

Why support the British Academy?

SINCE ITS EARLIEST YEARS the British Academy has been privileged to receive support in the form of legacy donations from its Fellows and friends. Many of the earliest benefactors were drawn from a small circle personally linked to the Academy's first Secretary, Sir Israel Gollancz (see p. 65 of this issue). In his Presidential Address of 1918, Sir Frederic Kenyon expressed his thanks to those who had already given funds to the Academy:

One cannot express too warmly the gratitude of the Academy to the generous benefactors who have chosen this way of demonstrating their sense of the value of intellectual culture, and who have selected the Academy as the medium of their gifts. I hope their example may be widely followed. It is to be hoped that in this country, as has long been the case in France, it will become a thing recognized and taken for granted that persons with money at their disposal, and interested in the progress of human intellect, and in the honour of their country as a leader in intellectual culture, will give or bequeath sums of money to the Academy, either for specific objects in which they are interested, or to be administered at the discretion of the Academy.¹

The majority of legacies over the years have been received from the Academy's own Fellows and other academics, who recognise the Academy's commitment to scholarship, and feel that the discipline to which they have dedicated their life's work will continue to be appreciated and valued by the Academy. There are currently about 30 individuals who have pledged to leave a sum of money or a particular item or items to the Academy in their will. But why should they choose to give to the Academy?

The British Academy as a guardian of scholarship

Many academics have long and happy associations with a particular institution. Indeed, they may have spent their entire academic career in one place and feel a great affinity with their department and colleagues. However, as one Fellow has put it:

Such are the vicissitudes of modern university life that there is no guarantee that what has been created and sustained by an individual or group in favourable circumstances will retain a recognisable identity. Many university departments are under threat, and who is to say which will be the next casualty?

Under these circumstances, the British Academy seems to be a more stable and durable institution, one that will continue to be capable of administering the limited funds from my legacy in a responsible fashion. If my university should decide to retain a field in which it once had the status of pioneer and leader, its devotees would be welcome applicants for support from my fund.

In short, by giving resource to the Academy, an individual can ensure that their field of interest continues to be supported, regardless of fluctuations in levels of interest at individual universities.

It is not just Fellows of the British Academy who feel this way. Robin Lovelock spent his undergraduate and postgraduate days and much of his academic career at the University of Southampton, continuing as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in Social Work Studies for twelve years after taking early retirement in 2001. Robin and his wife Jill, also a Southampton graduate, who had a long and successful career as a local government officer, have chosen to leave a proportion of their estate to the Academy.

The remit of the Lovelock Fund (an endowed fund whose initial capital is likely to be approximately £500,000 at today's values) will be fairly broad, supporting a combination of lectures, prizes and research awards, as appropriate. Its overarching aim is consciously akin to that of the well-known Tanner Lectures on Human Values (based at the University of Utah and elsewhere): 'to advance learning and research concerning the human condition'. Its more particular focus will be on the normative reasoning involved in intellectual enquiry of all kinds and in political and public endeavour. As Mr Lovelock explains: 'Although most of my research and writing was around social work and social and health care, my intellectual home has always been in political theory and the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences.' He sees that the Academy understands the academic interests motivating his and his wife's gift, and that this will be reflected and sustained in the ways the Lovelock Fund will be used in the long term.

Legacies like that of the Lovelocks demonstrate the strength of the British Academy to support and promote research and scholarship, and thereby shed light on major issues of the day, and make informed and trusted contributions to public debate.

¹ Sir F.G. Kenyon, 'The Position of an Academy in a Civilized State: Presidential Address [4 July 1918]', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, [8], 44. Sir Frederic went on to stress the particular value of 'funds which

might be used, at the discretion of the Academy, for the assistance of research'.



Figure 1. Professor Neil Smith FBA and his wife Saras have recently established the Neil and Saras Smith Medal for Linguistics – the design of which is illustrated here. This is the first British Academy medal for linguistics, and the first of its kind in the UK. The medal will be awarded for the first time in 2014, to a linguist whose career has demonstrated the highest standards of achievement and scholarship. In addition to their recent £10,000 gift, Neil and Saras are leaving a percentage of their residual estate to the Academy to endow the medal in perpetuity.

Transforming a discipline

Professor William Doyle FBA and his wife Christine contacted the Academy very recently after deciding to leave the residue of their estate to the Academy for a fund to support French History. Professor Doyle spent much of his career at the University of Bristol where, however, there was no tradition of research in French history. The Academy, therefore, seemed a more appropriate destination for a sum likely to be in seven figures. A sum of this size has the potential to transform the study of French History, and the broad remit of the Academy's work means it has the potential to do so internationally. It is intended that the fund should be used flexibly to pursue innovative approaches to the study of French history and the history of the French-speaking world.

Mutual benefit

Professor Sir Brian Harrison FBA, a historian, and his wife Victoria are leaving to the Academy both his academic papers and a generous gift which will generate (with careful management) investment income that is more than sufficient for the Academy to look after them. Sir Brian thinks that possession of Fellows' papers would collectively enhance the Academy's standing, but realises that it can undertake such responsibilities only if accompanied by adequate endowment. He has therefore placed no restrictions on the Academy's use of any income that remains from investing the fund: it can be used to support the Academy's priorities as they evolve. The Academy particularly values unrestricted income, which frees it to pursue opportunities independently of statutory funding, and will be happy to enter into discussions with other Fellows who may wish to reach a similar arrangement.

Strength in numbers

The majority of gifts pledged to the Academy are of a more modest size, but are nevertheless extremely important. They are a valuable reminder of the high regard in which the Academy is held by academics across the broad range of its disciplines. These smaller pledges are often made by those

with considerable pressure on their resources – with families or friends to provide for, or a favourite charity to which the majority of funds are committed – and as such they are particularly appreciated. There are, of course, a variety of motivations involved. Whether it is because of the Academy's support for early career scholars, or its international reach, or its role as a champion of the humanities and social sciences, an increasing number of Fellows are choosing to make a lasting commitment to its work.²

Four- and five-figure funds are not managed individually as a matter of course, but are added to the Academy Development Fund (ADF), from which unrestricted income is used to support new and strategically important activities at the Academy. Professor Charles (Charlie) Moule FBA (1908-2007) left £30,000 of unrestricted capital to the Academy in his will. If just 30 people followed Professor Moule's example, in time the ADF would be strengthened by a further £1,000,000. In this way relatively modest gifts make an important and lasting difference to the Academy's independence and ability to carry out its work.

The Fund is now valued at some £5,000,000 and is a valuable and powerful resource. Without the ADF the Academy would not have had sufficient financial security to be able to embark on the expansion into No. 11 Carlton House Terrace in 2010. Now that investment has paid off: the ADF is regularly supplemented by income from external room bookings, through Clio, the trading arm of the Academy.

Tax breaks make gifts more affordable

Though tax relief is rarely the primary reason for making a charitable donation, changes to inheritance tax laws made in 2012 make charitable donations more affordable. The laws were changed to give benefit to those who leave at least 10% of their taxable estate to charity.

Careful investment

In the main legacies are used to create invested funds from which a proportion of the income each year is re-invested, and a proportion spent to further the aims of the fund. In recent years the Academy's investments have performed extremely well, so the value of its private funds have grown. It is the Academy's policy (assuming sufficient income) to spend the equivalent of 4 per cent of the capital value of its endowed funds each year. If over- or

² The recent threat to the sustainability of the British Academy's Small Research Grants scheme spurred many Fellows to make donations to the Academy. See 'British Academy Small Research Grants: an anniversary worth celebrating', *British Academy Review*, 21 (January 2013), 29. The establishment of the Academy's 'Research Fund' enables any gift to be restricted to funding research, if preferred.

under-spending occurs then income may be re-invested for a year or so, or additional awards made, if appropriate. The Lovelock Fund, for example, with a value of £500,000 would be expected to generate some £20,000 per annum of expendable income.

Thanks

The Academy is indebted to those who choose to leave a gift in their will to support its work. As a token of thanks a lunch is held each autumn to which legators and their partners are invited. If you have included – or are considering – a gift in your will to the British Academy please do get in touch so we can thank you too! Our Develop-

ment Officer, Jennifer Hawton, would be pleased to hear from you, and is available to discuss your specific plans (on 020 7969 5258, or j.hawton@britac.ac.uk). Further information is available via www.britac.ac.uk/Legacies.cfm

Figure 2. One of the most significant legacies in recent years is that of Professor Ray Pahl FBA (1935-2011). He gave his collection of modern British art to the British Academy shortly after its expansion into No. 11 Carlton House Terrace. Professor Pahl's impressive art collection was amassed over a period of 40 years through some careful buying and 'trading up'. The paintings Professor Pahl and his family gave to the Academy are worth some £250,000 and proudly adorn the walls of the Marks Room in No. 10 and the first floor Gallery in No. 11. Professor Pahl's children have been closely involved with the Academy and its plans for the canvasses since his death. Illustrated is 'Black Sun Newlyn' (1982) by Sir Terry Frost (1915-2003).

