideals of Algeria’s buried history: purity and rootedness. ‘If I forget all that is past,’ sings Matoub, ‘my mother is no Kabyle.’

**Notes**

Seminar in focus: a new and different venue for research in Jewish history

Michael Berkowitz, professor of modern Jewish history at UCL and convenor of the Jewish history seminar

It is well known that the IHR offers regular seminars in numerous fields, featuring a diverse range of original and outstanding scholarship. But until last year there was no IHR seminar in Jewish history. To be sure, topics of Jewish interest were (and are) treated within the realm of British history, American history, German history, women's history, labour history and other domains. Furthermore, there are several distinguished Jewish historians, and those with an interest in Jewish history, throughout the University of London. It seemed strange that given a few dozen areas of specialisation in the IHR seminar series, there was not one devoted to Jewish history.

Having taught at UCL since 1997, I was also puzzled that there was no forum where students and scholars could present written work-in-progress. That is, I do not believe I had ever attended an event where a paper was distributed and read in advance, so that a seminar could mainly be a discussion of the text. In the realm of academic Jewish studies in London, there are a number of venues where one can present a lecture or read a paper: the UCL Institute of Jewish Studies; the Wiener Library/Leo Baeck Institute; Royal Holloway; Birkbeck; the Society for Jewish Study; and the Jewish Historical Society of England, to name a few. But discussing a paper in the style of, say, a graduate seminar in a US university, was not a part of the intellectual landscape. For PhD students in particular, I think it is constructive to have such a ‘seminar’ experience where one’s work is intensely scrutinised by a group.

I decided, therefore, to attempt to rectify both of these lacunae. I am happy to report that the Jewish history seminar of the IHR materialised quite painlessly. The main objections, to be expected, came from esteemed colleagues in Jewish history who expressed a number of reasons why it would not work, or why it was not a good idea. The powers-that-be of the IHR, on the other hand, thought it was jolly good from the get-go. We were able to begin in the second semester of the last academic year, 2010–11. Since then, we have enjoyed and discussed several fascinating papers. Over a dozen colleagues, including PhD students, displayed both brilliance and courage by taking on the proverbial role of Christians in a den of Jewish Studies lions.

A number of the papers, while scholarly and cosmopolitan, have local resonance. Madelyn Travis, recently awarded a PhD from Newcastle University in children’s literature, presented an original examination of a little-known but significant Jewish magazine for children from fin-de-siècle London. Felicity Griffiths, a PhD candidate in the department of Hebrew & Jewish Studies at UCL, shared a segment of her path-breaking work on the social and religious foundations of the University of London, focusing on the religious postures that precipitated the emergence of the (not quite) ‘godless’ College in Gower Street, and its staunchly Anglican rival, King’s. The seminar also sponsored work of a refreshingly interdisciplinary nature, such as Glenn Sujo’s superlative treatment of the Israeli artist Yehuda Bacon.

Papers planned for next year will continue the newly invented traditions of the Jewish history seminar. These include presentations by Lisa Peschel (University of York) on theatrical performance in the Theresienstadt Ghetto; Luke Berryman (King’s) on Wagner’s opera Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg; and new research by Pam Shatzkes (LSE) on the history of children in the aftermath of the Holocaust. However, several openings are available in the schedule. Should you be aware of PhD students or established scholars who can contribute to (or otherwise enjoy) the IHR Jewish history seminar, or you would like to participate – no matter your area of expertise – we are happy to welcome you.

The Jewish history seminar meets at the IHR on Tuesdays at 5pm.
Seminars at the IHR

The IHR’s world-renowned programme of seminars continues to go from strength to strength. Seminars meet weekly during term time and all are welcome. Please note not all seminars meet each term. An up-to-date programme for each seminar can be found on the IHR’s website at www.history.ac.uk/ihrseminars/ and is also displayed within the IHR.

American history
Thursday, 5.30pm

Archives and society
Tuesday, 5.30pm

British history in the 17th century
Thursday, 5.15pm

British history in the long 18th century
Wednesday, 5.15pm

British maritime history
Tuesday, 5.15pm

Christian missions in global history
Tuesday, 5.30pm

Collecting & display (100 BC to AD 1700)
Monday, 6.00pm

Comparative histories of Asia
Thursday, 5.30pm

Conversations and disputations
Friday, 4.30pm

Crusades and the Latin East
Monday, 5.00pm

Digital history
Monday, 5.00pm

Disability history
Monday, 5.00pm

Earlier middle ages
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Early modern material cultures
Wednesday, 5.00pm

Economic and social history of the pre-modern world, 1500-1800
Friday, 5.15pm

Education in the long 18th century
Saturday, 2.00pm

European history 1150-1550
Thursday, 5.30pm

European history 1500-1800
Monday, 5.00pm

Film history
Thursday, 5.30pm

Histories of home
Wednesday, 5.30pm

History of education
Thursday, 5.30pm

History of gardens and landscapes
Friday, 5.30pm

History of libraries
Tuesday, 5.30pm

History of political ideas/early career seminar
Wednesday, 5.00pm

Imperial and world history
Monday, 5.00pm

International history
Tuesday, 6.00pm

Jewish history
Tuesday, 5.00pm

Late medieval and early modern Italy
Thursday, 5.00pm

Late medieval seminar
Friday, 5.30pm

Latin American history
Thursday, 5.30pm

Life-cycles
Tuesday, 5.15pm

Locality and region
Tuesday, 5.15pm

London group of historical geographers
Tuesday, 5.00pm

Low Countries history
Friday, 5.00pm

Marxism in culture
Friday, 5.30pm

Medieval and Tudor London
Thursday, 5.15pm

Metropolitan history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Military history
Tuesday, 5.00pm

Modern British history
Thursday, 5.00pm

Modern French history
Monday, 5.30pm

Modern German history
Thursday, 5.30pm

Modern Italian history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Modern religious history
Wednesday, 5.15pm

Oral history
Thursday, 6.00pm

Parliaments, politics and people
Tuesday, 5.15pm

Philosophy of history
Thursday, 5.30pm

Postgraduate and early career seminar
Thursday, 5.30pm

Psychoanalysis and history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Reconfiguring the British: nation, empire, world 1600–1900
Thursday, 5.30pm

Religious history of Britain 1500-1800
Tuesday, 5.00pm

Rethinking modern Europe
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Socialist history
Monday, 5.30pm

Society, culture and belief 1500-1800
Thursday, 5.30pm

Sport and leisure history
Monday, 5.15pm

Tudor and Stuart history
Monday, 5.15pm

Voluntary action history
Monday, 5.30pm

War, society and culture
Wednesday, 5.00pm

Women’s history
Friday, 5.15pm

Sponsor a seminar
The IHR is well known for hosting some 60 seminars covering a wide variety of historical periods, places and topics, a number that is consistently growing. However, over the past ten years the amount of funding available for the IHR to disburse to seminars has reduced by 50 per cent.

Despite this, we have managed to maintain the level of funding awarded to each seminar, although of course these funds are worth less today than they were ten years ago. This funding is not nearly enough to cover travel costs for guest speakers and other incidental expenses, so we are seeking additional support to ensure that convenors are able to deliver the best possible programmes in the future.

To fully sponsor a seminar costs £1,000 per annum, although donations of any size are welcome. For more information, please contact Heather Dwyer: 020 7862 8791 heather.dwyer@sas.ac.uk.
Archiving the web

Dr Peter Webster, IHR Digital

It would be a fair bet that most historians have not given much thought to the idea of web archiving. That said, it is increasingly likely to concern contemporary historians, and indeed all historians. This article therefore seeks to set out some of the ways in which the IHR is helping to shape web archiving policy at a national level.

Most people know that material found on the web is easy to correct, augment or remove. In the early days of the web, the fact that online materials could - and did - disappear without trace was not an issue that concerned many, as the bulk of 'official' publication still happened on reassuringly permanent paper pages. Now many organisations in government and the wider public and private sectors publish enormous volumes of material that will never be printed, and thus never find their way into a conventional archive. As a consequence, the primary sources for much of the future historical writing about the early 21st century are at an increased risk of disappearance, or silent emendation over time.

Recent years have seen major ventures beginning to capture significant web content and preserve it for the use of future historians. The National Archives undertakes the task for central government web resources; and the British Library, by means of the UK Web Archive (UKWA, www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/), has responsibility for the rest of UK web space. As at February 2012, the UKWA held nearly 10,000 websites, representing almost 12 TB of data.

The IHR has been working closely with the UKWA to help shape the types of sites that are selected for preservation. There is a standing BL/IHR web archiving advisory group, in which historians and web archivists meet to discuss matters of common concern. Subjects have included the riots of 2011; sites relating to the current period of austerity in public spending; and particular issues arising from archiving scholarly blogs.

The IHR is also delighted to be involved with the British Library and the Royal Archives in the curation of a special collection relating to this year’s royal jubilee. An appeal has been made to organisations holding jubilee events to nominate their sites for inclusion - historians of contemporary Britain can help here. Are there forms of celebration or protest being planned that are likely to be of particular significance to future historians using the archive, whether because those activities are strikingly new, or a revival of older practice, or likely to be the last of their kind? Who are the most influential bloggers and commentators on the event, both celebratory and critical? Is this year’s event giving rise to new online resources about previous jubilees, including those of 2002, 1977 or earlier?

All these online resources should be captured and preserved for future historians by colleagues now, and so please get involved and nominate those sites for inclusion by visiting www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/info/nominate.

We are also delighted to be leading a new JISC-funded project, entitled Analytical Access to the Domain Dark Archive (AADDA), in collaboration with the British Library and the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) at the University of Cambridge. AADDA is an 18-month project to enhance the sustainability of a substantial ‘dark’ archive of UK domain websites collected between 1996 and 2010 by the Internet Archive, copies of which were recently acquired by JISC and are stored at the British Library on their behalf. Since this archive is ‘dark’ (ie. not publicly available), the project team will work with researchers in contemporary history in particular, and digital humanities in general, to obtain feedback on the feasibility of using the archive at an analytical level. The project will build on this feedback in order to develop new forms of analytical access to this collection, thereby enabling researchers to carry out unique and hitherto impossible research queries. The project will thus: develop prototype tools for the exploitation of domain web archives more widely; raise awareness of the material and services available; promote discussion and debate among key stakeholders; and inform future scholarly access arrangements at a domain level. For further information, please visit the AADDA project blog: domaindarkarchive.blogspot.com.

A special web archive collection relating to this year’s royal jubilee will be curated by the IHR, British Library and Royal Archives.

Police in riot gear on standby in central London, 2011. How to archive websites relating to the riots of 2011 was one of the subjects discussed by the IHR/BL web archiving advisory group. © 1000 Words / Shutterstock.com
Postgraduate research training courses at the IHR

Each year the IHR runs a wide-ranging and extensive training programme in skills for historical researchers from UK universities. Using a range of teaching approaches (workshops, seminars, lectures, hands-on practicals and visits), important and specialised skills are explained and explored by expert practitioners. Courses are short (from one day to one term), cover the whole range of necessary skills – from archival use and languages to databases and the internet – and are priced to be within the means of students.

Archival research skills
Methods and sources for historical research
16–20 April 2012
This long-standing course is an introduction to finding and using primary sources for research in modern British, Irish and colonial history. It will include visits to the British Library, The National Archives, the Wellcome Institute and the House of Lords Record Office, amongst others. Fee £210.

Explanatory paradigms: an introduction to historical theory
Wednesdays, 2 May – 11 July 2012
A critical introduction to current approaches to historical explanation, taught by Professor John Tosh, Dr John Seed and Professor Sally Alexander. The contrasting explanatory frameworks offered by Marxism; psychoanalysis; gender analysis; and Paul Ricoeur’s work on narrative form, the central discussion points of the course, equipping students to make their own judgements on the schools of thought most influential in the modern discipline. Fee £220.

Languages and palaeography
Further medieval and Renaissance Latin
Tuesdays, 24 April – 26 June 2012
This ten-week course provides a comprehensive survey of Latin grammar and vocabulary, together with practical experience in translating typical post-classical Latin documents. Although it stands as a constituent part of the IHR’s year-long Latin course, it is also open as a stand-alone course to students who have not taken the other parts but have the requisite experience. Students will emerge at the end with not just a strong grounding in the mechanics of Latin, but also an understanding of the changes that it underwent, and the new ways in which it was used in medieval and early modern Europe. The course is open to all who are interested in using Latin for their research. Fee £200.

Palaeography and diplomatic
Tuesdays, 4 October – 15 May 2012
This course provides an introduction to the history of script from the Roman Empire to the early modern period together with practical instruction in reading manuscripts and understanding the context in which they were written. The course concentrates on Latin and English palaeography in the British Isles, but scripts of other national traditions may be included if there is demand. Students are welcome to join the course, which is run by QMUL and taught by Dr Jenny Stratford, at any time in the year. Please email jenny.stratford@rhul.ac.uk for further information and to apply for a place.

Information technology courses
Databases for historians
12–15 June 2012
This four-day course introduces the theory and practice of constructing and using databases. Through a mixture of lectures and practical hands-on sessions, students will be taught both how to use and adapt existing databases, and how to design and build their own. No previous specialist knowledge, apart from an understanding of historical analysis, is needed. The software used is MS Access, but the techniques demonstrated can easily be adapted to any package. Open to postgraduate students, lecturers and all who are interested in using databases in their historical research. Fee £200.

Databases for historians II: practical database training
27–29 June 2012
The aim of this course is to develop the practical skills necessary for constructing and fully exploiting a database for use in historical research. Assuming a basic understanding of the conceptual issues in digitally managing information from historical sources, it introduces the specific tools and techniques required for improving the utility of the database from the data entry stage, through to the generation and presentation of analysis. The course consists of ‘hands-on’ practical sessions in which students are provided with practical guidance on employing these techniques using Microsoft Access. Familiarity with the basic concepts of database use is required. Participants should be confident working with Access, and should have some knowledge of working with data tables and simple queries. Fee £175.

Internet sources for historical research
6 June 2012
This course provides an intensive introduction to use of the internet as a tool for serious historical research. It includes sessions on academic mailing lists; usage of gateways; search engines; and other finding aids, and effective searching using Boolean operators and compound search terms. Advice will be given on winnowing the useful matter from the vast mass of unsifted information. Fee £170.

Spring and summer schools
Oral history spring school
26–28 April 2012
The inaugural IHR spring school in oral history will be held this year in association with the Oral History Society. The programme addresses six major areas: memory; experience; representativeness and generalisability; the researcher’s habits; re-use of recordings; outputs and impacts. The final day will include best practice in teaching oral history. Fee £160.

Summer school in local history
25–27 June 2012
The IHR’s inaugural three-day non-residential summer school in local history. The school is open to all those keen to expand or update their skills in local history research, introducing the most up-to-date methods, sources and successful approaches to the subject through an exciting programme of lectures and workshops. Taught by experts from the University of London, The National Archives, the British Library, the Victoria County History and the London Metropolitan Archives, amongst others, this is an invaluable opportunity to broaden the scope of your local history research at the same time as meeting other students, scholars and archivists. Fee £170.

For further information, the full programme and application forms, see www.history.ac.uk/research-training or contact Dr Simon Trafford, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU (ihr. training@sas.ac.uk).
Ancients and Moderns
81st Anglo-American Conference of Historians

5-6 July 2012, Senate House, London

Plenary lecturers include: Paul Cartledge (Cambridge), Constanze Güthenke (Princeton), Mark Lewis (Stanford), Sanjay Subrahmanyam (UCLA) and David Womersley (Oxford).

For programme and registration details, please visit www.history.ac.uk/aach12, or contact the IHR Events Office at ancientsandmoderns@lon.ac.uk or on 0207 862 8756.
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