Letter from the director

It is a pleasure to introduce another informative and lively issue of the IHR's magazine. For our regular users, Past and Future is a handy compendium of all that is happening around you onsite over the coming months. For our friends, alumni and academic partners across the UK and overseas we hope that the magazine is a seasonal showcase for our own programmes and the history scene in this country. Forthcoming highlights include 'Food in History', this year's Anglo-American conference of historians, and two special research training courses, a spring school on oral history, and a summer school on local history.

The new year saw the Institute passing some remarkable milestones. It is almost exactly 20 years since IHR Digital (or IHR Info as it was then known) was launched, and ten years since the creation of British History Online, assessed elsewhere in this issue. Membership of our postgraduate and early career researcher networks – History Lab and History Lab+ - has just reached 1,000. And recently Reviews in History, our electronic journal, published its 1,000th book review. These are reminders that networking and digital communication are very much an integral part of the scholarly community today. The IHR delivers so much content and service via its website nowadays, and I trust readers are as pleased as we are with the upgraded version of the website, which was launched last October, with greatly improved functionality and accessibility. Over the last few years we have also begun to use social media to communicate what we do, and are thus able to assist groups such as History Lab and History Lab+ in their important work.

And our physical presence as a library and events venue of course remains as important as ever. I am delighted to say than in its recent quinquennial review of the School of Advanced Study, the Higher Education Funding Council for England endorsed the work of the various Institute libraries, including our own. As we move forward with the £7.5 million refurbishment of the Institute (now, after nine months' delay, back on track to be completed in 2014), our famous library will continue to lie at the centre of our operations. Approximately two-thirds of the Library's holdings will be available on open access, with the remainder kept onsite. We will also be expanding our archives repository, collecting in the first instance the private papers of UK historians.

In the current financial climate public money for libraries remains difficult to obtain. So we are now including the IHR collections in our fundraising campaign. Private donations, bequests and gifts from overseas governments are what helped establish the IHR Library back in the 1920s and 1930s, and we believe that they might once again. I know that we can count on the support of our friends and donors in taking this forward.

May I wish you all a pleasant spring, and enjoyable reading!

Miles Taylor
March 2013
Willem Kalf, Still Life with Drinking-Horn, c. 1653, National Gallery (public domain, via Wikimedia Commons). This year’s Anglo-American conference explores the theme of ‘Food in History’.

The drinking-horn in this still life was made of a single buffalo horn set into a silver mount that features Saint Sebastian, patron saint of archers, who was bound to a tree as a target for two Roman soldiers. It dates from 1565 and is kept today in the Amsterdam Museum. The horn suggests that the painting was probably commissioned by a member of the Amsterdam archers’ guild. The artist has chosen the objects shown for their magnificent colour and texture. The sparkle of the lobster, the gleam of the lemon, the subtle texture of the carpet, all demonstrate the play of light over different surfaces. A contemporary viewer would have recognised the objects as expensive luxury items that only the wealthy would have been able to afford. - National Gallery
Study for a Master’s

• Is it important that you undertake extensive independent study in an area of your choice at Master’s level?
• Do you want to study at an internationally-renowned Institute committed to the highest standards of scholarship?
• Do you wish to be located in Bloomsbury, central London, with easy access to the capital’s rich cultural amenities and a walk away from the greatest concentration of book and periodical collections in the world?

Where better to undertake an MA in Historical Research?

The IHR is well placed to offer this taught degree. It has two active research centres, one of the country’s finest open access libraries, the largest weekly history seminar series run by any university, a thriving annual events programme, specialised training programmes in research and archival skills, Latin, information technology and unrivalled digital resources.

The programme’s core modules introduce students to key historical approaches, sources and methods, applying them to different periods, places and historical problems. Students then write an extended essay and a dissertation on subjects of their choosing, drawing on the skills and knowledge acquired and working closely with IHR tutors. The course offers wide-ranging research training and importance is placed on the use of architecture, material culture, archaeology and literature to aid historical research and understanding. Field trips and museum visits are key components.

Available full time (one year) or part time (two years). To apply now, see www.sas.ac.uk/graduate-study/masters-degrees/ma-historical-research.

BHO photography competition

This summer will be the tenth anniversary of British History Online (www.british-history.ac.uk), the IHR’s digital library. To celebrate, photographers with an interest in local history are invited to enter into our competition their photos of churches, pubs, castles, graveyards or any other structure of historical significance built before 1900. Participants may also enter copies of historical photographs for which they own the copyright.

The winning photo will appear on the BHO homepage for at least a month. Through the competition outstanding relevant images will be added to BHO, linkable to articles and providing a new way of navigating our local history material. Simply post your photos to our Flickr group, confirming that they may be used on BHO: www.flickr.com/groups/british-history-online/.

Two new IHR courses

Two new training courses now form part of our expanding online research training programme. Many courses are free and include topics such as data preservation, designing databases for historical research, digital tools, sources for British history on the internet, and podcasts for historians. The new courses are:

Building and using databases for historical research

Developed by Dr Mark Merry, who teaches the IHR’s successful face-to-face database courses, this provides full, comprehensive training in building and using a relational database. Designed for independent study, it progresses from our free online handbook, Designing databases for historical research, also by Dr Merry. It includes detailed examples and instructions on building databases and exercises, the final one of which is optional. Fee: £99 (provides access for four months).

InScribe palaeography learning materials

Medievalists have always found it difficult to interact with their primary sources due to a lack of palaeography (and manuscript studies) training.
i.e. the reading and understanding of ancient documents. This course provides scholars and anyone interested in medieval books and documents with online training on diverse palaeography topics including: general palaeography, the history of medieval scripts, diplomatic, codicology and illumination. One central module is free, others carry a fee.

Full details at www.history.ac.uk/research-training/browse/online.

AHRC skills training grant success

The IHR's research training team was recently involved in three successful bids to the latest round of the AHRC's Collaborative Skills Development scheme. The result will be a series of workshops for postgraduate students in history and related disciplines, and the creation of innovative online training resources to be hosted as part of the IHR's growing suite of digital research training packages. The first, 'Data management and training for historians', is a collaboration with the Universities of Sheffield and Hull. Dr Matt Phillpott at the IHR will coordinate this training in the development of skills and techniques to manage the different kinds of research data historians collect and use. The second, 'Methodologies for material culture', will be coordinated by Dr Mark Merry. He and colleagues from the University of Kent and Museum of London will train students in the study of material evidence, focusing particularly on using digital technologies and methodologies across disciplinary boundaries. Finally, we are now a partner in a training programme led by The National Archives. Two local record offices will provide workshops and training in Archival research skills for historians'. Full details at: www.history.ac.uk/research-training.

IHR Library news

Katherine Quinn has settled in well as the 2012–13 trainee, helping with the stack fetch service, selection of material for the French collection and the reclassification of the Library’s vast collection of poll books. She is just beginning to reclassify the United States collection to make items easier to retrieve. Jordan Landes, former IHR PhD student and Senate House Library history librarian, has also temporarily joined the Saturday and evening rota.

The Friends have donated £474 this year for book restoration including rebinding/boxing those in need of repair, such as Anstis’ Register of the Order of the Garter, Cartulaires de l’abbaye de Molemes and a volume of the Journal of the House of Lords, and the purchase of book supports. To donate, please contact: IHR.Development@sas.ac.uk / 0207 862 8764.

Recent acquisitions have included:

- The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643–1652 | B.746/Wes/Dix
- Cambridge History of South Africa | CLB.111/Cam
- This Cruel War: the Civil War Letters of Grant and Malinda Taylor, 1862–1865 | UF.78
- Werner Bests korrespondance med Auswärtiges Amt og andre tyske akter vedrørende besættelsen af Danmark 1942–1945 | ED.1
- The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles | B.0935/Hol/Kew
- British Family Life 1780–1914 | B.797/Nel
- The German Political Broadsheet 1600–1700 | EGG.054/Paa
- Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape | BIL.0834/Aal

Food history in the IHR Library

Over the past year, the Library has continued to acquire titles to add to its collection on the history of food and drink. They range from reference works and historiographic monographs to primary sources (e.g. recipe books, anthologies of sources on various types of food and drink). A guide is now available online (www.history.ac.uk/library/collections/food-history), while below is a list of some more recent acquisitions:

- Food and History (the subscription to this journal started from 2013)
- Writing Food History: a Global Perspective
- The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy (1747) by Hannah Glasse
- The Oxford Handbook of Food History
- Alla ricerca del ‘vino perfetto’: il Chianti del barone di Brolio...con il carteggio fra Bettino Ricasoli e Cesare Studiati, 1859–1876
- Hofstáðir: Excavations of a Viking Age Feasting Hall in North-Eastern Iceland
- Public Drinking in the Early Modern World: Voices from the Tavern 1500–1600

Historical Research

This spring sees a new virtual multimedia issue of Historical Research drawing on the topical theme of ‘Austerity’. It draws on past and current articles and podcasts on the economy, finance, debt, trade disputes, welfare and poverty. Full details are on the journal's homepage on the Wiley-Blackwell website: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-2281. Content is free for the first 30 days.

Later this year, the journal will publish a collection of papers from the 2011 Early Medieval Law in Context conference at the Carlsberg Academy, Copenhagen (August, vol. 86, no. 233). Topics include laws, law-making and law-collecting, and legal interpretation throughout Western Europe. The guest editor is Dr Jenny Benham.

Historical Research's commitment to developing the skills and careers of new researchers is enshrined in the Pollard prize for the best paper delivered at an IHR seminar. Awarded annually in July, it is open to postgraduates or those within one year of completing a doctorate. In addition to £200 of Blackwell’s books, the winner has the chance to publish their paper in the journal. Historical Research also publishes winners of the Julian Corbett Prize in Modern Naval History and the Sir John Neale Prize in Tudor History.

For details on the Prize, issues of Historical Research, early view articles (available online up to a year earlier than print publication) and an up-to-date list of all accepted, forthcoming articles, see the IHR website: www.history.ac.uk/publications/historical-research.

VCH Oxfordshire XVII launches at Kelmscott Manor

Kelsmcott Manor, on the edge of the Cotswolds, was the setting for the launch in September 2012 of VCH Oxfordshire XVII – the county’s sixth publication (including two EPE paperbacks) in eight years. Nearly 100 friends and supporters visited the house thanks to the generosity of the Society of Antiquaries, the owners since 1962. The Society oversaw a major research project on Kelmscott in 1959–2007 with which the VCH was closely involved.

Past and Future
The new 300-page book covers the nine villages of Broadwell, Broughton Poggs, Filkins, Grafton, Holwell, Kelmscott, Langford, Little Faringdon and Radcot. Kelmscott’s associations with the designer and socialist William Morris (who rented Kelmscott Manor as a summer home) have ensured its lasting fame, and the Morris theme is fully explored. The house had a profound impact on Morris’s ideas about building conservation, and following his death his widow and daughter erected several attractive Vernacular Revival buildings in the village.

The area, which in the late Anglo-Saxon period belonged to a single large estate, is also explored including farming, buildings, community life and village formation, together with the widespread religious Nonconformity (both Catholic and Protestant) which characterised several villages after the Reformation. The tiny riverside parish of Radcot played an important role in the Thames river trade, and recent Time Team investigations there have uncovered traces both of a planned 11th-century village and of a demolished Norman castle. A more recent influence was Sir Stafford Cripps, who in the 1930s embarked on community building projects in nearby Filkins, all in stone-built Cotswold style. Other prominent buildings include Langford church with its exceptional late 11th-century tower, and the 19th-century gothicised mansion house at Bradwell Grove, now the centre of the Cotswold Wildlife Park.

VCH Oxfordshire is now concentrating on Ewelme Hundred in the Oxfordshire Chilterns, due for completion in 2015–16. A volume on Wychwood Forest is also planned.

Kelmscott Manor by May Morris (via Wikimedia Commons).

Hampshire volume launches new VCH paperback series

The VCH has published the first volume in its new series of paperback parish and urban histories, on Mapledurwell (Hampshire). The series aims to publish local research swiftly and inspire readers to get involved with VCH ventures in their own areas. Each history, also downloadable in epub and Kindle format, will make a new contribution to the Victoria County History. Volumes are now planned on Eastnor (Herefordshire) and Newport (Essex).

Mapledurwell is the first parish history to be published by the New Victoria History of Hampshire group. Since publication of the first VCH parish account in 1911, ideas about what constitutes a good parish history have been transformed. The new history includes much more about the village itself and its economy and society, highlighting the lives of ordinary people and tracing those who owned the parish’s land and property. Despite its proximity to the urban centre of Basingstoke, Mapledurwell is typical of many Hampshire downland parishes in which the present-day landscape reflects an earlier open-field system. Its village, recorded in Domesday Book, is rural and picturesque with many attractive timber-framed cottages, the oldest being 15th century. Through a close reading of the archival records, Mapledurwell’s development from an agricultural community into a modern commuter village with only one working farm is explored and a model established for the histories of other rural parishes in Hampshire.

For details on ongoing work in Hampshire, visit: www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire. To purchase copies of Mapledurwell contact Dr Jean Morrin, History Department, University of Winchester, Winchester SO22 4NR. Price £7 + £2 P&P. Cheques for £9 should be made out to ‘Hampshire Archives Trust’.

IHR events

Materialities of urban life in early modern Europe

Organised by the Centre for Metropolitan History

events.history.ac.uk/event/show/8331
17–19 April 2013, Senate House

Film evening: A Man for all Seasons

Speaker: Dr John Guy (Clare College, Cambridge)
22 May 2013, Chancellor’s Hall, Senate House

Fellows’ lecture

Speaker: Dr Paul Seaward (History of Parliament)
25 June 2013, Court Room, Senate House

Mobilising London’s housing histories: the provision of homes since 1850

Organised by the Centre for Metropolitan History

events.history.ac.uk/event/show/7235
27–28 June, Woburn Suite, Senate House

Conference on horse racing and politics

29 June 2013, Senate Room, Senate House

82nd Anglo-American conference of historians: ‘Food in History’

11–13 July 2013, Senate House
http://anglo-american.history.ac.uk/register

Local history summer school

July 2013, Senate House

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

Register now for the 2013 Anglo-American conference: ‘Food in History’
anglo-american.history.ac.uk/registration

www.history.ac.uk
Food in history: ingredients in search of a recipe?

Sara Pennell, senior lecturer in early modern British history, University of Roehampton

In 1660, the cook Robert May published recipes for one of the modish dishes of the day: the grand ‘sallet’ or salad. The Stuart ‘sallet’ was a spectacle, with its carefully arrayed mixture of fresh and preserved elements, and imported commodities (anchovies, ‘Virginia Potato’, almonds) alongside indigenous ingredients (mushrooms, samphire). Sallets – the first dish to be given exclusive focus in any English-language food text (John Evelyn’s 1699 Acetaria) – were dietetically fashioned to soothe and stimulate in equal measure.

The current state of historical scholarship about, and of, food is arguably like a grand sallet. Much stimulates, yet much is familiar to the palate. A diverse array exists of research ‘ingredients’ – occasionally exotic – and yet how these ingredients combine to make a coherent ‘dish’, or area of shared theorisation and methodological harmony, might take some chewing over.

The first challenge is to establish what food history/food in history comprises. These word order and prepositional changes are significant, signalling shifts in scope and scale. Food history has (perhaps unfairly) a reputation of being exactly that: explorations of foodstuffs – their cultivation, preparation and consumption – in historical perspective. It may sound limited but has produced everything from single-ingredient/commodity histories with global intent (Mark Kurlansky’s 1997 ‘biography’ of Cod and the global histories of potatoes, cake and whiskey in the Reaktion Books ‘Edible’ series), to evocative accounts of feasting and many modern editions of historic ‘cookbooks’ (more properly, recipe collections).

What some food history lacks is attention to food’s historical agency, its relegation to a table-dressing role. Paraphrasing the title of B.W. Higman’s 2001 Food: a History to the micro-historical (with pretensions to macro-historical) significance (can a cookbook really change the world?) – is a vexed one. Too small, and the tendency towards antiquarianism is apparent; too large, and the gallop from caveman’s fire to induction hob tends towards whiggishness among the wigs and a sense that our current diet is inevitably healthier/more diverse/less exploitatively gained than what we ate ‘then’. The intellectual queasiness this might induce in us is now being further fed by accounts of post-industrial, globalised food insecurity from the likes of Michael Pollan and Joanna Blythman, as well as Slow Food activism worldwide.

By changing the preposition – food in history – do we indicate that, rather than simply focusing on the foods and their preparation, we choose a more elevated investigation into what anthropologists call the ‘foodways’ of the past: the processes, flows and impacts of food in economic, social, cultural, political and environmental/ecological contexts? This tension between the food itself and its processes (from raw to cooked, from agricultural production through to industrial synthesis, from local to global and back) might explain why food has yet to join ‘gender’ or ‘class’ as a fully-paid-up category of historical analysis.

Academic gatherings about ‘food in history’ in Britain have been relatively scarce (the annual Oxford Symposium of Food, established 1981, and the Leeds Symposium on Food and Cookery, established 1985, excepted). Clearly this theme has been a niche pursuit, still mostly invisible in the undergraduate curriculum (again with honourable exceptions such as courses currently on offer at York and Cambridge). By comparison, European, north American and Australian universities have developed entire degree programmes, courses and research centres around the historical study of food, for example Boston University’s gastronomy programme, the University of Adelaide’s Centre for the History of Food and Drink, and IEHCA (l’Institut Européen d’Histoire et des Cultures de l’Alimentation at the Université François-Rabelais de Tours).

Such mainly non-British outputs map the differential impact of certain historiographical and theoretical traditions in which food/foodways have carried explanatory power. The Annales school – with Fernand Braudel’s uncharacteristically romantic statement that ‘the mere smell of cooking can evoke a whole civilisation’ as its tagline – fuelled extensive, ongoing French and Italian scholarship, in works by Jean-Louis Flandrin, Bruno Laurioux, Massimo Montanari and many others. In North America, cross-disciplinary currents between history and archaeology underpinned the influential focus on 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century ‘foodways’, now extending to Australian and South African historical archaeologies.
Popular print, radio, TV and the internet are the most abundant and oft-replenished sources for food history/food in history in Britain. Since last autumn I have watched Clarissa Dixon-Wright tackle ‘Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner’ in historical perspective (BBC4, 2012), read William Sitwell’s A History of Food in One Hundred Recipes (Harper Collins, 2011), and received Bee Wilson’s Consider the Fork: a History of Invention in the Kitchen (Particular Books, 2012) for Christmas. And these are only the cherries on a much larger cake. In addition, energetic heritage engagement with ‘life below stairs’ serves forth a feast of food re-enactment, or ‘experimental archaeology’, depending on your viewpoint. Hampton Court Palace’s Tudor kitchens ‘live’ cooking weekends draw large audiences, while the historical ‘inserts’ in The Great British Bake-Off (BBC2, 2010–present) leaven the melodrama of collapsing sponges with snippets about baking BMB (Before Mary Berry). No doubt serious, seminal scholarly research underpins some of this output – leading lights Ivan Day and Peter Brears (significantly, freelancers both) effectively created it – but questions about authenticity remain. Modern food industrialisation, commercialisation and preparation technologies, plus health and safety and visitor engagement agendas, conspire to make these routes into food history no less fraught with interpretational problems than text-based scholarship.

Sources are of course crucially problematic. The history of food is NOT in the ‘recipes if we but had them all’, as the pioneering independent food historian Karen Hess once proclaimed. Yet, while food texts are more diverse than simply recipes – everything from state papers to chart paper ephemera – the recipe text still enchants, continuing a pedigree of food history research that launched with early antiquarian interest in the ‘ancient’, medieval texts of elite food ordinances and recipes. But, as 2013’s Oxford Symposium of Food acknowledges in its theme of ‘Food and Material Culture’, we do need also to ‘consider the fork’ – and the hearth, cooking pot, table, kitchen and the restaurant dining room, as necessary material routes into more nuanced accounts of food in whatever history we seek to write. Material food history is rather fashionable right now (see Bee Wilson’s book), but let us not be blind to its limitations, especially the reading off of food practices and more problematically still, tastes, from proxy objects: how many of us have that unused juicer in a cupboard, from which future historians might deduce our non-existent juice obsession?

More of a challenge still is the ephemerality of what goes in the pot or on the plate: a challenge that only archaeology can confront for the distant and not-so-distant past, before film and photography as documentary sources. The integration and interrogation of archaeobotanical, zooarchaeological and palaeographic deposits for the historic era with text and artefactual data is a crucial development, allowing scholars to test how prescriptive food texts (say, cookbooks or public health guidelines) are borne out in practical bodily and waste matter. Exploratory work in this area has tended to be multi-disciplinary, but there are some exciting interdisciplinary possibilities too, which is arguably what will produce a richer vein of ‘food in history’ research. Yet, if archaeological techniques and data are providing the piquant ‘new’ in our grand sallet, other themes are more familiar. My recent reading of the sadly-neglected children’s tale by André Maurois, Fattypuffs and Thinifers (first published in French in 1930), has shaped what follows. For those of you unfamiliar with the book, the Fattypuffs are cheerfully obese, life-embracing constant eaters, whose mantra is ‘one must live to eat’; the Thinifers rule-bound, ruler-thin workaholics, mouthing ‘one must eat to live, not live to eat’ before each sparse repast. These two tribes wage Swiftian war for territorial supremacy.

Recognisably ‘Thinifer’ and ‘Fattypuff’ tendencies are not difficult to identify in current ‘food in history’. Tending towards economic and ‘technophyical’ topics, ‘Thinifer’ histories focus on food supply systems and their resilience (or food security studies: for example Frank Dikötter’s 2010 Mao’s Great Famine) and histories of the corporeal consequences of dietary (in)sufficiency. These have historised concerns of modern economists, politicians and ecologists.
with what is robust and what is less so in contemporary food systems. Slightly less ‘Thinifer’ in tone, work inspired by E.P. Thompson, while not being particularly concerned with the food itself, has reached beyond the purely quantitative, to think about the social and moral ramifications of food shortage and entitlement. This produces histories – like those of John Walter for early modern England – that enrich the notion of food and access to it as ‘a system’, one in which individuals and communities, as much as states, supply lines and global commodification, have agency.

The emergence of the history of medicine as a sub-discipline within academic history and a well-funded area of research, thanks to the Wellcome Trust, has also brought seemingly Thinifer concerns – diet, nutrition and health – front-stage. But understanding modern challenges to dietary equilibrium and nutritional equality (a current Wellcome Trust priority) is not simply about physiological and biomedical issues. Cultural dispositions of communities to particular tastes, food customs and ideas of corporeal well-being are historically contingent, as well as often resistant to authoritative and public health agendas, as Keir Waddington has recently shown for the Victorian sausage.13

Here we are edging into ‘Fattypuff’ territory. One of the consequences of the late 20th-century cultural ‘turn’ saw foodways emerging as a cultural player, from the ‘civilising’ of behaviours and collective identities around food (in Stephen Mennell’s seminal historical sociology) to literary engagements with food, to the roles played by food-in-space, for example the later Stuart coffee house or the Revolutionary French restaurant.12

But, like the Rabelaisian Fattypuffs, cultural histories of food have recently been all-consuming: as in so many other areas of historical research, everything (economics, diet, ecologies) feeds the cultural ‘stomach’. A case in point is the recent series from Berg. While each volume covers food systems, food security and ‘body and soul’, they are nevertheless marketed under the general series title *A Cultural History of Food*, a decision that might narrow readership and does not reflect the different methodological and theoretical standpoints of contributors.13

So what happens between the Fattypuffs and Thinifers? Although the latter quickly overran the Fattypuff realm, deposing king and government, the colonisers and colonised undergo mutual accommodation. Fattypuffs see the virtues of eating less (although not all slim down), while Thinifers realise that functionalist eating may not be the only way to flourish. Historians interested in ‘food in history’ likewise need to be open-minded about what methodological tools and sources to deploy in using the study of foodways to answer some of our larger questions about dietary (and thus physiological and ecological) change and adaption; food and thus geopolitical security, on the ground as well as at policy level; and cultural formation of individuals as well as of states, nations and civilisations.

We need historical vantage points that complicate approaches assuming shared knowledge, experiences, and indeed tastes. In future these vantage points might need to be as much ‘glocal’ in scale and tone, as they are now local or global and with many more ingredients, combined in unexpected ways, than even the grandest of Robert May’s salads would admit.

The 2013 Anglo-American conference on ‘Food in History’ will take place at the IHR from 11–13 July 2013. For details, see anglo-american.history.ac.uk.

Notes
3 T. Sarah Peterson, The Cookbook that Changed the World: the Invention of Modern Cuisine (Temps, 2006).
4 A yeasted bun appearing in later Stuart and Georgian recipe collections.
6 See Ken Albala’s Food Rant, at kenalbala.blogspot.co.uk; and Ivan Day’s Food History Jottings at foodhistoryjottings.blogspot.co.uk (both accessed 24/1/2013).
Virtually untapped research potential: the Science Museum Group’s collections

Tim Boon, head of research and public history, the Science Museum

The proverbial man from Mars observing much of science’s public culture might be excused for thinking that science is a strange kind of human culture that exists only in the future and present tense: new discoveries and new science-enabled technologies are the stuff of most science reportage. The Science Museum Group collections belie such a view, standing for what science, technology, engineering and medicine have been in the past, representing what their history is. And our Museums, showcasing these collections, attract five million visitors each year. In contrast with the smoothed-out histories of science-as-ideas that occasionally surface into the media, the aspects of science and technology that our collections of material culture stand for are the lived experience of our forebears: ambiguous, social-historical aspects that invite the historian’s attention to explore, understand and communicate. A huge potential exists for historians to work on these collections and with these audiences: to explore new territories, shade in new meanings and to do research where ‘impact’ is an integral element of the research enterprise to be enjoyed.

On the side of research potential, the collections of the Science Museum Group (SMG) are fantastically diverse. In addition to the Science Museum in London, SMG incorporates the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester (MOSI); the National Media Museum in Bradford (NMeM) and the National Railway Museum in York (NRM, with its branch ‘Locomotion’ in Shildon, County Durham). The Group also runs substantial storage sites in West London and at an airfield in Wiltshire which, between them, hold more than 90 per cent of our collections. It would be a mistake for any historian to underestimate the social historical significance of what these collections represent, and we invite readers of Past and Future to come and find out more about them. To select just a few examples: we can claim that the Media Museum is home to one of the world’s very best collections of photographs because of its provenance, joining the Science Museum’s technical collection, some of it collected in the 19th century, to the immense riches of the Royal Photographic Society Collection. In London, our holdings are uniquely broad because, in addition to the kinds of material held by technical museums across the world – relics of the physical sciences and engineering – we curate the Wellcome Collection, a treasure-trove of the history of healing and a resource for global social history. In addition to its core strengths representing the significance of Manchester in world history, MOSI has the national electricity collection. NRM’s holdings extend far beyond the behemoths of stream dominating its main displays into every aspect of the transformations that the railways have wrought over two centuries.

Of course we do historical research ourselves, both within conventional academic fora of conferences, journals and books, and in developing our exhibition programme. Codebreaker – Alan Turing’s Life and Legacy, which...
The Science Museum Group’s collections embodies the best of the instrumental kind of research, was winner of the British Society for the History of Science’s 2013 ‘Great Exhibitions’ prize. Here, meticulous original research revealed connections between the work of this complex figure and aspects of the material record, enabling a rich and stylish exhibition. In other cases, such as Making the Modern World, the 2000 permanent gallery on the industrial era, the whole breadth of the multidisciplinary project team’s research experience provided telling and quirky historical details as well as the major narratives. But there is still enormous untapped potential in the SMG collections that is crying out for scholarly attention. Perhaps we suffer because our objects are not often seen as the core subject of disciplines in the way that specimens matter to archaeology or paintings to iconology. The disciplines of the histories of science and medicine in this country are thriving archive-based disciplines, but their practitioners usually prefer the relative certainty of the written word to the ambiguity of the material record. And that remains the case despite the emphasis of the sociology of science on practice, and of the history of medicine’s concern with the patient experience, often mediated by the kinds of instruments found in our collections. No social or economic historian of the industrial changes of the last 300 years has taken a close look at the machines of Richard Arkwright or Henry Maudslay in recent times. As a result, virtually any historian that comes to work on our collections can count themselves within the vanguard of materially-minded historians of our scientific, economic, industrial and cultural past.

Audience potential is being explored in the Museum’s Public History of Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine (PHoSTEM) initiative. This was launched in October 2010 with an international workshop of scholars and practitioners, ‘Co-curation and PHoSTEM’, which explored the kinship between public history and the current vogue in museums for co-producing exhibitions with lay groups. We are continuing the conversation between university-based scholars and museum practitioners in an AHRC-funded workshop series. This comprises three workshops – in York, Leeds and London – that each focus on a strand of the issues related to the public history of science. In York, we heard the testimonies of volunteers working on museum collections associated with technology museums. In Leeds, the focus was on different academic models for audience studies, and on collaborations between universities and museums. The London meeting will consider whether museums of science differ intrinsically from those with other concerns.

One big motivation for our public history work is our desire to learn more about the ways in which visitors engage with the histories and historical artefacts that they encounter in museums, with the aim of making future displays. One path towards this has been to work with groups of lay people that can be expected to have a developed historical sense: family historians or local ones, as in the case of a recent project, The Enfield Exchange. We returned to display at Enfield Museum a 1920s manual telephone exchange that we had collected there in 1960. We were able to collect, via a programme of reminiscence sessions, oral testimony about the social historical meanings of an artefact originally collected for its technological significance. Another example is our exhibition on the history of electronic music, a subject with ostensibly little history, created via a series of co-curation experiments.

In sum, it seems to us in the Science Museum Group that historians looking for exciting research potential and for real research impact can do no better than look to our collections. The IHR will be joining with the Science Museum in running a series of events in the near future.

More details can be found at www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/research, and we can be reached via research@sciencemuseum.ac.uk.
Televising history

Taylor Downing, documentary filmmaker and historian

The Great War, The World at War, Cold War, The Nazis – A Warning from History, Simon Schama’s A History of Britain, The Victorian Farm – television history comes in a variety of shapes and formats. Since the 1950s a great deal of history has been featured on TV and viewers have lapped it up. Programming in this area has been far more popular than other genres of factual TV, such as the arts or science documentaries. Indeed, TV history has enjoyed something of a golden age from the 1980s to the present.

It might come as a surprise then to discover that TV history was born at a time of military humiliation in Korea and out of a need to remind audiences of the heroic days of World War II. Victory at Sea was the first blockbuster history series, produced by NBC in 26 parts in 1951. It told the story of World War II using archive newsreels and films with a melodramatic commentary. It sold to 40 countries, including to the BBC, and set the mould for the big, ambitious, expensive-to-make TV histories that, as NBC said in its marketing, ‘bring history alive in the living room’.

Over the next decade, the BBC bought in more of these history blockbusters like Winston Churchill: The Valiant Years (1960), but rarely produced its own series as they were too costly. Far cheaper to produce was the ‘televising lecture’. The stand-out success in these early days was the controversial Oxford don A.J.P. Taylor, who recorded his first TV lecture series in 1957. The lectures, which continued for ten years, on both ITV and the BBC, included: When Europe was the Centre of the World (ITV 1957–8), The Twenties (BBC 1962) and Revolution 1917 (ITV 1967). There was no set, just Taylor, wearing his trademark bow tie, speaking direct to camera. Like his Oxford lectures, he spoke without notes but always came to a perfectly-timed conclusion with the help of a large clock behind the camera. The series achieved an impact it is hard to imagine in today’s multi-channel world, and many people claim their first interest in history was aroused by Taylor’s lectures – Simon Schama for one.

The TV lecture format went a stage further in the late ‘60s when David Attenborough, then controller of BBC2, persuaded Kenneth Clark to present a series of documentaries on western art and culture – not from a studio, but from locations worldwide. The result, Civilisation (1969), created a new format with the learned expert travelling the world to bring his wisdom to the TV public. Civilisation cost a small fortune but got its money back from a lucrative sale to American public broadcasting. The following series in this genre, all made with an eye to US sales, included Alistair Cooke’s America (1972), Jacob Bronowski’s The Ascent of Man (1973) and Hugh Weldon’s Royal Heritage (1977), written by J.H. Plumb. And, of course, years later, on David Attenborough’s return to production, he pushed this format to even greater heights with his own series, Life on Earth (1979), and its many sequels including The Living Planet (1984), The Blue Planet (2001) and First Life (2010).

In 1963 a group of young BBC producers started work on marking the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. A deal was done with the Imperial War Museum to provide archive film and an appeal went out on the Tonight programme for veterans with stories to tell. The BBC was inundated with several thousand letters. Two well-known historians, John Terraine and Corelli Barnett, wrote the script outlines and two senior BBC producers, Tony Essex and Gordon Watkins, held the reins. The Great War, produced in 26 parts, was the first great British history series, with a commentary read by Ralph Richardson and haunting music by Wilfred Josephs. Television folklore has it that pubs emptied on Wednesday evenings when the series was first shown on BBC1.

The Great War was innovative in combining veterans’ interviews (‘talking heads’ in TV parlance) with archive film. It was broken down into bite-sized chunks of narrative that are easily digestible in TV time-spans and the human testimony, along with intelligent scripts, made for an outstanding series. Unfortunately, the producers freely intercut staged feature film footage, shot after the war, with authentic record film. Nevertheless, The Great War established TV history as serious, powerful and popular, and showed that the BBC were masters of this new genre.

However, a change to the tax regulations of commercial TV in 1971 suddenly gave the ITV companies a cash windfall. Thames Television, the youngest but probably the most ambitious commercial company, wanted to prove that ITV could produce public service broadcasting equal to anything the BBC could do. Producer Jeremy Isaacs pulled the carpet from underneath Auntie BBC and made a series on World War II. The World at War (1973–4), another 26-part series, is still widely shown around the world 40 years later. © Freemantle Media.

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not have a monopoly on TV history and made a fortune for Thames.

These two genres of presenter-led history with great men (only recently has this included great women) guiding us through the corridors of the past, and the combination of archive film and talking heads, has endured for several decades. As viewers we have been able to enjoy masterpieces of both genres. On the BBC, Laurence Rees's series, such as *The Nazis – A Warning from History* (1997) and *Auschwitz: The Nazis and the ‘Final Solution'* (2005), were superb, as were the documentaries of Norma Percy charting recent political events from *The Death of Yugoslavia* (1995) to *Irland and the West* (2009). On the presenter side, many new voices have been brought to the screen, including Bettany Hughes (on the glories of the ancient world) and Amanda Vickery (on social history). Simon Schama's 13-part series *A History of Britain*, shown from 2000 to 2002, sparkles with the same sort of excitement that characterises his books, ranging in topic from Skara Brae to George Orwell. Schama has spoken about the problem of selecting what to feature and what to leave out, commenting: 'History is always about brutal selection, but there's brutal and brutal, and then there's Television.' But TV history really came of age with this ambitious project.

Something of a paradigm shift came in the years after 2000 that saw the creation of 'reality television' with *Big Brother* (2000-present). This had its impact on TV history, with groups or families being asked to imagine that they were living in the past. Sometimes this format produced some genuinely interesting programmes like *The Edwardian House* (2004), but too frequently 'living history' shows have degenerated into forced and farcical jokes, like *The Trench Experience* (2006) in which a group of 20-year-olds were asked to imagine what it was like living in damp trenches for two or three days, but without, of course, any risk of death or mutilation. Another problem TV history has tried to address is how to explore the subject from the era prior to photographs and moving film. One answer has been through some form of re-enactment or dramatisation. Again, sometimes these have been stunning, like Peter Watkins's *Culloden* (BBC, 1964) or Richard Broad's *The Luddites* (Thames, 1987). But all too often they have become risible, with a dozen whacky re-enactors running about in fields pretending to be Cromwell's New Model Army. Computer graphics have been another recent way of bringing earlier history alive so it is now possible to watch Vesuvius erupt over Pompeii, to tour medieval London, or to use aerial photographs to revive battlefield landscapes.

There have of course been many critics over the years, and rightly so. Re-enactments, we are told, are essentially phoney and false. Television is accused of too easily pandering to nostalgia. Too much of TV history is about war. Narrative is good but not analysis. And so on. But in looking at its history, it is difficult not to conclude that British viewers over the last 60 years have been served up some outstanding examples of documentaries that in the very best sense have been educative, informative and entertaining. At their finest, history programmes take from the academy new interpretations of the past and make them accessible to many millions. Producers borrow some fine historians to put on camera, or to advise behind the camera, and tap in to the broader public world of history, drawing in archivists, museum curators, teachers, living historians and enthusiasts of every hue. In the endless debate about the dumbing down of cultural values, this is not a bad record.

But there are serious worries ahead. Whereas much TV history has been shown on BBC2 or ITV, it now seems to be marginalised to BBC4. Over the last few years there have been some superb history series on BBC4, but average audiences here are only a tenth of BBC2's. An even greater worry, it seems to me, is that the form is now too frequently dominant of TV history. Style and technique seem to be valued over powerful storytelling. So, instead of a history of the Blitz, producers are asked to blow up buildings to see how they shatter. Instead of the story of the Battle of Britain, we have to follow a group of young people learning to fly a Spitfire and see who is the fastest. Instead of the story of the Blitz, producers are asked to show every hue. In the endless debate about the problem of selecting what to feature and what to leave out, commenting: 'History is always about brutal selection, but there's brutal and brutal, and then there's Television.' But TV history really came of age with this ambitious project.

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Mobilising London’s housing histories: the provision of homes since 1850

Andrew Saint, general editor, Survey of London and David Kroll, Centre for Metropolitan History

Housing, like food or clothing, is everyone’s concern and to that extent everyone’s speciality. That makes housing history of abiding and urgent interest. Just as the way we used to eat or dress shapes the fashions of doing so today and tomorrow, so where and how we and our predecessors have lived has a powerful relevance to the future of housing.

At the same time our view of housing, or at least housing en masse, is coloured by frustration, anxiety and guilt. We sense that we have still not got it right. Sometimes in the past housing provision was maybe better or more appropriate than it is today; often it was definitely worse. Why was that, and what have been the forces behind the perpetual changes in housing fashions? Answering these questions satisfactorily would go some way to offering politicians, planners, architects and builders clues for procuring permanently better housing.

Such thinking underlies ‘Mobilising London’s housing histories’, a two-day conference to be held at Senate House in June, hosted by the IHR’s Centre for Metropolitan History with the Survey of London (English Heritage) and the Urban Laboratory (University College London). Its point of departure is the current housing situation. Urban and suburban populations continue to increase in most regions of the world, outpacing adequate housing provision. London itself is again experiencing a severe housing crisis, widely featured in the press and political debates.

The causes are many, some familiar to students of housing history, others fresh: among them, an increase in London’s population and in the number and fragmentation of households; planning restrictions on urban expansion; rising rents and house prices driven up by the credit boom; the pressures on household income from the economic downturn; inequalities in access to housing; a decline in affordable housing stock; and the reinforcement through legislation of the general trend that prices lower- and middle-income households out of living in central London.

The list is formidable and, unsurprisingly, the solutions offered are as many and confusing as the problems themselves. What seems to be lacking is a maturely informed understanding of what has proved good and bad in London’s housing record. Lazy-minded generalisations are still too frequently trotted out: all council housing is dismissed as flawed; all high-rise or balcony-access flats are said to be unsuccessful; only private housing in short rows with separate gardens is alleged to suit the British domestic mentality. The real picture is of course far more complex and interesting.

The conference seeks to address these issues from multiple standpoints. In the past, research on the history of housing has often been stuck in the silos of particular disciplines. Academics from
various fields, alongside politicians, journalists, activists, housing managers and different housing provision contributors, ranging through planners, architects, surveyors, developers and builders, have evolved their own methods, ideologies and perspectives. Delegates with differing types of historical expertise and interest are being drawn together to stimulate the exchange of knowledge and discussion.

The contributions cross categories of housing study with papers on speculative, philanthropic and council housing. These categories often used to be considered mutually exclusive, but recent research suggests the differences have not been as cast-iron as we tend to assume. The intricate changes and adaptations that have affected all London housing over the past half-century are discussed, ranging from the varied uses of a large suburban villa through the well-known phenomenon of gentrification to the ever-shifting ideas of how communal areas and facilities should be integrated into housing – and indeed, what is or was understood by community. Historical researchers can study these changes with a critical distance and objectivity often eluding those trying to understand what takes place in London today.

Today's housing provision and policies are undoubtedly influenced by past developments and some papers will address wider themes such as urban growth, regeneration and migration, so key to the current London housing debate that it is easy to forget they are not new. The intricate changes and adaptations that have affected all London housing over the past half-century are discussed, ranging from the varied uses of a large suburban villa through the well-known phenomenon of gentrification to the ever-shifting ideas of how communal areas and facilities should be integrated into housing – and indeed, what is or was understood by community. Historical researchers can study these changes with a critical distance and objectivity often eluding those trying to understand what takes place in London today.

Housing has always been a product and reflection of our culture, values and social and economic relations – those of its users and the people involved in its production. When discussing the success or failure of past housing, responsibility has tended to be placed with particular parties such as architects or planners, but they are also part of this wider culture. While the focus on the user or buildings themselves has been prominent in the literature, the often complex roles and relationships of the building workers and professionals involved in housing production are still under-represented. Misconceptions still abound, for example, concerning the processes of designing and building London's traditional housing and the role of the different professions and trades involved. A better understanding of who really did the designing and building and their connection, if any, with those they built for is much to be desired.

Naturally most of the papers will be historical, bringing new research to bear on the many-sided aspects of London's past housing. The organisers, however, also hope to reach a shared sense of how experience of the past can inform the decisions being made about the housing of today and tomorrow. The current crisis has already taught us we are not above repeating failures of previous generations and could probably learn from their successes.
Development news

The IHR raised £1.04 million in philanthropic funding for the financial year 2011–12. This can be broken down into just over £820,000 in cash donations and pledges, and an additional £228,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in matched funding. We would like to thank all of those who have given and helped us to make our Redevelopment Campaign a success thus far.

As the figures demonstrate, the Mellon Foundation’s matched funding makes quite a big difference, especially because the funds are restricted to the IHR’s endowment. This has been growing slowly over the past five years and, once we have moved back into our premises in Senate House’s north block, expanding the endowment will become the primary focus of our fundraising activities. An endowment of £50 million would allow the IHR to become completely financially independent. The good news is that the Mellon Foundation recently agreed to extend the original terms of the matched funding grant and we can continue to match gifts for another three years!

We have published these charts before, but now seems a good time to review them again. They show what a tremendous difference this scheme can make to the value of your donation to the IHR.

And higher rate UK taxpayers, you can claim back the difference between the higher and basic rate on the value of your donation. So a donation of £100, which has a value of £180 to the IHR, only costs the donor £62.50.

Naming opportunities

The physical transformation of our home in the north block brings with it the opportunity to name spaces and equipment and it is also possible to name activities such as seminars. A number of these already acknowledge donors, or are recognised in memoriam at the request of the donor. This is a wonderful way to remember a loved one, particularly if they were fond of the IHR or the study of history more generally.

Support for the VCH

Last year we received several major gifts in support of the VCH led by a grant of £75,000 from the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust to assist in establishing a new position within the central office and working closely with the county offices. The new Editor and Training Co-ordinator will take responsibility for the quality of VCH contributors’ outputs, including its many volunteers. This will help the VCH to increase its publications, including the popular England’s Past for Everyone paperback series which engages local volunteers in writing the histories of their own communities.

The VCH remains high on our list of fundraising priorities as we look forward to developing the collections by engaging with volunteers in new places, in parts of the country not already covered by the existing county offices. We also plan to digitise more of the local history collections, including the general volumes, which are rich resources on topics such as natural history and botany, ancient monuments and earthworks. Many of these are now gone and this information is not currently available anywhere else. These volumes provide a snapshot in time as well as a snapshot of the priorities in local history in the 19th century.

Leaving a legacy to the IHR

The IHR has been the beneficiary of a number of significant legacies and, although nothing can take the place of the loss of a member of our closely-knit community, legacies are a wonderful way to be remembered and to share one’s love of history with generations to come.

If you have already decided to leave a legacy to the IHR, or you are thinking of doing so, please let us know. All legacies need to be directed to ‘The IHR Trust’ and it can be helpful to review the specific terms of your wishes, to ensure the IHR will be able to meet them in future.

And in case you missed this important piece of news, as of April last year, there is now a 10 per cent reduction in inheritance tax for anyone leaving at least 10 per cent of their estate to charity.

The Annual Fund – the key to the future

The IHR’s Annual Fund closed its third successful year and we would like to thank all of our donors for their generous support. The Fund raised just over £20,000 and gifts ranged in size from £1 to £4,000. We also have just over £8,000 committed via direct debit, so we hope that those who have chosen to give in this way will continue to do so as it helps the IHR to plan ahead. It is worth mentioning that these figures...
are exclusive of the matched funding described above, so support for the Annual Fund also helps us to build our endowment.

This past year the Annual Fund helped to support the IHR’s events and seminar programmes. The additional funding enabled the IHR to secure the very best speakers at its conferences and we were able to offer more support to students and early career historians through conference attendance bursaries.

As we embark upon the fourth year of the Fund, we hope that you will help us to build on its success and provide support for even more of the IHR’s activities. Each and every donation, no matter how small or large, makes a huge difference - you are the key to our future!

If you are interested in finding out more about the Annual Fund, please contact the development office:

IHR.Development@sas.ac.uk / 020 7862 8764 or 8791.

Friends’ events: a busy autumn

The Friends of the IHR had an eventful social schedule in the autumn. Friends hosted the Annual General Meeting (AGM), an outing to the magnificent Eltham Palace and a film evening featuring Sir David Lean’s award-winning Great Expectations.

At the AGM, the Friends generously supported a bursary scheme to help early career historians with research, funded the IHR seminar programme and sponsored restoration work on some of the IHR’s library books.

In October, the Friends visited Eltham Palace and its splendid gardens. The group enjoyed a private guided tour of the Courtauld family’s former residence and the childhood home of Henry VIII. In addition to seeing some of the finest examples of Art Deco and medieval architecture in England, they were also able to view some of the more eccentric aspects of the home.

Great Expectations was screened at the November film evening, which was presented by Professor John Bowen of York University. The iconic film was put into historical context from Dickens’s personal life and career. Professor Bowen also talked about some of the particulars of filming in mid-1940s Britain; the only shots of London, for example, were of St Paul’s Cathedral because of bombing damage.

We are now looking forward to a new season of events, which will include:

Film evening
Prof John Guy: A Man for All Seasons
Wednesday 22 May 2013, 5pm, Chancellor’s Hall

Summer outing
Details to be confirmed
July 2013

Annual General Meeting
Dr Helen Castor
Monday 14 October 2013, 5pm, Woburn Suite

If you are a member of the IHR community and would like to be kept informed of our events, please contact the development office:
IHR.Development@sas.ac.uk
0207 862 8764 or 8791.
The digital humanities and ten years of BHO

Jason M. Kelly, director, Indiana University-Perdue University Indianapolis Arts and Humanities Institute and associate professor of history

Most readers will be familiar with British History Online (BHO). Founded in 2003 by the IHR and the Parliamentary History Trust, with seed funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the site has grown to be a valuable resource for students of the early modern period. A model of thoughtful planning, its infrastructure allows it to grow with the changing needs of scholars and digital humanists.

When founded, BHO was one of numerous arts and humanities projects to focus on digitising texts and images. They provided individuals worldwide with remote access to a wide range of searchable primary and secondary sources. Following the path of other non-profit projects such as the Text Creation Partnership, ARTFL and Perseus, BHO was open access and did not immediately provide a massive corpus of scanned texts. The project directors worked with subject specialists to prioritise which works to digitise. Then, rather than simply scan and post the texts with the imprecise results of optical character recognition programs, all texts were double-keyed in XML and reviewed by subject experts. This created online texts that were 99.9 per cent accurate, far more precise than many other online corpora – especially Google Books, which one study recently claimed has a 30 per cent error rate in the metadata alone.¹

BHO has always provided the primary and secondary sources that historians often use. So, for example, the site includes the Survey of London, the Journals of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and the Victoria County Histories – all invaluable works, but not always easily accessible, especially to scholars outside Britain. While some of its volumes are available in other open access online repositories, the BHO texts are more accurate. Archives.org for example, has Alumni Oxonienses available as a digital scan and an OCR text. However, comparing the text for Richard Whiteway in both online editions reveals the strength of BHO’s method of double-keyed XML entry:


Without the ability to accurately search a reference work, the resource becomes little more than a digital photocopy of the book: still better than nothing, but severely limited in capability. BHO designers understood this principle from the start, choosing a method that was more labour intensive, but which provided a richer scholarly product.

Since the project was initiated in 2003, the digital humanities have developed on a scale few could have expected. And the scholars’ demands have expanded as well. There is still a great need for the reference works BHO provides, but it is increasingly difficult to find grant funding for basic digitisation, no matter how labour-intensive or important to scholars. Premium content is now offered to help sustain it, and those who wish to access the newly added Calendars of State Papers must pay £30 per year. But the shift in funding priorities has also allowed BHO to take advantage of new technological developments and create a more robust working environment. Small refinements to the system now allow users to change citation formats and browse maps to find publications focused on specific regions.

More substantial refinements focus on individuals’ ability to personalise the system. Users can now create personal bookshelves, storing readings for their next visit. More importantly, they can make annotations to the texts, a major feature that other systems (notably EEBO) have now begun to add. Annotations are moderated and allow individuals to correct and cross reference. In other words, rather than simply providing reference works, it encourages users to add and modify them, making the experience more active and breathing life into the texts.

BHO has been a success in the rapidly changing digital humanities environment by providing useful content on a scalable and sustainable model. As historians become more proficient in the tools available, BHO could make its current content even more valuable in a number of ways. First, BHO might consider loosening its licensing restrictions for out-of-copyright material, perhaps choosing a Creative Commons licence that encourages people to reuse and adapt the works. Second, the XML infrastructure provides two possibilities that could make the BHO invaluable. By geotagging the text, the data could add a spatial component, allowing historians to use and manipulate it in historical GIS analysis. Likewise, the text could be semantically interrelated through linked data, enabling the text to show the relations between people, place, things or even concepts. A researcher could, for example, create a search to trace the interactions of a cadre of Oxford graduates over the more than 1,100 volumes in BHO, exposing new economic, political and cultural connections and perhaps even posing new historical questions and problems. BHO is a model for the tools that historians can and should be building. It will be interesting to see what new innovations BHO brings over the next decade.

Notes
Feckless fraudsters or feeble failures?
Female bankruptcy in 19th-century England
Jennifer Aston, Eileen Power junior research fellow

An elaborate satire on what the imagined results of women's rights efforts would be, mocking the idea of women ever becoming lawyers, judges and legal officers. A New Court of Queen's Bench, As It Ought to Be – Or – The Ladies Trying a Contemptible Scoundrel for a 'Breach of Promise', an 1849 caricature by George Cruikshank for the 1850 Comical Almanack. Via Wikimedia Commons.

Until recently, the popular and academic image of the 19th-century middle-class woman centred on the domestic ‘angel in the house’, as described in Coventry Patmore’s 1854 poem of that title. But recent reassessment of business ownership in 19th-century England demonstrates that women could own and operate financially lucrative enterprises. Evidence shows women ran their businesses within the manufacturing, production and service sectors similarly to male-owned enterprises. Therefore, despite behaviour far removed from that of women at home, business ownership could still allow them to secure status by acquiring the luxury possessions such as property, jewellery and fine furniture long held to demonstrate male-middle-class status.

But what happened to the women whose businesses failed? Were their businesses more likely to fail in certain trades or geographical locations? Did the bankruptcy courts treat women differently because of their gender? And did women have the same access as men to opportunities for debt discharge and renewed trading? In my year as Power fellow I will address these questions so that the full spectrum of female entrepreneurship may be seen for the first time.

Discovering the economic stories of 19th-century women is often difficult due to a lack of sources. My starting point was the 1889–93 and 1904–8 volumes of the search registers and indexes of the Board of Trade’s Official Receivers Branch. They give the full name, address, business type and report reference number of the bankrupt, and introduce us to women such as Ellen Murray Auld, a turtle dealer, with business and home located on Montague Street, London, underneath what is now Senate House’s south block. Finding out more about Ellen was difficult because, although the search registers and indexes have survived intact, few Official Receivers Reports holding case details still exist.

However, the few surviving reports illuminate the world of businesswomen, giving extremely detailed specifics of their debts and assets, information incredibly difficult to source elsewhere. They include transcripts of the questionnaires that the Official Receiver completed with the bankrupt, which provide a rare opportunity to hear the businesswomen’s direct voices, opinions and experiences. Clothier Amy Bishop argues that her husband caused her situation by not fully teaching her the necessary business skills before he died, while portrait artist Ethel Mortlock pleads that if she could just claim the £2,000 owed to her by the Shah of Persia and the Chinese envoy His Excellency Li Hung Chang, she could avoid bankruptcy altogether. Unfortunately for Ethel, the Official Receiver felt that her excessive gambling, an inability to budget her outgoings and poor property portfolio management were more likely reasons for her financial difficulties.

The quantitative data from the search registers and indexes of the Board of Trade’s Official Receivers Branch and the qualitative data from the Official Receivers Reports are extremely revealing. If the cultural elements were as influential in the cases of female entrepreneurs as those discovered for males, we might expect to see judges treating businesswomen either more leniently because of reluctance to subject women to the financial ruin and shame of bankruptcy, or more harshly because patriarchal judges wanted to make an example of women who failed. Studying female entrepreneurs’ bankruptcy increases our knowledge of a relevant – yet still understudied – segment of the productive system, and provides a privileged viewpoint in exploring the link between entrepreneurship, institutions, social norms and cultural attitudes.

Notes

Past and Future
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

Colonial science and its histories
Friday, 5.15pm

Comparative histories of Asia
Thursday, 5.30pm

Conversations and disputations
Friday, 4.30pm

Crusades and the Latin East
Monday, 5.15pm

Digital history
Monday, 5.15pm

Disability history
Monday, 5.15pm

Earlier middle ages
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Early modern material cultures
Wednesday, 5.15pm

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, 5.15pm

Film history
Thursday, 5.30pm

Gender and history in the Americas
Monday, 5.30pm

Global history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

History Lab seminar
Thursday, 5.15pm

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, 5.15pm

Imperial and world history
Monday, 5.15pm

International history
Tuesday, 6.00pm

Jewish history
Tuesday, 5.15pm

Late medieval and early modern Italy
Thursday, 5.15pm

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, 5.15pm

London Society for Medieval Studies
Tuesday, 7.00pm

Low Countries history
Friday, 5.15pm

Marxism in culture
Friday, 5.30pm

Medieval and Tudor London
Thursday, 5.15pm

Metropolitan history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Military history
Tuesday, 5.15pm

Modern British history
Thursday, 5.15pm

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

Psychoanalysis and history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Public history
Wednesday, 5.30pm

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

Religious history of Britain 1500-1800
Tuesday, 5.15pm

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

Studies of home
Wednesday, 5.30pm

Tudor & Stuart history
Monday, 5.15pm

Voluntary action history
Monday, 5.30pm

War, society and culture
Wednesday, 5.15pm

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.
Seminar in focus:
The earlier middle ages

John Gillingham, emeritus professor of history, LSE

The seminar on the earlier middle ages was set up in 1974, the name a response to Robin Du Boulay's new seminar on the later middle ages, by two great figures in ecclesiastical history, Christopher Brooke and Hugh Lawrence. At that time the seminar was above all an occasion for research students based in London to present their work in progress for convenors to comment on. Two years later they passed the baton to Christopher Holdsworth of UCL, and he asked me to join him, perhaps to inject a more secular note into the proceedings - though we still continued to meet in the Ecclesiastical History room.

The only calculated change Christopher and I made was to announce at the beginning of each seminar that we intended to go to a pub afterwards and that all were welcome to join us. When Christopher moved to Exeter, I asked Jinty Nelson to become a co-convenor – one of my best moves ever. She, with characteristic thoughtfulness, felt that a senior colleague at King's might feel upstaged if she took this on without giving him first refusal. And so it was that Allen Brown, himself an enthusiastic pub-goer, took the chair. The crucial change made in our first year was to switch to meeting weekly and for all three terms, instead of fortnightly and for just one or two terms as was then the pattern of many seminars. The aim was to create a much stronger routine of attendance and of post-seminar discussion. Allen Brown dropped out at the end of the eighties, and we were joined by Michael Clanchy and Wendy Davies.

The establishment of this seminar had reflected the growing openness to Europe first visible when Joan Hussey and Nicolai Rubinstein started seminars on Byzantine and Italian history in 1948–9. Before then the Institute's medieval diet had been overwhelmingly insular, focused upon the mastering of English records (constitutional, legal, manorial), and therefore primarily on the period from the 12th century onwards. Not until the 1960s did less geographically restricted medieval seminars first get going, but even then Hugh Lawrence's seminar was limited chronologically to the 11th to 13th centuries. Hence the extent to which the adoption of the word 'earlier' in 1974–5 marked a breakthrough, finally bringing the first 600 years of medieval European history into the Institute's seminar programme. When, in 1990–1, the IHR's annual report began to publish lists of papers given, of no seminar was the Institute's claim that they revealed 'an astonishing richness and diversity of subject matter' more true. Moreover, because international contacts and co-operation were and are more characteristic of the Frankish centuries than of later ones, here too that original invitation to Jinty proved to be inspired. In consequence, it was not only researchers from all over the UK who wanted to give papers. So also did established scholars from abroad; in 1992–3, for instance, six distinguished speakers from the United States, Germany, Sweden, France and the Netherlands participated.

Numbers grew. The earliest attendance register I have seen dates from 1995–6. By then attendance was often 30-plus, with 20 or so regulars. Sometimes it seemed that every inch of space inside and just outside the Ecclesiastical History room was taken; on one occasion in October 1997 over 60 squeezed themselves in. All a far cry from the Institute's early days of few seminars and small numbers when the earliest annual reports listed the names of all the students who attended.

The list of convenors has grown longer: Brenda Bolton, Paul Fouracre, Alan Thacker, David Ganz, Guy Halsall, Sarah Lambert, Stephen Baxter, Alice Rio, Caroline Goodson, Peter Heath, Antonio Sennis, Alice Taylor, Hugh Kennedy, Julia Crick, Dionysios Statthakopoulos. A few (me included) have dropped out, but at present there are a good round dozen. Happily, today's convenors continue the old policy of inventing tradition slowly, while the effect of the underlying trend, itself a reflection of the seminar's growing reputation, has been to increase the range of subject matter and of contacts with the scholarly world near and far.

In 1994 a renowned ex-Oxford historian, in acknowledging their debt to a number of seminars and history societies in North America and India, as well as in the UK, included the following: 'One seminar above all has provided me with more than it is possible for me to acknowledge adequately: the convenors of the early medieval seminar at the IHR have made it combine friendliness with intellectual stimulus and rigour in a way I could never have imagined before I joined it'. Of course almost two decades have passed since those words were written, but to deserve them still remains the ambition.

The earlier middle ages seminar meets at the IHR on Wednesdays at 5.30pm.

Papers cover a wide range of topics. Recent titles include 'How to run your landed estate in 11th-century England' and 'Landholding and law in the early Islamic state'. Image shows the Umayyad Mosque, also known as the Great Mosque of Damascus, built between AD 705 and 715. © Waj / 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
15–19 April 2013/15–19 July 2013
Introduction to finding and using primary sources for research in archives, museums and online through an intensive programme of lectures and archival visits. Several repositories will be visited including the British Library, National Archives, Parliamentary Archives and Wellcome Library. Fee £225.

General historical skills
Freedom of information
10 April 2013
Taught by Andrew Flinn from UCL, this one-day workshop details the rights of the historian under FoI provisions, considers the theoretical implications of increased access and explains how to compose the most successful FoI requests. Fee £100.

Oral history spring school
25–27 April 2013
Held in association with the Oral History Society, the programme addresses memory, experience, representativeness and generalisability, the researcher’s habitus, re-use of recordings, outputs and impacts, and best practice in teaching oral history. Fee £200.

Local history summer school
25–27 June 2013
The school is open to all those who are keen to expand or update their skills in local history research. It will introduce the most up-to-date methods, sources and successful approaches to the subject through an exciting programme of lectures and workshops. This year’s theme is local history and the town. There will be two main strands: firstly we shall explore sources, looking at how best to find, obtain and interpret written and visual evidence in the archive and online and looking in depth at the spectacularly rich resources now to be found on the web. We then move on to techniques and themes, with sessions on a wide variety of local history topics and examples of the most innovative research and writing on towns and urban history in the UK. Fee £200.

Explanatory paradigms: an introduction to historical theory
Wednesday evenings, 8 May–17 July 2013
Critical introduction to current approaches to historical explanation. Each session examines a different explanatory approach, such as Marxism, gender analysis or postmodernism, equipping students to form their own judgements on the schools of thought most influential in the modern discipline. Fee £225.

Languages and palaeography
Further medieval and Renaissance Latin
Tuesdays, 23 April–25 June 2013
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 in its own right to students who have not taken the other parts but who 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 £225.

Information technology courses
Databases for historians
2–5 April 2013/4–7 June 2013
Four-day course introducing the theory and practice of constructing and using databases. Through a mixture of lectures and practical 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 techniques can be adapted to any package. Open to postgraduate students, lecturers and all who are interested in using databases in their historical research. Fee £225.

Databases for historians II: practical database tools
25–27 July 2013
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, the course aims to introduce 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 through the use of Microsoft Access. Familiarity with the basic concepts of database use is required: participants should be confident working with Microsoft Access and should have some knowledge of working with data tables and simple queries. Fee £180.

Internet sources for historical research
10 June 2013
Intensive introduction to using the internet as a tool for serious historical research. It includes sessions on academic mailing lists, gateways, search engines and other finding aids, and on effective searching using Boolean operators and compound search terms. Advice will be given on winnowing the useful matter from the vast mass of unsorted data available, and on the proper caution to be applied in making use of online information. Fee £100.

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).
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For details, telephone: 020 7862 8790
or visit www.history.ac.uk/materialities

82nd Anglo-American Conference of Historians: Food in History
11-12 July 2013, Senate House
From famine to feast, from grain riots to TV cookery programmes, dieting to domesticity, food features in almost every aspect of human societies since prehistoric times. At its annual summer conference in 2013 the Institute of Historical Research aims to showcase the best of current scholarly writing, research and debate on the subject.

Our plenary lecturers include Ken Albala, Susanne Freidberg, Cormac O’Grada and Steven Shapin. The conference will include a publishers’ book fair, policy forum, film screenings and a historic food recreation event. Bursaries will be available enabling postgraduate students to attend. For any queries, please visit www.history.ac.uk/aach13 or contact the IHR Events Office using the above email address or on 0207 862 8756.

For further details, please visit www.history.ac.uk/aach13

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