

SOME NOTES ON

The British Academy 1902–2002

OVERVIEW

1902–1930: the Gollancz years

Without the support of Government funding, the Academy achieved a remarkable amount in its early years, largely through the energies of Sir Israel Gollancz, the first Secretary of the Academy, in securing private endowments. A healthy programme of academic meetings was developed, with ten named lecture series established. There was an active publications programme. And the Academy sought to undertake or participate in long-term national and international research projects. Gollancz's efforts were finally rewarded when the Academy was awarded a modest annual grant from the Treasury in 1924, and when the Academy was able to move into its first permanent home in Burlington Gardens in 1928.

1930–1949: the Kenyon years

The economic crises of the 1930s and then the Second World War led to a reduction in the Government's funding of the Academy. Many of the Academy's activities slowed or stopped altogether in this period, and there were few new initiatives.

1949–1968: the Wheeler years

Another dynamic Secretary led to another explosion in Academy activity. New lecture series were established, the publications programme was boosted, and many long-term research undertakings were embarked upon. The funding position was dramatically improved, the Academy for the first time securing significant funds (first private, then public) to be able to award research grants in the humanities. And the Academy became the channel through which funds were allocated to the British Schools and Institutes abroad. At the end of 1968, the Academy moved into new quarters in Burlington House.

1969–1980

The new Secretary, Derek Allen, started to put in place the administrative machinery to handle and build on the various initiatives that Wheeler had put in train; Allen himself was followed by the first Secretary to be a full-time salaried employee rather than a Fellow of the Academy. More funds were received for research grants from the University Grants Committee, as the Academy increasingly began to take on the role of a *de facto* Humanities Research Council. The 1970s also saw the development of the Academy's international programmes — in particular, exchanges with the Soviet bloc and China.

The 1980s

As well as the Academy's move into larger premises in Cornwall Terrace, the 1980s saw the onward development of the Academy as a funding agency. There was a dramatic expansion in schemes offering research posts — Research Readerships (1981), Postdoctoral Fellowships (1986), Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowships (1989). And in 1984 the Academy took over from the Department of Education and Science the administration of its scheme for Postgraduate Studentships in the Humanities.

The 1990s

The 1990s saw the Academy recast itself. After its failure to persuade Government to set up an HRC in the early 1990s, the Academy distanced itself from this side of its activities by setting up its own Humanities Research Board in 1994 (with additional schemes, such as Research Leave); and then successfully participated in the foundation of the Arts and Humanities Research Board (1998). At the same time, it was strengthening its learned society role, with the creation of a programme of conferences, and the establishment of new lecture and publication series. In 1998 the Academy at last moved into premises in Carlton House Terrace that would enable it to fulfil its role as the national academy for the humanities and social sciences (in particular, the hosting of academic meetings).

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH

During the first years of its existence, the Academy had extremely limited funds with which to support research, essentially only those raised from subscriptions (the levy was three guineas annually per Fellow from the Academy's foundation until 1957 when it was raised to four guineas). Intermittently, one-off grants were coaxed from particular branches of Government: in 1905, for example, £200 was obtained from the India Office, to support the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, a project adopted by the International Association of Academies (IAA), and on which project committee the Academy was represented from the start. And in 1913, the Academy secured a grant of £400 a year from the Treasury to publish a series of *Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales* (a 'great national undertaking') — a grant alas almost immediately curtailed by the First World War. Even without regular receipt of public funds, however, the Academy was nonetheless committed to offering encouragement, occasionally supplemented by cash, to promote research activity both within the UK and abroad. It took its part in projects supervised by the IAA (later the Union Académique Internationale) and gave its own small grants to particular ventures, such as £50 in 1907 to collect materials for an edition of Venetic and Ligurian inscriptions (the first grant to an individual scholar), supplemented some 12 years later by a grant of £100 in aid of its publication.

In 1924 the Academy secured a Government grant for the promotion of research and publication, in the sum of £2,000 annually. The amount was modest, but the principle was fixed. The level of grant remained static, apart from some reduction owing to pre-war and war economies, until 1946. By 1950, the grant stood at £5,000.

In the early 1950s, the Academy began its first significant involvement in funding research throughout the UK. Initially, it operated schemes that were funded by private grants from the Nuffield Foundation and the Pilgrim Trust. The first was aimed at relieving the backlog of unpublished research, resulting from the Second World War, and grants were awarded to societies and others publishing learned journals. The second scheme offered small grants to scholars who were otherwise unable to secure funds to conduct

personal programmes of research. This was intentionally set up as a pilot scheme, to reveal the scale of demand within universities, museums, art galleries and elsewhere for this kind of support, and to establish a set of procedures for administering such a scheme. The grant from the Pilgrim Trust, initially awarded for a three year period, was twice renewed, in recognition of the quality of the research funded under the scheme, and in view of the gathering momentum for demonstrating to the Treasury the clear necessity for Government support.

In 1958, the Rockefeller Foundation made available a grant of £6,000 for the Academy to conduct a systematic review of the provision for research in the humanities and social sciences in the UK. A committee was established, and during the course of three years it took evidence from a wide range of sources and conducted visits to the United States, Canada, France, Germany and Holland to acquire comparative information. It was, perhaps, an indication of the work to be done to convince the British Government of the pressing needs of scholarship within the Academy's domain that the funds to support the review came from a private American foundation.

The report, published in 1961, made a cogent and comprehensive statement of the need for a national funding agency to support the humanities and social sciences. The arguments were accepted by Government, and in 1962 the President, Sir Maurice Bowra, was able to announce to the AGM that the Treasury had agreed an annual grant of £25,000, with a promise of an immediate uprating to £50,000. Since Government plans were simultaneously in hand to establish a research council for the social sciences, the grant was awarded to support research in humanistic studies. By 1969, the grant to support research in the humanities stood at £65,000.

The establishment of a regular Government grant-in-aid allowed the Academy to become more ambitious in the forms of research support it could now offer. It gave Council the confidence to initiate a new programme of **research projects**, and the Academy's Sections were invited to formulate research proposals of a character worthy of initiation and maintenance as specifically Academy enterprises.

In the event, the Academy was presented with two types of project that were deemed highly deserving of a long-term commitment of scholarly,

administrative and financial support: those in which the Academy was the initiator and prime mover; and those major international endeavours such as the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevii* and the *Medieval Latin Dictionary*, to which British committees had for a long time contributed. In course of time, the two categories merged to form a single programme of Academy Research Projects. An example of the project that sprang from the mind of the Academy was *The Early History of Agriculture*, for which an Academy Committee was established in 1966, and a project centre formed within the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge. British Academy Research Fellows were engaged to work on various aspects within the project's scope, and excavations and other studies were supported over many years. Other infrastructural projects that have long been supported by the Academy as examples of scholarship of the highest calibre, demanding sustained support over periods of time not readily achievable through other sources, include: *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*; Early English Church Music; *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*; *Fontes Historiae Africanae*. Some of these projects were formed under the auspices of the Union Académique Internationale.

In 1966, the long-dormant series, *Records of Social and Economic History*, was revived and reinvigorated in a New Series. Later expansion of the programme saw support extended to *Episcopal Acta*, the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* and others. Eventually, a further classification was developed to encompass those projects that were adopted as Academy Research Projects, bestowing a 'seal of approval' upon the endeavour, but to which the Academy made no financial commitment — the project to publish *British Documents on the End of Empire* is an example of one such enterprise. Following the establishment of the Arts and Humanities Research Board in 1998 (on which see further below), the Academy has remodelled its support for major projects yet further, and now offers primarily academic endorsement, but little financial support. The wheel, in some respects, has turned full circle from the early days when the Academy could offer encouragement, but little money; through the long periods of perseverance in pressing the case for adequate research provision; via success, and the extension of Academy support to a wide range of productive areas; to a period when national agencies now exist to support large-scale projects.

To return to that early period of expansion of research support: in

addition to funding its own research projects, the Academy was able to open up formal schemes of **research awards** to support groups and individuals both within the university sector and outside it. The Research Fund Committee was set up in 1962 and the first grants allocated in May 1963. The interpretation of humanistic studies was always a wide one, and grants in sociology, economics, anthropology and law featured in the lists from the start. The Committee gave awards once a year, and the normal size of grant for individual projects was in the region of £500. Then, as now, priority was given to funding the costs of travel and maintenance to enable a scholar to conduct an approved programme of research. There was a sum set aside to help with the costs of bringing a work to publication.

Applications from **Schools and Institutes overseas** were also accepted, for specific programmes of research, usually fieldwork and post-excavation studies. The Academy had since 1950 been the channel for the Government's support for the overseas British Schools and Institutes and certain Sponsored Societies. At that time, there were five institutions in receipt of grant: the British School at Rome; the British School at Athens; the British School at Jerusalem (which the Academy had helped to establish in 1918); the British School in Iraq; and the Egypt Exploration Society. (The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara was then in its formative stages.) This consolidation, through the Academy, of governmental support tidied up a situation that had been the subject of Academy representations since 1931, though it was not until Sir Mortimer Wheeler took over the Secretaryship that the problem was remedied. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Academy proceeded to offer encouragement for the creation of six other grant-aided bodies, in the shape of the Society for Libyan Studies, the British Institute in Eastern Africa, the British Institute of Persian Studies, the British Institute of Afghan Studies (which was later transformed into the Society for South Asian Studies), the British Institute in South East Asia (later the Committee for South-East Asian Studies), and the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History (Jerusalem and Amman are now merged as the Council for British Research in the Levant). The Academy has also since 1950 been a major sponsor of the Council for British Archaeology. The CBA was formed in 1943 as a result of a meeting called as the tide of war was turning, to contemplate the tasks and opportunities that would emerge when hostilities ceased, and to discuss the requirements

of British archaeology in the post-war period.

The core funding for Schools and Institutes was covered by a direct grant from the Academy. While some research costs could be included within that core grant, there was never enough to support all the activity being conducted under the auspices of the school, and project directors often had to seek funding from the Academy's schemes for research awards. The Academy was fortunate in securing a number of bequests and endowments to augment the public grant-in-aid, and, perhaps owing to Sir Mortimer Wheeler's own interests, a significant number were designated for the support of archaeological research. Taking the private funds into account, by the mid-1960s the Academy had a relatively substantial sum to allocate to research activity.

In 1976, the University Grants Committee asked the Academy to take on the administration of a scheme for '**small grants in the humanities**', and allocated the sum of £125,000 annually (this at a time when the Academy's General Fund stood at some £82,000, to cover Academy Research Projects, Research Awards and Periodicals). The authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland quickly followed suit, and the Department for Education and Science agreed to add to the fund from 1977 so that the scheme could be extended to scholars in polytechnics and other Higher Education Institutions in the public sector. In the words of the Academy's *Annual Report* for 1975–76: 'The new scheme makes available additional sums for research in humane studies ... and casts the British Academy in the role of a miniature "Humanities Research Council".'

In 1977–78, just after the Government had increased its allocation to the Academy to fund research grants for staff in universities and other HEIs, the Academy received 366 applications and made 188 research grants, totalling £215,000.

In the 1950s the Ministry of Education had decided to provide State **studentships** to support those pursuing a research career after graduation. To begin with, the allocation of these monies was decided on the advice of a committee appointed by the Ministry. In 1984, the Academy was asked to administer the scheme on behalf of Government, and it did this (after some initial heartsearching) on an agency basis, using staff transferred from the DES. In 1991, full responsibility was handed over to the Academy, meaning that it was now able to decide policy, including the numbers of awards, rates

of maintenance, and other issues upon which, during the period of its stewardship, it had endured some criticism whilst having no powers to alter practice or policy. The Academy's Postgraduate Studies Committee introduced a new system of awards, to allow an initial training period of one year, followed by another three year award to enable a PhD to be completed ('1+3'). In this way the Academy sought to improve submission rates. The model proved highly successful, and has since been adopted by other Research Councils.

Talk of the possibility of funding senior **research posts** (in emulation of Royal Society Professorships) began in 1978–79 with the inclusion of an entirely new element in the Academy's submission for the new funding triennium. The idea was prompted by the prevailing financial circumstances when some universities were closing departments or freezing posts where there was little demand from undergraduates. Certain areas of scholarship were perceived to be falling into neglect to the detriment of academic life within the UK. The Academy decided to offer a number of Research Readerships, tenable at universities, to allow researchers a period of time to devote themselves to a field where real progress could be expected. In his Presidential Address in 1982, Professor Owen Chadwick drew attention to one of the most valuable incidental effects of the scheme: the ability to open up opportunities for junior scholars to obtain career development posts as replacements for the senior scholars whose research was rewarded through the scheme. From its inception the competition has continued to attract an extremely strong field, and today there are over 100 applications annually for 13 awards.

In 1983 the Academy was involved in assessing applications under the University Grants Committee's initiative to introduce more university posts at a junior level (the 'New Blood' scheme). In principle, the posts were designed as permanent additions to the academic community. The UGC scheme lasted for three years, 1983–85, and prompted the Academy to introduce a programme that is one of its most popular today: the Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme.

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships were first offered in 1986. The purpose was (and remains) to enable the holders to develop mature research, and also obtain some experience in advanced teaching, over a period of three years, to strengthen their prospects of securing permanent

posts by the end of the fellowship. The scheme also filled a gap in the Academy's support of advanced scholarship, as the Academy was already administering postgraduate studentships for the first level after graduation, and had instituted the Readerships scheme for senior scholars some years earlier. In the words of the press release issued at the time, the scheme was expected to go some way towards securing 'the great tradition of advanced scholarly learning in Britain which has been put at risk by the reduction in expenditure on higher education' (*nihil novum ...*). Initially 25 awards were offered annually. Increased funding enabled this to be raised to 30, at which level it continues today. The success rate of the competition in placing scholars in academic careers following the end of their award runs at over 86%. To date, over 460 awards have been made.

The Academy has often found fruitful initiatives through **partnership** with other agencies or private sources of funding. Various private foundations have contributed towards the costs of the PDF scheme, and since 1987 co-operation with the Royal Society has provided funding for a number of special awards in the History of Science. In 1986 funds were secured for Science-based Archaeology awards and eventually a post for a Co-ordinator in this field was jointly funded with NERC (a holder of this post was Dr Sebastian Payne, who at the outset of his career had been one of the first research fellows engaged to work upon *The Early History of Agriculture*). A scheme for applied science in archaeology was funded in collaboration with NERC, English Heritage, and the Museums and Galleries Commission. In 1987, a grant of £500,000 from the Leverhulme Trust was administered by the Academy to support team-based research projects; and later, in 1989, the Trust made a grant to fund Senior Research Fellowships, which enable mid-career scholars to have research leave for one year. The Leverhulme Trust has been a particularly generous source of funding to support Academy initiatives, providing grants at various times to support Visiting Professorships and other individual grants. The Wolfson Foundation has provided grants to fund Visiting Fellowships to strengthen the interchange of ideas between British and continental scholars (the scheme ran from 1975 to 1982); and in 1991 subsidised the appointment of two Research Professors. The Academy reinstated this scheme, funded from public money, in 1999 when three awards were made.

Towards the end of 1980s the public funding of research became once

more a topic of national discussion and Government concern. Proposals to change the system of funding universities were broached, which eventually resulted in the separate calculation of resources to support teaching on the one hand and research on the other. The boundaries between grants from the University Funding Council and the five existing Research Councils were to be shifted, and there was general concern that the humanities, without a Research Council voice, would suffer. Accordingly, in 1989 the Academy established a working party to investigate various options to put before Government. The clear preference was for the establishment of a separate Humanities Research Council, to join the existing Research Councils under the umbrella of the Advisory Board (ABRC). Other options explored were the establishment of a joint Humanities and Social Sciences Research Council (with the participation of the ESRC) and, as a fall back, the creation of an agency within the Academy, but at arm's length from its functions as a learned society, to take over the quasi-research council operations that the Academy was by that time fulfilling. An interim report published in 1990 set out the Academy's position. Following extensive negotiations with the academic community, the Fellowship, Government, the ESRC, the ABRC and others, a report was prepared recommending the creation of a free standing Humanities Research Council, on a par with the ESRC (the Follett report, 1992). A strong proviso was attached to the recommendation, namely that sufficient funds should accompany the establishment of a new Research Council to enable it adequately to fulfill its obligations and to bring the national funding of humanities research on to a proper level.

For a considerable time, it seemed the momentum was with the Academy and all the signs were encouraging. After protracted discussions, however, the Government declined to make available the level of funding required to establish a new Research Council, and rejected the proposal to establish a Humanities Research Council.

The funding arrangements for universities had, however, changed in 1992 and the proposed alterations in the dual-support system had been implemented. The Academy therefore determined to proceed with its fall-back option, and in 1994, with the approval of Ministers, set up its own Humanities Research Board, to operate at a distance from the Academy, and with a preponderance of members drawn from outside the Fellowship. The HRB took on responsibility for Postgraduate Studentships, and the

programmes for advanced research, by this time including Research Leave, Major Research Projects, Small Personal Research Grants and Conference Grants in the humanities, and established a new short-term scheme for Institutional Fellowships run in conjunction with the funding councils. The Academy continued to run separate programmes for Small Research and Conference Grants in the Social Sciences, and the schemes for research posts.

Following the success of the HRB and the offer from the Higher Education Funding Council for England to make available a substantial sum for ‘project-based research in the arts and humanities’, the Academy joined forces with HEFCE and the Department of Education in Northern Ireland to establish the Arts and Humanities Research Board in 1998, which assumed responsibility for postgraduate studentships and advanced institutional project-based research. The funding councils for Scotland and Wales quickly joined in, to ensure that the new body had nationwide coverage. The Academy retained responsibility for small research and conference grants in both the humanities and social sciences, and for the support of individuals through research posts. Following an extensive consultation exercise with the academic community in 1999–2000, the Academy published its *Review of Research Support*. The review demonstrated overwhelming support for the small grants (now with an upper limit of £5,000), which were considered to offer value out of all proportion to their size in fostering original research. There was also thought to be a significant gap in the provision nationally of medium-sized grants in the range between £5,000 and £20,000, a need identified by both the humanities and the social science disciplines. Accordingly, in the autumn of 2000 the Academy introduced a new scheme of Larger Research Grants to complement the provision offered by the AHRB and the ESRC. Today, the Academy is able to offer research support throughout all its schemes equally to scholars in every discipline under its remit, underlining its role as the national academy for the humanities and social sciences.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A major — indeed one might even say *the* major — impetus to the founding of the British Academy was provided by the desire ('the pressing need', as an early Minute Book records, 'for immediate action from the standpoint of national prestige') for an institution which would represent British scholarship internationally in the human and social sciences. The first Resolution of the founding fathers read:

That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that a Society representative of Historical, Philosophical and Philological Studies be formed on conditions which will satisfy the requirements of the International Association of Academies. (*see page 8*)

The Academy was admitted to membership of the International Association 'in the philosophico-historic section' early in 1903, and, with the Royal Society, hosted the Association's meeting in London in 1904.

Despite this initiative, the earliest years of the Academy's history brought no systematic development of international contacts. For this, of course, restrictions of funding and a World War are largely responsible; and British scholars maintained international links and collaborated with foreign partners in the spheres of their particular interests without requiring any formal framework to support them. The Academy did, however, institute a category of Corresponding Fellowship for foreign scholars — for example, to return to the first Minute Book once more, 'in connexion with the recent [1904] Meeting of the International Association of Academies in London it was agreed to recommend ... thirteen Delegates as Corresponding Fellows of the Academy'.

The International Association was a casualty of the First World War. In 1919 the Academy became a founder member of the **Union Académique Internationale** (UAI), a more modest organisation, which covered the humanities in their broadest sense, philology, archaeology and history on the one hand and moral, political and social sciences on the other. (For the natural sciences international organisations based on individual scientific disciplines came into existence, to be gathered in 1931 into the International Council of Scientific Unions.) The primary aim of the UAI was to uphold

humanities scholarship and promote international collaboration through long-term research projects. With many of these the Academy has been closely involved throughout the UAI's history.

In the period immediately after the Second World War, private funds were made available to the Academy to bring distinguished scholars from the Continent to make contact with colleagues in Britain. In 1955, the office of Foreign Secretary was established, a post first held by Sir Charles Webster, whose generous bequest to the Academy included provision for support for 'the representation of the British Academy abroad...'. In the early 1960s, initial contacts were established with certain Academies of Sciences in East Europe, within the framework of the inter-governmental agreements on relations in the scientific, technical, educational and cultural fields. While the first contacts with the Academy of Sciences of the USSR were not attended by any notable increase in academic activity, the Soviets preferring to concentrate their efforts on the hard sciences through links with the Royal Society, cordial relations were established with both the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and, slightly later, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Funding restrictions limited this early development: the British Council supported the scheme both financially and administratively, but its resources were small, and often only a single scholar was able to travel from the UK each year.

Relations with the countries of **East Europe**, which have formed a major component of the Academy's international links, developed throughout the 1970s, in a series of direct inter-Academy Agreements falling within the framework of the broader intergovernmental agreements. By 1975, agreements were already in place with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, and negotiations were under way with the Soviet Academy of Sciences. 1976 saw the signature of an agreement with the Council of Academies of Sciences and Arts of Yugoslavia, and, at the end of the decade, an agreement was signed with the Academy of Sciences of the GDR — an agreement which was terminated only a decade later, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. All these agreements were funded by the Academy's grant-in-aid, administered by Academy staff rather than the British Council, and provided support for individual study visits in each direction. For fifteen years, these programmes formed a major part of the Academy's international relations work, and

enabled dozens of British scholars to travel to East Europe, and far more foreign scholars to come to the UK. There were, of course, frequently problems in the relationship between East and West, with communication difficulties exacerbated by the fact, almost unimaginable today, that it was necessary to contact partners by letter or telegram (the Academy did not even acquire a telex until 1982). Despite all this, however, excellent scholarly relations developed between British academics and their overseas counterparts, alongside close links between administrators which helped to contribute to the success of the exchange agreements.

The developments with East Europe and the Soviet Union were, however, preceded by a significant initiative with the countries of **Western Europe**. This arose from an action by the Royal Society, which, in 1967, had established a European Science Exchange Programme, with partners — Academies and research organisations — in twelve European countries. The Society had secured private funding to support a series of short-term study visits and longer-term fellowships, and set up a series of bilateral programmes, involving balancing funding, with its partner organisations. Most of these partner organisations covered the humanities and social sciences as well as the humanities, and it was not too long before they began to ask why these disciplines were not covered by the ESEP. Discussions between the Royal Society and the Academy led to the decision to endeavour to initiate scholarly interchange between selected foreign countries and the UK, and to seek funding for this. In 1969 the Academy received funding from the Wates Foundation to support British scholars travelling abroad, while, at almost the same time, the Leverhulme Trust offered the first of a series of generous grants, this to establish a number of British Academy/Leverhulme Visiting Professorships to enable senior British scholars to spend a period of time researching abroad.

As a result of this sudden increase in funding for international activities, together with the impetus caused by developments with Eastern Europe, the Academy's Council set up an **Overseas Policy Committee**, under the chairmanship of the Foreign Secretary (at that time Professor A. G. Dickens), to administer the new funds and to devise policies for the development of the Academy's overseas links. In the early 1970s the Overseas Policy Committee encouraged the development of the agreements with East Europe, but it did not restrict itself to this geographical area. In

this period relations were established with the Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, the Japan Academy and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the Newberry Library in Chicago: all these agreements persist to this day, though links with other American libraries have not survived so well.

In the meantime, too, efforts were being made to secure more significant funding to underpin a series of links with Western Europe, to operate in parallel with the Royal Society's European Science Exchange Scheme. In 1972 the Government granted funds, initially £25,000, rising to £50,000 in the fourth year — the 'Rippon Scheme', announced by Mr Geoffrey Rippon, then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and responsible for negotiating Britain's entry into the EEC — to encourage scholarly interchange with **Western Europe**, as part of a major Government drive to improve British cultural relations with Europe. The European Exchange Scheme in the Humanities and Social Sciences was established in late 1972. From the first the Academy's scheme was less ambitious and formal than the Society's programme. Although the annual meeting of partner bodies provided a framework for the development of links, the Academy never established formal agreements with more than a handful of its West European partners, including France and Spain, while other countries — Austria and Finland, for example — set up specific funding quotas to enable their scholars to work in the UK. Despite the lack of formal agreements, however, the cordial relations between the Academy and its partner academies and research councils throughout Europe provided a framework of links upon which the Academy could, and did, draw at need in order to assist UK scholars — while partner organisations, too, turned to the Academy for assistance when necessary in making academic contacts or gaining access to libraries, archives and museums. And the annual meeting of partner organisations served another valuable function as a forum for discussions of mutual interest and concern. The scheme of European Exchange Grants was, in 1978, subsumed within the Academy's Small Grants scheme, and transferred to the Research Fund Committee, but the principle of academic support, in the form of grants for travel and maintenance, to British scholars wishing to conduct research abroad, remains of crucial importance today.

In the 1970s, too, the Academy's **Visiting Professorships** scheme was

created. Initially established to provide an opportunity to allow British scholars to invite foreign scholars to visit the UK to conduct research, it has always been one of the Overseas Policy Committee's most popular grant schemes. Over the last quarter of a century over five hundred foreign academics have been able to visit the UK under the Academy's auspices, and while initially grants were restricted to senior scholars, the need was soon felt to offer Visiting Fellowships to support younger promising academics, and, most recently, British Academy Visiting Lectureships, specifically to support visits to lecture rather than to carry out research.

In 1979, the first Academy delegation, led by Sir Alec Cairncross, visited China, initiating links with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The following year a delegation from CASS visited London to sign the first Agreement — and one which, unique in the Academy's history, was signed jointly on the British side with the Social Science Research Council (now the Economic and Social Research Council). During the 1980s, the Academy's **China programmes** developed as a second major area of concern, alongside the East European programmes. The initial agreement with CASS was eventually amended and divided into a number of agreements with other Academies of Social Sciences, notably in Shanghai and Sichuan, and initially also Shandong, as well as the Chinese Academy of Sciences (which covered geography, psychology and aspects of archaeology). Attempts to develop relations with a variety of other regional academies of social sciences were halted by the events in June 1989, but the Academy was able to maintain the momentum of its programme to support British–Chinese collaboration through the generosity of two private donors. In 1988 the K. C. Wong Educational Trust established a series of K. C. Wong Fellowships which enabled Chinese scholars to visit the UK for periods of between three months and twelve months to conduct research, often in close co-operation with a British host. And in 1989 the Sino-British Fellowship Trust offered the Academy a grant of £15,000 a year for five years to promote British–Chinese collaborative research, support which has since been most generously renewed and extended.

If the 1980s, under the Academy's Foreign Secretary Professor E. W. Handley, saw the maintenance of a series of established relationships, the 1990s, under Foreign Secretary Professor J. B. Trapp, and then Professor B. E. Supple, were a period of change, although it was slow to evolve, and did

not always take the form that might have been expected. The enormous political changes in Europe at the end of 1989 did not immediately result in changes to the structure of relations and cancellation of agreements as doors so long closed were opened. Instead, East European academies generally sought to maintain the pattern of their international links. Inevitably the breakup, first, of the Soviet Union, and later, Yugoslavia, required the Overseas Policy Committee to address the question of dealing with a very different Europe, and the first outcome was a series of new agreements with the academies of some of the new states. The Committee, reviewing the nature and purpose of its bilateral relations in 1995, agreed that it should seek to concentrate its efforts on the support of collaborative research. Its original agreements had supported individual research visits, providing channels to facilitate visits abroad by British scholars in cases where there were political (or, sometimes, financial) advantages in making use of a framework. The changing situation in Eastern Europe, however, necessitated a different response, and the Academy began to initiate changes, first with the Polish Academy of Sciences, with the aim of moving away from agreements which supported only visits by individuals towards more flexible arrangements which offered assistance to scholars involved in collaborative projects. This was not, of course, the first time researchers involved in joint projects had received support under inter-Academy agreements: during the 1980s a most successful joint archaeological excavation was initiated at Nicopolis ad Istrum, between British and Bulgarian scholars, which is only now drawing towards a close, and there were other examples of joint research supported with other partners. But the gradual change, as agreements were renewed, to programmes encouraging the development of collaborative research, has proved extremely successful in increasing the level of activity supported by the Academy.

In parallel with its various agreements, the Overseas Policy Committee sought to establish a new series of grant schemes intended to support collaborative research. These took two main forms: the Joint Activities scheme, providing grants for bilateral projects over a period of up to three years, and the Networks scheme, which offered support for multilateral endeavours, over periods of up to five years. The initial development of these schemes was severely hampered by the lack of funding, and in the first year the Committee was only able to offer support by dint of cutting back on

other activities. But in 1998 the creation of the Arts and Humanities Research Board, with the benefit of a consequent rethinking of Academy activities and a redistribution of funds, allowed a substantial increase in the budget for international relations, from £378,000 to £723,000 over four years. Immediately the Committee was able to increase the sums available for its new schemes, and since 1998 it has offered more than 150 Joint Activities and Networks grants.

The new funding, however, also enabled the Academy to start to look further afield. There had, since the mid 1990s, been a strong feeling that the Academy should seek to broaden its international relations, developing links with those many areas of the world — Africa, the Indian sub-continent, Latin America — with which it had no links at all. But all moves towards new developments were hampered by the lack of funds, and also by an initial uncertainty of the form new arrangements should take. The Overseas Policy Committee now takes the view that new agreements should, wherever possible, concentrate on the support of bilateral collaborative research. It has developed programmes with France and with Taiwan in addition to its East European schemes, and it has entered into partnerships with other funding bodies, such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Central Asia Research Initiative of the Open Society Institute to support joint research projects in different parts of the world. Most recently discussions with the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Academy of the Humanities lead to the prospect of a new agreement to support joint research between British and Australian scholars, while potential contacts with Latin America and with Africa are being explored. These developments, it may be thought, are long overdue.

The Academy's involvement with **international organisations** dates back to its earliest years, and its membership of the Union Académique Internationale has already been mentioned. In 1974 the Academy became one of the founder members of the European Science Foundation, and, because it was at that point the main channel for government funding in the humanities, it became the British organisation represented on the Standing Committee for the Humanities, providing the British contribution to a variety of scholarly programmes (ranging from a comparative study of governments and non-dominant ethnic groups in Europe, to a study of

individual and society in the Mediterranean Muslim world, to an Asia programme designed to bring together European specialists in a series of minority disciplines). This somewhat anomalous position as the British humanities member — in view of the fact that the British Academy is an academy for the humanities and social sciences — is likely to be brought to an end once the Arts and Humanities Research Board becomes a member organisation of the ESF, leaving the Academy free to concentrate its attention on wider policy issues rather than matters relating specifically to the humanities.

The Academy is also a member of **ALLEA**, All-European Academies, founded in 1994, and consisting of nearly sixty member bodies. ALLEA is steadily developing its role as a commentator upon issues of European policy, and the Academy is becoming more involved in its varied activities. And the Academy will shortly be joining the International Social Science Council.

The Academy has, too, begun to concern itself with the European Union and its Framework Programmes, and to argue for both a wider definition of the Framework Programme's remit and its engagement with the whole spectrum of scientific endeavour, in the widest sense. The funding available from the EU far outweighs national funding, and the opportunities for British scholars are potentially considerable, albeit still largely restricted to the social sciences rather than the humanities. The Academy has much to learn in this area, developing its role in the presentation of contributions to policy debate and lobbying for change.

As the Academy enters its second century, the Overseas Policy Committee, under the chairmanship of the Foreign Secretary Professor Nicholas Mann, controls a very different range of activities from those it was set up to promote. British scholars are now rarely able to undertake long periods of research abroad, and the Wates Fellowships and Leverhulme Visiting Fellowships are long gone. Agreements remain a key feature of the Committee's work, but they are very different in structure from those set up in the Cold War, and the promotion of collaborative research lies at the heart of the Academy's international relations.

OTHER INFORMATION

An account of the development of the Fellowship and the structure of the Academy's Sections will be published in *A Historical Record of the British Academy Fellowship*.

A complete historical list of British Academy publications is published in *The British Academy: Complete Catalogue of Publications 2002*.

Further information, including lists of past Academy lectures published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, may be found via the British Academy's web site — www.britac.ac.uk