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# THE HISTORIAN

# 1906

One hundred years of the Historical Association

# 2006



The  
Historical Association  
1906 - 2006

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Discoveries of a lifetime



1906 - 2006

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# Foreword



I am extremely happy to salute this glorious Centenary. For it so happens that I gave my first ever lecture to the Historical Association, following the publication of *Mary Queen of Scots* in 1969. The occasion took place in Glasgow and in the middle of it I received a revelation (I make so such claims for my audience). To begin with I had been transfixed with terror and I can still remember that I spoke much, much too fast, the beginner's error when she hopes that the hour of the lecture will be over as quickly as possible for all parties concerned. Then in the middle of rattling away about Mary Queen of Scots and the Historians, I realised that the audience was not *the enemy* but *my friends*. What united us was a common love of

history – in my opinion the greatest and most rewarding professional passion that one can have.

Having begun my career as a lecturer at a particular branch of the Historical Association, and continued it over the years to others, it was therefore with enormous pleasure that I received the award of the whole Association in 2000 – the Norton Medlicott Medal – when I lectured on the value of biography to history. The wheel had come full circle: well, not quite, since I have published another historical biography since then and yet another – my ninth full length historical work – appears in August 2006. So the wheel are, as it were, still turning.

My own love of history was ignited by a combination of things. First there was the good fortune of being an exceptionally early reader so that I could plunge into *Our Island Story* for myself when I was four and a half: and however much the standards of society have changed in the hundred years since the book's creation, I shall remain forever grateful to its author Henrietta Elisabeth Marshall for being the first to excite me on the subject. After *Our Island Story* I have to say that *Black Beauty* seemed quite tame.

Early reading also meant that I could roam freely among the books

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in the Public Library at Oxford, where I was brought up. There I developed an amateur method of research, tracking my favourite historical characters from book to book and trying to make up my own mind when views differed. Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire was an early favourite after reading Marjorie Villiers' *Grand Whiggery* and after that I moved to the letters of her circle. I didn't always get the order right. Starting on Cardinal Newman, my next favourite, I was inspired by the essay of the brilliant, teasing Lytton Strachey on Manning in which Newman features as in effect the hero. It was only after that that I moved to the stout late Victorian volumes on Manning by E.S. Purcell which Lytton Strachey boasted of replacing with a new, less stuffy historical style.

This is not to ignore the place of historical fiction in igniting the youthful imagination: the recent article by Dr Stephen Collis in *The Historian* on 'the world of Harrison Ainsworth' reminded me of the thrill of devouring Old St Paul's (my favourite – oh, the piteous fate of the lovely Amabell!). Nor should I forget the pleasure of reading Margaret Irwin as a teenager: *The Bride* still lingers somewhere in my mind when I think of Montrose. It is just that from the first I found *real* history – a dangerous term perhaps but members of the Historical Association will know what I mean – even more exciting.

So far history had been a private pleasure, especially since both my parents, Frank and Elizabeth Longford, were by education classicists, and during my youth their chosen profession was politics (my mother became a distinguished historical biographer but by the time her formative *Victoria R.I.* appeared I was in my mid thirties with my own large family). But it is now that I must acknowledge the other great

influence, one peculiarly appropriate to the Centenary of the Historical Association, that of my teachers at various stages of my 'historical' development.

For example Mother Mercedes Lawler I.B.V.M. 'sort of blew in from Ireland' according to the official history of my school St Mary's Convent, Ascot. Whatever her credentials, she was an inspired teacher of history because she loved

it so much; from Mother Mercedes I derived a passion for the Empress Maria Theresa which was eventually resolved in my biography of her daughter Marie Antoinette half a century later. I was also fascinated by the founder of the order – the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – named Mary Ward, born in 1585 and an ardent believer in the education of women; that was an interest which found its place in my study of Woman's Lot in Seventeenth Century England, *The Weaker Vessel*. Among the sayings of Mary Ward was this one, dated about 1618, which particularly impressed me and which I have tried to bear in mind ever since: 'It is not learning that I commend to you but knowledge, true knowledge which you may all have if you love and seek it.'

My teachers at Oxford in the early fifties included Karl Leyser and Anne Whiteman. Karl as a tutor, on Mediaeval Germany, was an original, near incomprehensible genius so far as I was concerned but at all times warm-hearted and forgiving of those of lesser standards. I can still remember my

embarrassment thirty years later at finding he had slipped secretly into a lecture I gave on Warrior Queens in Boston, where he was a visiting Professor; how he shook his head afterwards, sadly but sweetly, at my errors of interpretation over Matilda of Tuscany. Anne Whiteman was genial and generous, combining a zest for history with a love of the novels of Anthony Powell and good claret; we remained friends to the end of her life. These two certainly

What united us was a common love of history; in my opinion the greatest and most rewarding professional passion that one can have.

shared the conviction that anyone can have 'true knowledge... if you love and seek it'.

As to the books of the great historians of the past, I began with Gibbon, Macaulay and Carlyle, who never made the mistake of thinking that the style of Dryasdust made good history better. It would be otiose as well as impossible to select from among the living, especially in the category of historical biographers since I don't think I have ever read a historical biography without deriving some pleasure and profit from it. So I shall select arbitrarily three books, works of history rather than straightforward biography, which made me look at the historical world in a different way: Garrett Mattingly's *Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (1959); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971); and Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation* (1992). Inspired by them and many, many others, I toast the Historical Association in its hundred-year quest for 'true knowledge' done with love.

Lady Antonia Fraser

# Swanning around

— JEREMY PATERSON

Swan Hellenic  
cruise into  
history.

It does not get much better than this. I am standing on the bridge of the ship, *Minerva II*, as it noses its way out of the Black Sea and into the Bosphorus. On this fine morning my task is to provide a commentary for the Swan Hellenic passengers who are thronging the rails of the ship as we head for Istanbul. Yes, we are 'sailing to Byzantium' – a cue for a couple of lines from Yeats:

And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

But there is scarcely time for that because we are already passing the 'Clashing Rocks' and I need to talk of the myth of Jason and the Argonauts. For that matter, I should also mention the origins of the name, Bosphorus, 'The Cow's Ford' in Greek: how Io, one of Zeus' many lovers, was disguised by him as a white heifer to avoid the attentions of his jealous wife, Hera, who as usual was not so easily fooled and sent a gadfly to pursue Io who was forced to swim the strait to escape.

By now, it is possible to see the characteristic *yalısi*, the traditional painted wooden houses, which line the Bosphorus. These were the summer homes of the Ottoman elite of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. After years of neglect and abandonment, many are being restored as retreats for the new wealthy of Istanbul.

The strait stretches out before us – the moment to mention that brilliant description of the Bosphorus by Petrus Gyllius, as 'the single key that locks and unlocks two worlds and two seas'. By now we are passing under the most recent of the bridges over the strait, the Fatih Mehmet Bridge. Somewhere hereabouts was the bridge of boats constructed to enable the Persian king, Darius, to cross with his army on the way up into Scythia. The constant traffic across the bridge is a reminder that behind the green hills lies the extraordinary disorganised expansion of modern Istanbul, the result of one of the largest movements of people in Europe since the end of the Second World War, from the Turkish countryside to the great city.

Beyond the bridge it is time to point out the two great fortresses, one in Europe, the other in Asia, constructed by the Ottomans before the assault on Constantinople by Mehmet II.

Up among the trees to the right appear the red roofs of Robert College, the first American College outside the USA, founded in 1863 by the educationalist, Cyrus Hamlin, and the philanthropist, Christopher Rheinlander Robert, who had met during the Crimean War. It is now the University of the Bosphorus.

After we have slipped under the second Bosphorus Bridge, mention of the Crimean War leads me to turn people's gaze towards the district of Üsküdar, Scutari, on the Asian side, and to the great Selimiye Barracks, the base of the Janissaries, used by Florence Nightingale as a hospital.



*Minerva II* from Delos



Sailing down the Bosphorus – the Ottoman fortress of Rumeli Hisar.

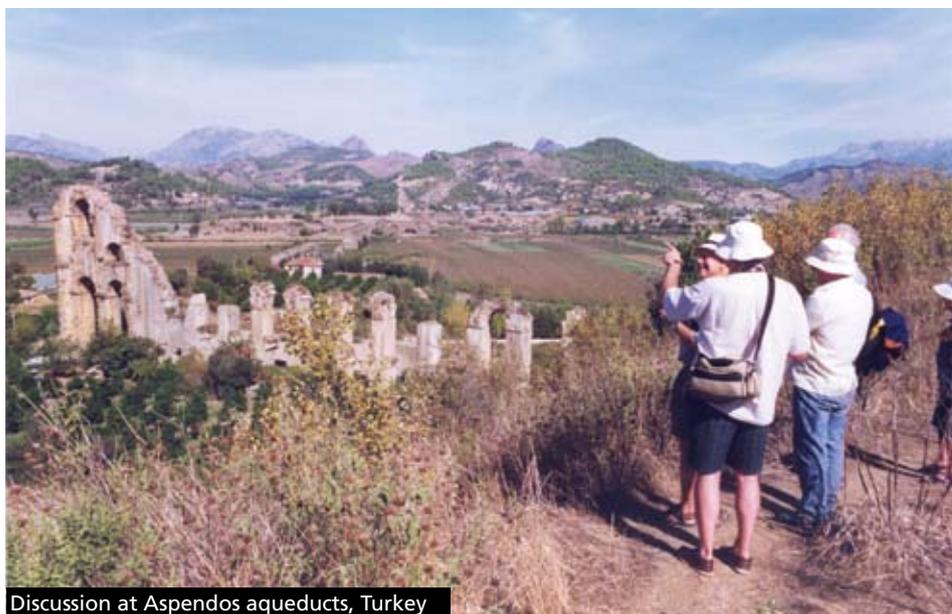
Finally *Minerva II* moors just outside the Golden Horn and turns into a grandstand for the spectacular views of Constantinople across the water from the gardens of the Topkapı Palace to the extraordinary blancmange mould that is the Süleyman Mosque on the Third Hill. So much history, so much to describe. No, it doesn't get much better than this, unless it is sailing into Venice as the early morning mist rises from the lagoon, or running in to the spectacular anchorage that leads to Mahon on Minorca, so long a key naval base, or...

So it is a hard life for an ancient historian as one of the guest speakers on Swan Hellenic. 'Why do they never want chemistry talks?' an envious colleague once asked. Swan Hellenic is a special form of what has become one of the key social features of our age, cultural tourism. Sea cruises have many pleasures in their own right, not least that you book into your room and find that the scenery changes outside your window at regular intervals without you having to move or pack and unpack. But so many people, while seeking relaxation, also want the mental stimulus that comes with finding out about the places visited, understanding the layers of history of the regions travelled through.

It was just over 50 years ago that the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies approached Ken Swan and his father about the idea of a cruise through the world of Classical Greece. Ken's father, W.F. Swan, had been at the heart of the two key periods of growth for the holiday travel industry – between the two world wars and then in the years after the Second World War as increasing numbers of people from Britain rediscovered the opportunity to travel abroad. W.F. Swan had once been the personal secretary of Sir Henry Lunn (1859-1939), a Methodist committed to the belief that travel broadens the mind and a pioneer in the travel industry (founder of what became Lunn Poly). Lunn's son, Arnold, an old Harrovian, was to be a key figure in popularizing Swiss skiing holidays. W.F. Swan's business developed after the First World War and included ferrying relatives of the fallen to visit their graves in Northern France. Ken joined the business straight from school in 1935 and after the Second World War became a partner to his father.

Ken saw a significant opportunity in the request from the Hellenic Society and in 1954 chartered the Greek ship, *Miaoulis*, for the first trip. I was lucky enough to be a speaker on the 50th Anniversary

cruise from Venice which followed some of the itinerary of that original trip. However, it was in 1955, this time aboard the *Aegaeon*, that the characteristic format for Swan Hellenic cruises was set. One key to this was Ken's recruitment of Sir Mortimer Wheeler to arrange the programme and the guest speakers. Wheeler at the time was at the height of his fame. He had played a central role in the development of British archaeology between the wars, with excavations at Maiden Castle and the Roman town of Verulamium, and had founded and directed the Institute of Archaeology in London. After the war he had overseen the development of archaeology in both India and Pakistan. He received his knighthood in 1952. He was committed to bringing an understanding of archaeology to a wider audience. Perhaps his most famous contribution was as a colourful panellist on the hugely popular television show, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* which first appeared in 1952. The idea of the Swan cruise fitted in with his thinking about popularizing his subject. Wheeler himself was a guest speaker on the first cruise along with four other speakers he had recruited. The presence of multiple guest experts was to remain one of the most distinctive features of Swan's approach to cruising. That 1955



Discussion at Aspendos aqueducts, Turkey

cruise cost its 268 passengers 80 guineas each and took them from Venice to Greece and up to Istanbul.

### Cultural Cruising

The Swan Hellenic approach to ‘cultural cruising’ was popular from the start. Swan has always enjoyed one of the highest rates of repeat bookings in the cruise industry. So generations of travellers will reminisce about life aboard the *Ankara*, Swan Hellenic’s ship from the late 1950s to the 1970s, where many of the passengers were housed in large, separate male and female dormitories. The longest serving ship was the *Orpheus*, chartered from Epirotiki Lines from the 1970s to the mid 1990s. She had originally been built for the Liverpool-Dublin overnight service. *Orpheus* was the subject of particular affection of many travellers, despite the fact that it did not have anything like the comfort and luxury of the ships that succeeded it in the last decade, *Minerva* and *Minerva II*.

One of the pleasures of being a speaker on a Swan’s cruise is the company of the three or four other speakers on board. These are drawn from an increasingly wide range of experts. For the Classical world of the Mediterranean, which was the heart of Swan’s operations until the new world-wide focus of recent years, there would normally be a Classicist, often an historian of a more recent period, and an expert on art and architecture. These days they are frequently joined by marine biologists, botanists, ornithologists, and practising artists. There are also two special groups of speakers. Swan has a strong line in ex-ambassadors and diplomats, who provide authoritative and occasionally indiscreet insights into the recent history of the countries visited. If you are a polymath senior clergyman, you are also likely to be in demand because you can combine your speaking duties with leading the Sunday service. I have always learned a lot from my colleagues. I remember listening to a leading military historian as we sailed to the Ukraine. His account of the staggering figures for the losses, both military and civilian, in this region during the Second World War, set in context a visit to a quiet tree-lined memorial in the outskirts of Odessa.

However, the real surprises and pleasures are frequently provided by the passengers themselves. Indeed, I have suggested that Swan’s should provide a forum for the passengers whose knowledge often exceeds that of the guest speakers. There was the quiet gentleman at the Levadia Palace in Yalta, who was paying a return visit. On the

first occasion he had been Churchill’s driver at the Yalta Conference. Just before the Athens Olympics and in preparation for a visit to Olympia, I gave a talk on the history of the Olympics. I ended by mentioning Robert Dover’s creation in the early seventeenth century of the Cotswold Olympicks at Chipping Campden (complete with an event for shin-kicking!) and the Much Wenlock Olympian Society founded by William Penny Brookes in 1850, which directly influenced Baron de Coubertin in his ideas for the modern Olympic movement. Only after the talk did I encounter two travellers heavily involved in the Cotswold Olympicks today, and two more from Much Wenlock. Once, while talking about Sir Arthur Evans, the excavator of Knossos in Crete, I mentioned the house, Youlbury on Boar’s Hill, Oxford, which Evans had built with its Minotaur and labyrinth design on its entrance floor – almost certainly modelled on Schliemann’s Athenian mansion, ‘The Palace of Ilion’, which Evans had visited. Youlbury no longer exists. However, I was besieged after the lecture by people who in their childhood had known the house, had camped in its grounds (Evans was a great supporter of the Scout Movement), or had been invited to tea. While standing on the hill of the Greek city of Aspendos in Southern Turkey, I tried (clearly inadequately) to describe the complex workings of the magnificent aqueduct of the Roman period which strides across to the city from the surrounding hills. This has recently been the subject of a major research report. However, among my audience on that day were no fewer than three civil engineers, all of whom disagreed with me, but differed among themselves on the correct interpretation. By evening two different schemes complete with the mathematics and detailed sketches had been presented to my cabin. Not only that, on the site our excellent Turkish guide had joined in



# Swanning around

the discussion with an astonishingly detailed knowledge of the problems of the flow of water through closed pipes. It emerged that he was a doctor who had researched the flow of blood through artificial heart valves; with the state of pay in the Turkish health service, it was worth his while to take several months of each year to act as a guide. A most poignant memory, however, is of the beautiful small British War Cemetery at the head of Souda Bay in Crete, the vital natural harbour on the North Coast which played such an important role in the defence of Crete during the Second World War. Here a gentleman asked me if I had just a moment and took me to a grave underneath the trees and simply pointed at the headstone and said, 'I hope you don't mind, Jeremy, but I just had to tell someone. He was my best mate and this is the first time I have been back here.'

Encounters and experiences like these go some way to replying to the inevitable criticism that this sort of tourism insulates people from the 'real' world of the countries visited. Of course, in a sense this is true. We return each evening to the country-house comfort of *Minerva II's* public rooms and bars. However, Swan Hellenic spend more time in port than most other cruise lines providing a selection of tailor made excursions at each port of call (included in the fare). As the Guest Speakers have personally experienced many of the places on each itinerary they provide in depth insight to the destinations enabling passengers to gain a greater understanding of each place. We may have strolled from *Minerva II's* berth for an evening walk through the splendid rebuilding of central Beirut; we may even have seen the apartment blocks along the Green Line which were still pockmarked with shell holes from the civil war, but we did not venture to Sabra and Chatila, the sites of the massacres of Palestinians.

(From top to bottom)  
Part of the mile long Roman colonnaded avenue at Apamea, Syria  
Süleyman Mosque, Istanbul  
Jeremy's talk on site at Lepcis Magna, Libya  
Marqab Crusader Castle, Syria  
Arriving at Venice

A Swan's cruise provides an excellent taster to a place or country. Even if the stay in any one place is short, a regional perspective is provided by the insight of the Guest Speakers, the local tour guides on the excursions and the information in the cruise book (unique for each itinerary). Just a couple of days in Syria may take you from the atmospheric Phoenician/Persian religious site of Amrit to the breathtaking main street of Roman Apamea with its columns stretching across the plateau over the Orontes, and to the brooding black basalt crusader castle of Qalaat Marqab (for me so much more atmospheric than the more famous and dramatic Krak des Chevaliers).

In the 1980s Swan Hellenic merged with P&O cruises, which in its turn in 2003 became part of Carnival, one of the largest cruise businesses in the world. Ken Swan stayed on as President and, until very near the end of his life, he and his wife Marion were regular passengers on Swan's. Ken died in 2005; he had been awarded the OBE for his contribution to the travel industry. It remains to be seen whether the very special type of cruising which he developed so successfully can survive in the sharply competitive world of tourism today.

Jeremy Paterson is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at Newcastle University, an expert on the ancient wine trade. He lectures and broadcasts on Roman history and has been a regular guest speaker on Swan's cruises.

All images courtesy of Anne Paterson



# A Parade of Past Presidents 1906-82

— DONALD READ

A past  
President  
takes stock  
of his  
predecessors.

Past-presidents – those still living – are yesterday’s people, or even the day-before-yesterday’s people. They should therefore be wary of speaking out of turn. And yet they retain one qualification long after they have left office – they know about the work of the president. This means that they are likely to have opinions about the contributions made by their predecessors and successors in office. Not that they often express such opinions. But the Centenary of the Historical Association provides an appropriate opportunity for one of them to look back to the first twenty-five presidents – those who are now dead. Their time in office – from 1906 to 1982 – happens conveniently to cover the first three-quarters of the Association’s history.

In 1956, the story of the Historical Association since its foundation in 1906 was told in a 56-page booklet compiled by the HA itself. It was introduced by the then president, Professor Herbert Butterfield, whose hand can be detected in the text. The longest-living president, Dr. G.P.Gooch, contributed a page of pithy comments upon his predecessors and successors. The booklet opens by discussing the acceptance from the turn of the nineteenth century of history as a discipline in its own right at the universities, notably at Oxford and Cambridge but also at the ‘newer universities’. By 1906 the obvious next step was to bring greater sophistication into the teaching of history in schools. One historian of education was later to assure an HA audience that little in the popular skit, *1066 and All That*, first published in 1930, would have raised a laugh a generation earlier: ‘it is a true documentary’.

The Historical Association can take much of the credit for the steady improvement in the teaching of history in schools in England and Wales during the years before and after the First World War. And at the same time the Association was setting out to attract those with a non-professional interest in history, those many general readers who had (or had not) studied history at school and university and who wished to keep up with their subject. Indeed, the Association has always been careful to avoid acting exclusively as a schoolteachers’ organisation, and it is no paradox that this has made it better able to represent teachers’ interests. If the HA ever ceased to be ‘the Voice for History’ in all its dimensions it would be less influential. Through its respected journal *History*, through its many pamphlets, through its revision schools, through its conferences, through its tours, and via its widespread branch network, the Historical Association has served this mixed membership for a hundred years.

The first president 1906-10 was C.H.FIRTH (1857-1936). Firth’s period of special interest was the Stuarts. Another Stuart historian, John Kenyon, was to complain in *The History Men* (1983) that after Firth’s appointment to the Regius Chair at Oxford in 1904 he (quote) ‘degenerated into an academic statesman’, becoming too much

# The Founding Fathers (and one mother)



C.H. FIRTH (1857-1936)  
President of the  
Historical Association 1906-10, 1918-20



T.F. TOUT (1855-1929)  
President of the Historical Association 1910-12



A.F. POLLARD (1869-1948)  
President of the Historical Association 1912-15



ALICE STOPFORD GREEN (1847-1929)  
President of the  
Historical Association 1915-18



A.J. GRANT (1862-1948)  
President of the Historical Association 1920-23



G.P. GOOCH (1873-1968)  
President of the Historical Association 1923-26



A.G. LITTLE (1863-1945)  
President of the Historical Association 1926-29



C.H.K. MARTEN (1872-1948)  
President of the Historical Association 1929-32



W.J. HARTE (1866-1954)  
President of the Historical Association 1932-36

involved with various public bodies, including the HA. Certainly, Firth published only one major book thereafter. He was a member of the Sheffield steel family whose name appeared on cutlery, and this meant that he was well-off. His Yorkshire origins were said to have shown themselves in what the 1956 HA booklet described as his 'dry humour, his contempt for pretentious and fine writing, his unconcealed impatience in the presence of conceited mediocrity'. Firth's Yorkshire obstinacy while serving as Regius Professor caused him to quarrel with most of the Oxford college history tutors. Nonetheless, the fact that he held the senior history chair in the kingdom undoubtedly helped the launch of the HA.

Firth had cut his teeth as a historical researcher on the original Victorian version of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB), which was then being compiled volume by volume. He contributed 222 entries to this great work. Similarly, his successor T.F.TOUT (1855-1929) – president 1910-12 – contributed 240 entries. Tout, a medievalist, made his national reputation from 1890 as Professor of History (initially, both 'Medieval' and 'Modern') at what became Manchester University. Tout's history school set new standards, first for undergraduate teaching and later for postgraduate work. Whereas Firth was an indifferent speaker to large audiences, Tout was a fine lecturer, able to talk without notes.

Tout recognised the need for more and better history textbooks, and himself wrote the volume covering the years 1216-1377 for a new Longmans Political History of England series, while his successor as president, A.F. POLLARD, contributed the late-Tudor volume. A rival Methuen series included Stuart and Hanoverian titles by two

later presidents, G.M. Trevelyan and Sir Charles Grant Robertson. A.L. Rowse, a leading historian of the next generation, called Tout 'lugubrious', using as evidence against him his six authoritative but indigestible volumes on medieval administrative history. In contrast, Gooch remembered him as 'the liveliest of men,' with a charming smile. Because he was full of positive ideas, Tout could be impatient; but those who understood him appreciated both his sound judgement and his underlying good nature. One of them summed him up by coining the bi-lingual quip: 'Tout comprendre c'est Tout pardonner.'

By 1906 Tout was on the brink of starting a history group in Manchester, but when he heard of plans in London for the creation of a national body he readily offered his support. Subject associations had recently been formed for geography, modern languages and classics; and Tout had concluded that 'historians should organise along with the rest'. He was here writing to A.F. POLLARD (1869-1948), who since 1903 had been Professor of Constitutional History in the University of London. Pollard was the driving force behind the London initiative to form a Historical Association for England and Wales. He pressed ahead even though, in response to his approaches, some leading historians had expressed little enthusiasm for a new body which would involve schoolteachers. They were sufficiently satisfied with the Royal Historical Society. Despite these doubts, the foundation meeting of the HA was called by Pollard at University College, London, on 19 May 1906. It was attended by 35 historians, teacher-trainers and secondary teachers. Firth took the chair.

Like Firth and Tout, Pollard had qualified as a researcher by writing

for the DNB. While serving as its assistant editor, he had contributed 426 entries. In 1956 Gooch recalled frankly that, although Pollard had possessed 'the keenest intellect' of all the presidents of the first half-century, he was not an easy personality. He had, Gooch admitted, 'a rather sharp tongue and as a reviewer he could be merciless.' He loved power and influence, and he was inclined to be jealous. He was greatly disappointed never to be offered the Chair of Modern History at Oxford. In 1921 he founded the Institute of Historical Research as a research centre within the University of London, and he became its first director. This was a central role which he greatly enjoyed.

Pollard served as the Historical Association's third president 1912-15. The article about him in the new 2004 Oxford edition of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) is by Professor Patrick Collinson. Collinson pays tribute to Pollard's work for the HA, adding graciously that it is 'hard to think of history without the Historical Association ... the association has always made an invaluable bridge between teachers of history in schools and universities'. In 1916 Pollard became editor of the quarterly journal *History*, when the HA took it over. He explained that it did not seek to compete with the loftily academic *English Historical Review*: 'Our position is less Olympic and our aim is to bring the gods into contact with those men and women who have to save historical truth from sterility by propaganda'. Pollard remained protective towards the HA for the rest of his life. Between the wars he took care to emphasise that, while open to all, it must remain detached even from supposedly good causes. It had, he thought, 'at times been almost persuaded to lend itself to Imperialist propaganda on one hand and League of Nations propaganda



# A Parade of Past Presidents

on the other'. In September 1940, at the height of the Battle of Britain, *History* carried a powerful article by a Glasgow professor, J.D. Mackie, on 'The Teaching of History and the War', which attacked those inter-war historians who had become bemused by the League.

## The first woman President

It has long been forgotten that the fourth president of the Historical Association – 1915-18 – was a woman. This was ALICE STOPFORD GREEN (1847-1929). Mrs. Green was a striking personality, well known in her own day as both a historian and an Irish nationalist. She was sufficiently important to be the subject in 1967 of a biography with the tempting title of *Alice Stopford Green, A Passionate Historian*, although the book does not mention the HA. Alice Stopford had been born into a family prominent in Irish history since the eighteenth century. In 1877 she had married J.R. Green, the popular Victorian historian, author of *A Short History of the English People*, whose research assistant she became. After his early death in 1883, she herself wrote a succession of books. Red-haired and vivacious, Mrs. Green was said to get on better with men than women. Her dinner parties attracted leading politicians, writers and civil servants to what Gooch later described as 'her hospitable home in Grosvenor Road'. Sidney and Beatrice Webb were Alice Green's friends and neighbours. Beatrice praised Alice's powers of intellect and expression, but also noted her one 'supremely feminine' weakness, 'the intensely personal aspect in which all things clothe themselves'.

In 1901 Mrs. Green's strong interest in African questions led her to become a co-founder of the African Society. In the new century she also began to write increasingly about Irish matters, historical, political and

cultural. She became an enthusiastic supporter of the Gaelic revival. An obituary notice by Gooch in *History* for July 1929 drew particular attention to her little book in the Home University Library series on *Irish Nationality* (1911). He believed that this book, starting far back in Irish history, had contributed 'to the making of the impetuous torrent of Sinn Fein', and that it still deserved to be read by those 'who desire to understand the feelings of a subject race'. Unlike her friend Roger Casement, Mrs. Green had hoped to achieve Home Rule, or (better still) dominion status, by constitutional means. She therefore condemned Casement's treasonable activities in Germany and Ireland following the outbreak of the First World War; but after the 1916 Dublin rising she campaigned unsuccessfully for his life to be spared. This included writing to the Prime Minister, Asquith, whom she knew personally. Most HA presidents would have thought such controversial political involvement inappropriate while in office; but not Mrs. Green. 'Her love of Ireland', recalled Gooch, 'was a passion and her eyes could flash in anger.' She reminded him of a flame, 'for she could scorch as well as warm and illuminate.' Yet she was a considerate hostess, and she would never have been chosen as president of the Historical Association if she had not been liked, or at least respected, by its (largely male) inner circle – even though she deliberately sat her guests on hard chairs after dinner, in the belief that this would encourage them to talk more readily.

HA membership dropped during the First World War, but after 1918 it was to more than double. By the mid-twenties there were well over 4000 members and 92 branches. The war had forced people to widen their historical horizons as they sought to find reasons for the catastrophe. Before 1914 one suspects that most members of the Historical

Association believed that London was still the centre of the world. They knew that the Royal Navy ruled the waves and that much of the map of the globe was painted British-Empire red. Significantly, however, at the HA's annual meeting in 1916 there was discussion about the need to promote the study of imperial and naval history. The meeting came in the middle of the war, and in the year of the Battle of Jutland; and such talk was really a sign of a new national unease, even though the discussion was presented as serving an educational purpose. After the First World War, the new realities of power meant that – in the words of *1066 and All That* – the United States had become 'top nation'. With despairing patriotism, this famous skit suggested that 'History is now at an end'. But Historical Association members knew otherwise.

## Between the wars

The post-war boom in HA membership continued through the presidency of A.J. GRANT (1862-1948). He was president 1920-23, after Firth had served a second term 1918-20, making him the longest-serving president. Although Grant held a first-class degree from Cambridge, he had to spend the first fourteen years of his career from 1883 not in a single academic institution but as an extension lecturer. He quickly showed, however, that he was an outstanding teacher, able to adjust to every kind of audience. Indeed, Gooch called him 'one of the best lecturers I ever heard' as well as 'the gentlest and most modest of men'. Lloyd George (no less) once praised Grant's skill as a speaker. He spoke with disarming simplicity, both in manner and in arrangement of material. In 1897 he became Professor of Modern History and English Language and Literature – all in one! – at Leeds, which was not yet a separate university. He stayed there for the rest of his academic career until

1927. Sir Ernest Barker, a leading political philosopher and university administrator, and an external examiner at Leeds, remembered Grant as 'one of the last of the positivists, who made history a faith as well as a discipline'. He was pre-eminently a teacher, not a researcher. He once said modestly of himself that he had a sole talent: 'le talent de la vulgarisation'. Remarkably, Grant never contributed a single article to a learned journal. But his teaching skills included some notable textbook writing. The famous Grant and Temperley textbook, *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, was first published in 1927 and often revised. By combining considerable detail with clear comment, it served a whole generation outstandingly well. I bought my own copy as a sixth-former in 1948. Given his temperament and position, it is not surprising that from the start Grant was an active supporter of the Historical Association, both nationally and through its Leeds branch.

G.P. GOOCH (1873-1968) – president 1923-26 – was not a lifelong university academic. Instead, for seventy years he pursued a varied public career while writing a succession of scholarly books, mostly about European political and diplomatic history. Gooch was a Liberal MP in the 1906-10 parliament, making his maiden speech in support of old-age pensions. He was editor of the *Contemporary Review* for 49 years from 1911; president of the National Peace Council 1933-36; and president of the English Goethe Society. One of the contributors to Gooch's *Contemporary Review* was Virginia Woolf; and in her diary for 10 May 1926 she described him as 'a tall, pale mule, affable & long winded'. He was usually regarded as a follower of Lord Acton, because like Acton he was learned, liberal

and optimistic. Gooch's most-read book was *A History of Our Time*, first published in the Home University Library in 1911 and revised in February 1914. He there argued that the danger of war was receding because of the 'gradual triumph of reason' in international relations. 'We can now look forward', claimed Gooch, only months before the outbreak of the First World War, 'with something like confidence to the time when war between civilised nations will be considered as antiquated as the duel.' At the time of the Sarajevo assassination on 28 June he was in the grip of a nervous breakdown caused by overwork. After the war, he remained an optimist, and he was one of the inter-war historians enthusiastic about the League of Nations and sympathetic towards Germany. He concluded that before 1914 the German government and people had no more wanted war than their British counterparts; both sides were the victims of 'international anarchy'. Right or wrong, Gooch's interpretation came to be based upon extensive evidence, for from the mid-twenties he was joint editor of the 11 volumes of *British Documents on the Origins of the War*. He accepted this important official work on the understanding that he would be allowed a free hand in the selection of material.

Gooch's long-windedness had one particular effect. For nearly forty years he was president of the Central London branch of the HA; and Herbert Butterfield, a later national president, recalled how 'countless historians of Great Britain heard him, as chairman, deliver their own lecture before they were allowed to speak'. In terms of honours, Gooch stands out as the HA's most distinguished president, appointed a Companion of Honour in 1939 and joining the Order of Merit in 1963.

A.G. LITTLE (1863-1945) was president 1926-29. Gooch wrote

of his successor that he was 'a master of dry humour', who 'never displayed much interest in the modern centuries'. This seems to hint that Little was limited in his view of history, choosing to be largely 'the oracle of Franciscan studies'. Certainly, he was only briefly a full-time university historian, preferring the life of a private scholar. But he was active in outside bodies, including the HA. He was second chairman of its publications committee, which was an important role, and he became first editor of the HA's *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature*. He also encouraged the study of local history. In a presidential letter to *The Times* of 2 March 1928 Little argued that local history deserved special attention, 'not merely because old landmarks, old customs, and ways of thought are passing away and should be recorded, but still more because the general trend of modern life is loosening our connection with the past'. An HA committee for local history had been started in 1925. Little's *ODNB* entry does not intend to provoke a smile when it says of him that 'from Sevenoaks he exerted a quiet and continuous influence which penetrated far'.

C.H.K. MARTEN (1872-1948) was the first schoolmaster president 1929-32, and he often said how proud he was to be the first. Yet it has to be admitted that he was a schoolmaster with a difference – for his school was Eton. Still, his textbook on *The Groundwork of British History* (1912), written with G. Townsend Warner from Harrow, has been described by the *ODNB* as 'one of the most used textbooks of the first half of the twentieth century'. The Association's 1956 booklet waxes particularly enthusiastic about Marten, praising his 'intense and infectious fervour, combined with great urbanity and an almost cherubic charm'. All this made him a great favourite as



'His Majesty King George VI conferring a knighthood on Sir Marten', by Richard Eurich, oil on canvas, 1945-6. Reproduced with the permission of The Provost & Fellows of Eton College

a branch lecturer, for as soon as he entered a room he generated enthusiasm. He had attended the foundation meeting in 1906, and he served on the editorial board of *History* from 1917 to 1946. His reputation as a teacher – plus Eton's proximity to Windsor Castle – recommended him at the highest level. In 1938 he was appointed history tutor to Princess Elizabeth, and in 1945 he was knighted by the King on the steps of Eton College chapel.

Princess Marie Louise, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, writes in her memoirs about a wartime royal family dinner-party in Windsor Castle at which she had reminisced lengthily about her younger days. At the end she had felt bound to apologise to the teenage Princess Elizabeth. 'But, Cousin Louie,' responded the princess, 'it's *history*, and therefore so thrilling'. Perhaps therefore the charming Marten had made some impression upon his royal pupil. In a newspaper article published at the time of the

princess's marriage (*Daily Telegraph*, 19 November 1947) he briefly outlined what he had taught her. He had told her that the monarchy stood second only to the papacy in its antiquity, and that it had survived for so long largely because of its capacity to adapt to changing times. In this connection, he had presumably shown how Charles I's obstinacy had cost him both his throne and his life, and that his execution in 1649 had temporarily marked the end of the monarchy. But did the princess's urbane tutor ever admit that his own direct ancestor and namesake, Sir Henry Marten (1562-1641), had been a prominent judge under the doomed King, and that this Sir Henry's son, also called Henry, had been one of the most committed regicides in 1649?

W.J. HARTE (1866-1954) was president 1932-36. His presidency followed soon after his retirement from the Chair of History at the University College of the South-West. Walter Harte had held this chair at Exeter for thirty years. He

had attended the HA's foundation meeting in 1906, and during four decades he exercised a steady influence within the HA, drawing people together by his friendliness, and urging from the first that the Association should include not only teachers but all who were interested in history. In particular, Harte promoted the cause of history in the West Country, where he immediately formed the Exeter branch as a focal point. He was especially interested in the study of local history, and in 1951 a local lecture series was started in his name. However, he was light on publications, and he was to leave little trace nationally. In 1937-38 he was president of the Devonshire Association, and at his death its *Transactions* summed him up frankly: 'He was not a profound scholar, but his personal quality won him the confidence and friendship of the leading historical scholars

of his day'. In other words, it may sometimes be more useful to know historians than to know history!

F.J.C. HEARNSHAW (1869-1946) was president 1936-38. He had earned himself the disapproval of Gooch, even though they had been friends since their Cambridge days. 'I used to call him "the schoolmaster"', wrote Gooch in 1956, 'for he became increasingly authoritarian in his views, and in his later years he was more of a publicist than an academic historian.' Both charges were unfortunately true, even though from 1912 Hearnshaw was Professor of Medieval History at King's College in the University of London. Between the wars his name appeared year after year on a stream of books. Some of these he had written himself; but many were collections of essays by other people, edited by Hearnshaw after first being given as public lectures at King's College. One of his own books was on *Conservatism in England* (1933), where he recommended 'leaving predominant political control in the possession of those who are by descent, by character, by education, and by experience, best fitted to exercise it'. In the first months of the Second World War he wrote a propaganda piece called meaningfully *Germany the Aggressor Throughout the Ages*. The titles of Hearnshaw's many editions of essays often began with identical wording. For example, *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Thinkers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1926); or *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age* (1928). Such collections were certainly useful for teachers and students; but by giving so much time to this work Hearnshaw sacrificed his own scholarship. As Gooch made plain, this was not what the Historical Association wanted.

What then does the HA expect from its academic historians? The

answer must be that they have to strike a balance, making their scholarship understandable without over-simplifying its content. The HA's half-century booklet ends with rousing words – almost certainly written by Herbert Butterfield, the serving president – which spelt out this purpose:

as a great fellowship the Association has a national function to perform. It is particularly true that in days when specialization proceeds further and further so that the specialists are no longer able even to read one another, the Association has the supremely royal function of finding for all things their due proportion, and of guarding the quality and the status of 'general history'.

This call was right in 1956, and it remains so today.

### The Second World War

Sir Charles GRANT ROBERTSON (1869-1948) was president 1938-43, and again temporarily in 1945. He had been elected a Fellow of All Souls in 1893, and he retained this college base with great affection for the rest of his life. Although he never married, in his younger days he gained a reputation as a ladies' man. He even wrote a romantic novel, *Love, the Judge*, under a pseudonym. It was said that one virginal female don warned her charges always to visit male dons in pairs and Mr. Grant Robertson in threes. Nevertheless, he was an expert teacher of undergraduates, and in 1912 he was selected as history tutor to the Prince of Wales at Magdalen. Robertson's lectures were noted for their breadth, vigour and wealth of illustration. He became best known outside Oxford for his sourcebook, *Select Statutes, Cases and Documents to illustrate English constitutional history, 1660-1832* (1904), and for his Methuen textbook, *England*

*under the Hanoverians* (1911). Admittedly, after the publication in 1929 of Lewis Namier's *Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, the understanding of 'party' in the Hanoverian book began to seem outdated. I myself used *Select Statutes* as a set-book at Oxford after the Second World War. Grant Robertson's *Bismarck* (1918) was the first scholarly biography in English.

Between 1920 and 1938 Grant Robertson served successfully as principal and vice-chancellor of Birmingham University. He expanded the study of arts subjects and drew the city and the university closer together. Taking up the HA presidency in the year of 'Munich', it fell to Grant Robertson to oversee the war preparations at headquarters. In his 1928 Creighton lecture on *History and Citizenship* he had emphasised the historian's duty to the public, and the same sense of duty guided his presidency throughout the war years. A.L. Rowse, a younger colleague at All Souls, summed him up briskly many years later: 'Like me, Robertson was a bachelor and had no other love but the College. He did get forward with his career as Vice-Chancellor at Birmingham, where he did a fine job. But his writing was clotted with clichés: he wrote historical jargon.' Certainly, Grant Robertson was no great stylist, but his books were never less than useful. And his whole career as a teacher, writer and administrator was one of good purpose substantially achieved.

A.S. TURBERVILLE (1888-1945) was president during the last two years of his life 1943-45. He served from 1929 as Professor of Modern History at Leeds, where, like his predecessor, A.J. Grant, he was wide-ranging in his interests. But unlike Grant he engaged in original research. He published upon medieval heresy and the Spanish Inquisition, and upon the House of



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Lords in the eighteenth century. He is best remembered for the latter. He was a man of great charm, good with students and an eloquent lecturer. He was also a capable administrator, and for the HA he became a long-serving chairman of its publications committee 1931-43, where he promoted the writing of pamphlets on broad themes. Wartime pressures meant that his was necessarily a low-key presidency. On the other hand, during the war he travelled widely throughout the United Kingdom on official propaganda tours to talk to troops and civilians. The demands of this work were thought to have undermined his health, and he died in office just as the war was ending.

## Post war Presidents

G.M. TREVELYAN (1876-1962) – president 1946-49 – was a figurehead, not a conventional president, although he had attended the Association's foundation meeting in 1906. He only agreed to accept the presidency upon the understanding that he would not be involved in administration.

Trevelyan was Regius Professor at Cambridge 1927-40, and Master of Trinity 1940-51. He was appointed to the Order of Merit in 1930, the year in which he began publication of his masterpiece, the three-volume *England under Queen Anne*. Trevelyan was the best-known historian of his generation, especially after the appearance of his *English Social History* in 1944; and it was a great coup for the HA to secure him, even though he was not a good lecturer. His friend, A.L. Rowse, summed up Trevelyan well: 'His whole attitude to history', wrote Rowse, 'springs from the *general* point of view of a member of the old governing class, whose judgements came from proximity to government rather than from the specialist outlook of the historian.' Trevelyan wrote sensitively but from above, almost in a spirit of *noblesse oblige*. This spirit of *noblesse* drew him not

only to the Historical Association, but also to the National Trust, the Youth Hostels Association, and other bodies. Yet although he was ready to serve the history-reading public – inside and outside the HA – a remark made near the end of his *Social History* confirms Trevelyan's ruling-class attitude. He wrote there with some disdain (p.582) that the Victorian spread of mass education had 'produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading, an easy prey to sensations and cheap appeals'. Such people were of course never going to read Trevelyan's own books, nor to become members of the HA. But many people did join the Association at this period, for membership grew from under 5000 to over 8000 during the post-war years. I was myself one of this new generation. I bought Trevelyan's *History of England* and his *Social History* on the same day in 1948, and I was given life-membership of the HA as a twenty-first birthday present in 1951.

Sir FRANK STENTON (1880-1967) – president 1949-52 – was a distinguished medievalist, best known to non-specialists as the author of the Oxford History of England volume on *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943). This was that rare combination, both a textbook and a contribution to scholarship. Stenton was also a constructive administrator at Reading University, where he spent the whole of his academic career from 1908 to 1950, ending up as vice-chancellor. He played a major part in the transformation of Reading from a minor university college into a significant institution in its own right. At the same time, he gave much attention to outside bodies such as the HA. The *ODNB* speaks of his 'accumulated experience, great practical wisdom, and firm, incisive, but kindly, chairmanship'. In short, Stenton was a man of all-round

quality, outstanding as a scholar and notable as an administrator. As a lecturer, he used a minimum of notes, thereby allowing his enthusiasm, clarity and scholarship to give (in the unexpected words of the *ODNB*) 'an impression of controlled incandescence'. Rather ineptly, Stenton's *Times* obituary (18 September 1967) spoke of 'his energy, which seemed more outstanding in view of his small stature'.

W.N. MEDLICOTT (1900-87) – president 1952-5 – was unfairly disparaged by Rowse and others as a mediocrity, and Oxbridge always treated him as an outsider. The *ODNB* records that this was an unfairness about which Medlicott long felt sensitive. A graduate of University College, London, he spent the first two-thirds of his working life on the academic fringes – as a lecturer at University College, Swansea (1926-46), and then as Professor of History at the University College of the South-West (1946-53), which was not yet the University of Exeter. His long sterling work for the HA – including acting as wartime honorary secretary 1943-6, and being post-war chairman of its publications committee 1946-52 – was never likely to be noticed among the dreaming spires. At the same time, Medlicott was writing a two-volume official history of economic warfare (1952, 1959), which the *ODNB* recognises as his 'outstanding memorial'. His unexpected appointment in 1953, while president of the HA, to the Stevenson Chair in International History at the London School of Economics – in preference to A.J.P. Taylor from Oxford and E.H. Carr from Cambridge – provoked 'snide comments', as the *ODNB* observes. Despite these comments, he transformed the LSE's teaching of international history. Then from 1965 he worked in the Foreign Office as a model

editor of the inter-war series of *Documents on British Foreign Policy*. He was also editor of the Longmans History of England series, to which he himself contributed the final title on *Contemporary England*. Medlicott invited me to undertake the preceding volume, after he had been let down by an Oxford scholar. Meanwhile, the present HA president, Barry Coward, was writing the Stuart volume. Medlicott's 1967 festschrift accurately sums him up, as 'the complete professional', a scholar who distrusted flamboyance. When I knew him in old-age, he had become a figure of quiet achievement, but his academic career had been a harder climb than he deserved. Childless and a widower, he left his estate to the Association, a bequest which has proved to be a lifeline. In 1984 the HA named its Norton Medlicott Medal for service to history after him.

Medlicott was succeeded – 1955-58 – by HERBERT BUTTERFIELD (1900-79), successively Professor of Modern History at Cambridge (1944), Master of Peterhouse (1955), and Regius Professor (1963). Butterfield was born into a working-class West Riding family, and he retained a mildly Yorkshire accent throughout his life. He also continued faithful to his family's Methodism, serving in his early years as a lay preacher and remaining a teetotaler. But after entering Peterhouse in 1919, his life became centred upon Cambridge. Butterfield can be said to have shaped history in his very own way, for his best-known and most influential book was *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931). This argued that historians too readily link their presumptions about the past with the circumstances of the present, whereas their chief aim ought to be 'the elucidation of the unlikenesses between past and present'. Butterfield published much



Herbert Butterfield (second right) giving a prize at the North London branch of the HA.

further work about the idea and practice of history, but his British Academy obituary by Maurice Cowling of Peterhouse concludes that he was 'more persuasive negatively than he was positively'. Another Cambridge don, Noel Annan, noticed how at times Butterfield's 'Delphic ambiguity' baffled his readers. But perhaps they were impressed by being baffled, for Gooch remarked in 1956 that Butterfield's 'broadcasts and reflections on history have won him admiration beyond the limited circle of historical students'. He believed that history testifies to Christianity and that Christianity can interpret history. Not surprisingly, this was contentious. Professor John Cannon exclaimed in a 1984 HA pamphlet on *Teaching History at University* that Butterfield's approach 'seems to leave no role as an historian for a non-believer, or, indeed, for a non-Christian'.

Later in his career, Butterfield published two books on eighteenth-century British history, in which he refused to be overawed by Sir Lewis Namier's apparent domination of the field. When in 1957 Cambridge University awarded Namier an honorary degree, Butterfield refused

to receive him at Peterhouse. Against Namier's contention that George III had no ideas and no priorities, 'only a bundle of contradictions', Butterfield spoke up in *George III and the Historians* (1957) for 'the framework of ideas and conscious purposes which George III and everybody else possesses'. Unfortunately, Butterfield weakened his case by misquoting a key passage from Namier. Cannon's 1984 HA pamphlet calls Butterfield's commentary 'one of the most curious books of our time'. Personally, Butterfield could be engaging. Annan called him 'a Methodist with a twinkling eye, a fascinator'. These attributes served him well at HA branches.

R.F. TREHARNE (1901-67) – president 1958-61 – was Professor of History at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, from 1930. Although born in Merthyr Tydfil, his family soon moved north, and his *Times* obituary (4 July 1967) remarks that 'in the minds of his friends and colleagues, Treharne was always associated with Lancashire'. He had been a highly promising product of Tout's Manchester history school, appointed to its staff soon after taking his Ph.D. His book on



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*The Baronial Plan of Reform, 1258-1263*, was published by Manchester University Press to acclaim in 1932, with promise of a subsequent volume to follow. It never did follow, and an appreciation by Glanmor Williams – professor at Swansea and Treharne's former pupil – published by the HA after his death has to admit that 'he had not given himself the chance of writing the books of which he knew he was capable'. Students of what Treharne called 'the first deliberate and conscious political revolution in English history' had to settle for lectures and essays collected posthumously. The Association's journal, *History*, was likewise behindhand during Treharne's time as editor from 1947 to 1956, although this was a consequence of wartime difficulties. Treharne's particular contribution to the HA was as the founder-director of its annual revision schools, which he ran with great success at Aberystwyth for many years both before and after the Second World War. These brought members up-to-date with the latest research. However, Treharne's most enduring contribution to the sum of human happiness may lie in the 1957 film version of Kingsley Amis' comic novel, *Lucky Jim*. The novel and the film came out while Amis was a lecturer at Swansea, and someone there may have told him that Treharne liked to answer his office phone at Aberystwyth with the comprehensive greeting: 'History speaking'. Though often repeated down the years, this story may not be true. Moreover, even if true, Treharne was no doubt innocently speaking for his whole department, not arrogantly inflating himself. But, be that as it may, the film shows Amis's under-published history professor on the phone intoning the two words with total seriousness. The effect is side-splitting.

G.R. POTTER (1901-81) – president 1961-64 – was another historian

who never published as much as he had promised. He was president of the HA when I first joined the council in 1963. He made a good chairman, precise in manner. He was small in stature and academically bespectacled and, if judged by appearance, George Potter could have been the grandfather of the fictional Harry Potter. Or he could have featured as a Victorian professor in a novel by Trollope. I found him courteous, but very much the professor to a young lecturer. For most of his time at Sheffield from 1931 his title was Professor of Modern History ('Modern' starting in 476 AD); but by the time he retired he had become Professor of Medieval History. He refused to feel restricted by these qualifying adjectives, for he was a committed generalist, able to speak upon topics in European, British or local history from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. His readiness to offer a wide choice must have especially recommended him to HA branches. Although his lecturing voice was slightly mannered, his content was usually stimulating. His range qualified him not only to contribute to the *Cambridge Medieval History* but also to edit the first volume of the *New Cambridge Modern History*. His major book on Zwingli, leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, was published in retirement, and condensed into an HA pamphlet.

Very different from the rather prim George Potter was his successor GEOFFREY BARRACLOUGH (1908-84), who was President 1964-67. Both by date-of-birth and restless temperament Barraclough can be regarded as the first truly twentieth-century figure among the presidents. He was an individualist rather than a good committee man. Indeed, he called himself 'a lifelong rebel'. A.J.P. Taylor, who knew him from their schooldays, said that Barraclough 'often bit the hand that

fed him', which some might think was a case of the kettle calling the pot black. Barraclough's restlessness led him to marry three times and to return to his second wife. During the second half of his career he moved between a succession of universities on both sides of the Atlantic. Of course, he could have been a good president in spite of his unsettled private life. But he did not give the role sufficient attention, partly because during the period of his presidency he had to satisfy new teaching commitments in the United States. A further problem, as his *Times* obituary (31 December 1984) admitted, was that he always disliked 'academic organization and negotiation'. Undoubtedly, however, Barraclough's name won notice for the HA. He had first become known to a limited readership for his work in the rather forbidding field of medieval German history, being appointed Professor of Medieval History at Liverpool in 1945. But in mid-career he turned to linking past history with present-day problems, and this gained him a much wider public. Barraclough argued that the concentration of British professional historians upon the history of their own country and of western Europe, with some attention also paid to the United States, amounted to navel-gazing. Historians should be looking much more towards China, Japan, India and the wider world. His summing up was emphatic: 'The European age – the age which extended from 1492 to 1947 – is over.' Appropriately, in 1951 Barraclough became chairman of the HA's international committee. And in 1956 he moved from Liverpool to the Stevenson Chair of International Relations at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. But when in 1960 Barraclough proposed to Butterfield that Cambridge ought to establish a chair or lectureship in world history, Butterfield answered that it was too vast a theme ever to become a teaching subject.

Two years later Barraclough quit the Stevenson Chair. The year in which he was made president of the HA – 1964 – was also the year of the publication of his most popular book, *An Introduction to Contemporary History*.

### Merger with the Scottish HA

DENYS HAY (1915-94) was president 1967-70. He was Professor of Medieval History at Edinburgh 1954-80, and he came into the presidency as the result of the merger of the HA with the Scottish Historical Association. With devolution not yet in the reckoning, the merger was a success. This owed much to the personality of Hay himself, who was known throughout the academic world for his very high degree of geniality, which he combined with underlying integrity. I met just one person, among those who knew him well, who said that he had ever seen Hay's geniality shaken, and that was only in old-age. Given these personal qualities, it is unsurprising that Hay was a brilliant teacher, sympathetic but provocative. One student recalled how 'his lectures reminded me of a catherine wheel, shooting off sparks in different directions.' As editor of the *English Historical Review* (1958-65) he was helpful towards both contributors and readers, warning against narrowness. He told one HA audience: 'Articles are of interest to those who write them and to those who read them. I think that sometimes they are almost the same people.' In his own research Hay made important contributions to Renaissance studies, his most influential book being *The Italian Renaissance in its Historical Background* (1961). Two years later he presented on television a successful series about the Renaissance, in which he said that he had been attracted to the period 'largely because it has one foot in the Middle Ages and one in the modern world'. Hay edited the Longmans



Alec Myers taking a Seminar at The University of Liverpool, c.1969

History of Europe series, and himself contributed the volume on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Hay's successor, C.L. MOWAT (1911-70), died after only a few weeks in office. Charles Mowat – whose father had been Professor of Modern History at Bristol between the wars – was a quietly pleasant man of integrity and ability, who gained full recognition comparatively late. His integrity was demonstrated by his refusal to take the anti-Communist oath required of all academics in California during the early days of the Cold War. He had spent the first two-thirds of his career in the United States, ending up as Professor of British History at Chicago. In 1958 he returned to Britain to the Chair of History at University College, Bangor. He is best-remembered for his detailed but readable overview of *Britain between the Wars*, first published in 1954 and of lasting value. He also edited the second edition of the concluding volume of the *New*

*Cambridge Modern History*. He asked in his introduction: 'Is this the last chapter of modern history or the first chapter of world history?' In narrower focus, he was an enthusiast for railway history and train-spotting.

After Mowat's unexpected death, Alexander TAYLOR MILNE (1906-94) – widely known as 'Jock' – took over as president 1970-73. He did so with characteristic competence and with characteristic friendliness. Perhaps in normal circumstances he would never have become president; but he had been an HA stalwart for many years, already commended in the 1956 booklet for his 'multiple activities'. He was not a conventional academic, but a bureaucrat par excellence – secretary and librarian at the Institute of Historical Research 1946-71. He had spent his undergraduate years as one of Pollard's pupils at nearby University College. Until the numbers arriving at the Institute became too many, Taylor Milne



# A Parade of Past Presidents

liked to welcome all postgraduates personally. He provided them with background information, written introductions, and a tour of the library. As part of this ritual, he might ask a newcomer to identify a large photograph in the common room of the great man himself – Pollard. Taylor Milne was busy outside as well as inside the Institute. He lectured not only for the HA but also for London University's extramural department, the Workers' Educational Association, and other bodies. Given that by nature he was the opposite of dryasdust, it is perhaps surprising that his own specialism was bibliography and editing. He produced a succession of valuable bibliographic aids to historical scholarship, and he edited two substantial volumes of Jeremy Bentham's correspondence. A keen sportsman, he played croquet until the very last day of his long life.

There was more to A.R. MYERS (1912-80) – president 1973-76 – than met the eye, for Alec looked as though he could be taken advantage of. He presented what a Liverpool University colleague has fairly called 'a curious mixture of self-confidence and humility'. This meant that he ran the risk of being undervalued, both as a personality and as a scholar. Before he became president I myself certainly underrated him. At one HA council meeting soon after he took over, I expressed some surprise to my neighbour, Medlicott, at the effective way Myers was chairing the meeting. Medlicott made it plain in a stern whisper that I should not have been surprised. Boyhood misfortune had played a part in making Alec Myers the man he was. His father had been blinded by a sniper's bullet in the First World War and this meant that, while Alec was growing up, the family found itself unexpectedly poor. He was still able to attend a good school, Huddersfield College, but he was unable to take up the place to read

history which he had gained at Oxford. This was something which Myers never forgot. Instead of going to Oxford, he won a scholarship to Manchester University, where in 1934 he took a first in history. In the following year he joined the medieval history staff at Liverpool. He climbed the ladder of promotion only slowly, taking twenty years – including a period of dangerous wartime service in the navy – to become a senior lecturer. However, when in 1956 Geoffrey Barraclough resigned from the Chair of Medieval History, Myers had hopes of succeeding him. Instead, the appointment went to 29-year-old Christopher Brooke, who was the silver-spoon candidate from Cambridge. Here was another of life's disappointments which Myers duly bore, giving Brooke his loyal support. He had to wait another eleven years before he was finally appointed to the chair, after Brooke had moved on. Such acceptance of adversity owed much to Myers's deep Christian commitment. For more than forty years he was an active member of the Anglican community on the Wirral where, in the words of his *Times* obituary (9 July 1980), he lived out his life 'exemplifying Christian ideals'.

Myers became recognised at Liverpool for his care as a teacher, administrator and scholar. Not so obvious was his political awareness. For example, his lobbying within local government and university circles in support of the launch of *VCH Cheshire* was highly successful. His main research was into the constitutional and administrative history of later-medieval England. He became best-known for his brief account of that period in the Pelican History of England series. This paperback, first published in 1952, was still in print at his death. His last book, *Parliament and Estates in Europe to 1789* (1975), showed that he could range

beyond England. Nevertheless, his *Times* obituary was to remark ambiguously that: 'his scholarship brought recognition, though perhaps it tended to be undervalued'. There was nothing ambiguous, however, about Myers's commitment to the Historical Association. This was touchingly demonstrated by the way he said farewell to it. When he was terminally ill, he came to what he knew would be his last meeting of council, and at the end he walked round to shake each member (including myself) by the hand. Here was moving evidence that his unusual combination of humility and self-confidence was more a strength than a weakness.

The next president, 1976-9, was H.R. LOYN (1922-2000). Henry was a Cardiff graduate, and he spent most of his academic life there, rising to become Professor of Medieval History. Then from 1977 he finished up strongly as Professor of History at Westfield College in the University of London. His personal presence made it very difficult to differ from Henry. He was tall, with smiling eyes beneath flourishing dark eyebrows, and a soothing mildly Welsh voice. Everyone liked him. Fortunately, his persuasiveness was allied to calm good judgment. The best-known of his many books was on *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest* (1962), written in the Stenton tradition. He spent a lifetime lecturing for the Association, never liking to decline an invitation. His illustrated lecture on the Bayeux tapestry was a particular favourite with branches. I once heard him keep this lecture going even when the projector was chewing up his slides. In 1986 he lectured some forty times upon the Domesday Book, in the year of its nine-hundredth anniversary. In the same year he was awarded the HA's Medlicott Medal for service to history. His British Academy obituary remarks of his presidency

that 'the Loyn years were later to be seen as a golden time in the HA' Membership in that decade touched perhaps 10,000.

No one, except myself, seemed to notice that the HA next proceeded to choose as its president a third medievalist in a row. R.H.C. DAVIS (1918-91) came from a family of historians, his father having been briefly Regius Professor at Oxford. Ralph Davis looked what he was – a man of firmly-held opinions. The *ODNB* attributes what it calls his 'unconformable quality' partly to his Quaker schooling, even though he never actually joined the Society of Friends. He was a conscientious objector during the Second World War, serving with distinction in a Friends' Ambulance Unit. At Oxford one of his teachers was the young Denys Hay, who many years later was to recall that Davis 'taught me a lot as my first pupil'. Davis's own university teaching career began after the war at University College, London, and continued from 1956 at Oxford to where he returned as a Fellow of Merton. Family tradition made Oxford congenial to him, but to obtain a chair he moved in 1970 to be Professor of Medieval History at Birmingham, where he successfully reorganised the history department and won the respect of his students in difficult times. Davis showed himself skilled in both textbook writing and in the close study and publication of medieval chronicles and charters. The latter was for specialists, but his *History of Medieval Europe from Constantine to Saint Louis* was described in his British Academy obituary as one of the most successful history textbooks of the second half of the twentieth century. It presented familiar themes in a new light, while always remaining easy to read. Davis thought it important for historians and their readers to distinguish between 'truth' and 'myth', as exemplified in his 1976



Ralph Davis with HM the Queen, 1981.

analysis of *The Normans and their Myth*. For the Historical Association, he was editor of *History* 1968-78. Characteristically, he had the temerity to ask in its columns whether a Historical Association was needed at all. He responded with a positive but not complacent answer, suggesting ways in which the HA should modernise. Then he founded the History at Universities Defence Group, while also campaigning as president of the HA to ensure that history was taught in schools up to the age of 16. This was to be an aspiration of successive presidents throughout the 1980s and, later, a good purpose in which, alas, they were to be unsuccessful.

### General observations

So there they are – twenty-five past-presidents. I knew eight of them at least slightly, and wish I had known them all. In retrospect, five stand out for particular qualities – Pollard, the academic operator; Mrs. Green, who knew what she wanted; Gooch, the Edwardian survivor; Barraclough, the restless spirit; and Loyn, one of nature's gentlemen. Five were especially blessed with charisma – Marten, Turberville, Butterfield, Hay and Loyn. Gooch

– briefly an MP – was something of a public figure independently of his time as president. So eventually was Mrs. Green, who ended up in the Irish senate. The majority were university academics. Some – including Marten and Grant Robertson, the royal tutors – were Establishment figures, circulating within the privileged triangle formed by Oxford, Cambridge and London. Five of them were knighted – Firth, Marten, Grant Robertson, Stenton and Butterfield. Pollard is thought to have declined a knighthood, as Trevelyan certainly did.

During the first half of its history, a majority of the Historical Association's presidents were (or later became) Fellows of the British Academy, while three (Firth, Tout and Stenton) also served as presidents of the Royal Historical Society. Although busy men, these leading historians – these 'gods' as Pollard once dubbed them in *History* – had committed themselves to maintaining regular contact through the HA with both schoolteachers and general readers. During this same period, professors from the provincial universities had shared the presidency with these Oxbridge and London grandees. In contrast, during more recent times there have been no Oxbridge presidents, and only three FBAs, none of them modernists (Hay, Loyn and Davis, but not Medlicott). Does this mean that those in academic high places have withdrawn from the promotion of history by personal involvement outside the universities? Not quite. The compliment paid to the HA by Patrick Collinson, Regius Professor at Cambridge 1988-96 – and a Medlicott medallist – has already been quoted. But it may be significant that Collinson spent most of his distinguished career outside Cambridge. In the HA's 1956 booklet Gooch congratulated Herbert Butterfield upon his recent election as Master of Peterhouse



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just before he became president of the Historical Association. Unfortunately, although the 'Peterhouse school' has continued to flourish, it has not sought to maintain Butterfield's commitment to what he called the 'great fellowship' of the Association.

As early as 1953, Reginald Treharne, as editor of *History*, was complaining – admittedly in none too polished prose – that provincial as well as Oxbridge university historians were increasingly reluctant to recognise the contribution made by the HA:

How many university teachers and lecturers have withheld even the slender support of their personal subscriptions? The Association was founded by an unselfish group of men and women within and without universities, who included some of the foremost historians of the day – Tout, Pollard, Firth and Grant, to speak only of those who are gone: they believed that in the world of history, teaching is one profession, from the primary school to the university, and they were neither too selfish nor too lofty to work on terms of complete equality with the keen school teachers who joined with them to found an Association which would serve both the subject itself and the profession of history teaching.

Twenty years later, Ralph Davis felt it necessary to copy this complaint into his article about the future of the Association. Since then the position has become even worse. Whereas today in the United Kingdom there are about 3000 academics specialising in history, less than 300 are members of the HA. The demands upon the time and energy of university historians have certainly increased during recent years; but that cannot be the whole explanation for the cold attitude of most of them, since (as the above makes clear) the problem

had begun to be noticed as early as 1953. A priority for the twenty-first century must be to attract many more academics into membership.

I may have given the impression that the succession from president to president was always seamless, that Y followed X without question. Such may indeed have often been the case, and yet perhaps not always. Many academics find intrigue intriguing, and not only in the past. 'Nothing pleased Butterfield more than plotting' recalled Noel Annan. But we do not have any firm evidence about presidential plotting within the HA until 1981, when the outgoing president and the honorary secretary are known to have differed about the succession. The president prevailed, as was only proper. Fortunately, a good choice of leader has nearly always been made, which is of course one reason why the HA has continued to be effective. We must hope that future presidents will be as successful as the best of their twentieth-century predecessors.

## Background reading

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Professor Donald Read joined the Manchester branch of the HA in 1951. He was president of the HA 1985-88. At Oxford he was a pupil of Asa Briggs, under whom he later served as a history lecturer at the University of Leeds. In 1965 he became one of the first historians appointed to the new University of Kent. In 1990 he retired early in order to serve as company historian at Reuters news agency, where he worked until 2000. Among his more recent publications are *Peel and the Victorians* (1987), and *The Power of the News, The History of Reuters* (2nd ed., 1999), and a boyhood autobiography (2003). He is currently writing an uninhibited novel about university life, which may or may not see publication.

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# The Norton Medlicott Medal

— BILL SPECK

Eminence at work  
for the HA.

The idea of a medal for outstanding contributions to history originated late in 1983 with a proposal from Professor Donald Read. In January 1984 a working party was set up under his chairmanship to devise criteria to be submitted to Council. It recommended that a selection sub-committee should be established to choose the recipient. Although individual members and branches were encouraged to advise this sub-committee, it alone should decide on the name of the medallist. At that time it was assumed that 'the best name for the award would be The Historical Association Medal; but of course if it were to be financed by a gift from a generous donor his or her name could be linked with the medal.' When the proposal was put to Council in February, however, Harold Freakes, the Honorary Secretary of the Association, proposed that it should be named after Professor Norton Medlicott. Although Professor Medlicott had not then published his intention to leave a considerable bequest to the Association, he was a distinguished past President still very active in its affairs – see Professor Read's article on 'past Presidents'. Council accepted the proposal and the committee's suggested criteria for the award: in making it the 'medal committee', as it became known, should select persons of distinction from a diversity of backgrounds in their service to history. Individual members and local branches were invited to nominate possible recipients to the medal committee. They were asked to bear in mind that 'amongst the contributions to history which it is proposed to recognise will be scholarship in the sense of original research, publication through specialist writing and lecturing, popularisation of history through writing and lecturing for non-specialist audiences, and teaching at any level.' It was stressed that the medal committee's decision would be final and that 'no sort of election is intended'.

At the meeting of the committee on 30 June it was presented with no fewer than thirteen names, which were assigned to three main categories: distinguished academic historians; local historians; and educationists. Eight fell into the first category, two into the second and three into the third. The response to the appeal for nominations had not been great, but one name emerged with more sponsors than any other, that being A. J. P. Taylor. This is not surprising given his dedication to the Association, which was acknowledged in the second issue of *The Historian*, which published a Profile of him in Spring 1984. Although the criteria made it clear that the medal was 'not to be awarded for service to the Historical Association, except as part of service to history in general', there can be no doubt that Taylor, one of the leading historians of the twentieth century, more than satisfied the conditions of the award. Unfortunately, as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* observes, his 'last years were clouded by Parkinson's Disease'. Though he did not go into a nursing home until 1987, the committee felt that he was too ill to attend a presentation ceremony, or to give the lecture which the medallist was invited to give on accepting the medal. It therefore decided to make the award to Professor A. G. Dickens instead.



The Norton Medlicott Medal

This too was an impeccable, if less controversial, choice. As *The Historian* put it, Professor Dickens 'has served the Association notably through the years, freely giving time to lecture seemingly endless groups of sixth formers and branches.' Given the



Professor AG Dickens becomes the first recipient of the Norton Medicott Medal 1985, presented by HA President Irene Collins who later received the medal in 1996.

decision not to offer the medal to Taylor, however, its claim that 'there could clearly be no stronger choice for its first recipient' was, to say the least, debatable. Notwithstanding, Professor Dickens had an international reputation for his work on the Reformation, prominent amongst which was his *The English Reformation* published in 1964. After a distinguished academic career he had retired from his last position, the Directorship of the Institute of Historical Research, in 1980. That year his contribution to the establishment of the German Historical Institute in London was recognised by the government of what was then West Germany with the award of the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit. The Medicott Medal was a fitting addition to this honour. When Professor Dickens accepted it arrangements were made to award it in April 1985.

Meanwhile the medal had been designed and cast. Professor Read and Mr Freakes, who had begun to explore the possibilities before the end of 1983, had a meeting in January 1984 with Mark Jones of the Coins and Medals department of the British Museum. The design

emerged through an exchange of correspondence between Messrs Freakes and Read, in which they discussed several options. The medal was ultimately designed by Ron Dutton, 'one of the most talented and experienced of contemporary British medallists'. Council accepted it, and ordered ten to be cast in bronze, one of which was deposited in the British Museum's medal collection. Mark Jones contributed an article on Medals of Learned Societies to *The Historian* that October. When it appeared it also included a 'Profile' of William Norton Medicott with an illustration of both sides of the new medal.

Professor Dickens was presented with the first. The presentation was made at the Annual Conference held in Canterbury, where he had received an honorary degree from the University of Kent.

In 1986 the award went to Professor H. R. Loyn. He had in fact been lined up for it by the committee at the same time as it offered the medal to Professor Dickens. A former President of the Association, and a leading Anglo-Saxonist (see Donald

Read's article on past Presidents) he had been kept in reserve then in case Dickens declined to accept, on the understanding that he would be the second Medicott medallist. The committee also 'placed on record its intention to consider a local historian or an educationist as the medal recipient in 1987'.

This led to the nomination of Frederick ['Derick'] G. Emmison as the third recipient of the medal. After leaving school in 1925 Dr Emmison had been appointed first clerk of the records for Bedfordshire County Council. In 1938 he became the first county archivist at Essex, a post he held until his retirement in 1969. As archivist he put the record office at Chelmsford firmly on the historical map. In the words of *The Historian* number 14 'he kept his records; he encouraged their use; he used them himself'. Thus he launched a series of publications to which he himself contributed several works, including *Tudor Secretary: Sir William Petre at Court and at Home*. Recognition of his services came

John Fines receives the Medal 1990



with an MBE in 1966, an honorary degree from Essex University in 1970, the Julian Bickersteth Medal of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies in 1974 and the Medicott Medal in 1987.

The following year the committee selected the first woman recipient of the medal, Professor Ragnhild Hatton. Born in Norway in 1913, and naturalised as a British subject in 1936, her nomination was by no means a token gesture. After taking a Ph. D. in London University Dr Hatton became successively lecturer, Reader and Professor of International History at the London School of Economics. Among her many publications were biographies of Charles XII of Sweden, Louis XIV and George I. They alone testify to the range of her research and her command of several European languages. Her reputation as an international historian was so prestigious that two festschriften were published in her honour, one in 1985, the other in 1997, two years after her death. Besides her written work the seminars at the Institute of Historical Research which she chaired were truly seminal. 'In 1983 King Olav V of Norway bestowed on Ragnhild Hatton the title of

Knight (Riddar) First Class, of the Norwegian Chivalrous Royal Order of Saint Olav'. Andrew Lossky observed in a personal appreciation written for the second festschrift: 'In 1984, to all these marks of distinction were added the French Palmes Académiques for services to French culture. This incomplete list of honours gives one an idea of the special place that Ragnhild Hatton occupied in historical scholarship.' It is a pity that he did not mention the Medicott Medal!

That the Medicott Medal was not intended just for professional historians the committee showed when in 1989 they awarded it to Magnus Magnusson, the broadcaster best known as the presenter of the television programme 'Mastermind'. Though this was an imaginative choice he had sound historical credentials too, having also presented 'Chronicle' and 'BC: the archaeology of the Bible lands'. In addition to these achievements he is the author of over forty books, among which perhaps his translations of Norse Sagas and his *Lindisfarne* were the most relevant to the award. If by making it to one described by *The Historian* as 'one of the great communicators

of the age' the committee hoped to generate publicity for the Historical Association, it cannot be said to have succeeded – it does not even appear on his own website. But then the majority of Medicott medallists have not reflected their glory back onto the HA.

Following this foray into the entertainment world the committee retreated back into that of education the following year, when the medal was awarded to John Fines. John was a dedicated member of the Association. As Head of History at University College Chichester he was active in the local branch, which published a fine appreciation of him in 2001. He served on the editorial board of *Teaching History* from its launch in 1969, and contributed many book reviews and articles to it. He was Deputy President from 1981 to 1983, Vice-President from 1984 to 1994, and President from 1994 to 1996. But his reputation as an educationalist extended far beyond the HA. He served as editor of several series, including *Then and There*, *History Resource* and *People in Living History*. His publications were prolific – following his early death in 1999 one obituarist calculated that he had written or contributed to over one hundred books, several of them following up themes traced in his doctoral dissertation on 'Studies in the Lollard Heresy'. It was not just his writing, however, but also his inspiring impact in the classroom which made John an outstanding teacher, earning him a national reputation which was recognised with the award of the medal.

In 1991 the committee again looked beyond the usual academic suspects to offer the medal to Mr (now Sir) Neil Cossons. He was then Director of the Science Museum, having previously served as the first Director of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust from 1971 to 1983 and of the National Maritime



# The Norton Medicott Medal

Museum from 1983 to 1986. We owe the survival of Ironbridge and the development of the museum associated with it to his foresight and enterprise, achievements which in themselves merited the OBE in 1982 and the Medicott Medal. Since its award Sir Neil has gone on to further justify the inspired nomination by becoming chairman of English Heritage.

The following year saw the medal being awarded to Alan Bullock, described by *The Historian* as 'Britain's most distinguished contemporary European historian.' The eminent Bradfordian had established his reputation with *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* as long ago as 1952. His further publications included a three-volume biography of Ernest Bevin and *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*. As a senior member of St Catherine's Society, Oxford, he was primarily responsible for its transformation into a College, of which he became the first Master. There were Bullock reports following his chairmanship of two enquiries, one into the teaching of reading, the other into industrial democracy. For these achievements he was showered with honours. Among them was a Fellowship of the British Academy, a knighthood, a life peerage, and the award of the French Légion d'Honneur. These somewhat overshadowed the Medicott Medal, which was not mentioned in the obituaries on his death in 2004.

Dr Margaret Reeves was chosen to be the recipient in 1993. She was a medievalist who wrote extensively on Joachim of Fiore, the Italian town which made her an honorary citizen. Her historical scholarship led to her becoming a founding fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford, and to the accolade of a festschrift, *Prophecy and Millenarianism*. But she was

better known for making history accessible to children. She had been a school teacher in the late 1920s and knew how to make even the history of hairdressing interesting to schoolgirls. As *The Historian* put it in a Profile of her in autumn 1987 she 'wanted to enable children to re-live the past in all its richness and not just be presented with a chronological selection of facts.' To realise this goal she launched a series



'Then and There' with two titles in 1954: *The Medieval Village* and *The Medieval Town*. These were the first of over 100 books which appeared in the series. Her efforts were rewarded with a Fellowship of the British Academy in 1992 and the Medicott Medal the year after.

Another FBA, Professor R. Rees Davies, the distinguished medievalist, received the medal in 1994. He was then Professor of History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, but moved to Oxford the following year as Chichele Professor of Medieval History, a post he held until his retirement in 2004. Professor Davies served as President of the Royal Historical Society from 1992 to 1996. He died in 2005 and the *Times* obituarist not only recorded his services to

the Historical Association, but even mentioned the award of the Medicott Medal!

John West, who was awarded it next, was dedicated to the work of making historical records generally accessible. Among his publications designed with this in mind are *Village Records* (1982) and *Town Records* (1983). He also provided materials, based on original sources, in support of the National Curriculum. These included *Classroom Museum* (1990), *Classroom Gallery* (1992) and *Classroom Archives* (1993). Dr West taught history in primary and secondary schools and wrote several books for children, including *Telltale* and *The Magic Map* (1991), written with his wife, Margaret. He worked as Chief Inspector of Schools in Dudley, where he set up the Resources Centre.

In 1996 the medallist was Irene Collins, one of the stalwarts of the HA, who had served as President from 1982 to 1985.

Mrs Collins – she married her alter ego Rex in 1951 – has been chairman of the Manchester Branch since 1986. She wrote three HA pamphlets: *Liberalism in Europe*; *The Revolutions of 1848*; and *Napoleon Bonaparte*. But the medal was far from being awarded just for services to the HA. Mrs Collins taught in the History Department at Liverpool University from 1947 until her retirement in 1983. Her publications made her a recognised authority on nineteenth century European, and particularly French, history. They include *The Age of Progress: A survey of European History 1789-1870* and *Government and Society in France 1814-1848: Select Documents*. Since retiring she has changed her focus from Napoleon to Jane Austen, and has published two books on her: *Jane Austen and the Clergy*; and *Jane Austen the Parson's Daughter*.

Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, the recipient of the medal in 1997, was more renowned as a politician than as a historian. As Home Secretary in the Labour government from 1964 to 1967 Roy Jenkins had been instrumental in the passage of much liberal legislation, including the repeal of the law making homosexual acts between consenting adults a criminal offence. Subsequently as Chancellor of the Exchequer he had to cope with the consequences of devaluing the pound, which contributed to the government's defeat at the polls in 1970. Back in office in 1974 Jenkins, a staunch Europhile, led the referendum campaign which resulted in Labour's confirmation of Britain's entry into the Common Market negotiated by the Conservative government of Edward Heath. In 1977 Jenkins became President of the European Commission. After Labour lost the next general election he became one of the 'Gang of Four' which seceded from the party to form the Social Democrats in 1981. When he lost his seat in the Commons in 1987 he was raised to the House of Lords as Lord Jenkins of Hillhead. So far his curriculum vitae scarcely seems to fit the criteria for the Medlicott Medal. However, Lord Jenkins also achieved fame as a biographer. He published his autobiography in 1991. But it was his life of Gladstone which won the Whitbread prize in 1995 and made him the outstanding candidate for the medal.

For the 1998 ceremony the committee returned from the world of politics to the groves of academe, nominating Professor Patrick Collinson for the award. The holder of chairs at the University of Kent at Canterbury, Sheffield and Cambridge, the last the Regius Professorship, he is Britain's leading historian of the Reformation.

Among his many publications mention is appropriate here of his HA pamphlet *English Puritanism*.



Professor Eric Hobsbawm receives the Medal in 1999

Another academic historian, the internationally renowned Professor Eric Hobsbawm, was the choice the following year. The outgoing President, Chris Wrigley, presented him with the medal at the Annual Conference held in Cambridge. Professor Hobsbawm replied to his speech when making the

award with a lecture on 'Is History Dangerous?' Unfortunately, due to a malfunctioning public address system, only half the audience was able to hear it. This deficiency was made good, however, when the lecture was published in the summer issue of *The Historian* later in the year. He answered the rhetorical question posed in his title with a resounding 'YES'.

Lady Antonia Fraser graciously accepted the medal in 2000 at the last Annual Conference organised by the HA headquarters, which was held in York. She presented an absorbing talk on the value of historical biography to history. The author of half a dozen historical biographies, and histories of women in the seventeenth century and of the Gunpowder Plot, is uniquely placed to make such an evaluation. Lady Antonia is a stalwart supporter of the work of the HA. As we have seen, not all recipients of the Medlicott Medal draw attention to the award, whereas it is duly mentioned in



Lady Antonia Fraser receives the Medal in 2000 from HA President Bill Speck



# The Norton Medicott Medal

the c.v. which prefaces her *Marie Antoinette: the Journey*.

Dr David Starkey, the acclaimed Tudor historian and popular radio and television personality, received the medal in 2001 at the first Annual General Meeting to be held in London rather than at a Conference. His lecture was 'The English Historian's role and the place of History in English National Life'. He admitted that he 'chose the title with deliberate provocation'. It was indeed provocative, confirming the tabloid reputation he then had as 'the rudest man in Britain'. First he painted with broad brush strokes the history of the development of England as a nation from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, observing that 'Whig history is actually right!' He then went on to assert 'that nation creates history; that you cannot have history without nationhood'. This led him to attack contemporary historians who denied there was a grand historical narrative and studied other aspects of the past. Among his targets was the Royal Historical Society, which he claimed was out of touch with the public, a point he illustrated by asserting that its President was virtually unknown. The distinguished medievalist Professor Jinty Nelson was the President at the time, whose policy of giving it a higher profile included liaising with other bodies, one of them the HA. As I was then President of the Association, who had presented Dr Starkey with the medal and arranged for his lecture to be published, this was somewhat embarrassing. In the interests of mending fences with the RHS I felt obliged to dissociate the HA from his remarks about it.

Dr Starkey's provocative musings on the way historical studies were going gave the occasion of the presentation of the medal more publicity than it usually receives, and this perhaps persuaded the committee to offer

it to another media historian, Professor Simon Schama, the following year. Unfortunately he is an exceedingly busy man and it proved impossible to find an occasion on which to present it to him in 2002. At the Annual General Meeting the late Professor Ben Pimlott obligingly filled the slot set aside for the Medicott lecture with a timely talk on 'the Jubilee and the Idea of Monarchy'. It was not until 2005 that a date mutually acceptable to Professor Schama and the HA could be found, and he was presented with the medal in May.

Meanwhile the committee turned from television to more conventional academic historians in its nominees for the medal. It recognised the fundamental contributions of Sir Keith Thomas to social history when it offered it to him in 2003. Sir Keith was impeccably professional in his acceptance of it at the Annual General Meeting and in the prompt presentation of the lecture he gave to the editor of *The Historian*, Professor Muriel Chamberlain, for publication. Professor Sir Ian Kershaw, the leading authority on Nazi Germany, was unable to accept it at the Annual General Meeting held in Liverpool in 2004 due to unforeseen circumstances. But he displayed similar professionalism in arranging to hold the presentation ceremony in London as soon as possible thereafter, and in having his lecture ready to be published even before it was delivered. Sir Martin Gilbert, the author of magisterial volumes on Sir Winston Churchill, was the recipient of the medal in 2005. Sir Martin was also unable to attend the Annual General Meeting, held that year in Oxford, and again a special ceremony was arranged in London when he gave a lecture on 'Churchill and Gallipoli'.

The medallist for 2006 is Professor Lisa Jardine CBE, who holds the

Centenary Chair of Renaissance Studies at Queen Mary College, London University, where she is also Director of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Centre for Editing Lives and Letters. As an interview in the *Education Guardian* for 17 January observed 'her writing and research credits are four times longer than even most successful academics; she speaks French, Italian, Dutch, Modern Greek, Ancient Greek, Latin and some Hebrew; and ... she's picked up the Royal Society Medal for popularising science' – alas it did not mention the Medicott Medal for services to history. Ironically she read mathematics and then English literature as an undergraduate at Cambridge, and then wrote a Ph.D thesis on Sir Francis Bacon as a scientist. Professor Jardine has published over fifty articles in scholarly journals and seventeen books. The most popular of her books are about Erasmus and Sir Christopher Wren, while the most recent is *The Awful End of Prince William the Silent: The first assassination of a head of state with a handgun*. She is general co – editor of the *Oxford Complete Works of Francis Bacon* and of the HarperCollins history series *Making History*. Professor Jardine is well known outside academe, writing and reviewing for national newspapers in the UK and for the *Washington Post* in the USA, and appearing regularly on TV and radio programmes dealing with the arts, history and current affairs. In 1996 she judged the Whitbread Prize, in 1999 the *Guardian* First Book Award, in 2000 the Orwell Prize and in 2002 chaired the Booker Prize.

It is to be hoped that the award of the medal to such a high profile historian will finally gain for the HA some public recognition. It was after all one of the aims of those who devised the scheme that it would enhance our image by attracting publicity.

# For Short Time an Endless Monument:

The Shifting History of a Familiar London Landmark

— LISA JARDINE

The Medicott Medal Lecture 2006.

This lecture sets out to intrigue you with the idea that something as apparently solid, stable and lasting as Wren and Hooke's Monument to the Great Fire might in fact have a multiple and changing history. If you stand with your back to Greenwich Observatory, even today, you can spot the pillar and gilded urn of the Monument to the Great Fire. In 1677 – the year the Monument was completed, and the Observatory became fully operational – the view was clearer (though the London smog was more dense).<sup>1</sup> I start with the spatial relationship between the Observatory at Greenwich and the Pillar on Fish Hill, because my own interest in the Monument to the Great Fire began with the realisation, while working on my biography of Wren, that this familiar London landmark was not what it seemed – that its iconic status as memorial to the devastation of September 1666 masked other roles, some symbolic, some functional. I had believed for some years (since I wrote *Ingenious Pursuits*) that the Monument had been designed with large-scale astronomical observation in mind.

It was not until last year, though, that I realised how visible the gilded urn at the top of the Monument was from the Observatory – ideal for taking a bearing with a long telescope or quadrant. Yet again the Monument metamorphosed, from the familiar form I had come to know and love into yet another practically useful element in the Royal Society's grand scientific plan.

But I am already getting ahead of myself. Let me begin my excavation proper of the many-layered history of the Monument with a story which elegantly sums up the capacity of historical objects to be at once highly visible, known and understood, and yet in terms of their historical function and even meaning, hidden in clear sight.

Invited to contribute to a Channel Four documentary on the Great Fire of London, I spent three early hours of an unseasonably cold April morning at the Monument in 2001. It was pouring with rain. While I was waiting forlornly in the shelter of the entrance-hall at the bottom of the 200 foot column for the camera crew to finish setting up for filming at the top, the elderly attendant – to cheer me up, I think – asked me if I had ever seen the basement. Removing the chair from his ticket booth, he rolled back the carpet, lifted a hinged trap-door in the floor, and there, like something from a brothers Grimm fairy story was a flight of stone steps, curving down to a sizeable room beneath. Nothing I had read about the Monument, no plans I had inspected showing its construction, and none of the many experts in a whole range of fields relating to my project, had ever mentioned an underground chamber.<sup>2</sup>

For a glorious half-hour I was able to explore what I immediately recognised to be the laboratory Hooke had designed as the purpose-built location for a whole series of scientific experiments requiring a long vertical telescope tube – available to be used, most significantly, as a zenith telescope (which does not require lenses), to attempt to track the minute shift in position of a selected fixed star over a six month period, in order to prove the rotation of the earth.<sup>3</sup>

No extant architectural drawings of the Monument show this underground space, so my architect husband kindly agreed to provide one. We returned, on a slightly more clement early November morning, to take detailed measurements of the basement for a drawn



The Monument to the great fire.



On Friday 10 February 2006, Professor Lisa Jardine CBE MA PhD (Cantab) gave the keynote speech at a joint Historical Association and English Association reception held at Foyles Bookshop. It was the first event to launch the Centenary celebrations of both Associations'.

cross-section of the building which would include the underground room. While my husband was taking the measurements, I persuaded the attendant to surrender her intriguing bundle of over-sized keys ('I have no idea what any of them does,' she said).

I climbed the 345 steps of the beautifully-crafted cantilevered stone staircase to the observation platform to find that two of my story-book-sized keys fitted two further heavy doors on a stone stairway leading on upwards from the platform. Finally I was confronted with an iron ship's-ladder rising vertically inside the drum. I lifted – with great difficulty – the heavy iron trap-door above my head (two semicircular doors, in fact, like a ship's hatch) and emerged into the light, to find myself at the very top of the flaming urn which crowns the column. I was dizzyingly high above the City, and vertically above the 3 foot diameter circular aperture in the domed roof of the basement laboratory.

Now I knew with absolute certainty that the Monument had been designed as a unique, hugely ambitious, vastly oversized scientific instrument. From the basement laboratory area an absolutely clear view could be had of the sky,

via another aperture at platform level, then via a third at the base of the upper drum, and finally via a two-foot aperture at the top of the gilt flames issuing from the ornamental urn, hundreds of feet above. The upper observation platform also offers a suitable place where one could conveniently swing a long pendulum, or lower a barometer or thermometer on a rope (as Hooke records having done from the derelict tower of Old St. Paul's in the 1660s). From the strategically located man-sized niches set into the wall alongside the beautiful, regular stone spiral stair, with its black marble treads, one can take measurements using a delicate instrument measuring, say, atmospheric pressure variation with height, carried down, step by step (as Hooke records doing with a barometer, on this very stair, in 1678).

It seems incredible that such an achievement should have been so totally lost from view. How could we have overlooked the extraordinary precision in construction (every step exactly six and a half inches high, each aperture a perfect multiple of feet), the careful, tailor-made functionality of the building for scientific use? Records tell us that the Monument was held up a number

of times because suitable stone of precise dimensions could not be obtained. Hooke's diary plainly records his using it for scientific experiments for many years after its completion.

### The construction of the Monument

The Monument was under construction from 1673 to 1677, with Hooke taking charge of the project once it went on site, through to completion. On 19 October 1673 he recorded in his diary, 'perfected module of Piller'; on 1 June 1674, 'At the pillar at Fish Street Hill. It was above ground 210 steps'; on 7 August, 'At the Pillar in height 250 steps'; on 21 September 1675, 'At fish-street-hill on ye top of ye column'. On 11 April, 1676, he was with Wren 'at the top of ye Piller'. From the precision of the elements in the column as built (the accuracy of the height of each individual stair-riser, the breadth of the circular apertures) it appears that particular care was taken with the construction of this single, vertical shaft, extending the period to completion significantly. On 14 October 1676, Hooke noted, 'scaffolds at fish-street-pillar almost all struck', but a year later he went again 'to pillar about scaffold' and on 26 October 1677 he 'directed corners'.<sup>4</sup>



Looking up from the basement laboratory.



Looking down from the flaming urn.

On 8 February 1673, Hooke recorded in his diary discussions he had had with Wren that day about modifying the preparatory drawings for St. Paul's:

With Mr. Haux at Pauls churchyard. at Dr. Wrens, told me the Designe of burying vaults under Paules and the Addition of Library Body and portico at the west.<sup>5</sup>

The discussion of the 'vaults' or crypt of St. Paul's envisages functional

spaces below ground to support the practical needs (as well as the fabric) of the Cathedral. Two years earlier, in 1671, Hooke, designing a new building for the Royal College of Physicians, had similarly proposed that 'the Cellar under the Hall and great Stayer Case bee fitted for a laboratory with a large chimney.'<sup>6</sup>

A domed underground space, ample enough to offer facilities for an experimentalist working directly beneath the shaft, provides the foundation for the 'Fish Street

Pillar', suggesting that Wren and Hooke devised this neglected, yet structurally and functionally vital, part of the building together.<sup>7</sup> The underground room culminates in a round aperture at the top of its domed roof, so that the experimenter has a clear view from the basement to the top of the shaft, and, indeed, through the ornamental urn (which conveniently hinges open to the sky). Sunk twenty feet deep, covering an area exactly the dimensions of the plinth at the base of the column, and designed with openings to allow access for air (and experimental features like a vertical plumb line dropped from above), this laboratory is large enough to allow several experimenters to work at the bottom of the vertical shaft. It is also large enough for an observer to spend long periods of time comfortably and conveniently taking measurements there.

Although it did not produce the desired results as a zenith telescope (neither in the deep well at Greenwich, nor beneath the column did it prove possible to measure the tiny incremental shifts in position of the fixed stars required to provide the hoped-for proof of the earth's rotation round the sun), the Monument did prove a suitable location for more modest kinds of experiments. Hooke used it regularly for empirical work which required long vertical drops, and readily accessible, staggered experimental locations vertically above one another (for instance, for experiments with pendulums and barometers).

On 16 May 1678, Hooke recorded in his diary: 'At Fish Street pillar [Monument] tried mercury barometer experiment. It descended at the top about 1/3 of an inch'<sup>8</sup> May 23 he 'directed experiment at Column. Lent Mr. Hunt a cylinder to do it'<sup>9</sup> The proceedings of the Royal Society for May 30 record that



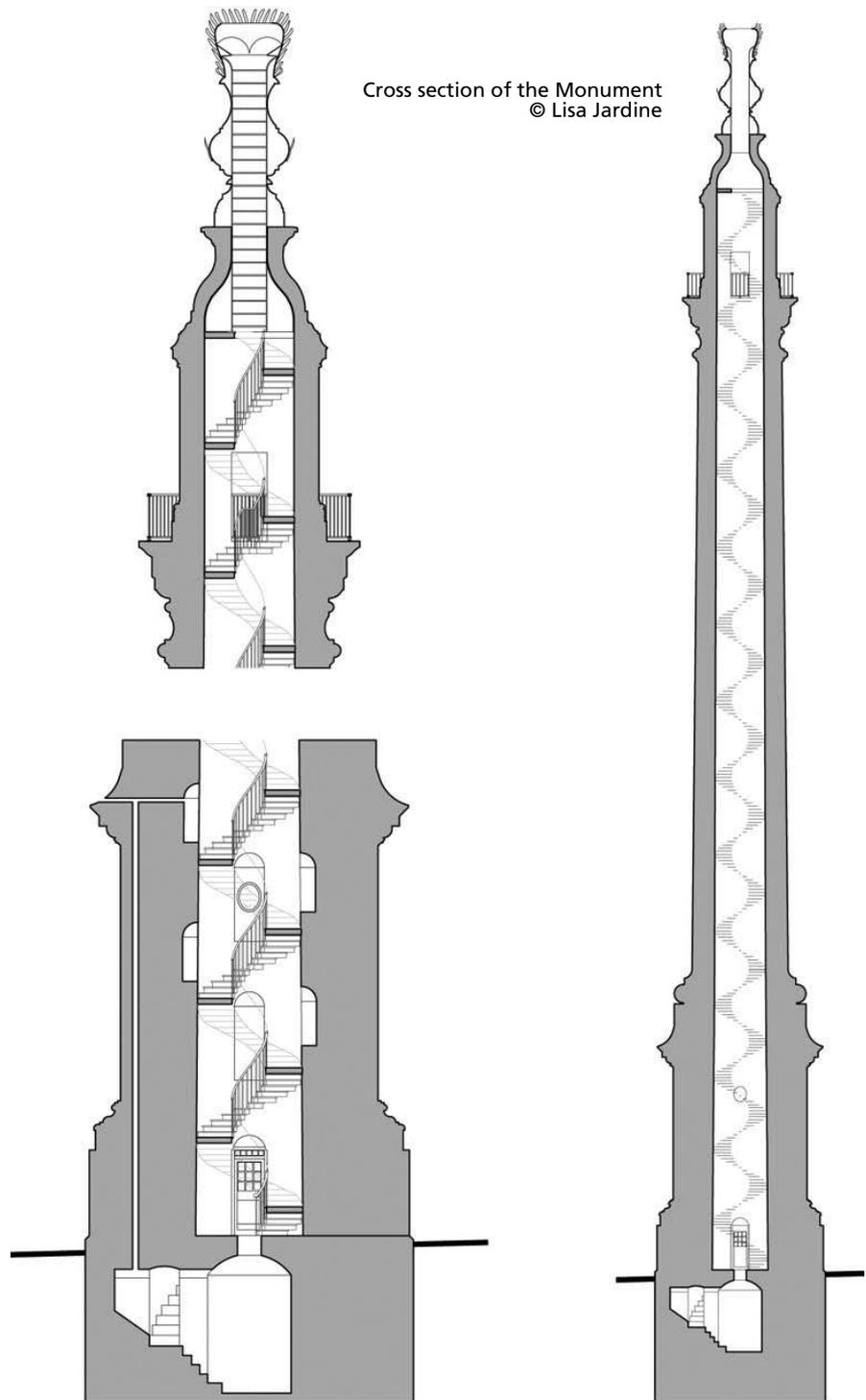
# For Short Time an Endless Monument

Hooke measured the pressure at various stages as he came down the Monument's steps, but that he was not entirely happy with the accuracy of his equipment:

He had observed the quicksilver to ascend by degrees, as near as he could perceive, proportional to the spaces descended in going down from the top of the column to the bottom: but because the said stations of the mercury were different from one another but very little, and so it was not easy to determine the certain proportions of the one to the other; therefore he proposed against the next meeting an experiment be tried at the same place with an instrument which would determine that distance an hundred times more exactly: which instrument also he there produced, in order to explain the manner thereof, it being made upon the same principle with the wheel barometer, but more curiously wrought.<sup>10</sup>

In an autograph paper preserved among the manuscripts of the Royal Society Hooke develops his wheel barometer, explicitly in the context of these experiments conducted inside the shaft of the Monument. The paper also makes it clear that these experiments continue those begun by Wren and Boyle, thus indicating that Wren remained involved at least in spirit in the post-construction scientific uses of this Wren office architectural project.<sup>11</sup>

In December 1678 Hooke measured the height of the Monument – presumably the distance from the upper platform (beneath the crowning burst of gilded flames) to the floor of the basement and found it to be approximately 202 feet.<sup>12</sup> This was the distance over which measurements could be taken for his resumed Torricellian and pendulum experiments – the



series he had begun 12 years earlier at the top and bottom of Old St. Paul's tower, shortly before the Great Fire destroyed his experimental location.<sup>13</sup>

## The 'botched' ornament

Let us pause for a moment on the gilded ornament at the top of

the Monument, with its carefully concealed aperture. I have referred to it as a 'flaming urn', as do contemporary and later commentators. In fact, of course, it is a flaming ball on top of an urn.

Drawings of several types of column survive in a variety of hands,



including those of Woodroffe and Hooke. The one which most closely resembles the pillar as built is in Hooke's hand, and signed by Wren in his capacity as Royal Surveyor: 'With His M[ajesties] Approbation.'

Proposals for what should go on the top of the completed column are contained in a letter from Wren to Charles II, submitted for scrutiny in July 1675:

In pursuance of an Order of the Committee, for City Landes I doe heerwith offer the Severall designes which some monthes since I shewed His M[ajestie] for his approbation, who was then pleased to thinke *a large Ball of metall gilt* would be most agreeable, in regard it would give an Ornament to the Town at a very great distance; not that His M[ajestie] disliked a Statue; and if any proposall of this sort be more acceptable to the City I shall most readily represent th same to His M[ajestie].

*I cannot but com[m]end a Large Statue as carrying much dignitie*

*with it, & that w[hi]ch would be more vailable in the Eyes of Forreiners & strangers. It hath been proposed to cast such a one in Brasse of 12 foot high for 1000lb [sic] I hope (if it be allowed) wee may find those who will cast a figure for that many of 15 foot high, w[hi]ch will suit the greatnesse of the pillar & is (as I take it) the largest at this day extant; and this would undoubtedly bee the noblest finishing that can be found anserrable to soe goodly a worke in all mens Judgements.*

*A Ball of Copper, 9 foot Diameter cast in severall peeces with the Flames & gilt, may well be don with the Iron worke & fixing for 350lb. and this would be most acceptable of any thing inferior to a Statue, by reason of the good appearance at distance, and because one may goe up into it; & upon occasion use it for fireworkes.*

*A phoenix was at first thought of; & is the ornament in the wooden modell of the pilar, wch. I caused*

to be made before it was begun, but upon second thoughtes I rejected it because it will be costly, not easily understood at that Highth and worse understood at a distance; & lastly dangerous by reason of the sayle the spread winges will carry in the winde.<sup>14</sup>

It is intriguing, in the light of this letter, that the final solution should have been a hybrid between an urn and a flaming ball. This suits Hooke's scientific ambitions for the Monument, but decidedly did not please Wren. In *Parentalia*, his son Christopher records his father's annoyance at the 'botched' ornament which was eventually created to crown the top of the Pillar. In the corner of the engraving showing the achieved Pillar alongside Trajan's Column for comparison is a note which reads:

a brazen urn, poorly turned on a lathe, set atop the column despite the architect's efforts [Urna Aerea, Male tornata, Columnae imposita Contra Architecti Intentionem].<sup>15</sup>

The ball and urn came shortly after Wren's discussions with the King, and appear to have been under Hooke's control from the outset. On 3 August 1675, Hooke 'walked with Sir Chr. Wren in Privy Garden and Discoursed of the Ball for the Column'. On 11 September 1675 Hooke notes in his diary: 'To Sir Chr. Wren's. Received Draught of Urne'. On 22 September Hooke showed the City Lands Committee 'the figure of an Urne most proper to be placed upon the top of the new Columne on Fishstreet hill'. Among Hooke's papers is a drawing in his hand of a flaming urn with a shaft running up inside it, which I like to think refers to these early discussions.

There is also a more elaborate drawing by Wren, whose detail



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corresponds to the urn part of the final urn-ball. The executed detail of the lower half of the gilded urn-ball closely corresponds to this drawing of Wren's. The flaming ball also corresponds to a design submitted to the rebuilding committee. As with everything else concerning the Monument, execution of the urn-ball was delegated to Hooke:

Sept. 21 [1675]. At Fish Street Hill on top of the Column. Agreed with Cole Brazier for Urne after the Rate of 18d per lb for plaine and 2s. 6d. for chaced work. He to set it up and fix it.

Sept. 24. Brazier drew out Urne.  
Sept. 28. Agreed with Bird for Urne at 19d. per lb. for plain work.

Oct. 11. I paid Bullock for Module for Urne 8s. 6d., and Lignum Vitae.

Nov. 20. To Birds, the Urne bungled.

Dec. 16. At Birds, saw half the Urne made.

Jan 25. 1675/6. Mr. Marshall here, with him to Birds, Bath Lane, he had finished Urne.

Jan. 27. Urne to Fish Street Hill. Weight 1452+.

July 14. Order to raise the Urne tomorrow.<sup>16</sup>

Whether the 'bungled' urn was a piece of mis-casting, or a hybridised execution of competing designs (ball and urn) submitted by Wren and Hooke we will probably never know. We recall Wren's discussion of the flaming ball, which was the perfect design to allow for an aperture and access to workspace at its summit:

*A Ball of Copper, 9 foot Diameter cast in severall peeces with the Flames & gilt, may well be don with the Iron worke & fixing for 350lb. and this would be most acceptable of any thing inferior to a Statue, by reason of the good appearance at distance,*

*and because one may goe up into it; & upon occasion use it for fireworke.*

In other words, the hybridising of the flaming ball and the Urn suited Hooke's interests, but decidedly displeased the classically scrupulous Wren, who never reconciled himself to it.

## The location of the Monument

In a remarkably similar way, the location of the Monument flickers between Wren's neo-classical interests, and Hooke's pragmatic, City- and science-orientated ones. The Great Fire, coming hot on the heels (as it were) on the establishing of the Royal Society in London, as a focus for new initiatives in applied knowledge and technology, provided a golden opportunity to embed experimental science in the rebuilt City. By the early eighteenth century that moment was past. When Wren's ex-clerk and architectural pupil Nicholas Hawksmoor praised the Monument in print in 1728, it was as an architectural masterpiece, which vied in its neo-classical beauty and proportion with Trajan's Column in Rome, in spite of the fact that Wren himself had cautioned that the proportions of the huge doric column were not correctly as specified by classical architectural theory.

Instead, generations of architectural historians carefully scrutinised the Monument's classical antecedents and pedigree, inserting the Monument into a well-developed story of influences and prototypes, symbolic functions and Roman 'quotation'.

With the embers of the Great Fire still smouldering, Wren was the first to present Charles II with a proposal for rebuilding the City. It was along resolutely classical lines, and was rapidly rejected by the Corporation of London, in favour

of allowing individuals title to their old properties, and rebuilding to the existing street patterns. London was returned to its old plan, apart from some strategic street-widening.

There may not have been City support for a Louis-XIV-style rebuild of London, but there was general agreement on the appropriateness of a classical-style memorial to the providential rescue of the Capital from the Fire. An act of Parliament of 1667, related to the rebuilding after the Great Fire, already contained the instruction that

the better to preserve the memory of this dreadful visitation; Be it further enacted that a Columne or Pillar of Brase or Stone be erected on or as neare unto the place where the said Fire so unhappily began as Conveniently as may be, in perpetuall Remembrance thereof, with such Inscription thereon, as hereafter by the Mayor and Court of Aldermen in that behalfe be directed.

This early decision to erect a memorial Pillar was confirmed in the 1670 City Churches Rebuilding Act. There money was allocated for a memorial 'the better to preserve the memory of this dreadful visitation'. On February 14, 1671 the London Court of Common Council approved the 'Draught or Modell ... of the Pillar'. Work excavating the foundations (to create that laboratory) was completed in November 1671, and construction must have commenced shortly thereafter.<sup>17</sup>

The site for the Pillar, at the top of Fish Street Hill, was entirely suitable for such a Monument, in terms of classically-influenced views and vistas.<sup>18</sup> The Pillar would offer a focal point, elevated above the viewer's eye-line, as visitors crossed into the City over old London

Bridge.<sup>19</sup> It was, furthermore, erected on the former site of the church and churchyard of St. Margaret New Fish Street, the first church destroyed by the fire.<sup>20</sup>

The idea that the Pillar actually provided a marker for the precise spot at which the fire began seems to have come much later. In an entry dated 8 October 1677, Hooke noted in his diary that ‘The Baker’s ground [is] distant the length of the Pillar’.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the rough correlation between the scientifically height-specific Column and the distance to Pudding Lane had suddenly been introduced as a significant measurement. This is precisely the moment at which Dr Gale of St Paul’s School was composing his inscriptions. And sure enough, one of the final inscriptions includes the sentence:

Hinc in orientem pedum CCII  
intervallo quae est huisce  
columnae altitudo erupit de  
media nocte incendium.

Remember, the height of the Monument had been settled on originally because it corresponded to the height from cross-beams to ground in the Tower of Old St Paul’s, where Hooke and other Fellows of the Royal Society had been conducting long-term experiments on barometric pressure and temperature when the Great Fire broke out. Now that height has become critical to the symbolic power of the Monument to record the disaster of inattention which caused the fire in the Baker’s shop in Pudding Lane.

### The Inscriptions

In a diary entry dated 17 November 1676, Hooke writes that he and Wren had discussed the inscriptions for the Monument – nearly fourteen months after the City Lands Committee had enjoined ‘Mr Surveyor generall

and Mr Hooke ... to appoint such persons as they think most Fitting to make An Inscripton for the said Collume”. On 17 October 1677, some twenty-seven months after the original mandate, Hooke was “at [the] Lord Mayor’s about the Fleet and Dr. Gale’s inscription”; following the orders of the Lord Mayor, he then met “with Dr. Gale, Sir Chr. Wren and Controuler [Joseph Lane] about [the] inscription”; their colloquy did not finish “till 10 at night”. Hooke goes on to state that the committee, on 18 October, “Attended all day on that affaire”, and for some time in the presence of the Court of Aldermen; on 20 October, he “Discoursed with Sir Chr. Wren at Mans about [the] Inscripton”. Two days later, the Court of Aldermen approved the inscriptions, and two days after that, so did the Lord Mayor. On 17 June, 1678, when he called on Gale, Hooke “saw the Monument inscription finisht”; on November 6, he “Viewd Inscripton on the Pillar”, and on 30 November, he was “At the Pillar with Sir Chr. Wren and Dr. Gale”.<sup>22</sup>

I want to end with one further, curious episode relating to the inscriptions on the Monument – a brief moment of Anglo-Dutch collaboration on the commemorative project. A moment which is the more unexpected for the fact that, over the period during which it took place, England was once again at war with the Protestant Netherlands, not to mention the fact that more than one commentator at the time of the Great Fire believed it to have been set by the Dutch.

In December 1670, Sir Constantijn Huygens, 72-year-old Secretary and advisor to the young William of Orange (who was in London attempting to retrieve monies owed to him by his uncle Charles II), wrote to Sir Christopher Wren (in English):

The King hath been pleased to keepe a copie of this poor project, and would doe me this morning the honour to commend it with the character of “a very good paper”. If it doe but chance to pass for half so good in your liking, Sir, I will hold my paines happily bestowed. I pray you to peruse it, that we may have occasion to conferre about [it], while I am here. It may be, one time or other some reflexion will be made upon the reasons of a simple autor, who is ...<sup>23</sup>

On 18 February 1678 there is a further reference to this ‘poor project’ in Huygens’s correspondence, this time in a letter in French to Monsieur Oudart:

It matters little whether my inscriptions have been used for the Column or not. I remain extremely well satisfied that so distinguished a person as Monsieur the Surveyor [Wren] found them to be to his taste, to the point that he produced them to the City officials, and thereby demonstrated to them my good will towards their great and most noble City. I beg you to assure that most excellent personage of my boundless esteem for his great talent and my most ardent affection in his service.<sup>24</sup>

So the ‘poor project’ which both Wren and the King found so much to their taste was proposed inscriptions for the plinth of the Monument.

Neither Huygens’s commemorative inscription, nor Wren’s own remarkably similar one was in the end used. On 4 October 1677 the Court of Aldermen of the City of London minuted their final decision as to the inscriptions:

This Court doth desire Dr Gale Master of the Schoole of St



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Paul to consider and devise a fitting inscription to be set on the new Pillar at Fishstreet Hill, and to consult therein with Sr Christopher Wren Knt his Matie's Surveyor Generall and Mr Hooke And then to present the same unto this court.<sup>25</sup>

'Within three weeks of the first meeting of the inscription committee, the Court of Aldermen, having heard from the lord mayor that Charles II had "very well approved" the inscriptions drafts, decreed that the inscriptions be carved "forthwith". On 25 October, the Court rewarded Gale with "a handsome peice [sic] of plate."<sup>26</sup>

Today I'm afraid many visitors to London miss the Monument altogether, hemmed in as it is by tall buildings. For them the Monument is nothing more than the name of an underground station.

For those of us for whom the Monument still holds historical significance, I hope I have shown tonight that its representative powers – its ability to evoke a key moment in British history – are kaleidoscopic and multi-faceted. It serves as a reminder, I suggest, of the constant potential of all historical data, how ever well-studied, to yield new possibilities when seen in a fresh historical light.

## References

1. On 22 June 1675, Wren was appointed as architect, to design and build the Royal Observatory in close consultation with John Flamsteed, the first Astronomer Royal, as to its technical specifications (the building being named, accordingly, 'Flamsteed House'). Wren in his turn, immediately appointed Hooke to act as his deputy and site manager, 'to direct [the] Observatory in Greenwich Park for Sir J More'. The building was near enough to completion to be used for viewing an eclipse at the beginning of June 1676 – it had been hoped that the King might attend, but he failed to appear.
2. The producer of the TV programme was James Runcie. The attendant at the Monument that morning was Martin Witziers. My thanks to them both for their wisdom and encouragement.
3. The method fails because the fixed stars are too far away for the minute displacement to be detectable by telescopic methods, but

- this was not understood till a century and a half later.
4. Hooke also had trouble with the inscription: on June 17th, 1678, he 'saw Monument inscription now finished', but as late as April 10th, 1679, he writes, 'At Fish Street Pillar. Knight cut wrong R. for P. Hooke, *Diary*, p. 27.
  5. Hooke, *Diary*, p. 27.
  6. A. Stoesser, *Robert Hooke and Holland: Dutch Influence on Hooke's Architecture* (Doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University, 1997), p. 45.
  7. Although he did not know about the domed basement, Professor Hyman indicated to me that he did not find it surprising that it should exist, since the pillar as built requires substantial, spanning foundations for stability. Personal communication, July 2001.
  8. Hooke, *Diary*, 358.
  9. Hooke, *Diary*, 359.
  10. Birch, *History of the Royal Society* 3, 409-10.
  11. See W. E. K. Middleton, 'A footnote to the history of the barometer: An unpublished note by Robert Hooke, FRS', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 20 (1965), 145-51.
  12. Hooke, *Diary*, 388. Since the circular opening at the very top of the flaming urn also hinges open, allowing an operator to stand in the open air above the shaft, it would also theoretically be possible to conduct experiments from that height also.
  13. See L. Jardine, 'Monuments and microscopes: scientific thinking on a grand scale in the early Royal Society', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 55 (2001), 289-308.
  14. Chr: Wren July 28th 1675 [verso:] Report of Dr. Wren/ concerning the Monument/ 28 July 75. BL Add. MSS 18,898.
  15. For a full discussion see J. E. Moore, 'The Monument, or, Christopher Wren's Roman accent', *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998), 498-533. See in particular, footnote 180. See also *Parentalia*, p. 322.
  16. *Wren Society* 18, p. 190. The ornamental

- work on the urn was done by Bowers. See Moore, 'The Monument', footnote 180.
17. Moore, 'The Monument', p. 2 (online version).
  18. It may indeed have decided the Corporation to commemorate the Fire near the site of its outbreak, rather than, as many, like John Evelyn would have preferred, marking one of the points at which the wind dropped and the Fire was brought under control.
  19. London Bridge was moved 100 feet westwards from its old location in the early nineteenth century, and the Monument is now hemmed in by tall buildings, erasing the intended 'prospect'.
  20. Moore, 'The Monument'.
  21. *Wren Society* 18, p. 190.
  22. Moore, 'The Monument', p. 22 of online version.
  23. J. A. Worp, *De briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens 1608-1687*, letter 6778.
  24. 'Il importe peu que mes inscriptions ayent esté employées à la colonne ou non. Je demeure fort satisfait de ce qu'une personne si entendue que Mr. le surveyor [Wren] y ayt trouvé quelque gout, jusques à en faire part au magistrat, et leur ayt fait paroistre de ma bonne volonté à l'endroit de leur grande et tres-noble Cité. Je vous supplie de bien assurer cest excellent personnage de ma veritable estime de son grand merite et de ma tres-ardente affection à son service.' Worp, letter 7077.
  25. CLRO, RCA 82, fol. 268v.
  26. Moore, 'The Monument'. Gale was formerly Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge.

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Lisa Jardine with the Medlicott Medal, 8 April 2006

# Wise in Counsel: An Appreciation of Harold Freakes

— MICHAEL BIDISS

For nearly 30 years this Secretary of the HA strove to 'keep our Presidents on the rails and to make our Council run its trains on time'.



Harold at his Honorary Degree ceremony, Reading, 1987.

As Honorary Secretary of the HA from 1962 to 1989, Harold Freakes was our organizational mainstay for nearly three decades. Throughout this span his bearing embodied an air of authority that doubtless owed much to his successful wartime career in the Middle East, which had earned him promotion to the rank of major. Yet he was also something of a chip off the parental block. Here was a station-master's son who could talk wryly of endeavouring to keep our Presidents on the rails and of striving to make our Council run its trains on time!

Born in Surrey just before the outbreak of the Great War, Harold proceeded in 1932 from his schooling in North Hampshire to the University of Reading. There his history course culminated in study of the special subject on King Alfred that was offered by Professor Frank Stenton, who was himself soon to become one of the HA's most renowned Presidents. Having stayed on at Reading to obtain a certificate of education, Harold subsequently taught in Kentish primary and secondary schools until 1941. He then joined the army, serving first with the Military Mission to the Free French Forces in the Lebanon and thereafter in the Education Corps where further postings took him to Palestine and Egypt. Those who remember his precision of diction will not be surprised to learn that he also found himself acting from time to time as a newsreader for the English-language service of Radio Cairo.

With the return of peace Harold became involved in selecting and advising servicemen who were aiming to become teachers via the government's Emergency Training Scheme. In 1946 his appointment as Deputy Education Officer for Enfield launched him on a long career of senior public administration in Middlesex. When the County Council was dissolved in 1965, he became Deputy Chief Education Officer for the new London Borough of Haringey. There he supervised a major building programme, a re-organization of secondary schooling along comprehensive lines, and a series of pioneering initiatives in multi-cultural education. He retired in 1977, clearly hoping to have more time for other interests. These included his church activities in the parish of Enfield, his governorships at two voluntary-aided schools in Hornsey, his cricket-watching, his gardening, and his rambling - especially where the downlands of Alfred's Wessex could be found rolling within sight of the sea.

By no means least, there was the HA too. Here Harold's major involvement spanned the years both of employment and of retirement. In our context, above all, the strands of professional and voluntary service, of work and leisure, became most closely entwined. By the later 1950s he was chairman of our large North London Branch, and in 1960 he joined the HA Council. His energy, experience, and practical wisdom were such that by November 1962 he had been invited to assume the post of



Honorary Secretary. In that role, where he was always enthusiastically supported by his wife Winifred, he helped to set the points and marshal the engines for no fewer than ten of our Presidents. He was especially interested in school pupils' perceptions of the past, and warmly supported such initiatives as the *Teaching History* essay competition and the Young Historian Scheme. During the 1980s Harold also assisted in strengthening vital links with the new History at the Universities Defence Group. Equally, however, he never allowed Council to forget that, beyond the sphere of education as formally defined, the HA had a parallel duty to meet the needs and enthusiasms of those many branch-members who were not professionally employed as teachers or lecturers.

When he stood down from the Secretaryship in 1989, the Association rightly made him one of its Honorary Vice-Presidents. A

subscription was taken up amongst HA members at large, and the overwhelming response testified not simply to his fine administrative talents but also to the personal enjoyment that so many had derived from Harold and Win's company on tours or at conferences and vacation schools. After she predeceased him, he moved from London to the cathedral town of Wells, and there he died in May 1997.

Harold's work for the HA had been publicly recognized by his appointment to the Order of the British Empire in 1980, the year before he supervised the celebrations for our 75th anniversary. In 1987 the University of Reading would add its own tribute to this former alumnus. His honorary degree, conferred upon him by Lord Sherfield as Chancellor, marked the quarter-century of service that by then he had already given as Secretary to the Association. At the luncheon following this ceremony the new

HA President Keith Robbins retirement presentation to Harold Freaks on his standing down as Honorary Secretary of the Historical Association 1989.

Master of Philosophy pretended to chide me for having dared in my speech of presentation to compare him with Alfred, as one who had been 'wise in counsel, valiant in defence of what he values, and eager in the diffusion of good learning'. Since each of those phrases truly highlighted a facet of Harold's character and of his achievement within our own domain of history's promotion, I did not retract a single word. Nor would I do so now, nearly a decade after his death, when we can assess in even longer and indeed centennial perspective the fundamental contribution that he made to the work of the Association over so many years.

Michael Biddiss, who is now Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Reading, was HA President from 1991 to 1994.

— LAWRENCE LYLE

Talented 'Pied Pipers' have led HA Tours the world over and with many memorable moments.

# Tours

## Origins

Tours do not appear among the Association's activities until 1934 when the Propaganda Committee congratulate the organisers of a tour to the Roman Wall and the Scottish Borderland on the success 'of their first venture.' This Committee had been founded in 1919 to revive membership after the First World War. Led for over twenty years by F.S.Marvin, a dynamic H.M.I. who believed in Comte's idea of progress, it quickly raised membership to nearly 5000 only to see it fall as low as 3761 during the Great Slump. An annual tours programme began to emerge. In 1935 Mrs Dobson M.A., Litt.D., F.S.A., J.P., Vice-President, led the first foreign tour, to Normandy. The success of a tour to the Yorkshire Abbeys and Castles in June 1935 encouraged the formation of the Tours Sub-Committee to arrange the programme for 1936. Parties went to Provence, Dorset and the North-East of England followed by Lowland Scotland in 1937. A Rhineland tour in April 1938, led by Dr J.F.Dobson, Professor of Greek and Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University, and Mrs Dobson, was open to members of the Classical Association. The cost of £15-5s, with a single room supplement of 13/6d, included all meals, travel by boat, train and coach and admissions. In August two tours were run at the same time, to the Highlands of Scotland, led by W.T.McIntire FSA, started in Glasgow and travelled by 'Motor Charabanc'. Meanwhile Professor A. Hamilton Thompson, Vice-President of the Association and Chairman of the Tours Committee, the leading expert on medieval monastic and ecclesiastical architecture, was leading a 14-day tour of Burgundy costing £15-16s.

In 1939 the Dobsons led a tour to Auvergne in April but the outbreak of war caused the cancellation of Professor Hamilton Thompson's tour to France. However, A.J.Richard's tour of the Marches of Wales went ahead in August, followed by another of W.T. McIntire's northern ventures covering Cumberland and the Western Highlands. No tours were organised during the war.

## Post-War

Tours were resumed in 1947. An Irish tour had to be cancelled because of 'the illness of our intended leader and the impossibility of obtaining a motor coach in Dublin' whilst a tour of West Kent and East Sussex (£11-10s for eight days at 'a good class private hotel') replaced one to the Lake District where accommodation could not be found. Meanwhile Mrs Dobson led a party to South-East France for twelve days based in Avignon; the inclusive cost of £52 did 'not include afternoon tea or gratuities.' Already the familiar warning of the shortage of single rooms and the request to book early had appeared in pre-tour literature. Post-war austerity was ending when warnings were dropped about bringing ration books and the possibility that 'should petrol restrictions make it impossible to hire a motor coach, a modified programme will be carried out by local trains etc.'

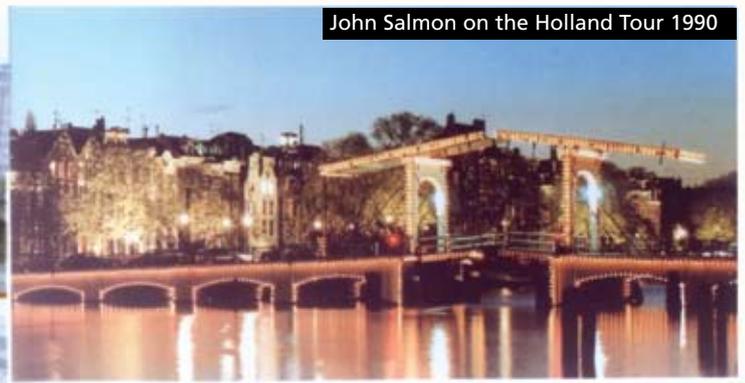
John Salmon (1910-2001) was the dominant figure in tours for 57 years from 1938 when he became secretary of the Tours Committee. His delight in old buildings, especially churches, began as a child. He recalled visiting Canterbury Cathedral at the



A tours brochure



John Salmon on the Holland Tour 1990



age of ten with his father, dissatisfied with the two guidebooks available (at 1d and 2d) he wrote his own, illustrated with postcards. At school he was allowed to cycle out to visit churches instead of playing games. During the war, partly spent training army signallers, his

usually waiting lists for his tours. Few members had cars in those days and there was less competition from other organisations offering cultural tours. One lady resigned her membership when John refused her bribe to jump the queue; his reproof to latecomers at

flying to and from Bilbao and visiting Burgos, Madrid, Toledo, Salamanca and Santiago (being possibly the first organised party to visit the pilgrimage city since the Reformation). The sixteen-day tour with a party of 39, staying in *paradores*, cost £100 each.

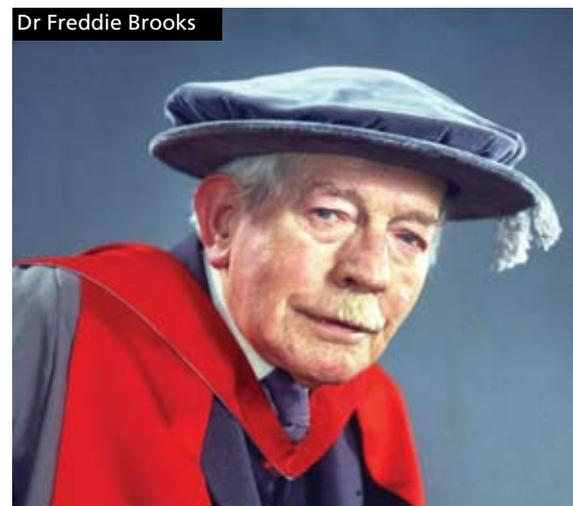
One lady resigned her membership when John refused her bribe to jump the queue; his reproof to latecomers at rendezvous was formidable.

On his earlier tours John collaborated with A. J. Richards particularly when Wales or the Marches were visited. Later, in the 1960s and 1970s E.E. Smith helped him to explore areas as diverse as the

cross-country exercises tended to end at interesting churches. As a schoolmaster and housemaster at Wrekin College he soon became an expert on the Welsh Marches and was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1948. His capacious memory, infectious enthusiasm and wide acquaintance among owners of historic houses throughout the country made his tours memorable. Always meticulously planned with train times suggested (restaurant cars noted), cream teas included and preceded by useful brochures, it is not surprising that there were

rendezvous was formidable. Against a background of enthusiastic and scholarly commentary on history and architecture many memorable incidents stand out – the Dean of Londonderry playing the Londonderry Air on his cathedral organ, an aristocratic lady's butler providing an early tea with chocolate leaves from Fortnum's before the planned tea at the next historic house. After his retirement in 1970 he was able to organise tours during school terms. A particularly memorable one was to Central and Northern Spain in May 1971,

Dr Freddie Brooks



Welsh Borders, North-east Scotland and the Cotswolds. John revisited his favourite areas frequently, notably the Welsh marches and East Anglia. His love of the Suffolk-Essex border grew from brass-rubbing trips by bicycle in his 'teens. If he had a blind spot it was industrial archaeology.

In his last ten years as a tour leader he collaborated fruitfully with Tom Corfe who looked after the business side of the tours – and occasionally took over when ill-health obliged John to take a day off. In retirement at Norwich he guided parties in the

interesting church furniture. His wife Dorothy helped with his tours at home and abroad. In Austria, when the Abbot of a monastery closed to women had allowed all members of the party to visit it, his thank-you letter was written in Latin as Dr Brooks had no German and the Abbot spoke no English. On another tour in 1964 intense summer heat buckled the railway lines near Salzburg derailing the overnight train taking the party back to the Channel port. They were rescued by a train of the '8 horses, 20 men' variety as far as the next junction where they continued their

be taken.' The party did, however, visit nine churches and abbeys and Montacute.

Another amateur archaeologist, Dr Vincent Reckitt, led early tours, assisted on military matters by Brigadier Peter Young, a founder of the 'Sealed Knot'.

### The Corfe years

Tom Corfe, a teacher trainer at Sunderland, had experience of taking his students on fieldwork and had a special interest in Irish history. In 1967 he was invited by Freddie Brooks to lead a tour to Ireland

Tom agreed but, when someone suggested that 'Director of Tours' sounded like a rather sinister official of the French Revolution, called himself 'Tours Director' and remained the genial and efficient organiser for seventeen years.

cathedral until a few days before his death. For later generations of leaders he set the high standards of preparation, attention to detail and exposition to which we have aspired, mere Fords to his Rolls Royce.

Until 1975, when tours came under the new Membership Services Committee, the Tours Committee was chaired by Dr Freddie Brooks, Reader in Medieval History at Hull University with Miss Marjorie Irons as Secretary. Miss Irons (no one in those days used her Christian name) was a chain smoker who stood no nonsense from anyone, whether tour member, stately home owner or HA official. Freddy Brooks, with his pipe, was an enthusiastic medievalist with a particular interest in stained-glass and an encyclopaedic knowledge of French cathedrals. A scholar of strong views he hated crocketed church spires ('hairy carrots'), church organs especially in France where they were often installed insensitively and Harvest Festivals covering

journey in greater comfort, their hunger only relieved by hotdogs and, in the morning, a trolley selling coffee and croissants.

Another leader of early post-war tours was Col. Alfred H. Burne, D.S.O., author of several books on British and foreign battlefields, (he had explored those in England on a bicycle in the 1920s and 30s.) Playing the parts of general and private soldier alike he vividly evoked the clash of battle in his loud voice, giving historical nicknames – Margaret of Anjou was 'Pestilential Peggy'. His parties tramped across battlefields in all weathers and were summoned by hunting horn, whilst his brochures were often unconventional – instructions such as 'Bring no nylons' warned off the less hardy. His Wessex tour of 1951 was introduced thus: 'This tour will be primarily of a military nature and therefore half the vacancies will be allotted to men. There will be a good deal of brisk walking and hill climbing. Sandwich lunches will

where he received enthusiastic support from Irish academics, local experts and politicians. At a civic reception in Cork the Lord Mayor remarked that the HA was more welcome than the last English visitors, the Black and Tans, who had burned parts of his city. A later tour to Northern Ireland coincided with the beginning of the Troubles. The party shared the Queen's University accommodation with the army and had a brisk military briefing but were still fascinated by the richness of Irish history.

In 1976 John Salmon was briefly Director of Tours but almost immediately called Tom in to lunch and asked him to take over the job. Tom agreed but, when someone suggested that 'Director of Tours' sounded like a rather sinister official of the French Revolution, called himself 'Tours Director' and remained the genial and efficient organiser for seventeen years. He revised Freddie Brooks' invaluable *Guidelines for Tour Leaders* and



# Tours

aimed to offer six to nine tours a year. Tom specialised in home tours, becoming an expert on islands. With Marjorie Kennedy, a dedicated and charming Scot who was unable to come on the tour, he explored the Orkney and Shetland Islands in 1988 using coach and ferries and offering different ways of reaching the islands and of providing accommodation during the tour. This singularly successful tour was repeated in 1990 and in 1996. Visits to North Wales naturally included Anglesey whilst he described the Isle of Man as 'a compact historical mixture blended into a unique whole and the Manx cherish and present their wonderful assortment of antiquities with loving care.' The Isle of Wight tour had the full cooperation of the local branch but the contrast with the Orkneys could hardly have been greater.

Whilst John continued his well-established, comfortable and well-fed tours, Tom encouraged walking tours for the more energetic. L.W. 'Dick' Herne led one in 1977 along canal tow paths with uncomfortable accommodation in a moored narrow boat. Marilyn Palmer led another splendid walk along Offa's Dyke; frequent mud and innumerable stiles stick in the memories of those who took part. On another Offa's Dyke walk Ann Hay, as the youngest member, was sent by the leaders, Professor and Mrs Treharne, to risk drowning in search of a Roman ford across the Severn marked on an old map. Parties led by Tom and Sheila explored the Northumbrian Border country, the whole length of the Eden valley, and linked the Roman Wall with the Stockton-Darlington railway.

Another of Tom's innovations was thematic tours – the Church in the North-East and the Industrial Archaeology of the West Riding. Younger members and families were encouraged;

Peter Wells, a headmaster, led a tour to Renaissance Italy for those in the 16 – 24 age range. Local branches were invited to collaborate as in 'Both sides of the Tamar' celebrating the quatercentenary of the Armada. 'Recommended' tours involved co-operation with other bodies such as Swans and the Cambridge Extra-Mural Department at Madingley Hall. Tours 'get-togethers' at Annual Conferences were opportunities for tourists to exchange photographs and hear of the delights in store for the coming season. Short post-Conference tours proved popular. During this time brochures became more professional as more leaders mastered word processing and Sheila's artistic skills made Tom's the gold standard at which we aimed.

It was under Tom's leadership that Ann Hay started her far-flung tours. For China in 1981 she collaborated with Neil Taylor, managing director of Regent Holidays Ltd. and unofficial adviser on tours to the Association, who is over six feet tall and had read Chinese at Cambridge. The country was emerging from the Cultural Revolution but the slogans had not all been changed. We became quite skilled at deciphering 'Workers of the World unite' in Mandarin. After a visit to the Winter Palace near Beijing a calligrapher wrote a Chinese panel, 'Hall of Diligent Administration', which still hangs in my tiny study. After ten days in the People's Republic Hong Kong's single-minded dedication to making money struck us forcibly. Later, Ann was to lead a second tour to China, in which the party enjoyed the blue sofas of what had been Madam Mao's private jet. In North Korea they had an excursion to Panmunjon which should have taken one and a half hours; it took seven with no food except for the fruit buns and banana-ade available at every station. U.S. soldiers at

Tom Corfe



the frontier viewed them with open suspicion. In Hoxha's Albania there were no guidebooks or postcards but magnificent sights; the party were the first to visit the Icon Museum and to take photographs.

## Recent years

I took over as Tours Officer in 1993 and was fortunate to be able to recruit new leaders as well as persuading older ones to continue. Tom Buckney, who taught classics for many years at Rugby, led tours to Greece and the countries colonised by the ancient Greeks. Memorable moments include his reciting Hector's farewell from Homer on the walls of Troy (and it really was 'windy') and talking to the party on the very spot where Aristotle taught Alexander of Macedon. Charles Freeman came on Tom's tour of Ionia when writing his *Egypt, Greece and Rome* and volunteered to lead a tour to Rome which he did brilliantly – with no notes. Subsequently he has published *The Closing of the Western Mind* and *The Horses of St Marks* and led two more tours in northern Italy. Philip Johnston has

helped at home but has made the Far East his speciality with ambitious and popular tours of China; in 2001 'The Dragon Awakes' was justifiably announced as 'an engrossing opportunity to witness Confucius and commerce in a contest of

My tours have been mainly abroad, having cut my teeth as a school master in charge of Foreign Tours at a boys' grammar school. We celebrated the bi-centenary of the French Revolution in Paris and in Tours and explored Baden-

from Wednesday to Wednesday with Sunday morning free still attracts members, with accommodation at universities more readily available and much cheaper than the big hotels our groups need. Smaller groups have used minibuses which are not popular for tours involving much travelling.

## Our tour of Warsaw and Cracow ranged from Chopin mazurkas in a restored palace to Auschwitz which stirred profound reflections on human depravity.

tradition and transition'. In 2006 Thailand, Laos and Cambodia was so heavily subscribed that it was run twice back to back. Tom Corfe collaborated with Alan Baxendale in a unique project of specialist tours which started in Cornwall in 1993, moving slowly eastward every two years; a memorable moment was an old parish priest at Purse Caundle singing the Old Hundredth in a Dorset dialect while a member of the party played the organ. The foot and mouth epidemic in 2001 involved last minute changes in the itinerary but by 2006 they reached Wiltshire. Each tour was accompanied with a comprehensive brochure with maps, plans and pictures of at least 150 pages. Tom and Sheila have repeated some of their earlier tours with great success, notably to North Wales and Northumberland. Members who went on Professor Gordon Batho's short tours in the north benefited from his unique knowledge of the area and his numerous contacts among country house owners. Marjorie Holden of the Norwich branch benefited from John Salmon's advice in leading tours to Norfolk and to Rockingham Forest. Neil Heavens helped Marjorie and other leaders as deputy and led his own tour to Morocco, the Association's first to the Muslim world; it was followed by Tom Buckney's to Tunisia and my tour of coastal Libya in 2005.

Württemberg in poor weather which did not detract from the magnificence of the Baroque buildings especially Ottobeuren Abbey. Marjorie, my wife, has helped me with a tour to the Hill Towns of North-East Italy and another to Toulouse and Cahors and more recently to Croatia. We have, of course, led a tour of the Gateway to England (East Kent). Our tour of Warsaw and Cracow ranged from Chopin mazurkas in a restored palace to Auschwitz which stirred profound reflections on human depravity. Marian Hay has specialised in Spain but also led an enjoyable tour to Prague notable for a number of musical events. Neil Taylor's wide knowledge of the Baltic states has made his tours popular; Regent Holidays were pioneers in opening up these states after the fall of Communism. Recent Baltic tours have included 'In the steps of Napoleon' to Lithuania on which local historians were particularly helpful.

Rising prices, the increasing professional demands on schools and varying half-term dates have reduced the number of teachers on recent tours. I have tried to extend the season by putting on tours before Easter to warm destinations such as the Far East and to India where a party toured the Golden Triangle in 2000. But the traditional home tour

The reorganisation of the Association which followed the Cooper and Lybrand's report involved the abolition of the Membership Services Committee so that the Tours Officer now reports directly to the Executive Committee. With increasing competition in the field of cultural tourism we are having to stress the special features of HA tours – enthusiastic leaders, friendly fellow-members and comfort without luxury. Perhaps we are also helping to increase membership as the Propaganda Committee of the 1930s hoped.

A member since 1949, Lawrence Lyle has helped with 39 tours. He is active in the Canterbwy branch and was Tours Officer from 1993 to 2006. His other main interest is archaeology; he has been secretary of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust since 1974.



Lawrence Lyle

# The Branches of the Historical Association 1906-2006

— CHRIS WRIGLEY

The history of the branches shows the great variety and vitality of the HA.

The early aim of the branches was ‘to bring teachers together’. Nevertheless, the branches soon took on more research-based concerns and broader social and cultural roles as well as helping the development of skills and knowledge for the better teaching of history. While the original eligibility for membership was set down as ‘All...who are engaged or interested in the teaching of History’, this was interpreted broadly and not in an excluding manner and soon ‘general interest’ people, often professional people (retired or still employed), were attending and often running the branches.<sup>1</sup>

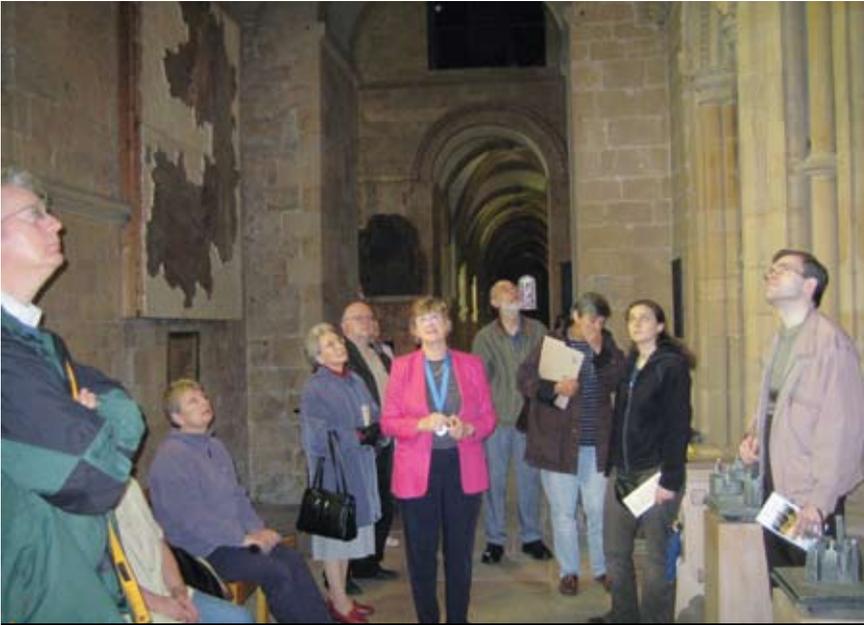
Before the First World War there were only fifteen branches, with two others having already folded.<sup>2</sup> These are listed in Table 1. There was a steady growth in the London branch, from 186 to 301 members, with only regression in 1909-10. Birmingham, Exeter and Leeds grew well, while others were near static and a few, such as Liverpool and Southampton, barely survived.

For two years branch meetings focused almost exclusively on the teaching of history. However, in the 1908-9 session several branches began to hear lectures on the specialisms of their speakers. At Birmingham G.M. Trevelyan spoke on ‘The Political and Ecclesiastical problems of Britain in the Seventeenth Century’ and the Rev. Professor J.H.B. Masterman lectured on ‘Napoleon III’. In Bristol Mr A.E. Tilling ‘sketched the careers of some “Famous Women connected with Bristol”’ and at Southampton Miss Plunkett read a paper on ‘Venice in the Days of her Power’.

The branches soon found that their members enjoyed outings. The earliest were in 1909, with the London branch visiting Penschurst Place in May, the Sheffield branch travelling to Conisborough Castle in June, the Leeds branch going to Marston Moor in July, the Reading branch ending its season with an excursion to the Vale of the White Horse and the North Eastern Counties branch being shown round the Corstopitum excavations in September. In some cases tours became almost a passion, with the York branch noting of 1913-14 that it ‘attempted to meet the increasing demand for excursions during the summer months’ by organising five, the last being a joint venture with the Leeds branch to Coxwold and Byland.

There were also joint ventures with other learned societies. The original fifth aim of the Association was ‘Co-operation for common objects with the English Association, the Geographical Association, the Modern Languages Association and the Classical Association’. The Manchester branch combined with the Classical Association for its 1911 and 1912 excursions to Lincoln and York. Others held meetings with the local history or archaeological societies. More unusual was the Exeter branch’s March 1914 joint meeting with the Exeter Child Study Society at which, it was reported, ‘we had a delightful account of the Village Children’s Historical Society’ by Miss G.A. Hadow.

HA branches also joined with other educational associations. In Birmingham in 1912-13 the branch joined the Joint Committee of Educational Associations and its



The Nottingham Branch at Southwell Minster, the cathedral of Nottinghamshire.



members heard such notables as the Rev. William Temple (1881-1944), then Headmaster of Repton (1910-14), later Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-44). Similarly, the Manchester branch joined the Manchester Associated Educational Societies in November 1912; the inaugural meeting included an address by William Temple on 'Modern Tendencies in Education' before an audience of nearly a thousand.

### The Branches and the First World War

Like most other people, the HA members expected the war to be short. The national annual report for 1914-15 began on a suitably sombre note, observing that it was 'drawn up in a time of gloom and apprehension, when every society in England is called on to suffer with fortitude and anticipate the future with resolution'. With the exception

of the Liverpool branch, which folded, and the Carlisle branch, in a major munitions centre, the branches continued their activities during the First World War (see Table 2). Several lost some of their most active members to various forms of war service. The founder secretary of the Nottingham branch (1911-15), Professor R.C.F. Dolley, was killed in action on the Western Front on 1 July 1916.

In 1914-16 most branch programmes were devoted, at least in part, to topics explaining what had gone wrong and why. For instance, the Rev. W.D. Fenning, of Haileybury College and president of the Hertfordshire branch, urged his members in autumn 1914 to 'organise small independent meetings with a view to spreading a better knowledge of what went before the war'. He gave the one lecture of that session in February 1915 on 'some Political Issues Of The War' to what was described as 'a large and interested audience'. In Bradford the branch organised a course of ten lectures on 'European History Relating to the War', attracting an average attendance of over 300. The following session the branch organised two courses of lectures, one on 'Development of the British National Spirit' and the other on 'Russian History'. The British theme lectures 'were exceedingly well attended'. Such enthusiastic interest in history was soon translated into higher membership figures. In the last year of the war membership of the HA as a whole rose from the 1080-1100 area of 1914-7 to 1311, surpassing the pre-war peak of 1223 in 1913-4.

Several branches suspended outings for the duration. In contrast, the York branch held four in 1915, noting that they were very popular; the final one was a motor excursion to Askham Bryan Church, Healaugh Earthworks and Synthingthwaite

# The Branches of the Historical Association 1906-2006

Priory. By the summer of 1918 the York branch's outings were confined to the city.

## Branch officers

The officers of the early branches were primarily from education, with many presidents being professors or headteachers. Of the presidents of the first nine branches to return annual reports, six were professors (including W.J. Harte, A.J. Grant and A.F. Pollard).<sup>3</sup> A few women were presidents. The first was Sara Annie Burstall (1859-1939), who was headmistress of Manchester High School for Girls (1898-1924), a member of the Education Committee of Manchester City Council (1903-22), President of the Association of Headmistresses (1909-11) and author of educational and religious books. She was president of the Manchester branch for its first two years and served on the HA's Council, 1906-10, giving a paper on 'The Methods of

Teaching History in Schools' at the January 1910 AGM. In 1909-13, one of her successors as president of the Manchester branch was Miss M.A. Grant, the headmistress of Withington Girls' School and a member of the HA's Council, 1911-16.

The other major group of early presidents was clergymen. It was still an age when the Anglican Church provided a scholar and a gentleman for most parishes, many of whom were Oxford or Cambridge graduates.<sup>4</sup> The Bristol branch's first president was the Lord Bishop of Bristol (1906/7-15). The roles of George Forest Browne (1833-1930, Bishop of Bristol 1897-1914) as branch president included giving papers on 'A Crux in Early English History' and 'Research and Travel' and also a social one. The 1911-12 branch report recorded:

An enjoyable summer meeting was held at Wells, where the

Bishop of Bath and Wells and Mrs Kennion kindly entertained the members at the palace. The cathedral and its surroundings were shown and explained, and the Lord Bishop of Bristol gave an address on some points in their history.<sup>5</sup>

The Bishop was succeeded as branch president (1915-32) by the Very Rev. The Dean of Wells. Joseph Armitage Robinson (1858-1933, Dean of Wells, 1911-33), a Fellow of the British Academy (1903), also offered hospitality as well as scholarship. Hence, in June 1922 the branch report recorded an excursion to Wells:

The Dean gave a short address in the Cathedral on the early history of the Church and its first Bishops. Tea was kindly provided for members by Mrs Armitage Robinson in the Deanery garden and the principal rooms in that

Table 1: The Pre First World War branches

Name	Formed	Average membership	Highest	Lowest
Birmingham	May 1907	47	71 (1914)	32 (1907)
Bradford	Dec 1912	24	27 (1914)	21 (1913)
Bristol	1906/07	42	56 (1909)	29 (1913)
Carlisle	Dec 1913	56	56 (1914)	56 (1914)
Exeter	Nov 1906	31	45 (1914)	22 (1906)
Herts & Bucks <sup>1</sup>	Oct 1910	46	65 (1911)	32 (1913)
Leeds	Nov 1906	48	63 (1913)	40 (1908)
Liverpool	Oct 1907	15	19 (1912)	10 (1908)
London	July 1907	260	301 (1914)	186 (1907)
Manchester	1906-07	64	74 (1912)	54 (1910)
North Eastern Counties	Dec 1908	68	85 (1909)	63 (1912)
Nottingham	July 1911	56	60 (1911)	52 (1914)
Plymouth <sup>2</sup>	1906/07	16	17 (1909)	13 (1908)
Reading <sup>2</sup>	Feb 1908	32	42 (1908)	22 (1911)
Sheffield	1906/07	22	28 (1908)	15 (1914)
Southampton	Nov 1906	16	23 (1906)	11 (1912)
York	1912/13	23	23 (1914)	23 (1914)

<sup>1</sup> Entitled Herts only from about 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Plymouth and then Reading closed in 1911.

Notes: Bedford was listed but had no branch reports, having its inaugural meeting in 1920. A well-attended Cambridge meeting in March 1908 led to no branch being formed. The dates in brackets relate to the year end (e.g., 1908 for 1907-8).

Table 2: The First World War 1914-1918

Name	1914/15	1915/16	1916/17	1917/18
Birmingham	49	54	38	42
Bradford	29	26	26	30
Bristol	42	37	38	42
Carlisle <sup>1</sup>	23	-	-	-
Derby <sup>2</sup>	50	53	19	18
Exeter	45	44	49	53
Herts	25	19	21	53
Leeds	48	47	43	49
Liverpool <sup>3</sup>	20	17	14	16
London	300	314	341	400
Manchester	71	65	53	64
North Eastern Counties	52	41	50	49
Nottingham	46	31	22	29
Sheffield	14	15	10	10
Southampton	24	24	25	26
South Wales/Monmouth <sup>4</sup>				36
York	18	16	14	16

1 Not listed after 1915 (a munitions centre)

2 Derby formed 19 February 1915

3 After one meeting on 'The German Case and Its Answer' (in 1914-15) no further meetings were held and the branch formally closed late in the war.

4 South Wales and Monmouthshire formed 6 December 1917

delightful fifteenth century house were shown. Later, the Bishop's Palace, the Vicar's Close, and the interesting medieval hospital, now used as almshouses, were visited.

By the early post First World War years clergymen were prominent in many branches. For instance, in 1921-2, branch presidents included the Rector of Bury (Bury branch), the Rev. A.J. Mason (Canterbury), the Dean of Carlisle (Carlisle), the Dean of Gloucester (Cheltenham and Gloucester), the Dean of Chester (Cheshire), the Dean of Durham (Durham), Canon W.T. Brown (Essex, East London), Dean Waterfield (Hereford), Canon Barry (Leamington), the Bishop of Lincoln (Lincoln), the Bishop of Stepney (London, East), Canon H. Foster Pegg (London, South West), the Dean of Windsor (Reading and District) and the Dean of Salisbury (Salisbury and District). In these years the HA in some areas must

have seemed like the Anglican Church attending to its history books.

The choice of presidents was one revealing area about the cultures of the branches. The HA itself had been but one of many learned

societies founded in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. These included subject associations such as those for Maths (1870), Geography (1893), Modern Languages (1893), Classics (1903) and English (1906).<sup>6</sup> Not only were there many such bodies with local branches but also scholarly local societies such as the Dorset Field Club (1873, later joined with archaeology) and the Thoroton

Society in Nottinghamshire (1897). In counties the scholarly societies linked the leading landed and ecclesiastical figures with well-educated professional people.

### The Diversity of Branches

A notable feature of HA branches was their distinctiveness. They created their own cultures. Some in cathedral cities, especially in the interwar period, were dominated by the clergy. Many in university towns had close links with the universities or university colleges. Some branches even had the head of the institution as branch president. This was so before 1914 at Reading, where William MacBridge Childs (1869-1939), Principal and then Vice Chancellor (1903-29), was president of the branch (1908-11). The Northern Counties branch had as its president for 1910-12 William Henry Hadow (1959-1937), Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle (1909-19), later Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University (1919-30). Other branches had a 'county' feel to them, with local squires or other 'great and good' in senior offices, thereby giving social prestige to the meetings. For instance, Cornwall had as its founder president, 1920-30, the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall (1918-36),

A notable feature of HA branches was their distinctiveness. They created their own cultures.

John Charles Williams (1861-1939), formerly an MP for Truro (and the son of a baronet and Cornish MP).

In some instances the branch's particular flavour stemmed from an energetic and/or dominating person. This was notably so at Horsham in the late 1920s. There the president (1924-31) was Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), a former Liberal MP (1906-10). Belloc was a prolific author and

# The Branches of the Historical Association 1906-2006

a formidable defender of the Roman Catholic Church. He had spoken for the HA earlier and in the 1920s devoted much intellectual energy to attacking H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (1920) as well as to writing his own four volume *History of England* (1925-31).<sup>7</sup> When Belloc retired, the branch report commented that 'by his lectures' he had 'helped and inspired the branch since its formation'. Belloc spoke on 'The Early History of Sussex' (1924/5), 'Domesday Sussex' (1927) and 'First Accounts of Sussex in History', 'when Mr Belloc gave his conclusions as to the Celtic rather than Saxon origins of the Sussex people' (Autumn 1929).

In the London, and then Central London branch, G.P. Gooch (1873-1968) was long the major figure. Like Belloc, Gooch had been a Liberal MP (1906-10) and like Belloc he was a prolific author. However, his work was more scholarly and he received honorary doctorates, was elected FBA (1926), admitted to the Order of Merit (1963) and served as president of the Historical Association (1923-26). As branch president he served for a probably record length, from 1918 to 1961. He gave a presidential lecture at the start of each session for most of his presidency. Over his time in the branch his lectures ranged from the highly topical 'Poland: Past, Present and Future' of 1 March 1918 to 'Some Great French Historians' in autumn 1959.

His longevity as a branch officer was matched by Joan Lewin, MBE, the secretary of Central London branch for some five decades from 1947. Asked in 1997 how long she had been involved with the branch, she replied:

Since I came down from college. I was a fresh young teacher and was flattered to be asked to be secretary of the branch.

The Beckenham and Bromley Branch enjoy a fish and chip supper.



The branch had 971 members (most HA members not in other branches were linked to it). G.P. Gooch was President. Committee members included Joel Hurstfield and Edmund de Vere and some other eminent figures. It was exciting to be secretary and I felt almost overwhelmed by it. I was fortunate as Miss Partridge was treasurer and she gave me support. Otherwise I might not have lasted long – especially when it came to negotiating for a lecture room with University College.<sup>8</sup>

Between G.P. Gooch and Joan Lewin, their overlapping Central London branch officerships covered eighty years of the HA's one hundred, and their membership its whole history. The branch marked G.P. Gooch's retirement with a tea party and a presentation in January 1961 and on 22 February 1997 it marked Joan Lewin's MBE (given for 'services to the Historical Association') and her role in the branch with a buffet and speeches by the current and past presidents and her friend and fellow long-time HA

active member, Peggy (M.E.) Bryant. There was also longevity within a family at Beckenham. There, Dr D. Schove became branch president in 1954 and between him, his wife, his daughter Ann and her husband John Wagstaff, the family were active members and provided branch officers for over fifty years (and still counting).

The distinctiveness of branches stemmed from the concerns and tastes of their members as well as from their officers or other dominant figures. Some branches found that their members wished for many excursions. For instance, the Torquay branch frequently had four summer excursions, with between 38 and 75 people on them. On 23 May 1936 70 went to Trematon Castle and on 19 June 1937 51 went on a full day's trip to Restormel Castle and Lostwithiel. In 1937-8 there were six outings, all with fifty or more on them, with 70 going on 30 April 1938 to Torre Abbey and 75 going to the Torbryan caves. As late as 1940-41 the branch still ran six visits. After the Second World War excursions again went further afield and were clearly a

Table 3 The Post War Rapid Expansion, 1918-31

Name	Formed or Revived	Average membership	Highest	Lowest
Bangor	Feb 1920	26	37 (1930)	17 (1926)
Barking	1923	-	35	-
Bath		48	55 (1928)	39 (1927)
Bedford <sup>1</sup>	Oct 1920	30	55 (1921)	15 (1927)
Belfast	4 Feb 1927-1929	48	52 (1928)	43 (1927)
Bexhill-on-Sea	1924-28	17	34 (1925)	10 (1926)
Birmingham		106	183 (1921)	48 (1918)
Bolton	19 Oct 1928	46	51 (1929)	38 (1930)
Bournemouth	Dec 1922	23	30 (1931)	20 (1923)
Bradford	(Suspended 1934)	40	82 (1921)	24 (1923)
Brigg	4 Oct 1927	12	15 (1928)	10 (1929)
Brighton/Hove/Sussex	1921/2	58	132 (1922)	28 (1929)
Bristol		86	111 (1925)	52 (1918)
Buckingham	1923/4 (after Bucks N.)	14	18 (1926)	12 (1928)
Buckinghamshire (N)	Mid to late 1921-1922	-	40 (1922)	-
Burton-on-Trent	April 1924	50	94 (1925)	27 (1931)
Bury	March 1921	34	40 (1921)	24 (1929)
Cambridge <sup>2</sup>	(1920/1-1927, 1929- )	44	63 (1925)	35 (1926)
Canterbury	25 Nov 1920-1934	36	65 (1921)	21 (1930)
Cardiff/South Wales <sup>3</sup>	1927	34	38 (1929)	29 (1931)
Carlisle	Nov 1921 (1913-15)	52	75 (1931)	35 (1928)
Cheltenham/Glos	1919 (before July)	70	89 (1924)	44 (1931)
Cheshire/Chester	30 June 1921	38	60 (1923)	20 (1929)
Chichester	3 July 1929	65	65 (1930)	64 (1931)
Cornwall	Autumn 1920-30; 22 March 1933-34	33	70 (1923)	13 (1928)
Coventry	29 Nov 1919	64	100 (1921)	37 (1931)
Croydon	27 June 1922-1925	37	48 (1923)	25 (1925)
Darlington	Autumn 1923	23	43 (1924)	13 (1930)
Derby		30	45 (1931)	15 (1921)
Derwent Vale	December 1930	-	41 (1931)	-
Devon, North	Jan 1923-1925	39	57 (1924)	33 (1923)
Doncaster	14 July 1930	-	37	-
Dorchester	Mid to late 1921	32	59 (1922)	18 (1927)
Dudley	Dec 1919-1929	25	61 (1920)	10 (1929)
Durham	Nov 1919	35	53 (1920)	16 (1927)
Eastbourne	July 1923	51	73 (1924)	37 (1931)
East Ham	July 1924	17	23 (1925)	10 (1930)
Eltham	1927	19	21 (1928)	16 (1931)
Essex	Autumn 1920	114	143 (1927)	64 (1921)
Essex (East London)	25 Nov 1921-1924	50	67 (1923)	28 (1924)
Exeter		109	144 (1923)	56 (1919)
Grimsby	Sept 1927	16	22 (1929)	10 (1930)
Halifax	Nov 1923	32	54 (1924)	15 (1931)
Hastings	July 1924	22	37 (1925)	15 (1926)

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Name	Formed or Revived	Average membership	Highest	Lowest
Hereford	Jan 1922-mid 1922, 1926-29	35	41 (1922)	30 (1927)
Hertfordshire	Autumn 1926	77	53 (1919)	107 (1929)
High Wycombe	Oct 1920-25	31	50 (1922)	11 (1925)
Horsham	Mid 1924	51	61 (1928)	40 (1926)
Huddersfield	Jan 1924	18	23 (1925)	11 (1930)
Hull	Sept 1921	62	71 (1928)	54 (1925)
Ilkeston	28 Sept 1927	-	64 (1928)	-
Ipswich	July 1921-23	-	12 (1923)	-
Kent, North	Mid 1924-27	27	45 (1924)	12 (1927)
Kent, West	Feb 1923	47	64 (1931)	34 (1926)
Lancashire (N and C)	Sept 1920	70	90 (1922)	46 (1931)
Lancashire (NE)	26 June 1923	26	29 (1925)	23 (1923)
Leamington	29 Nov 1919	57	73 (1921)	40 (1922)
Leeds		101	137 (1926)	37 (1919)
Leicester/Leics	1920/21, reformed 1922	20	30 (1923)	14 (1928)
Lincoln	June 1920	38	90 (1923)	17 (1924)
Liverpool	Nov 1919-1925, autumn 1929	81	95 (1930)	49 (1925)
London <sup>4</sup>		450	468 (1920)	432 (1919)
London (C)	Mid 1920	463	510 (1931)	420 (1926)
London (E)	15 Nov 1920	94	110 (1926)	67 (1921)
London (N)	Nov 1920	88	143 (1922)	50 (1931)
London (NW)	13 March 1923	-	44	-
London (SE)	21 Jan 1921	41	55 (1921)	28 (1927)
London (SW)	27 May 1921	84	96 (1922)	70 (1926)
London (Forum Club) <sup>5</sup>	1930-1		*	
Luton	1921-23	31	33 (1922)	28 (1923)
Macclesfield	May 1925-27	27	31 (1925)	19 (1927)
Malvern	1921-3	31	33 (1922)	28 (1923)
Manchester		86	132 (1924)	65 (1927)
Medway	12 Nov 1930	-	38 (1931)	-
Middlesbrough	24 Jan 1922-26, 8 Oct 1929	61	89 (1924)	22 (1931)
Middlesex	April 1921-27	65	86 (1924)	38 (1927)
Newport	Jan 1927	35	39 (1931)	33 (1927)
Northampton	21 Sept 1921-23	33	41 (1922)	24 (1923)
North Eastern Counties		72	95 (1931)	40 (1920)
Norwich/Norfolk	19 Nov 1919	30	40 (1931)	25 (1922)
Nottingham		26	33 (1922)	19 (1920)
Nuneaton	29 Nov 1919-27, late 1929	47	78 (1921)	26 (1927)
Oswestry	7 Nov 1923	47	71 (1926)	27 (1931)
Oxford	Autumn 1919 (not active 1927-9)	67	93 (1920)	52 (1927)
Peterborough	Feb 1923	41	50 (1927)	23 (1923)

Name	Formed	Average or Revived	Highest membership	Lowest
Plymouth	11 Feb 1920-29	29	42 (1921)	2 (1920)
Portsmouth	Nov 1920 (suspended 1923/4)	26	43 (1921)	18 (1925)
Radnorshire	4 Dec 1930	-	12 (1931)	-
Reading	Jan 1920 (1907-11)	142	250 (1921)	6 (1920)
Richmond (Yorks)	1930/1	-	10 (1931)	-
Rugby	29 Nov 1919	70	187 (1920)	50 (1928)
Salisbury	Oct 1921	58	63 (1922)	49 (1931)
Sheffield		34	56 (1928)	18 (1925)
Shrewsbury	Dec 1930	-	30 (1931)	-
Sittingbourne	Dec 1930	-	19 (1931)	-
Somerset (W)	Nov 1920	25	30 (1923)	18 (1926)
Southampton	Collapsed in 1929-31	23	25 (1923)	22 (1929)
South Wales		34	43 (1919)	29 (1920)
Staffordshire (N)	Nov 1921	54	114 (1922)	17 (1928)
Stamford	7 Oct 1925	28	32 (1927)	22 (1925)
Stockport	Nov 1922	26	30 (1926)	15 (1928)
Stockton	1923	30	40 (1924)	20 (1930)
Street/Glastonbury	Oct 1923	30	40 (1927)	10 (1931)
Surrey (SE)	27 June 1924	27	30 (1925)	25 (1926)
Surrey (W)	June 1919	44	73 (1921)	38 (1924)
Sussex	Mid 1921-23 (then Brighton)	119	132 (1922)	106 (1923)
Swansea	Oct 1923-25, reformed in Nov 1928	51	89 (1929)	12 (1925)
Swindon	3 Feb 1921	39	64 (1922)	25 (1931)
Torquay	10 Oct 1922	81	97 (1928)	62 (1926)
Walsall	Autumn 1921	42	66 (1923)	18 (1931)
Walthamstow	June 1924	40	55 (1925)	25 (1926)
Warwick	Nov 1923-1930	35	49 (1925)	16 (1930)
Wellingborough	7 Oct 1926	41	61 (1931)	21 (1927)
West and Mid Wales	6 Dec 1924-27	23	25 (1926)	21 (1927)
Whitby	17 Nov 1930-31	-	31 (1931)	-
Wight, Isle of	June 1922-25	23	33 (1923)	17 (1924)
Winchester	22 Nov 1919-1925	42	61 (1924)	27 (1925)
Wolverhampton	Dec 1921	45	89 (1922)	20 (1926)
Worcester	1927/8	42	84 (1931)	18 (1929)
Worthing	16 Jan 1931	-	30 (1931)	-
York	Inactive, then closes from 1927	22	34 (1922)	13 (1920)

1 Bedford was listed from 1907 but this was due to the honorary Treasurer being there.

2 Cambridge is reported for 1920-1 as sending in no report but notably active in 1921-2.

3 Cardiff sprang from the South Wales branch (which briefly included Monmouthshire).

4 London was divided from mid-1920.

5 The History Section of the Forum Club, Grosvenor Place, London, briefly affiliated.

6 Rugby was initially named Warwickshire (Rugby), with four other divisions: Coventry, Leamington, Nuneaton and Stratford-on-Avon (the first three soon being separate branches:).

The highest and lowest membership figures are for the year end (1927-8 appears as 1928).

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major aspect of the branch's culture. In 1953 four excursions were held, including one industrial. The annual report recorded of this: 'A party of 71 visited the "Shiny Ore" at Hennock, by courtesy of the manager, who explained the use of the ore in paint manufacture, and formerly in black-lead polish and ink'. In the 1990s

Some branches had a more educational flavour, with more lectures on such themes, study groups and educational conferences. Such concerns had been the original purpose of the HA and had been very apparent in the programmes of many branches both before and after the First World War. The London South-East branch devoted the 1928-29 session to *A Handbook for History Teachers*, edited by the branch secretary, Miss Dorothy Dymond, who was a Lecturer in History at Goldsmiths' College (later CBE and an Honorary Vice President). According to the branch report, 'Most of the active members of the branch were fully occupied during the session on work for

Excursions were a branch norm, but usually not on the scale of Torquay's expeditions, and organised alongside lecture programmes and educational events.

and after the Trent branch held and increased its membership largely by programmes of attractive outings, mostly organised by Dr Trevor James.

Excursions were a branch norm, but usually not on the scale of Torquay's expeditions, and organised alongside lecture programmes and educational events. Some branches, such as Dorchester, had an annual theme to lectures. These ranged from Ancient History to Victorian Britain and from the USA to Russia and Spain. In some branches sizeable numbers of lectures were put on, often in association with other bodies. The Lincolnshire North-West branch held six lectures (and an outing) but also was associated with twelve lectures on 'Domestic Architecture' put on with Sheffield University. The Ealing branch was notably energetic after the Second World War. In 1955-6 it held seventeen lectures (with a distinguished list of speakers including A.J.P. Taylor, F.L. Carsten, Lady Stenton, J.R. Pole and G.R. Batho), its discussion group met fifteen times to consider 'The Age of Louis XIV' and it arranged six outings. Being an active HA member there was a way of life. Other branches tried three-weekly meetings but fell back to monthly when audiences could not be sustained.

the bibliography' in the book and the four lectures of the session were linked to the book. In addition, there was an exhibition illustrative of the handbook at Goldsmiths' College, 7-11 May 1929, which was formally opened by the former Secretary of State for Education and Vice Chancellor, the Rt Hon. H.A.L. Fisher. There was a strong return to educational concerns after the Second World War. Joan Lewin recalled in July 1997 that fairly early on in her time as Central London branch secretary Professor Medlicott had pressed her and Elspeth Fields to run sixth form conferences. In March 1958, the Cambridge branch, which has often held sixth form conferences, held one in association with King's College. The branch report recorded:

...a schools conference for sixty boys and girls of about fifteen was held in King's College at the invitation of the Provost and Fellows, who entertained members to lunch as guests. All the secondary schools in the city and county were invited to send representatives, and the numbers wanting to attend were greater than accommodation allowed. Mr Salter [branch president] opened the conference, and lectures were given by Miss J.B. Mitchell, Fellow of Newnham College; Dr Peter Eden, Principal Investigator of the Historical Monuments Commission, and Mr John Saltmarsh, the Vice Provost of King's College, on the history and architecture of Cambridge. Dr Eden and Mr Saltmarsh also conducted parties round King's College Chapel and other buildings.

The Historical Association, nationally and through its branches, linked up with a number of groups promoting discussion concerning the teaching of history, some operating under the name 'The History Forum'. These groups brought together teachers in schools and universities, inspectors, examiners and publishers, with the emphasis on sixth-form issues. In 1960 the groups affiliated to the HA were London (founded 1949), Southampton (1949), Cambridge (1951), Bristol (1953), Oxford (1954), Exeter (1955), Chester (1956), Birmingham (1958), Manchester (1959), Leeds (1960) and Lincoln (1960).

There were other HA branches which placed much emphasis on local history and local archival research. For some years this was a feature of the Nottingham branch. Dr J.D. Chambers ran a highly influential Local History Group, whose members, such as W.E. Tate and Arthur Cossons, spoke to the branch and which collectively affiliated to the Nottingham branch in 1932-33. The Plymouth branch decided in 1953 to devote all its meetings for two years to

local history. Its report for 1954-55 recorded that W.G. Hoskins 'aroused much enthusiasm on "The Study of Local History"'. Earlier, at Huntingdon in 1937-8, the branch president, Granville Proby, JP (1883-1947), then Clerk in the House of Lords and later Lord Lieutenant of the county, had gone to unusual lengths to boost local history. The branch report recorded that he 'has made a strenuous step for

was president in the early 1950s, lecturing himself on archaeological subjects and securing Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1954/5 on 'Rome Beyond the Frontiers in the East'.

The number of branches grew after both world wars. Table 3 provides details of the expansion of branches between the First World War and 1931, with the branch activity of the Association's first quarter century

an officer (frequently president) subsequently.

### Overseas Branches

In addition to domestic branches, the Historical Association took on an imperial role. The 1920-21 annual report noted: 'The formation of a branch in Ceylon is a novel and welcome feature'. The first secretary of the branch was G.E. Harding of the Training College, Colombo. Its officers returned to Britain at intervals. In 1921-22 it was noted that the secretary 'was absent from the island on furlough for six months', in February 1923 the president 'went on long leave', and a vice president, Sir Anton Bertram (1869-1937), the Chief Justice, left permanently. In 1926-7 the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Hugh Clifford (1866-1941) became the Patron of the renamed Colombo Historical Association, with his successor Sir Herbert Stanley (1872-1955) taking the office and subsequently chairing at least two meetings (joint with the Geographical Association). Its focus was on the history of Ceylon and by 1930 it had fifteen papers on sale and had a sub-committee working on a bibliography. Between 1920 and 1932 its membership rose from 43 to 75, averaging 53.

While the Colombo branch became a separate, affiliated society, others in Asia were formed as branches of the Association. The indefatigable F.S. Marvin went to Ceylon in November 1925 and lectured to a large audience in Colombo on 'The Teaching of History'. He then inspired the formation of a Kandy branch, based on Trinity College. The branch's first report paid tribute to his 'infectious enthusiasm'. He then went on to tour India. The HA's annual report for 1925-6 noted that:

...branches have already been definitely started in Delhi and Madras. Steps are being taken

## Some branches had a more educational flavour, with more lectures on such themes, study groups and educational conferences. Such concerns had been the original purpose of the HA.

encouraging interest in local history, in most generously presenting to each parish that part of the Victoria History of the County which appertains to the Hundred in which the parish is situated; this should indeed stimulate the Association in its future activities.'

Between the wars and after the Second World War there were several branches with a local history study group. The Horsham one in 1926-8 began research into the history of Horsham. In 1951-2 the Chesterfield branch promoted the preparation of a film-strip, 'The Monumental Brasses of Derbyshire', which it sold for fifteen shillings (75p). In 1953-4 the main activity of a group of the Watford branch was transcribing Watford parish registers. There was also great interest in local archaeology, with this being a substantial part of the local history interest for some branches. At Exeter it went beyond local archaeology. Sir Cyril Fox (1882-1967), who had been Director of the National Museum of Wales (1926-48) and President of the Society of Antiquaries (1944-49),

outlined in Tables 1, 2 and 3. From the fifteen branches at the end of the First World War it grew to 53 domestic branches in 1921 and 83 in 1931.

The power-house behind the considerable growth in number of branches was Francis Sydney Marvin (1863-1943), who perhaps did more than anyone else in the Historical Association's history to expand it. After Oxford University, he taught in elementary schools, was an extension lecturer, an inspector of training colleges and ended his career as Professor of Modern History in the University of Egypt, 1929-30. He was president of the Herts branch (1917-29) and on Council and Chairman of the new Propaganda and Organisation Committee (1918-43). A very high proportion of branches formed in the interwar period came into being after Marvin had organised an inaugural meeting and addressed it. While he was highly important, he was not unique. It is very clear that branch growth owed a lot to HM Inspectors helping to launch branches and often becoming

# The Branches of the Historical Association 1906-2006

in Calcutta, Bombay and Agra to establish ordinary branches, and at Lahore the question of the affiliation of the Punjab Historical Association is under consideration. It was thought that at most centres in India the course which has been most successfully followed in Ceylon might well be adopted, i.e., first to form an ordinary branch, obtaining all the literature and all the assistance available from the parent Association, and then at a later stage, as strength is acquired, to strike off as affiliated societies with publications etc. of their own.

The successes in Ceylon were followed by the affiliation of the Historical Association of Scotland from 1 July 1926 and the Montreal Historical Association in 1927 and a branch in Rangoon from summer 1928. The New Zealand Historical Association, founded in 1923, had affiliated in 1924. Later branches were formed in South Africa, due to F.S. Marvin, in Durban in April and Grahamstown in May 1931 and Pietermaritzburg from 1933. In January 1937 a branch was formed in Lisbon, which eagerly began researching Anglo-Portuguese history and was soon housed at the British Council's headquarters.

The Second World War, like the First, saw a suspension of some branches' activities. By the end of 1939 41 of 77 branches were functioning. In May 1940 50 branches were active, with sixteen holding no meetings and eleven suspended. In June 1939 the HA had 4,630 members (lower than the 4,738 of 1922), and this dipped to 3,464 three years later. In 1944-45 membership rose and suspended branches at Chichester, Leicester and North Staffordshire revived (though, even so, only 44 of 72 branches were active). Plans were then underway to reactivate many branches and a campaign was prepared to establish new branches once the war had ended.

The HA expanded markedly after the Second World War. By 1951 its membership had risen to 8,122 and its number of domestic branches had recovered to 74. In addition there were still overseas branches in Lisbon, Pietermaritzburg and Victoria, Australia and three affiliated societies: Scotland, Montreal and Singapore. By the Association's fiftieth anniversary membership reached 8,694 while the number of branches had fallen to 72. While some branches exhibited considerable longevity, others waxed and waned. Throughout the hundred years a major reason for branches collapsing was the departure of officers and an inability to find replacements. It was noted, for instance, of the Worthing branch in 1951-52, that it had 'been unable to find a secretary, and no meetings were arranged'. Otherwise, dwindling members and few people willing to attend meetings also resulted in closures. In the case of Carlisle in 1953 it was reported: 'Unfortunately, attendance at the meetings was so poor that it had become embarrassing to invite speakers, and income for some time failed to meet expenses. Accordingly the branch was forced to close down.'

Yet, while some closed, others opened or reopened.

Carlisle, itself, was re-established in 1971-73 initially under the name of Cumbria branch. It had earlier existed in 1913-15 and 1921-53. With Ken Mount serving as secretary for some 30 years, succeeded by Ian Mason, previously a secretary of the Essex branch, the branch was active and strong in the HA's centenary year. Nottingham was another example of the longevity of an officer being important in its survival, in this case Professor Michael Jones, who was secretary or president for some thirty years from 1968.

By 1972 the Association had expanded to 100 domestic branches. It still had five overseas branches: Central Africa (based at University College, Rhodesia), New South Wales, Pietermaritzburg, Tasmania and Victoria, of which New South Wales and Tasmania were teachers' associations. In addition its affiliated societies were the Canterbury Historical Association (New Zealand), the Hellenic Travellers' Club, the Morley History Society, Surbiton and District Historical



Ken Mount retires as Secretary of the Cumbria Branch after giving 32 years unstinted service.

Society, Swindon Public Library Historical Society, Wembley History Society and Wimborne History Society. By the Centenary the number of branches had fallen back to 58.

For a century the HA's branches have provided a focal point for many people in education at all levels, interested professional people and others to hear lectures often by major historians, sometimes by leading local historians or archaeologists, to discuss and

some interest in women's history from early on in the HA's existence. For instance, the Leeds branch in October 1915 had Mrs Western read a paper entitled 'Women and Children in Fifteenth Century English Life'; the Bristol branch in 1919 had Miss Lina Eckstein on 'Women Donors in Early Christian Rome'; the Birmingham branch in 1923-4 had Dr Eileen Power on 'Women of the Middle Ages'; the Nottingham branch in 1918-19 had Mrs M.L. Woods speak on 'The English Housewife in the

autumn, 1918'. Over the years there were numerous historians whose lectures attracted large attendances at branches. These included A.J.P. Taylor who often attracted hundreds, but also others such as H.W.V. Temperley, C.V. Wedgwood, A.L. Rowse, Herbert Butterfield, I.A. Richmond, the Rev. Professor Dom Knowles, S.T. Bindoff and Lady Antonia Fraser.

The branches also often played a role in their communities. This was sometimes on their own but

For a century the HA's branches have provided a focal point for many people in education at all levels, interested professional people and others to hear lectures often by major historians, sometimes by leading local historians or archaeologists, to discuss and sometimes research the history of their area and to enjoy outings, plays and films.

sometimes research the history of their area and to enjoy outings, plays and films. Conversely, the giving of such lectures encouraged the givers to think seriously about the dissemination of their research and the interests and concerns of audiences beyond the narrow world of specialists striving to impress other specialists or those blinkered by the RAE to sole pursuit of the Holy Grail of internationally acclaimed excellence.

The records of the Historical Association provide evidence of the varied fare that was put before branch audiences. There is an impressive inclusiveness, with many branches choosing speakers and topics which went well beyond mainstream history of the day as well as having the major historians on big themes of Western history. There was interest in Asia and Africa. There was

Seventeenth Century' and later, in 1933-4, had Miss Ivy Pinchbeck lecture on 'Business Women in the Eighteenth Century'. There was also considerable support for the HA from leading economic historians. In Nottingham Ivy Pinchbeck was preceded by Professor Eileen Power on 'Medieval Shepherds'. The Southampton branch had such future professors of economic history as Jack Fisher, E.M. Carus-Wilson and W.H. Chaloner among its late 1930s speakers. Other branches had these and others such as Peter Ramsay, W. Ashworth, George Unwin, Walter Minchinton, Arthur Redford, Peter Mathias, J.D. Marshall, Eric Hobsbawm and Sidney Pollard. There were also exercises in oral or 'witness' history, including an early one of memories of Paris in 1870-71 and a very recent account in 1918-19 by Miss Hutchinson of University College, Nottingham of 'In Liberated Alsace,

often in conjunction with other scholarly societies, and entailed providing specialist role or acting as a pressure group. Hence the Herts branch secured the Archdeacon of St Albans to dedicate a memorial tablet to Pope Adrian IV (Nicholas Brakespeare) and then put on 'an excellent pageant play' based on Brakespeare's life at Bedmond, where it is believed he was born. Similarly, at the time of the coronation of King George VI the Norfolk branch 'prepared a tableau of Queen Philippa and the Weavers for the historical section of the Norwich Coronation Day procession'. The Torquay branch in the mid 1930s took action to save a fifteenth century house in Kirkham Street, Paignton, with funds coming from a wealthy member. In Nottingham in 1952/3 the branch was prominent among interested bodies in promoting a major public meeting on 'The Preservation of

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HA Branch events from Local History Month 2003.

Nottingham's Past', with a resolution passed calling on the City Council to both act 'to preserve the fast-vanishing historic buildings' and to provide a good museum. The London North branch was notably vigorous in 1954-6 campaigning for better funding for the British Museum and other museums (following a critical public report).

Between the wars, especially in the earlier period, many branches were eager supporters of the League of Nations, with G.P. Gooch prominent in this. This interest usually was linked to modern history lectures but at the London South East branch in March 1922 Miss Dorothy Dymond lectured on 'A League of Nations in the Eleventh Century'. This interest in the League was balanced, perhaps, by strong pro-Empire support in some branches. Generally, however, the branches eschewed current political issues, though the most common outlook was conservative with a small c, especially before the 1980s. The visiting speakers, however, came with a variety of views. One of the more memorable annual report entries records the visit of the eminent medieval scholar K.B. McFarlane of Magdalen College, Oxford, who lectured on 'Class' to the Buckingham branch on 30 June 1930. It dryly observes, 'He made some witty remarks about the future of Public Schools, in whose defence he was not enthusiastic. About the future well-being of the country as a whole, however, he was more hopeful.'

For a century the Historical Association's branches have been a major link between the national body and its members around the country, especially its 'general interest' members. In some areas, including big cities, they have struggled to survive. Elsewhere, including medium-sized towns with substantial rural hinterlands, they have been valued parts of the associational culture of their communities. Most strikingly, the branches have developed in different ways and have their own characteristic culture.

## References

1. *The Historical Association 1906-1956*, London, The Historical Association, 1955, pp.9-11
2. Bound volumes of the annual reports are in the Historical Association Papers, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Hallward Library, Nottingham University. The 1906-21 volume has the reference ACC 1693/1.
3. Walter James Harte (1866-1954), Professor of History at Exeter, was founder secretary of the Exeter branch (1906-26) and president of the HA, 1932-6. Arthur James Grant (1862-1948), Professor of History at Leeds, was founder president of the Leeds branch (1906-11 and

- 1919-21) and president of the HA, 1920-23. Albert Frederick Pollard (1869-1948), Professor of Constitutional History, University of London, was founder president of the London branch (1907-12) and president of the HA, 1912-15.
4. As well as Fenning at Herts and the eminent Bristol figures, the Rev. Walter Howard Freer (1863-1938), who was the Bishop of Truro, 1923-35, was president of the Leeds branch, 1913-16 and of the Cornwall branch 1933-34, and the Rt. Rev. John Howard Bertram Masterman (1867-1933), who was Professor of History at Birmingham University (1902-09) and Suffragan Bishop of Plymouth (1922-33), was president of the Birmingham branch from its foundation for over a year (1907-8).
5. The Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Rt Rev. George Wyndham Kennion (1845-1922), who was of the landed interest and had been Bishop of Adelaide, 1882-94, was a notable example of Victorian athletic Christianity. In *Who's Who*, his entry for his recreations included: 'in former years boating and all school-boy games, hunting, shooting; in Australia, riding, swimming, boating'.
6. *The Historical Association 1906-1956*, p.6.
7. A.N. Wilson, *Hilaire Belloc*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1984, including chapter 13 for 1924-30.
8. CJW interview with Mrs Joan Lewin, MBE, 24 July 1997.

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The Gwent Branch of the HA enjoy a trip to Avebury, Wiltshire

# A timespan of interests

## Some notes on long-standing membership of The Historical Association

— RAFAEL MANUEL PEPIOL

Rafael is responsible for the 'on the web' items in *The Historian*, but here he volunteers as a long-time HA member to interview other 'lifers'.

During its first century, HA membership has included a wide range of people and institutions. Contacting some of them has unearthed noteworthy details and experiences which are worth noting.

### Belonging

HA Memberships are long-standing and the reasons for joining are various. For example, Miss C.E. Munro, who was born two years (1908) after the HA's foundation, joined and remained a member into her nineties. Emeritus Professor G.R. Batho was interested in history by the age of 7 (to his parents' surprise). In 1944, he believed that HA members 'were usually white-bearded old men'; nevertheless, he became a member and helped to found the Ealing Branch in that year. In 1950, he asked for and obtained life membership as his 21st birthday present. Mrs. J.E. Blyth joined because she was teaching history in secondary schools and preparing sixth-form work, areas in which the HA provided valuable help. In the case of Mr. K.D. Mount, he has been a member uninterruptedly for over 56 years (since 1950).

Other members, such as Miss A. Hunt and Mrs. D.M. Manhood, also retain a shared record as colleagues, friends and even family relations with another member. On the other hand, marriage may also have meant that a spouse was a Full Member (since 1956) while the other became an Associate Member, as in the case of Mrs. N.M. and Mr. G.D.A. Catchpole. They may have alternated full with associate membership to avoid duplication of HA printed material coming through their letterbox. Eventually some settled for one full and one associate membership as Mrs. I.L. and Dr. I.A. Colville. The author of this article joined in 1983, maintaining an uninterrupted membership for over 23 years. Other long-standing members, such as Mr. D. Talbot have belonged to the HA for over 15 years but not continuously, although he ensured corporate membership at an institution where he taught.

### A lifeline with the past

Unsurprisingly, an interest in history seems to go back to the earliest childhoods of many HA members. Memories and experiences seem to go back to earliest childhood. A woman recalls sitting on her father's shoulders and watching George V's progress in Birkenhead after his accession in 1910. A man remembers listening in 1936 to King Edward VIII's abdication speech on the radio as a boy, (such listening was more of a rarity at that time), and then tells of the happy occasion of a school festival to celebrate in 1937 the coronation of King George VI, who was Edward's brother and successor.

Other historical events draw further details. At the onset of the First World War in 1914, some of its logistics overruled religious conviction and practice. The girl remembers that her mother was a strict Presbyterian, keen on the observance of the Christian Sabbath as a day of rest. However, her father, a veterinary surgeon, worked even on Sundays, at Birkenhead, testing animals brought over from Ireland, for health and fitness, before they were taken to the front. He wanted to join the war but his profession required him to go to Cyprus to tend to military horses.

As the conflict wore on, she remembers that gassed casualties were being sent to Ireland, but cannot recall precisely whether to the North or the South of the island (perhaps an intriguing point for historians considering the Irish turmoil of the time.) More harrowingly, another member's father who fought in France and Belgium, was gassed in 1918 and was also sent to Ireland to recuperate (a very stormy crossing did not exactly hasten the soldier's recovery.) He received the Military Medal for leading the capture of a German machine-gun post, while his brother (her uncle) served as a stretcher-bearer and was awarded the same medal for bravery under fire. After the war, her father would never eat tinned corned beef, which was known as 'bully beef', because they had had so much of it when fighting in the trenches. Amazingly, this may have constituted a relative luxury. Another member's Dutch father-in-law was taken prisoner on the Somme and only mentioned that they were fed dandelion soup. Equally haunting for the initial member remains the green face of a gassed soldier from the Highland Regiment, and of another who was a shell-shocked casualty who would suddenly jump up in the air but do so silently. She had then some good Irish friends, who were unpopular for a while, because of the troubles in the future Republic of Ireland. Indeed, after the First World War, Europe's map had changed so much that she recalls new school atlases being brought in.

Memories of the threat of gassing continued after the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. A member recalls, as a boy of 14, the awesome practice of wearing a gas mask, while another specifies that 'all [schoolchildren] did gas mask practice occasionally'. Another remembers carrying the gas mask in a box and seeing spikes of wood with a painted rectangle on top

which changed colour on detecting gas. As a 10-year-old one member was evacuated with her brother to Wilmington, Kent (a.k.a. Bomb Alley). She was re-evacuated to Teignmouth, Devon, and shared the local Grammar School, which was machine-gunned during an air-raid. The see-saw of evacuation and the use of air-raid shelters are their common memories. In one case a member was born in the house in which he suffered two bad air-raids in its cellar and is currently living in the same building. He also recalls dam-buster aeroplanes doing dummy-runs at a nearby dam. Further, they saw the cities being bombed: Hull, London, Ipswich, Bath. The sight evokes lingering recollections of 'houses with no windows, nor ceilings' and of the eerie image of a severed doll's head lying on the ground after a bomb, and on D-Day a swarm of aeroplanes. Even now, HA members have residual feelings of bombing raids if several Hercules aircraft from Lyneham fly over, or of shaking involuntarily at the sound of sirens.

Other war experiences produced different results. A member recalls sitting in an air-raid shelter eating butterscotch, a great treat then, as sweets were one of the many things rationed during the war. On the same count, she remembers writing in a school essay: 'Our butcher tells lies. He tells us he has no meat when we know he has.' Strangely enough in another case, while reading *Macbeth* at school, the V2 bombs going over clicked into Shakespearean imagery and the reader saw their flamy tails appearing to her 'like daggers'. One remembered being forced, as a schoolboy with his friend, to take refuge in a muddy ditch when a V2 bomb was coming. 'Although dishevelled, they continued to school and met the Schoolmaster, whose only comment was: "Go to the cloakroom and clean yourselves up; this is a Grammar School." He

is glad he was encouraged to take pride in his school.' However, school in wartime could encompass other activities. A girl recalls seeing marks on shrapnel-hit walls. On the way to school in the morning, she collected shrapnel and nose-cones from shells, and handed them in... but kept the best bits, which were sometimes traded with her mates. Perhaps war failed to make you lose your best marbles.

Such memories and experiences cut closer to family and home for some members: in one case, his father was in the Navy and was wounded twice, off the Firth of Forth in Scotland, and off Greece; but he was plucked up, shortly after finishing Grammar School, and sent for military service as a coder in a warship (1944). Another's father was in the Eighth Army and a BBC war correspondent. Another recalls families counting out departing aeroplanes and waiting to count back the returning craft, as well as the relative comfort of a Spitfire which landed in a junior school field nearby. She ponders on the effects which both wars had on families: they suffered because they were scattered and many women were forced into teaching and nursing. Indeed, her future husband was called up to the Navy and, stationed at Lossiemouth, Scotland, served as doctor to troops, wives and families. For another member, employment as an electrician in a factory (making motors for bombers) meant that he was not called up since he worked for a protected industry producing war matériel; however, he was enlisted in the fire service and recalls how hose canvas (especially when wet during a call) ripped the skin off your hands.

### An interest in the past

Thus childhood and war experiences intermingled. Yet, even when attending Grammar School during war time (1937-1942), one member could sense the study of history

which (among other things) the HA had set out to promote. There was 'a good history teacher' who concentrated on nineteenth century social history and had the ability of presenting 'people as if alive'; he required pupils to produce counterfactual essays in which they 'wondered why [the historic figures] they'd done it'. For another, her 'good enthusiastic' history teachers insisted on documents as part of the study while preparing for university entrance. Another member recalls that, having suffered a severe nervous illness as a child which required ten years' speech therapy, his precocious interest in history went along with the effort to develop his public persona. In it, he was encouraged by his (retired) parents and his Grammar School, where he became Head Boy and, therefore, had to make speeches. Likewise, he gave votes of thanks as a young Conservative. He was offered a chance to be a Parliamentary Candidate but declined, in favour of history, because he considered 'politics as ephemeral'.

On the other hand, early recollections need not have produced a positive response. A member recalls that her schoolmistress was 'dreadful, uninspiring, boring', but she was 'always a great reader' and was not put off. Similarly, being presented with a historic diet of 'lists of battles without significance and the technique of war', another member could not feel 'enthused by history'; so he changed his mind only later at senior levels of study, plus his general and personal experiences and his interest in war films, although his conviction that war is 'awful for humanity' remains. Nevertheless a study of history furnished other members with hindsight on a number of their life events: after the Spanish Civil War, being born shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbour, or having one's

earliest memory getting clothes for a sitting in a photographic studio, only to discover years later that this had coincided exactly with the end of World War II. The portrait, transferred on to wood panel, still hangs at home as a symbol of a first link with and awareness of history.

### Professional commitment

In many cases members obtained a degree in history and followed a career in teaching, another HA hallmark. Some memories linger: history teaching sessions were conducted on Saturday mornings by Mr. M.N. Duffy, whose school textbook on the twentieth century was (remarkably in the mid 1960s) the first on this period. Likewise, professional activities veered around teaching at all levels: primary (which was 'thoroughly enjoyed'), secondary (with accompanying changes in school curriculum and structure of examinations and certificates), college, polytechnic (as it was), university, evening classes and teacher or tutor training. Such activities entailed long-term commitments to specialised fields ranging over Economic and Political Science, Philosophy, then Industrial and Social History; to Art History but in compromise to fit in with syllabi and conferences; to the Certificate of Secondary Education (1964-1974) and to marking history examination papers yearly (1965-2000).

Teaching encompassed different professional skills and aims. In mid twentieth century, most female pupils could be prepared for O-level and A-level examinations, but not always for university entrance. At the time, women were expected to be educated differently. They were not directed to careers or business. For history teaching, however, the greatest challenge was to establish and maintain its overall cover across the range of educational levels in the context of the HA.

One member developed an interest in primary studies and, in 1987, Chester College of Higher Education organised an important primary history conference. This attracted a great deal of national interest and Cheshire Local Education Authority offered support for primary history development work. This led to the founding of the Primary History Association, which grew rapidly and functioned outside the HA. The PHA Committee met at Chester College and began a programme of conferences and a magazine.

This PHA member had also started cooperation with the HA, specifically in an HA pamphlet on primary history which was published and sold well. Eventually the PHA merged with the HA, bringing with it a substantial membership and an active committee. However, there was turbulence, in the mid 1990s, when a proposed reorganisation endangered the primary committee's existence. A happy resolution ensured that the committee's task continued and grew to become a centre for work on young children learning about the past.

History teaching, nevertheless, did not limit HA membership. It includes people from many professions, such as a State Registered Nurse who 'always knew historians', 'made friends through the HA' and, as another member's guest, became Associate then Full Member. Through an extraordinary coincidence leading to the meeting with her husband, a doctor in medicine, who also knew historians but developed an interest in history after their marriage, (he was impressed by the strict use of evidence in historic research). They style themselves 'as amateur historians'.

### Branching out

Alongside the study and teaching of History, HA membership entailed

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belonging to a local branch, with varying categories of people, financing and activities (a feature of everlasting controversy to the present day). For example, for one member, it was the Coventry Branch (initially); for another, the Bath Branch, with the Bristol Branch as an option, because the home address is equidistant from either; for another, in 'Bath, like a mini-metropolis', the Branch offered 'high-standard and very varied lectures'; as for the Exeter Branch, its membership, at the time, was a mixture of students from St. Luke's College, Exeter (where the HA member taught), the general public, and a few schoolteachers. It had few student members from Exeter University then, 'though some Dons like Joyce Youings were supportive'.

Thus local branches presented (and still present) a changing pattern of fortune. The link of corporate or individual membership (as two of the various possibilities) may be established but perhaps no local branch is near. Furthermore, an unsatisfactory location may be worsened when an attempt is made to join a local branch activity and no acknowledgment is received.

On the other hand, local branch membership signified participation in the running of the HA at that level, as Secretary, or Excursions Secretary, or Treasurer, or Press Officer, moving on to Chair of the Branch, and thereby at the higher level as Branch Officer or member of the HA National Council or its several Committees. It was certainly the start, in one case, of many years of involvement with HA tours and educational cruises (which are separately dealt with in this Centenary issue) all over Western Europe and the Mediterranean; in another, it has led to editorial and publishing activity; thirdly, it opened up a direction of volunteer

work for the Second World War Experience Centre. For another member, it has meant running a Summer School, conferences (signally the Conference of the True Millennium 2001), the Cumbrian, Northumbrian and Scottish Borders Experiences, regular Privilege Visits, the History of Education project for the long-term unemployed, as well as many local, national and international commitments.

Last but not least, local branch meetings provided enjoyable 'companionship and friendship with other HA members', as well as the opportunity to hear some memorable speakers, like J.H. Elliott (author of *Imperial Spain* and this member's former tutor) to the Exeter Branch, or Lady Antonia Fraser lecturing on Mary Queen of Scots. Other members go to meetings with an open mind and are often pleased at the outcome, although they point out people's increasing reluctance to go out, because of television.

A similar atmosphere obtained at annual HA Conferences, organised systematically at different venues of interest throughout the country. Although Conferences are found to be expensive, it is acknowledged that they are enjoyable (with 'lecturers with good illustrations, plus tours) and they do present an occasion for meeting many different people, among whom are 'ordinary people who are not teachers'.

## Members' views

Understandably, members have many opinions on the HA. One holds strong views on how to get a Branch to run smoothly. For example, the Ealing Branch was founded 'on a cup of tea and a scone', in the context that 'the Chairman should greet everyone coming to a meeting. Membership should be open to all and the young encouraged specially. Speakers should have the lecture room fully

prepared for them, be offered a meal, accommodation and travel expenses. Above all, publicity in the media should be constant and flyers distributed'. Another member deems that the HA's duty to uphold history's place in the social-educational system and beyond is paramount. For the task, she commends holding conferences and continuing the publication of pamphlets (as it has done recently with a primary issue). She considers that, essentially, Branches should provide local contacts and a focus of interest.

Members' opinions also refer (as they should) to the society in which we live. One believes comprehensive schooling to be in many ways a failure; Secondary Modern Schools should have had more funding, to avoid the status of Cinderella figures of the system. In 1963 he understood it was agreed that all who secured a university place would be funded, regardless of their financial background; he thus deplors the loss of that provision and the encouragement of people who lack motivation and/or purpose to go to university. Another member calls for 'a wider view of history', linking pre-history to the present and to a projection for the future. He ran a course relating science, technology and society where historic events were studied as being significant, not kings nor queens, and were considered in their economic framework and social factors. Consequently, he feels unhappy about the way history is taught in schools.

Thus long-standing HA membership encompasses many different aspects directly and indirectly related to history, as study, education, leisure or otherwise, and comprises a timespan of interests. Remarkably, long-standing members celebrated the HA's 25th (1931), 50th (1956), 75th (1981) and 100th (2006) anniversaries.

— RAFAEL MANUEL PEPIOL

History and the HA helped greatly in this member's quest for identity.

# An Alien's approach to the Historical Association

It must be pointed out, from the start, that the motivation for this article arises from a quest for endeavour of identity, individual and otherwise. Since history was and remains an integral part of such a search, it is no wonder that the Historical Association is an important link in the chain. The Alien's particular interest in the quest lies, by definition, in his origins, individual and social, political as well as religious, cultural and educational, outside the point of reference which determines his position. Furthermore, in the unbroken chain of development of identity, his HA membership has become a pivot in order to render meaning to the past, organise the present, and look forward to the future. As such, the HA Centenary offers an excellent opportunity to proclaim and defend, at all private and public levels, 'an interest in history... the common strand which brings people together as members of the HA'<sup>1</sup>

To consider origins as conditioning circumstances, the fact of my birth in the former Kingdom of Valencia provided a well determined historic position on which to anchor my initial identity. Here was a clearly defined past with its own language, culture and traditions. The Kingdom's fall to the House of Bourbon and its central political control from Madrid in the eighteenth century introduced a further note of linguistic identity. It seems that the registrars, sent by the central government to the periphery in order to compile a census of its erstwhile rebellious subjects, were all Castilian speakers whose ears could not distinguish the sounds of the other languages in the Peninsula. They were therefore bound to write down surnames in the spelling which would be more akin to Spanish. Thus they would fail to recognise an unstressed 'a' (as in 'mortar') and note it down as an 'e'. As a result, my father's surname is spelt Pepiol. Likewise, they could not distinguish a fricative or affricate 'g' (as in 'leisure' and 'ledger') and render it in their Castilian-Spanish approximation of 'ch'. Consequently, my mother's surname is spelt Vercher.

This example of political interference in a context of historic and linguistic identity constituted part of the picture. Valencia had been the last political capital of the ill-fated Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939). Consequently, it suffered political, religious and cultural oppression under the Franco dictatorship (1936-1975). Among many things, it meant that Castilian-Spanish was the imposed official language. For someone like me who was born in the region, as mentioned above, after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), it entailed living in such an oppressive environment, dominated by the official language. Thus I remember attending secondary education when students and teachers alike would go into the classroom talking in the vernacular Valencian; the bell would sound and the teacher automatically switched to Castilian-Spanish; when the bell rang again at the end of the lesson, he automatically reverted to Valencian, told us to collect our books and bade us farewell. I insist that the strongest impression of this repeated process was that it happened automatically on all sides. Nobody ever queried it. Life was like that.





Easter day-out by young people in Valencia, Spain, circa 1960. They are standing on one of the containing walls of an irrigation reservoir (which doubled up as a swimming pool) in an orange-growing estate half-way between Carcaixent and Alzira. The author is sixth from the left.

Nevertheless, my identity development in the context of these historic, linguistic and political reference points continued apace. Having completed my secondary education, I wrote an article on 'Vernacular languages' which was published in the school magazine. In it, the illustrious political, religious and cultural past of imperial Spanish was lauded. Likewise, I pointed out that the official language was

Spanishness, I advocated linguistic plurality in Spain.<sup>2</sup> With hindsight, it is easy now to appreciate the temerity of the stance at a time when the Franco dictatorship brooked no opposition at home and struggled to increase international tolerance of it abroad. Such a stance becomes remarkable when it is remembered that my secondary and higher education studies were sponsored by the Francoist single party and the

live radio broadcast on the return to Spain of Blue Division ex-combatants (who had fought with the Nazis against the Soviets) and other Spaniards residing in Russia. 'Up to a point, the news could not concern me,' I reminisced years later, 'since my family were waiting for nobody to return but, in some guise, that sudden and unpredictable event bothered me. (...) It was something unusual happening at that very moment among us and for us. We were dealing with a widespread feeling of emotion which was unplanned and could not be planned.'<sup>3</sup> Thus I began to discover that, outside the dictatorial cocoon, there existed an unofficial uncensored real place called 'Abroad'.

## HA membership has become a pivot in order to render meaning to the past, organise the present, and look forward to the future.

used to vindicate other common features of our identity and, having signalled out Valencian, I deplored the attitude of some regional contemporaries who looked down on it and spoke a mixture of Castilian and Valencian, presumably ignoring that the latter had enjoyed a flourishing period prior to the former. Having made references to Galician, Catalan and Basque, and banking on the official unifying

Spanish Catholic Church. Then as now, the case is that sincere gratitude does not imply servitude. Such is life.

Alongside the initial reference points and the assertion of regional / national identity which they triggered, my awareness of the outside world as history in the making was also developing. This happened in 1955, during my thirteenth year, when I heard a

The international dimension became the last major piece of my identity puzzle: 'different languages, landscapes, people, customs and ways of viewing life.' I travelled through France for a summer course in Italy in 1961 and then lived in the South of England for a year (1964-1965). 'Suddenly, nothing of what had been taken for granted [inside the dictatorial cocoon] could hold its ground before these people: it had to

 HOME OFFICE  
Lunar House Wellesley Road Croydon CR9 2BY  
Telephone (Immigration) 01-686 0688  
(Nationality) 01-681 3421

Please reply to  
The Under Secretary of State  
Your reference *FNAPS/VFT*

Our reference *P 1511 54*

Date *9. 11. 73.*

The Under Secretary of State acknowledges the receipt of the following documents relating to  
*MR. RAFAEL MANUEL PEPIOL VERGER.*

Passport/s ✓  
Travel Document/s ✓  
Work Permit ✓  
Bank Pass Book ✓  
Post Office Savings Book ✓  
Birth Certificate ✓  
Marriage Certificate ✓  
Certificate of Registration ✓

The matter is receiving attention and the documents will be returned as soon as possible.

Meanwhile this acknowledgement may be regarded as authority for the holder to remain in the United Kingdom pending a decision on any application made for an extension of stay.

be defended.' Being neither Francoist nor Catholic, the need to assert and defend my identity constituted there and then 'the reason for my way of being and behaving'. One started by criticising all which had to be defended and, according to my previous account, I had already done my homework on it. It did not take long to comprehend that the foreigners amongst whom I lived were interested in me and the country of my birth, as well as in themselves and other nations on Earth, because they were concerned 'to grasp the truth, to the extent to which truth can be apprehended, about the history of that moment which we all, they and us, were making'. In other words, it seemed to me that different 'peoples have more reasons to be united than to hate one another, if only they knew those [reasons] enough'. So that I wished 'to live in my [20th] century ragingly, since it was the only justification for having been born during it'.<sup>4</sup>

With the regional / national and international dimensions in place, my identity could grow and develop. My return amongst my compatriots, therefore, signified a period of work in those areas, interspersed with

visits to and contacts from abroad, especially Germany and Britain. Growth and development of identity there happened, indeed. After an interlude of three years, roughly, I moved to London to take up a post with the BBC Radio External Services at Bush House. This was a journalist's version of the United Nations and, very soon, I had made friends with colleagues of many official nationalities, as well as some unofficial ones for whom the BBC also used to broadcast. Thus it happened that a well-meaning and kind friend of mine clarified that my return to live among foreigners was no such thing at all. Never mind about my being Spanish. In fact, I was an Alien. He, a co-Alien, then

and the clerk's astonishment, it seemed that I was not an Alien but two! With a glint in the eye, the clerk retrieved a file where, separately from Alien Pepiol, Alien Verger was also registered using my mother's surname (in the spelling which I had revindicated at the time). Thereafter, I came to the conclusion that the only honourable thing to do remained to resign myself to using my hyphenated surname with the spelling which appeared on my birth certificate.<sup>6</sup>

The hyphenating solution worked relatively well in most cases, though not all, even when, as with employers, their staff roll administration might be expected

## I was classified as an Alien and was given a Certificate of Registration as proof of identity.

recommended a book which had been written by another co-Alien and which I promptly bought and read. There I learned, what is more, that I had been an Alien all my life because, simply, 'Truth does not depend on geography'; so the only thing left to do was to follow the instructions of this manual *on How to be an Alien*.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from this hugely entertaining and provocative eye-opener, there was the reality of the Home Office where, indeed, I was classified as an Alien and was given a Certificate of Registration as proof of identity. It could be expected that the matter was settled. Far from it. Some time afterwards, the post brought me a peremptory letter from the Home Office inquiring why I had not reported my stay in the United Kingdom. I rushed down to the office in Lamb's Conduit Street and brandished my Certificate of Registration. To my consternation

to know who you were and how you were called.<sup>7</sup> The point, however, which is worth noting here refers to the ease with which, even in good faith, it remains possible to alter details of identity. To this observation I shall return later, setting it in the context of history.



Torres de Serrans, Valencia 1967



# An Alien's approach to the Historical

At the time, on the other hand, it seemed that my Double Alienhood had been resolved. Following my career move from London to Bristol, personal and professional prospects developed into permanent settings and, as a matter of course, the next practical step became naturalisation. Another surprise awaited me. The logic was terse: 'If you have a connection by birth, marriage or descent with another country you may be a national of that country in addition to being a national of the United Kingdom. Acquisition of United Kingdom nationality does not necessarily cause the loss of another nationality or citizenship.'<sup>8</sup> Put it another way: after a brief spell as a Double Alien, I became a full-fledged Dual National. Consequently, a Certificate of Naturalisation was granted with effect from the same date when, by referendum, Britain voted to stay in the European Community: 2 June 1975.

It can be concluded that identity, whether individual or communal at all levels, is a life-long process. While its main settings may be determined early in an individual's development, its boundaries can stretch further according to the person's life experiences. It can also be concluded that identity, in any place at any time, will be shaped and fashioned by the individual and communal happenings of society, in the context of different identities of other individuals, groups or societies. The case of the differing spellings of my two surnames should be borne in mind. Furthermore, it can be concluded that identity, for the purpose of control of such individuals, groups or societies, may be manipulated by vested interests of any ilk, whether political, religious, economic, cultural or otherwise. Moreover, in the present culture of mass media, identity can be overwhelmingly and easily manipulated to suit the purposes

of any such vested interests. All of which draws towards the Alien's approach to the Historical Association. After the death of the dictator in 1975 and Spain's political development in its return to democracy culminating in the 1978 Constitution, my professional activities led me to a Ph.D. and, in the process, to HA membership. The Association, therefore, became the pivotal point in my quest for identity as well as in my doctoral studies. It embodied personal and professional achievement at individual and communal levels.

Ever since, I have considered that the Historical Association, (or better, the group of people who are its members) face an onerous and important task: mainly, through the study and dissemination of history, at all levels and in all forms, to inquire into the validity of identity, both individual and communal. Then the HA must challenge every and any attempt to manipulate history by any vested interest for its own purposes, especially under the ease supplied by modern-day technology. This is a difficult task which has engaged the HA's efforts during the last century and should

equally focus its attention in the future.

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Dr Rafael Manuel Pepiol (philologist, journalist, lecturer, historian) worked in Madrid and London (BBC Radio External Services) and taught Spanish contemporary area studies and language, including legal aspects, at the University of the West of England. He is a long-standing member (including former Chairman) of the Bath Branch of the Historical Association. He took early retirement in 2002.



Bush House, Aldwych, London 1969, where the author worked for the BBC Radio External Services, Spanish Section.

# The Historical Association and Local History

— TREVOR JAMES

The Historical Association has been involved with local history since its inception.

The Historical Association was an early formative force in the study of Local History in Britain. Its Village History Committee, which later evolved into the Local History Committee, was first convened in the 1920s. Its origins possibly lay in the continuing enthusiasm for antiquarianism which prevailed at that time and this is fully twenty years before W. G. Hoskins, H.P.R. Finberg and M. W. Beresford began to chart the methodology and philosophy of modern Local History. Certainly the Historical Association's pedigree in Local History links it with the nineteenth century antiquarian enthusiasms from which Local History has grown, and its commitment to the subject as a key element of the Historical Association's wide-ranging interests was fully shaped long before the Standing Conference for Local History and its successor, the British Association for Local History [BALH], came into the historical arena. The Historical Association had an early commitment, however indistinctly defined in those days before Hoskins, Finberg and Beresford, which saw Local History, history at the micro level, as something more than just 'national history writ small', and as a valuable contribution to the historical process in its own right.

Because it had this specialist committee which had a naturally strong interest in the historian's fundamental tools of documents and artefacts, and no other committee had been convened to pursue such matters in any area beyond Local History, very quickly the Local History Committee assumed a wider role in relation to the all-important areas of archives and museums, and it became and remains the policy of the Historical Association to refer all policy developments in these two areas to the Local History Committee. Obviously archive management, retrieval, protection and access, and the parallel issues relating to artefacts and museums, are key concerns of historians. The result has been that for over seventy years the Historical Association's Local History Committee has been at the forefront of consultations regarding all public policy developments concerning archives and museums over that period of time. This has become less pronounced since the emergence of a Department of Culture in the 1990s, and more latterly of a Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, which has begun to draw these matters more closely into the political process. But until the 1990s a network of agencies, pressure groups and academic bodies, such as the Historical Association's Local History Committee, worked valiantly to ensure that the cornerstones of our research needs as historians generally were given due care and protection and were accessible to working historians, whether professional or amateur, national or local. The result of this was that the Local History Committee by the 1970s was at the nexus of a network of groups who worked tirelessly in the interests of the wider historical community in such groupings as the Records Users Group, and it also explains why the Historical Association's Local History Committee to this day includes, and welcomes, representatives of such important Local History stakeholders as the Victoria County History, the Association of Local History Tutors, the BALH and the Conference of Regional and Local Historians [CORAL]; and equally why the Historical Association's Local History Committee is represented at the BALH.



Posters produced for Local History Week 2002

Guidance in the use of documentary sources has been a continuing preoccupation of the Local History Committee over many years. Amongst many publications the two volumes of *Short Guides to Records* particularly stand out. These began to appear as a series of individual items in *History* between 1961 and 1971. These twenty-four introductory guides covered such issues as rate books, poll books, probate inventories and chantry certificates. For the next twenty years offprint versions were highly valued and heavily used by active local historians. In 1990 the decision was made, with help from the Aurelius Trust, to commission a further twenty-four introductory guides to extend the range of documentary guidance available and these were in such areas as churchwardens' accounts, settlement papers, archdeacons' records and school log books. In 1994 the original twenty-four short guides were published as a single volume – *Short Guides to Records [1-24]* – and they were joined in 1997 by *Short Guides to Records [25-48]*. These continue to be popular and energetically used. Discussions are continuing in the Centenary Year as to whether a third

volume of short guides would be a feasible undertaking.

Other important and formative publications to assist local historians have been commissioned to appear in the *Helps for Students of History* pamphlet series. Amongst these A.A. Dibbens's *Title Deeds*; F. G. Emmison's *How to Read Local Archives 1550-1700*; Robert Perks' *Oral History*; Roger Swift's *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914: Perspectives and Sources*; and Peter Eden's *Small Houses in England 1520-1820* have become classics and essential tools for working local historians.

Throughout the lifespan of *The Historian* the Local History Committee has been represented on its editorial board and Local History Committee members have been involved in the identification and commissioning of local history articles. Over sixty articles, covering various aspects of local topographical and cultural history, have appeared so far and a local history article is now a standard feature of each edition, encompassing a huge range of topics. These articles frequently have a very specific local focus and yet also

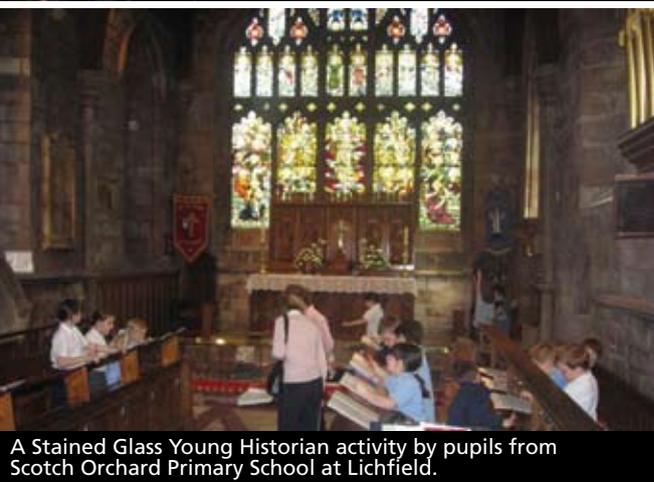
serve as an example against which other local researchers can make comparisons. Peter de Figueiredo's recent article on 'Cheshire Country Houses and the Rise of the Nouveaux Riches' which appeared in the Summer 2005 edition is a very appropriate illustration of this helpful provision for local historians.

### Local history and the Branches

Although it was formally confirmed as a strategy in the recently adopted Historical Association Development Plan, it has always been the practice that local history has been placed at the heart of the Historical Association's activities. This can be confirmed in any year by reference to branch programmes and branch reports because most include local history items in their annual programmes as a matter of course and a minority of branches have programmes which are predominantly comprised of local history lectures and fieldwork. Branch local history publishing programmes are another aspect of the Historical Association's contribution. Pamphlets have been published in places such as Sheffield and Beckenham; Coventry and



'The Bridewell Story'. Wymondham Heritage Museum holds a living history presentation



A Stained Glass Young Historian activity by pupils from Scotch Orchard Primary School at Lichfield.



St Michael's Primary School Lichfield - Young Historian Project Citizenship activity at Borrowcop Gazebo.

North Warwickshire have made a significant contribution over many years; but the achievement at Bristol over more than forty years has been astounding. The Bristol Branch has published well over one hundred pamphlets on a variety of themes, which have enthused a local audience but which have also been useful to students of local history because of their continuingly high standards. The range of topics has been enormous, possibly the most unusual being Derek Winterbottom's *A Season's Fame* which is an account of how Arthur Collins of Clifton College in 1899 made the highest ever individual cricket score of 628 not out. The Beckenham and Bromley Branch run a regular newsletter called *The Beckenham Historian* which always has a decidedly local emphasis. Alongside the Branch activity, the Historical Association Tours programme has frequently contained local history options within Britain. Very successful Local History Conferences used to be held

in the East Midlands in the 1980s and this idea was revived, again successfully, at Manchester in 2002; and, of course, the 2004 AGM and Conference at Liverpool had local history as its main focus. Residential conferences with a strong emphasis on local history have been held in recent years at Durham and Carlisle, to the latter of which the Local History Committee contributed guided fieldwork visits to Silloth and Whitehaven.

In recent years, in support of the study of Local History in schools, the Local History Committee has been a firm supporter of the Young Historian Project and has negotiated funding from both the Historical Association Development Fund and the main budget to support Young Historian Awards in Local History in two primary and three secondary school categories. Committee members have enthused over the quality of the entries submitted each year and have been pleased to be able to support this school-

based curriculum initiative. Recent Young Historian Local History Award winners have come from St Bartholomew's Primary School in Sydenham, Shire Oak School at Walsall Wood [Key Stage 3], Gedling School in Nottinghamshire [GCSE] and Thomas Mills High School at Framlingham [Post-16]. This initiative is continuing.

Another initiative has been the promotion of regional visits to a variety of venues and locations which are not ordinarily open to the public. These have included the *Guardian* Newsroom; St Mary's College Oscott [to see the Pugin interior and furnishings]; W. and T. Avery's private museum; Heage Windmill; and the St Pancras Hotel [prior to its refurbishment]; and there have also been some guided walks of an unusual kind – to the industrial village of Ironville; in Manchester City Centre; and around the historic Surrey village of Woodside, in conjunction with the Mid-Trent, Manchester and

# The Historical Association and Local History



Grimsby Branch's guided walk around Immingham, taking in Pilgrim Fathers' Memorial.



Essex Record Office open day.



Liverpool, and Beckenham and Bromley Branches respectively. This programme is continuing in Centenary Year with another Manchester walk and a visit to a Co-operative Museum in Birmingham.

## Local History Week

The Historical Association's Local History Committee has been the driving force behind what started out as a Local History Week in May 2001 and grew to be a Local History Month in the succeeding years. It was very much a partnership with a vast range of local history, family history and archaeological organisations, societies and agencies, collaborating to place the attractions of local history as an academic and leisure pursuit and a lifelong learning opportunity before the general public. It reinforced the Historical Association's claim to be at the heart of local history. It was a huge success, backed by electronic databases, including one managed from the Historical Association office in Kennington, and by media

such as *BBC History Magazine*, that has caught the public mood and has now become a much anticipated annual festival of local history, involving lectures, walking tours and special visits and exhibitions.

The Historical Association's Local History Committee has at times functioned as a pressure group. In a sense it has been doing this through its involvement in the continuing consultations over public archive and museum strategies. In the 1980s, however, it was involved in the campaign to ensure that the historic integrity of the open field village of Laxton in Nottinghamshire would be protected in the transfer of ownership and management of this unique survival from the Department of the Environment to the Crown Estates Commissioners, as part of the wider privatisation of public assets that was being pursued at that time. As far as it was possible to do so, the guarantees have enabled future generations to continue to explore and understand

the agricultural arrangements of earlier times.

Local history through local courses and local societies is a burgeoning adult leisure interest of modern times, and family history has grown immeasurably alongside local history. Under the Historical Association's Development Plan the Local History Committee has a commission to develop its role to embrace family history and the lifelong learning culture which is now an established feature of modern adult life. Already some moves towards family history have been undertaken, in such areas as day schools on surnames, and this wider commission is well within the competence of the Local History Committee, given its achievements and service over the last eighty years.

Trevor James is a Centenary Fellow of the Historical Association, is Director of the Young Historian Project and Secretary of the Mid-trent Branch.

— JOE SMITH  
AND  
MALCOLM CROOK

Publications  
have been a  
prime means  
whereby the  
HA has kept  
contact with its  
members.

# Publications

The Historical Association has been involved in publishing for virtually the whole of its existence over the past hundred years. A Publications Sub-Committee was quickly established and it began to produce leaflets, the beginning of a whole series of pamphlets which reached a veritable profusion in the 1960s and 1970s and were authored by some of the leading British historians. A journal, entitled *History*, followed soon afterwards. It was first issued during the First World War and has gone from strength to strength ever since to become a leading international journal. It too, would attract the expertise of some of the most eminent historians working in this country in the twentieth century. The concern to keep members up to date with the latest research was another early objective of the Association, fulfilled by the *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature*, an ever-more invaluable aid as the amount of published material shows no signs of decreasing. In more recent decades two educational journals, *Teaching History* and *Primary History*, have appeared, both highly influential in their fields, while the impressive inventory was completed with the emergence of a members' magazine, *The Historian*, in 1983. In this regard, as in so many others, there is much to celebrate.

## History

The appearance of the first issue of *History* in April 1916 occurred during time of war and essentially marked an act of rescue. The new publication was intended to replace its namesake, a magazine edited by the independent author Harold F.B. Wheeler which had started in 1912 as a private venture and had run into publishing difficulties. At the annual meeting of the Historical Association in January 1916 a resolution was carried unanimously to produce a journal which would be owned and controlled by the Historical Association and would be called 'History'. The contents would cover a broad chronological range and would seek to keep readers 'in touch with all the more important results of research, and even by means of articles to make not infrequent contributions to historical learning.' In fact, the stated purpose of the new journal was not to appeal solely to members of the Historical Association 'but to the larger public outside that charmed but limited circle.' The current slogan of the Historical Association as 'the voice of history' was just as evident all those years ago in what might be described as the 1916 'Mission Statement' for the new journal: 'We hope to represent the interests of all sorts and conditions of teachers ... we hope also to appeal to the general public ... We should be impeding the spread of historical truth if we confined ourselves to research and ignored the means by which its results may be diffused throughout the educational world. Hence, in the articles we publish, we shall endeavour to provide matters of interest to the general reader no less than to the history specialist.'

The journal was published on schedule under the editorial direction of A.F. Pollard. In its early years it attracted the goodwill and support of many historians, history teachers and members of the Historical Association. Eminent historians such as G.M. Trevelyan, Elie Halévy, Paul Mantoux, H.A.L. Fisher, F.M. Stenton and T.F. Tout were willing to contribute articles. Each issue of the journal contained several learned articles which were often complemented with short 'Historical Revisions' on selected topics of historical controversy such as Magna Carta or the Spanish Armada. A section of reviews of recent books was also included. The high scholarly quality



and readability of the journal was never an issue. The main problem, however, was finance. During the 1920s the annual cost of membership to the Historical Association was 10s with an additional 5s required for *History*. Unfortunately, as the 1921 Annual Report of the Historical Association observed, not enough journals were being sold so that the average cost of producing each copy was actually more than the amount paid by a single subscription. The answer was to recruit more subscribers and in this respect the Historical Association looked to the Branches. For example, the 1926 Annual Report noted that the deficit 'would at once be wiped out if the proportion of subscribers to members in other branches reached the standard of those at Cheltenham and Gloucester, Exeter, and East London.' Branch officers clearly took heed because the total number of subscriptions rose to more than 2,000 in 1928, a figure that made the journal financially viable. A single gift of £10 from the Oxford Branch to help reduce the deficit was also gratefully recorded.

The most flourishing period for *History* was during the expansionist phase of British Higher Education in the 1960s. At the helm was Alfred Cobban of University College London who became Editor in 1957. Under Cobban, the annual subscription for *History* was doubled to 10s a year. Nevertheless, the number of subscribers steadily rose from just over 6,000 in 1957 to 9,000 in 1962 and to 10,000 in 1967. Individual members of the Historical Association still made up the large majority of subscribers, but it was noticeable that an increasing number of libraries took out corporate subscriptions. While the journal continued to attract articles of high scholarly standard, a notable new feature was the increase in size of the Book Review section, as Cobban remarked, 'to cope with the flood of new historical works coming in for review.' Cobban did much to make *History* a leading academic journal not only in Britain but also in the wider world. Moreover, he successfully catered to both the specialist and the general reader. Shortly after Cobban gave up his editorial duties in 1967, his successor Ralph Davis, who would himself serve as Editor for more than a decade until 1978, recorded that Cobban had 'attracted and published an impressive series of articles which were both solid and serious and exciting, readable and of the most general interest both to those of us who teach the subject in schools and universities and to a much wider public.'

In 1989 the Historical Association entered into an arrangement for the production of *History* to be taken over by Blackwell Publishers in Oxford rather than be produced in-house at Kennington. The outcome was advantageous to the Historical Association because it reduced costs and released personnel at Kennington for other activities. In 2001 it was decided to put the contract for the production of the journal out to competitive tender. The resulting decision to enter into a joint equity arrangement with Blackwell Publishers meant that the Historical Association and Blackwell Publishers became equal partners in the publication of *History* and the *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature*. The partnership was marked by a new cover design with an image on the front of the issue for January 2002. The arrangement has worked very well especially in producing an increased income for the Historical Association. Manuscripts and Book Reviews continue to be received and processed by the Editor. Blackwell Publishers deal with the production and marketing aspects and contribute their expertise in developing the journal as an electronic research tool. In keeping with the 1916 'Mission Statement', *History* continues to maintain a broad appeal. The recent annual Publishers Report, which covers the year 2004, reveals that the number of institutions throughout the world with subscriptions for access to *History* and the *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature* increased from 1,645 in 2003 to 1,986 in 2004. Moreover, in terms of the new measure of the

'downloading' of articles, *History* was 'downloaded' 40,836 times in 2004 compared with 29,436 in 2003 – a very encouraging increase of 39 per cent.

### Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature

The *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature* has regularly appeared since 1911, thus recording an even longer continuous period of publication than *History*. The *Annual Bulletin* has truly proved to be a 'unique' type of publication because it is not, as many people assume from its title, just a bibliography consisting simply of lists of books and articles. The several contributors, who are acknowledged experts in their particular field, are asked to be selective and give a brief but critical analysis of the most recent historical works. Furthermore, the coverage extends from the Ancient World up to the Twentieth Century and also includes sections on Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, Asia, and Australasia. As a result the *Annual Bulletin* provides an invaluable guide especially for history teachers preparing courses but also for researchers, students and general readers.

The *Annual Bulletin* was included with *History* in the joint equity arrangement that was signed between the Historical Association and Blackwell Publishers in 2001. This means that the contents of the most recent journals are now available on-line in database form. So far the results have been extremely pleasing. Articles in the *Annual Bulletin* were 'downloaded' 13,735 times in 2004 compared with 3,220 in 2003 – a most impressive increase of 327 per cent.

### Links with Publishers

Over the years there have been many links between the Historical Association and Publishers.

# Publications

Mostly these have been short-term arrangements in which commercial publishers have been contracted to publish a specific journal or pamphlet. For example, Macmillan produced the first issues of *History* in 1916. Blackwell Publishers were similarly responsible for the production of *Teaching History* from 1989 to 1994. A more significant development has been the joint equity partnership in *History* and the *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature* which was agreed with Blackwell Publishers in 2001. Prior to that arrangement a highly successful publishing venture had already taken place with Blackwell in the form of a new paperback series known as 'Historical Association Studies'. The idea was to provide short, incisive studies of key historical topics that would directly appeal to sixth-formers and undergraduates. The Publications Committee of the Historical Association contracted authors and edited their manuscripts, while Blackwell were responsible for production, publication and marketing. The first six volumes were published in 1985 and ranged from Ken Haley's *Politics in the Reign of Charles II* to Muriel Chamberlain's *Decolonization*. The series proved highly successful in terms of achieving academic prestige and sales. To date more than twenty volumes have been published with some going into expanded second editions of which the best sellers have been Joe Smith's *The Cold War* and Nigel Worden's *The Making of Modern South Africa*. More recently, the Publications Editorial Board has worked closely with Blackwell Publishers to provide Editors for the individual volumes in the *Blackwell Companions to British History* series.

## Teaching Journals

The Historical Association has also produced two outstanding educational journals. *Teaching History* first appeared in May 1969

with John Standen as its Editor. As the only national journal on the teaching of history, *Teaching History* was a pioneering venture. Its stated purpose was to inform and explain what was happening in history teaching throughout the country and to provide a point of contact for the exchange of ideas and information between history teachers. The considerable success of the journal was demonstrated in 1977 when it moved from two to three issues a year and also appeared in a larger format in order to provide space for additional articles. In recent years, under the editorial direction of Christine Counsell and her team, *Teaching History* has consolidated its position as the leading professional journal for history teachers in Britain.

*Primary History* was first published in 1994 with Paul Noble as its Editor. From its inception *Primary History* has sought to publish articles and reports that will be relevant and, most of all, of practical use for the classroom teacher. An important feature has been the appearance of Special Issues giving up-to-date information on curricular developments and changes in national educational policy.

## The Historian

The first issue of *The Historian* appeared in 1983 with Bob Unwin as its Editor. It was seen as a replacement for the general history pamphlet and also for *The Kennington News*, a short newsletter which sought to inform members about recent developments within the Historical Association. The aim of *The Historian* was to keep members 'in touch with the historical world' by offering a varied menu of 'features' and 'updates' on interesting historical subjects, including local history, and information on recent and forthcoming activities at Kennington and in the Branches.

What made *The Historian* different from the other journals published by the Historical Association was its inclusion of illustrations (many in colour in the most recent issues) so that it had the appearance of a glossy historical magazine. Bob Unwin successfully saw *The Historian* through its first decade. Chris Wrigley became Editor in 1993 and was succeeded by Muriel Chamberlain in 1998. The current editors are Bill Speck and Ian Mason.

## Pamphlets

Almost from its inception the Historical Association began to publish occasional leaflets, which soon expanded into a plethora of pamphlets in different series, some produced by branches, such as Exeter and most notably Bristol. Titles of general interest were subsequently distributed to members as part of the annual affiliation fee and, during their 1960s and 1970s heyday, no less than half a dozen pamphlets of different types were being published each year. It is a testimony to their enduring popularity that many were reprinted and revised, gradually acquiring glossy covers instead of the monochrome paper that sufficed for earlier editions, while illustrations were later inserted in the text. Members eagerly awaited their regular arrival, while students, and their teachers, like local historians, were delighted to find an expert distillation of the subject in the space of less than thirty pages. Yet the pamphlet era was not to last: production and distribution costs became prohibitive; other publishers were cashing in on the popular market; and booksellers became reluctant to stock titles which lacked a spine. In 1983 *The Historian* magazine was introduced as an alternative means of conveying scholarly material to ordinary members, though separately subscribed pamphlets, entitled *New Appreciations in History*, continued

to appear on a periodic basis until they too were curtailed. The pamphlet era was over; it had lasted just short of a century.

A Publications Sub-Committee, chaired by A. F. Pollard, was mentioned in the Annual Report of 1908 and, in accordance with the general aims of the HA, its object was to keep members abreast of the latest historical work, chiefly by means of four-page bibliographies. Among the earliest titles were: *Books upon General History* (no. 6), *A Bibliography of London* (no. 14), and *A Short Bibliography of the History of Sheffield* (no 25, 1911), that opened with the intriguing sentence: 'The history of Sheffield is rather abnormal ...' In 1910, with more members bringing in additional income, T.F. Tout declared that the Association had grown more ambitious. Its current objective was to 'produce for the working teacher a portable working library in a few volumes' (at that time, of course, the HA was still very much a professional organisation). Even in those merciful days of less print, bibliographies were soon outdated, so they were supplemented, then supplanted by more substantial leaflets on particular subjects. Tout announced this new departure with the publication of 'a fairly bulky pamphlet dealing with a definite historical subject', written by 'a very rising young scholar', by the name of Frank Stenton, on *The Development of the Castle in England and Wales*. Four years later, rushed out 'in response to an urgent request from many teachers', *History and the Present War* was to appear.

Pamphlets were likewise issued on topical issues after the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Indeed, MacInnes' essay on *The Empire and the War*, which was published the following year, was adopted by the Ministry of Information and some 120,000 copies were distributed at home and abroad, a colossal circulation never likely to be bettered. During the preceding decade, under the chairmanship of A. S. Turberville, it was the clear policy of the committee to commission pamphlets on 'broad themes, written with an eye to the intelligent but non-technical reader', who comprised the emergent lay membership of the Association. R.G. Collingwood wrote *The Philosophy of History* and J. N. L. Myres *Roman Britain*, for example. When this venture was wound up to make way for further developments in the post-war era, no less than 122 titles had appeared. Yet diversification was already underway. Local history hand-lists had begun to be generated by the Local History Committee, while teachers were specifically catered for by the Teaching of History leaflets. Moreover, local branches were producing their own titles, often a published version of lectures they had hosted.

In the wake of World War II, this process of specialisation was consolidated. The broader membership series was re-launched as the *General Series* which so many of us remember so fondly. The initial title was *Common Errors in History*, written by a team of 'members' who refuted misinterpretations (rather than simply errors of fact) on topics such as the Suppression of the Monasteries, or the Causes of the American War of Independence. It retailed for just one shilling and was so successful that a second instalment appeared as pamphlet number G7 two years later and, fittingly, it was prefaced by an erratum. Thereafter a succession of distinguished historians were to grace the (increasingly more decorative) covers, including Alfred Cobban on *The Causes of the French Revolution*, or Erich Eyck on *Bismarck after Fifty Years*. The former topic became something of a *cause célèbre*, when its author questioned the dominant Marxist interpretation, while the appearance of the latter was justified on the grounds that the German author's three-volume biography was unlikely to make 'an early appearance' in translation (it never did).

At the same time, *Helps for Students of History* were taken over from SPCK (Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge) and became an extremely popular series aimed at practising historians. This distinguished series included numerous

bibliographies, but became more concerned with methodology: *The Use of Medieval Chronicles*, *Oral History: Talking about the Past*, *Domesday Book and the Local Historian*, *The Chapel and the Nation: Non-Conformity and the Local Historian*, to name just a few. Meanwhile, for the professionals, the Teaching of History continued to produce some equally valuable material. Russia and the USA were the subject of notes for courses. There was *Coins in the Classroom: An Introduction to Numismatics for Teachers* and, as early as 1972, *The Use of Film in History Teaching*. A personal favourite is John Cannon's *Teaching History at University*, in which he begins by making a case for the subject, apparently provoked by the disparaging comments of a local dentist, to which he responds: 'I had always privately thought that peering into people's mouths was a limited occupation ...'

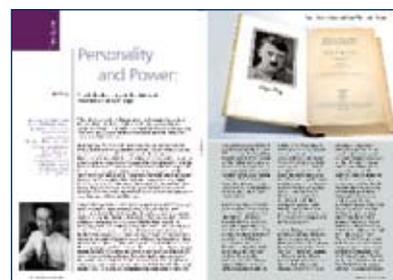
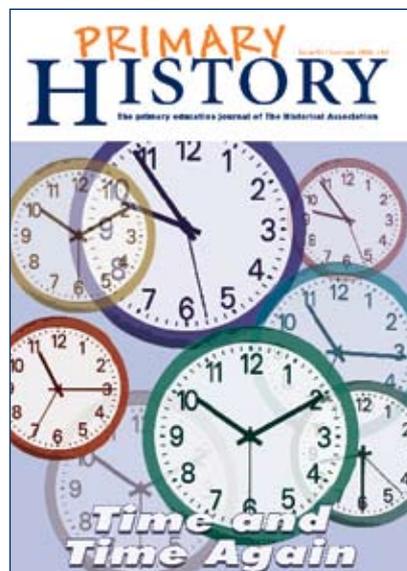
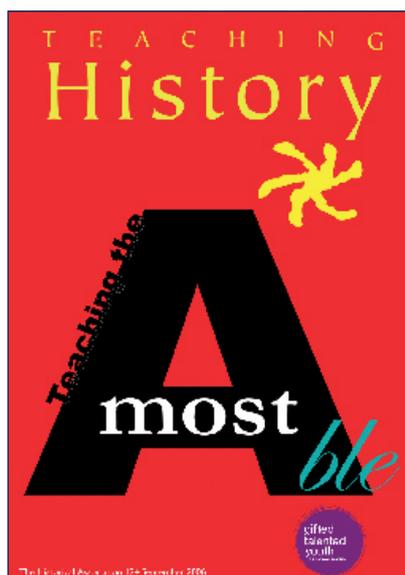
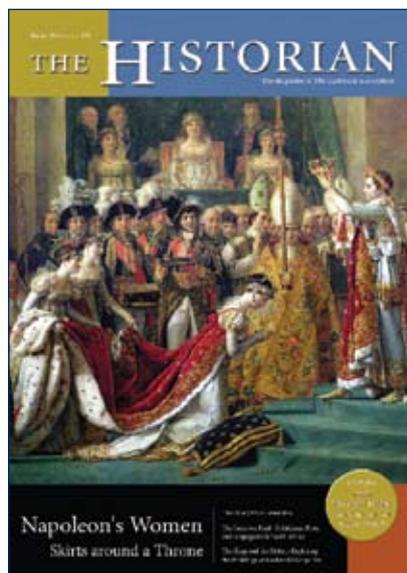
What we might call 'pamphleteering' reached its zenith in the 1960s and 1970s. Even the lectures delivered at the Jubilee and Diamond Jubilee celebrations of 1958 and 1968 were published as pamphlets and distributed to all members. Some of the great names writing history in Britain in the later twentieth century were persuaded to contribute, from W. N. Medlicott on *The Coming of War in 1939*, to Norman Hampson on *The Terror*, M. S. Anderson on *Peter the Great* and Patrick Collinson on *Puritanism*. Yet the pamphlet phenomenon was not destined to last. Clive Knowles had the honour of authoring the final instalment on *Landscape History* in 1983.

The general pamphlets did not end at that point, but in future they were to be purchased separately, albeit at a reduced rate for members who no longer received them automatically. A series entitled *Appreciations in History* had already been introduced in 1971,

# Publications

a successor to another venture entitled *Aids for Teachers of History*, which had produced fifteen leaflets in distinctive pink paper covers in the 1960s. I wonder how many of us still possess battered copies of W. H. Chaloner's *The Hungry Forties*, or H. F. Kearney's *The Eleven Years Tyranny of Charles I*? The Appreciations series were bound in stiffer covers and have stood the test of time in more robust fashion. They included titles on the Factory Acts and the Frondes, but only eight appeared over the following decade. With the demise of the General Series these were re-launched as New Appreciations in 1986 and over the next decade or so some forty titles appeared. One of the best sellers among them was Martin Pugh's *Votes for Women in Britain, 1867-1928*, a testimony to growing interest in the history of gender, while Edward Acton's *Nazism and Stalinism: A Suitable Case for Comparison?* also sold extremely well in schools.

Production values were high, illustrations were introduced into the text, and once again a long list of notable authors put pen to paper. Yet, sadly, pamphlets from this final generation were set at a relatively high price (£4.00 to members) and they were not easy to sell. Booksellers were reluctant to stock them and librarians found it difficult to conserve them (how many have survived in University or Public Libraries?) One or two titles are still available and there are regular voices in favour of revival, or at least a reprint of titles that remain popular. Although the Publications Committee itself has just ceased to exist on the eve of its centenary, its successors (Membership and Higher Education) will doubtless keep the matter under review. A strong possibility lies in electronic reproduction and publication. Perhaps in this regard, as in so many others, the future is digital.



# Changes to history in schools

— NICOLAS KINLOCH

Apart from real threats to 'coursework' or individual studies, the situation of history in secondary schools is desperate but not critical.

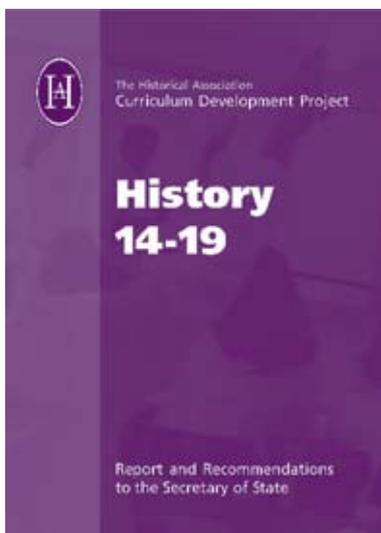
What's happening in English secondary education? Is there some sort of crisis and, if so, what form does it take this time?

Certainly the context of planned reforms is not promising. Although history is consistently identified as one of the best-taught subjects in the curriculum, it has been squeezed out of many primary schools, and there's evidence that in more and more secondary schools its allocation of time is being cut. Only about 30% of GCSE students opt to do history. In some schools, heads are only allowing students to study history if they are likely to get a high grade: history is under pressure from 'easier' subjects and may be in danger of relegation to an academic ghetto.

Of various reforms, the most obvious development is yet another refashioning of the 14-19 curriculum. The ambitious 'Curriculum 2000' was launched only a few years ago: this was the change that split the old A Level by introducing the new AS qualification, and created a fully modular framework. Curriculum 2000 is now widely perceived to have failed, and the changes proposed are the government's attempt to create a new system of 14-19 qualifications. It is hoped that these will meet with the trust and approval of students, universities, employers and the public. There has been little attempt to get the teachers on board, perhaps because the politicians have long regarded them as a hopeless cause.

What will be the effect on history and history-teaching? There are some obvious practical changes. Teachers will start teaching the new AS Level courses in 2008, with the new A2 courses beginning the following year. As with other subjects, the current package of six modules is to be replaced by four. This is a response to complaints that the sheer volume of assessment is leading to 'teaching to the test' and hence a lowering of standards. At the time of writing, consultation was still under way. But it looks increasingly likely that coursework is on its way out. In AS/A level history most coursework takes the form of an independent investigation. There has been some opposition to the prospect of its disappearance. The Historical Association's Curriculum Project, which forcefully denounced what it saw as the inadequacies of AS/A levels, nonetheless praised the individual study as a model of good practice, allowing students to use source material in a proper historical context. It seems, however, that fears about plagiarism – it's depressingly easy and common for students to download completed studies from the internet – may have won the day.

There is also a growing consensus – backed by all the principal political parties – that there should be a greater emphasis on British and Empire history. In part this results from what are perceived as some of the failings of the new curriculum subject of citizenship. History is increasingly seen as the obvious medium for producing good citizens and promoting 'British values'. There is much less of a consensus as to what





those values are. A recent House of Lords debate seemed to suggest that they might be 'justice and fair play', though not everyone would agree that these are the values that obviously distinguish every era of British history.

The impact upon history in schools will be variable. At GCSE most schools already do a large amount of British history, so it is again at AS/A level that the changes will have the most obvious effect. Although current courses must offer a mandatory 'significant element' of British history, DfES Under-Secretary of State Lord Adonis is known to consider that a single unit – which is all that many schools and colleges offer – cannot be described as significant. It looks as if the amount of compulsory British history will stabilise at 25%, bringing it into line with practice at GCSE.

GCSE itself will undergo some change. Again, the most likely one at the time of writing was the

loss of coursework. This prospect has dismayed teachers of the Schools History Project, for whom coursework has always been one of the principal benefits. More seem happy to see Modern World History coursework go, perhaps a reflection of the fact that coursework for this syllabus has mostly been set by the awarding bodies. It has rarely been very imaginative.

Finally, yet another review of Key Stage 3 is under way. The main aim of this is to give greater flexibility to teachers. There's even talk that they might be allowed – not quite the same thing as encouraged, of course – to teach thematically. It's unclear how this will be squared with the repeated demands of politicians for students to learn traditional facts in a traditionally-ordered way.

What about the complaints that school history is dominated by studies of twentieth-century dictators? To the extent that this is true, it's not likely to change much in

the near future. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has produced a new unit on post-war Germany for Key Stage 3. While this might please former German ambassadors von Moltke and Matussek, both of whom decried British ignorance of any German history after 1945, there's not much evidence that teachers are jostling one another to take it up. Teachers' expertise, and the ready availability of resources, are likely to mean that Hitler will be with us for a long time yet.

History in secondary schools, and its teachers faces, some significant problems and challenges over the next few years. On the other hand, there is nothing new in this state of affairs. It used to be said of Austria-Hungary that its situation was desperate but not critical. The same may be true of history in schools.

Nicolas Kinloch is Deputy President of The Historical Association

# Primary History in the Historical Association

— ROY HUGHES

Primary History matters within and outside the HA despite Government reforms and targets.

The transformation of the primary curriculum provided the context for the new primary history in the Historical Association (HA). In 1989 HMI<sup>1</sup> reported surveys of history in the primary school noting:

“In only one in three schools were standards judged to be satisfactory or better... The picture revealed by national monitoring is a disappointing one”.

The Government’s intentions soon became clear and in July 1988 the Education Reform Act became law. The National Curriculum, a consequence of this Act, came into being in September 1989. In the following three years a series of reports, “consultations”, assessment procedures and “orders” transformed the primary curriculum-including primary history. This was traumatic change.

This too was the headline grabbing context for history developments in the primary school. But there was also significant research activity looking into primary education and at primary history. There was no one single focus but all looked to children’s intellectual capacity to understand the past.

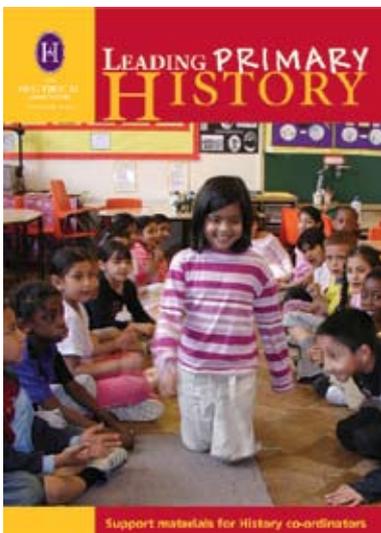
Alan Blyth, (1973)<sup>2</sup> was the outstanding figure. He was joined by his wife Joan Blyth<sup>3</sup> a lifelong HA member. There was seminal work on young children learning history from Hilary Cooper.<sup>4</sup> Professor Cooper’s distinguished work continues to guide teaching and learning in primary history. Hilary too is a long standing HA member. This is now the intellectual bedrock of young children learning history.

There were then two sets of developments: national legislation and research activity that joined to power primary history. There is an important tension here to which I will return. I do not want to overstate the chronology but it is possible to look at the HA’s involvement in primary education in three or four periods.

## HA and the Primary History Association the late 1980’s-early 1990’s

The Historical Association had shown commitment to young children learning history. There had been pamphlets for example exploring good practice and ideas in story-telling, drama, and general primary method. The work of Ann Low-Ber, Paul Noble and Joan Blyth was central to the HA at this time.

In the North West of England, associated with Joan Blyth and with a focus at Chester College of Higher Education, a separate model began to emerge. At the beginning there was a successful 5-11 years conference at Chester in April 1988. This conference inaugurated the Primary History Association (PHA). At the end of the weekend in the plenary it was suggested that a primary history association would be useful for primary teachers. Frank Earle, the Humanities Adviser for Cheshire Local Authority,





D.A.P. – Developmental appropriate practice.  
This is curriculum and pedagogy looking to recognise stages of  
child development, important in primary history work.

offered financial support for such a potential organization.

On 5 November 1988 the Primary History Association was formally brought into existence. A Voluntary Steering Committee of 12 was formed. It was agreed to have two conferences a year, two Newsletters and a membership fee of £6.00 (£4.00 for students).

The committee met at Chester College of H.E. Membership

so called “deficit model”) rather than what they could. Even in these very early days the committee worried about the time available for teaching primary history.

Linked to such learning and to pedagogical challenges was a PHA Newsletter. This was not a newsletter for very long. It quickly became the magazine *Primary History* (Having also been titled in the early days *Primary Historian*). A long list of hard working editors: Gill

It was agreed to merge PHA with the HA. This formally took place at the Lancaster Conference, AGM, hosted by Alan Farmer, a robust committee member in November 1991. I took a substantial cheque for PHA's closing balance and membership list to HQ in Kennington.

PHA committee members wished to be certain that the interests of the primary teacher would be well served in the merger. There was no ambiguity of intent. What was rather more ambiguous was the tension that might arise from joining an HA that had a very large secondary school membership. Secondary teachers are often defined by the community of their subject. There is a different intellectual engagement for the primary teacher; the subject is only part of their intellectual definition. And again the National Curriculum is largely a stipulation of history subject matter. There is a lot more to the education of the young child than this. The National Curriculum is concerned (especially with older primary children) on what children should know; with little attention on how children should learn. Real problems can arise here. The HA would need to be mindful of how young children learn history; to have regard to the process of children's learning. That process needs to be constantly guarded and respected in our work in the HA.

Primary history (with occasional turbulence in the mid 90's) became secure in the Historical Association. The ideas, character and events of primary history in HA saw a continuation of activities relating to teacher professional development. The conference programme continued. For example a large and popular school-based Peterborough conference in 1997 was particularly noteworthy and looked to resources and local history. The journal *Primary History* moved to

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grew very rapidly. The first day conference received national media coverage. This looked to “Storytelling in History” and was led by John Fines of the HA with lively Salford 6-10 year old children as part of the conference experience. It took place on 13 May 1989 at Chester College.

Other successful conferences quickly followed: Bristol Polytechnic, October 1989, on resources. In May 1990 Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, on the National Curriculum. Autumn 1990 saw a very large conference at Southampton (LSU) on History and Drama.

The intervening meetings of the PHA looked to conference planning, subscription rates and the usual committee business.

But this was a reflective committee and anxieties about the new National Curriculum were a central concern. The committee was concerned not to slide into rhetoric and not to focus on what children could not do (the

Leonard, Julie Davies, Paul Noble, Patrick Wood and Penelope Harnett, trod the difficult line between theorising and practical advice. Membership of PHA continued to grow approaching 2000 in 1991.

At the same time the Historical Association had continued in its work with primary history managed by Paul Noble. Links between PHA and HA were strong. Often the same people worked in both organizations. The job of primary teaching was being re-defined and the first concern had to be with the professional development of teachers. It became clear that to save duplication of efforts a single organization looking to the HA was an obvious focus. Merger talks began.

### The early 1990's

Martin Roberts (Deputy President of HA and a Headteacher) represented the President of HA, Michael Biddiss. A long series of talks and meetings took place at the home of Joan and Alan Blyth in Chester.



Storytelling, phonological awareness and talk about literacy and history.

colour and developed its work on constructing a professional role for primary history teachers.

It was possible for some primary members to become active in HA branches. The Association was able to publish primary pamphlets. Reduced price membership was established for students in training. The committee agenda developed to include concern for inclusive history and links were made, developed and continue with the Young Historian Project. There was constant interest in the subject structure of history and the teacher's conceptual grasp. This was linked to concern with child-teacher interaction in teaching and learning history. The enhanced primary journal was the usual focus for this reflection. In addition articles were commissioned from major academic historians (often active HA members) on improving subject knowledge in diverse time periods: the Tudors; the Victorians; and the interwar period in Britain.

The committee was able to organise guest sessions at its London meetings from for example the BBC, a range of publishers and Government agencies-QCA, Ofsted and one of the first presentations of the Primary National Strategy to which I will return. If this was a good session the presenter was encouraged to write in the primary journal.

### This takes us to the late 1990's

The 1988 Education Reform Act had apparently secured primary history in English primary education. This curriculum security was quickly compromised first by assessment requirements looking to English, maths and science and then by the unmanageability of the whole primary curriculum package. The subsequent development of numeracy and literacy strategies linked to government targets compressed the primary curriculum

still further. Readers might well think that a language curriculum should engage with history and culture in its widest sense. Alas not so. It was instead a narrow instrumental literacy. The committee defended its territory with lobbying and frequent statements in *The Times Educational Supplement*.

### We have reached the final stage in this brief history

In May 2003 the Government published *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools*. I referred to this earlier, linked to the Primary National Strategy. At one level this looks to a wider primary curriculum which should be good for primary history. But examined closely the message is ambiguous. Nevertheless a Kennington based committee meeting was the focus for one of the first seminars on this new curriculum development-presented by one of its senior

officers. This subsequently became an important and widely quoted article in the primary journal.

Professor Harry Dickinson, President, was equally quick to agree the funding of a “new style” primary pamphlet series looking to this development. The pamphlet encouraged primary teachers to think through history matters for themselves, not as technicians but as professionals. In particular we looked to the means of improving classroom practice. It has made its mark. It is the first of a new series.

For the future and for the Government’s Primary Strategy (derived from Excellence and Enjoyment) it is still too early to say; parts are very encouraging but the targets remain, the tests remain; primary history continues to be squeezed.

In the pressurised and shifting world of primary education HA primary remains a potentially clear and important voice in a highly centralised system which all too often displays very little understanding of how young children learn and particularly how they learn history. It is important that the voice continues to be heard.

And finally one of the irritations of writing this short piece is the inability to thank all the people clearly involved in the advancement of primary history. It has been an honourable project the better when clearly rooted in primary experience. In this case I would mention committee colleagues, officers and past Presidents of the HA. Primary children, primary teachers and primary students of course should never be forgotten. It is a very large indebtedness.

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- <sup>2</sup> Blyth Alan, (1976) et al, *Place Time and Society 8-13*, Schools Council, Collins, Bristol.
- <sup>3</sup> Blyth, Joan, (1988) *History 5 to 9*, Hodder, London
- <sup>4</sup> Cooper, Hilary (1992) *The Teaching of History*, David Fulton, London.

Roy Hughes was Chair of the HA’s primary committee from 1991 until 2005. Before that he was Co-Chair, Chair, and Secretary of the Primary History Association. He began his primary history work in a Wirral school working on the intellectually innovative “Place Time Society” project, following a primary PGCE. He read economic history at the University of Liverpool.

He now teaches at the University of Leeds. He was for nearly 20 years head of an Anglican primary school in Salford, Manchester.



Child involvement, clarity of purpose, informed practitioners – part of the role of the primary history educator.

# Help us continue to make history



The Historical Association has been campaigning for history for the last 100 years. By leaving a legacy to the Association you can help secure its future. Your money would help us to enhance the importance of understanding and learning from the past and to represent a wide range of those interested in history, at all levels.

Your gift could fund bursaries, awards, scholarships and a host of projects. These could include:

- Supporting the Young Historian Project – an award to encourage good history projects
- Providing young academics support on research projects
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Whatever you give, you can make a direct and lasting difference by remembering the Historical Association in your will. Past gifts have enabled us to provide Choosing History packs to schools, which aim to increase the number of students taking history at GCSE. The Norton Medlicott Award was created in honour of a legacy donation.

If you would like to find out more about leaving the Association a gift in your will please request an information pack.



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