

# British Academy REVIEW

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## New Visions

Featured

**Annabel Tremlett**  
on new ways  
of seeing  
Roma people

**Ash Amin on the**  
British Academy's  
international  
vision

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# British Academy REVIEW

## No. 35 Spring 2019

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Join us this June as we throw open our doors for our annual two-day Summer Showcase.

# Academy news



## National academies urge Government to develop national languages strategy

In February 2019, the British Academy published *Languages in the UK: A call for action*, urging the Government, business, policymakers and social organisations to revive language learning with a national strategy, to help make Britain and its citizens truly global.

Backed by the Royal Society, the Academy of Medical Sciences, and the Royal Academy of Engineering, the British Academy said that the prospect of Brexit 'makes it even more important for the UK to have the languages needed to forge wider commercial and other links.'

[For more on this, see page 12](#)

## British Academy says immigration policy undermines the academic sector

In February 2019, the British Academy published two statements calling for a rethink of the Government's proposed immigration system, and existing plans for UK-based EU nationals post-Brexit, which risks severely damaging the UK's higher education sector.

Home Office policy direction, it said, was at odds with the practical realities of academic structures, and could erode the competitiveness and attractiveness of UK higher education and research. It highlighted the fact that six of the top seven disciplines with the highest proportion of non-UK EU undergraduates are in the humanities and social sciences.

[For more on this, see page 3](#)

## Chris Skidmore MP is 'Minister for the Arts and Humanities'

The British Academy has welcomed comments made by Universities Minister Chris Skidmore in a January 2019 speech at RADA, in which he said 'I take great pride in wanting to be Minister for the Arts and Humanities'.

In response, the Academy underlined the value of the arts, humanities and social sciences to the nation's economic, social and cultural wealth, stressing that they are essential to tackling the key challenges of our time, and it said it looked forward to working closely with the Minister.

## British Academy publishes healthcheck on Theology and Religious Studies

A new British Academy report reveals that the number of first-year university students enrolling on Theology and Religious Studies has fallen by a third over the past six years, with several UK university theology departments closing or becoming smaller. The findings are of concern at a time when a deep understanding of religions could help avert sectarian conflicts and attacks, and also help multi-faith communities to navigate the challenges they face.

[For more on this, see page 8](#)

## Mary Robinson to speak on the challenge of climate justice

On 4 June 2019, Former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson will be at the British Academy to discuss our collective responsibility to campaign for climate justice. The event is part of the British Academy's season on *Utopia or Dystopia – Imagining Futures*.



## Summer Showcase exhibitors announced

The British Academy has announced the 15 humanities and social sciences projects chosen to exhibit at its Summer Showcase, a free festival of ideas for curious minds (21–22 June).

After the inaugural British Academy Summer Showcase in 2018 attracted 1,750 visitors, the British Academy will once again throw open its doors as the selected projects' researchers present their work through hands-on activities and interactive displays. There will also be pop-up talks and performances, and hundreds of young students will enjoy a free Summer Showcase Schools Day.

[For more on this, see page 72](#)

**Editorial:**

# ‘Global’ Brexit Britain



Professor Ash Amin is Head of Geography at the University of Cambridge. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2007, and has been the Academy's Foreign Secretary since 2015.

Ash Amin explains  
the international vision  
of the British Academy  
in a turbulent world

I write this wryly on April Fool's day, when the UK should have started its withdrawal from the EU but has not done so yet. The sun is streaming in through my window, perhaps because we are still in the EU. I have been asked to reflect on my four years as the British Academy's Foreign Secretary, and to look ahead to the Academy's international future.

Well, how to put this with a measure of calm? I would say that our future comes with an unhealthy dose of uncertainty that could be deeply detrimental to the UK's future in the humanities and social sciences, posing a significant threat to us all in our research careers and personal lives, at a time of already great pressure in the higher education community. And yes, this is the polite version.

I might mention the dangers that our disciplines face from the UK's withdrawal from the EU – admittedly with some weariness given our repeated attempts to get this message across in the last few years. Our disciplines are world leaders, and we face an unprecedented challenge on a wide range of fronts. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences based in the UK have won more than 33 per cent of all funding given by the European Research Council (ERC). This is more than any other country in any discipline. The funding has been a lifeline for collaborative and larger-scale curiosity-driven research. The UK does very well across the board in the ERC, including the natural and physical sciences in which we often lead the pack – but even here the UK has won 'only' around 20 per cent of the funding ever provided.

Six out of the top 10 UK disciplines with the highest proportions of non-UK EU staff are in our disciplines, which also account for six out of the top seven disciplines with the highest proportion of non-UK EU undergraduates. The attracting, nurturing and development of talented academics in the UK will be deeply harmed by the UK not being able to participate in the ERC in the future. The value of moving up through national research schemes such as the British Academy's Mid-Career Fellowships to larger ERC awards is clearly shown elsewhere in this issue (pages 54–57). We look into an abyss as Parliament and our EU



Under the British Academy's Early Childhood Development programme, Keetie Roelen (Institute of Development Studies) is leading research that is investigating how economic strengthening through comprehensive social protection can effect early childhood development in Haiti. Photo: Sung Kyu Kim.

counterparts decide on whether the UK will continue to be part of – and benefit from – the networks of knowledge and excellence our EU membership has enabled.

More broadly, there is a major tension we face going forward, with current Government policies and messaging. The referendum campaign and its aftermath played on deep public concern about UK national identity, around a host of anxieties, prejudices and illusions that continue to circulate and define diverse positions on EU membership. The country remains polarised along the fault lines revealed by the referendum, and the divisions will not be closed by persisting with the zealous rhetoric and double-speak of Brexit.<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, the Government has coined the concept of a 'Global Britain', signalling that the UK will 'continue to

be open, inclusive and outward facing', 'resist any sense that Britain will be less engaged in the world in the next few years', as well as have a 'global presence, active in every region; global interests, working with our allies and partners ... and global perspectives, engaging with the world in every area, influencing and being influenced'.<sup>2</sup> Fine words, which make me wonder why the concept cannot include continued deep collaboration with the EU and our European partners.

On the other hand, we have seen the rise of a language of taking back control, border controls and national privileges for a historic people. This language has profound effects on choices about where and how to live, study and/or work.<sup>3</sup> Divisive and inflammatory rhetoric such as 'citizens of nowhere', and an immigration system that is closing down oppor-

1 Ash Amin and Patrick Wright, 'Nation on test: Identity and belonging after the EU referendum' (British Academy, 2018).

2 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *Global Britain: Sixth Report of Session 2017–19*, HC 780, 'Memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office', pp. 19–20.

3 'Statement on the UK's future immigration system for higher education and research' (British Academy, February 2019); 'Statement on the proposed settled status scheme and European temporary leave to remain for higher education and research' (British Academy, February 2019).



tunities through incommensurate and inappropriate burdens and barriers for international mobility and collaboration,<sup>4</sup> are just a small part of a rebuttal of cosmopolitanism, liberal thought and free movement. These are staple principles for an organisation such as the British Academy, committed to learning and knowing through open engagement, and we will find ourselves having to stand up for them more vociferously in the days to come.

I see these days as turbulent and dark. I sense a growing intolerance of critical reasoning, open debate, and cosmopolitan thinking in public and political culture, reaching for the comforts of not thinking too hard. Thankfully the British Academy's international mission, delivered through our programmes and activities, the diplomacy we engage in, the networks we foster, and the ideas and people we support, remain a beacon for these ideals,

opening us to the world and vice versa. We are for 'citizens of a somewhere' that is both here and there, home and abroad, rooted and mobile.

I am sure the British Academy will continue its international work as such an advocate. That has been my guiding principle as Foreign Secretary. It is essential that we make every effort to maintain the UK's central place in facilitating knowledge and cultural exchange. This is key to ensuring that the UK remains an attractive pole for the very best researchers and research, in turn ensuring that the humanities and social sciences continue to enrich and deepen our understanding of the world around us, and making it a better place for us and future generations. Making the case for the indispensability of our subjects in a turbulent and fast-changing world requires active work, including speaking up for them interna-

tionally.

This we have sought to do vigorously. We work closely with the All European Academies (ALLEA), leading its Horizon Europe Working Group, to influence current and future EU Framework Programmes, engaging with EU Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament. We have collaborated closely with the Royal Irish Academy on a series of 'Brexit Briefings'.<sup>5</sup> We have also led our community in speaking up for our subjects' excellence as the UK withdraws from the EU, including for the first time convening all seven national academies in these islands to speak with one voice. It is vital that we continue to lead shared European agendas with ALLEA and with other European academies, and not be cowed by Brexit. This is why I am delighted that the British Academy will host the ALLEA General Assembly in

4 'The British Academy: current and proposed immigration policy is undermining the academic sector' (British Academy news release, 22 February 2019).

5 Between October 2017 and December 2018, the British Academy has issued 11 Brexit Briefings. They can be found via [thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/brexit-briefings](http://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/brexit-briefings).

the UK in 2020.

Using our convening power, we have worked to sustain and extend the UK's European and global engagement and collaborations, and to bring together perspectives on global challenges from across the world. We collaborate with our European and US partners on a stream of activities related to truth, trust and expertise, which aim to make the case for the importance of expertise and evidence-based thinking today. Our own expertise and convening power have proved critical in helping to develop dialogue on key questions for the future of UK research. With our International Forum Series, we col-

laborate with the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) amongst others to bring our subjects to bear on topical matters. Through the Series, we have helped, for example, to examine the impact of China's 'One Belt One Road' policy from a South Asian perspective.

Future plans aim to enhance further our international partnerships and leadership, by scaling up our bilateral, regional and global partnerships with academies, leading universities and other research partners. This will include research meet-

ings and expert roundtables with partners in India and China, and through work with partners in Africa we will play our part in capacity-building there and more broadly in the Global South.

Our five international thematic priorities – *Conflict, Stability & Security; Urban Futures; Justice, Rights & Equality; Europe's Futures; Knowledge Frontiers* – have been fundamental to our international partnerships, but they also address global challenges and influence international policy debates. For example, some research funded under our *The Humanities and Social Sciences Tackling the UK's International Challenges* programme, has

Under the British Academy's *Cities & Infrastructure* programme, Philip Rode (London School of Economics) is leading research on the governance of urban infrastructures interfaces in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in Ethiopia. Photo: Charlie Rosser Photography.



created a toolkit on safeguarding children from sexual exploitation in peacekeeping operations, which is being utilised by the UN Missions in Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and has also been adapted by the African Union, the OECD, and DFID.

In work supported by our *Cities & Infrastructure* programme, teams of archaeologists, engineers, architects and scientists have identified monuments in Nepal that are likely to be endangered following the two major earthquakes there in 2015, and helped authorities to change the way in which they address conservation.<sup>6</sup> As another example of this critical interdisciplinary approach, our *Knowledge Frontiers* programme has brought together psychologists, geophysicists, geologists, city authorities, emergency managers, architects, artists and local communities to raise awareness and preparedness about the Lembang Fault in Indonesia, which has been recently recognised as active and capable of major earthquakes. All of this research has helped improve not just understanding of vital questions, but also timely international policy engagement and impact. For example, five of our award holders in the DFID-funded *Tackling Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour in Modern Business* programme have been included in the annual UK Top 100 Corporate Modern Slavery Influencers' Index.<sup>7</sup>

To attract the best scholars from across the world and to promote international researcher mobility, we are building international collaborative links through a series of early career researcher symposia. We have successfully delivered symposia in Boston, Delhi and Johannesburg with local partners in the last year or so. The UK-US collaborative seed funding from the first workshop has already been developed into a significant new research project for one group, led by a former British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow with expertise in literature, on the visualisation of gender-based violence in graphic awareness campaigns in Nepal. We wish to expand these symposia to ensure that early career researchers can engage with counterparts across disciplines and borders, so that the UK remains central to the next generation of cutting-edge ideas. We have already additional funding to do so in the Global South in the coming years, and we are looking to scale up this activity across the rest of the world too, with plans progressing with partners in Germany, Australia and Ireland.

We continue to invest in the best researchers in the UK and worldwide. Our *Newton International Fellowships* enable early career researchers to come from anywhere in the world to the UK for two years, with five years of follow-on funding. Our *Visiting Fellowships* have provided opportunities for 89 academics from 34

countries to work with UK partners. Programmes such as these ensure that the UK remains central in global networks; and we are expanding these further through our new *Global Professorships*, which provide world-leading academics an opportunity to work in the UK for four years to develop cutting-edge research and lasting collaborations.

The years ahead are going to be a bumpy ride, no doubt punctuated by more politeness on our part, but I hope also the urgency to proclaim our cosmopolitan commitment. I don't think it naïve to believe that the British Academy has the platform and levers to play a crucial role in shaping an existential future that is safe, knowledgeable and congenial. We are an important voice for our disciplines, for their civilisational worth, and for the internationalism they require. In the last few years we have considerably expanded the Academy's international reach and profile – in the last five years we have increased our annual international funding from some £6.5 million to around £20 million today – through more research programmes, fellowships for UK and overseas researchers, early career and expert symposia, country partnerships, and various efforts of 'science' diplomacy.

I feel compelled to close, as a settled migrant vexed by the growing public animosity towards the stranger, by declaring that the British Academy has the power to resist the devastating mischief that is afoot. We have the means to articulate a vision and set of actions, rooted in research in the humanities and social sciences, showing the value and necessity of a public culture of engagement with the stranger and of openness to the world as the confident way of negotiating uncertainty and turbulence.

I am comforted to know that my successor as the British Academy's Foreign Secretary, Simon Goldhill, shares this view. It has been a privilege to work for the British Academy, and even more so with its international staff led by Philip Lewis and overseen by Vivienne Hurley. What a formidable, dedicated and resourceful team!

**We have the means to articulate a vision, rooted in the humanities and social sciences, showing the value and necessity of engagement with the stranger and of openness to the world.**

<sup>6</sup> See Caroline Knowles, 'Cities and infrastructures: A view from Kathmandu', *British Academy Review*, 33 (Summer 2018), 27–31.

<sup>7</sup> For more on this programme, see Brad Blitz, 'Tackling modern slavery in modern business', *British Academy Review*, 32 (Spring 2018), 27–29.



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# Theology and Religious Studies: new inspirations?

Silvianna Aspray, Benjamin Kirby, Judith Lieu and Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad discuss past and future directions

**T**he origins of the university system in the West are inseparable from the study of Christian theology – usually designed for the more advanced education of clergy and monks. In that context, the question of God was a necessary and invariable part of the question of how we understand the world and ourselves, even of what it means ‘to know’. In the contemporary world, especially in the West, ‘the question of God’ is no longer self-evident, and indeed is regarded by many as alien to our task of the pursuit of knowledge. Yet what is now called ‘Theology and Religious Studies’ (TRS, on which more below) continues to excite, way beyond the confines of the earliest clientele. Two aspects of this were explored in a pair of recent conversations, each between a senior academic and a researcher near the beginning of their academic career.

## What religious texts do, and not just what they say

The close reading of texts, especially texts that deal in some way with God, has been

a constant thread throughout the history of Christianity (and not just of Christianity), and is one of the hallmarks of TRS. Yet increasingly we are not excavating these texts for their ideas or the story they tell, but locating them in much larger stories. Dr Silvianna Aspray explained, ‘One of the things that excites me about my research, and in general about the way that philosophical theology is explored in this country, is how I am encouraged to combine a detailed case study of a historical thinker and historical sources, with thinking about what implications they have for bigger narratives, such as about what makes modernity “modern”.’

With reference to her own work on Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), she said: ‘The way in which we perceive reality in our time – for example, that the world can be imagined regardless of whether it has some kind of origin, or goal beyond itself – is not the only possible way. This becomes clear to me time and again when I read someone like Cusa, who could not think of reality apart from its relationship to God.’ It is not just a matter of how

such ideas have evolved and changed, but also of the fundamental and far reaching-implications for the understanding of ourselves and of reality that we take for granted.

This close reading of historical sources also challenges us with very different models of what is entailed in ‘thinking’, and therefore with very different understandings of how texts should be read, than those we take for granted. For Silvi-  
anne, ‘in our time, the normal stance is to think of ourselves as readers who are somehow neutral. When we read something, we expect that some kind of propositional knowledge is being conveyed to us. We stand somewhat outside the text, as neutral observers and receivers.’ This stands in contrast to some of the texts that we read from pre-modernity. ‘They want something to happen to the reader in a much more embodied way, in a way that actually guides the readers’ thinking and imagination. For example, most pre-modern texts about prayer do not try to be neutral and detached. Rather, in talking about the importance of prayer, the texts may want to lead you into a prayer. They may try to shape your imagination, or the

habits of your mind.’

This should make us rethink other classic pre-modern texts – proofs of God, for instance. ‘There is a long modern tradition of reading them as if their authors were saying, “With these clever tricks of thought and word, I can prove the existence of God.” But perhaps someone like Anselm of Canterbury never meant his ontological argument to be read that way. Rather, as many now think, he wanted to get his readers to ponder about the problem of perceiving God. The neutral, detached, sceptical standpoint is a very modern thing.’

This attention to what texts *do*, to their ‘performativity’, is something that runs across TRS. Professor Judith Lieu’s own work on the New Testament and the early church has followed a similar trajectory. ‘When I started my lifelong close study of John’s Gospel, people thought about reading texts as picking out the ideas. So, I might ask, “What does this text say about God? Or, what does this text say about who Jesus is in relationship to God? What does this text say about salvation?” Now, we pay much more attention to the way that texts shape individuals and shape

communities. Texts *do* things. One way that we look at that is by recognising that a text like John’s gospel is a narrative; and we can explore how that narrative works to invite the readers inside, to identify with characters, to be shaped by the plot, to take sides or claim insight when the author uses irony or double entendre.’

This is true more widely. We have very limited access to the historical realities behind the texts, but no doubt they were much messier; the texts we are reading may be distorting the reality and projecting what they hope to generate. ‘We used to look at (other) early Christian texts as the source of ideas or as providing information about what people thought at that stage, how the Church was structured, or something like that. Now we read texts much more in terms of “how were they trying to shape something that was new?” When people became Christians, they did not become something that already existed. Christianity was *in the making*. And therefore the early texts were seeking to give shape to individuals and to communities. To use the modern jargon, they were “shaping identities”.’

Judith continued, ‘Recently my work has been on the emergence of the idea of heresy. There was not a preformed true belief from the start. Rather, out of what is probably a swirling experimentation with ideas, a process develops through texts by which notions of true belief and wrong belief emerge, boundaries are drawn or experimented with, outsiders are castigated. It is a process *through texts*. In practice, who believed what and in what numbers is largely lost to us.’

Of course, this emphasis on the performativity of texts is not peculiar to TRS: it shows how the discipline is always in conversation with other disciplines – literary studies or classical studies to begin with. Yet this conversation explored what it is that is distinctive about the texts we read or the context in which we read them. ‘Perhaps,’ Silvi-  
anne suggested, ‘this kind of focus is particularly pronounced in TRS because the challenge of theology has always been to talk or think about something that is beyond the reach of language in some way, “the transcendent”. There is always this understanding that, whatever words we use to talk about the divine, they are just scaffolding, and while we climb the scaffolding, it also falls down. Language that starts from the things that can be seen and touched has somehow to be stretched when applied to



Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), from a painting by the Master of the Life of the Virgin.



With the nearby mosque at capacity, Muslim men in the Kariakoo district of Dar es Salaam perform Friday prayer (swala ya Ijuma) in the streets. Photo: George Gasto / Rehoboth Pictures.

God. Theological writers in the past have been very aware of that, and have been trying to get around it by ways of speaking that are not just providing the right bits of information, but are more performative, and are trying to shape imaginations and habits.'

Silvianne agreed that, in terms of method, she could do her work in a history of philosophy faculty, but a faculty or department of TRS does offer something distinctive: 'All my colleagues working in the Divinity Faculty, as diverse as their methods are, are united by an interest in God, and in what thinking about God does to language, to communities, to knowledge, to texts.'

Judith's experience, which includes having worked in a department of ancient history, is much the same. 'What is distinctive about working in a department of theology and religious studies is that it is acceptable to use all one's critical analysis for texts that talk about God, and actually to see God as part of the players, actors, or topics of these texts, without thinking that to do so treads on dangerous ground.' This is highly relevant in a contemporary context. 'Religious texts shape the way

people live and behave in very profound ways, with consequences that effect the lives of those who have little direct interest in religion. It is important to be able to analyse what is going on in texts, without suggesting that this means undermining the authority of those texts. Obviously, there are always those who do feel threatened when you analyse texts that talk about God, particularly if they are part of the sacred scriptures. However, the ability to analyse texts that talk about God without colleagues thinking that this is doing something weird, or something that isn't open to proper analysis, is something that we can do in a department of Theology and Religious Studies.'

### Embodying religious identities in social contexts

Dr Benjamin Kirby's research explores how 'religion might be integral to some of the processes that are unfolding in urban African settings.' He focuses on the way that Muslim and Christian identities operate as part of everyday street life in East African cities. Although worlds away from Silvianne's concerns, he also talks about embodiment and performativity, but this

time of religion by human actors, and his work similarly promises to destabilise long-established Western understandings of the divine and the world.

In this he signals how 'Religious Studies' has been transformed over the 50-odd years of its existence. As Professor Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad observed, 'When the study of religion became a kind of conversation partner with the existing discipline of theology, there was an idea that we ought to study religions that are not Judeo-Christian in the same way as we study it,' because it was assumed that to do so was 'objective' or 'neutral', as if 'the Western gaze somehow was outside the picture.'

In the context of the mid-20th century, awareness of the social conditions and challenges that societies elsewhere in the world were facing, and that immigrants from there were facing in the West, often provoked a 'collapsing of religion and society into one trope of backwardness.' Doing so flattened the differences between religious traditions past and present and how they might be critically analysed, and the contemporary societies in which these occurred. It ignored 'the way in which, in practice, ancient texts and ancient practices have been pluralised and have been integrated, and have perhaps been forgotten' – for example, in modern India, one of Ram-Prasad's areas of interest. In Religious Studies that means overcoming the separation between 'textual specialists' and those 'who have been out in the battlefield', and developing a more integrated exploration of how what is observed is 'informed by the unseen history of religion that plays such a living role in what people do today', something that will include their dynamic re-negotiation of ancient texts.

When Ben undertakes his ethnographic work in Tanzania, he is adopting a very different lens and set of questions from that earlier model. He is asking how does religious identity work; how does it 'facilitate interactions'? 'Muslim fashion, particularly among men in informal market districts, acquires an almost infrastructural quality, in that it allows people to create platforms that enable them to engage with strangers. A performed Muslim identity can protect informal workers from the negative attentions of the police.' Spaces, such as mosque complexes, and how they fit into urban architecture, are part of this. This can work differently for Christians and Muslims in the same

setting.

More tentatively Ben suggested that similar observations might be made in a UK setting, for example between Muslim and Christian Nigerians, and the possibilities that religious spaces or patterns of observances offer them and how they are played out in daily lives. 'People are very proficient at performing different forms of religious identity in the everyday settings of their social worlds.' He sees among his African-born friends in the UK that 'the everyday enactment of a Muslim identity carries a very different kind of potency from that of a Christian identity.'

Once again, these specific case studies open the door to reflection on bigger narratives. Ram-Prasad noted how the rise of criticism of 'multiculturalism' and of the policies to address it in the UK has shown little awareness of other periods in history and places – such as India, which 'as a political entity has always been fundamentally polycentric and pluralised, and has always had to have peoples of different religions and languages and ethnicities circulating around.' A more nuanced understanding of the relationship between religion and identities, and daily performance and living together, will be crucial 'if the Britain of the 21st century is to be able to reconceive itself'.

Recent research in Religious Studies takes this on board, as it has moved from being 'a particular way of looking at the world you go to', to recognising that 'understanding what is going on around the world is necessary for us rather than a gift to them.' Although the university systems and institutions in these other parts of the world may not always have the infrastructure and robustness of our own, their intellectual sophistication is not in doubt, and they are developing models from which we can learn.

Ben recognised this within his own intellectual experience, particularly in debates about what constitutes 'religion'. 'The enduring potency of particularly Western European Protestant notions of what religion constitutes shapes our own assumptions about what should constitute other groups' religious identities. This country has a very distinctive expectation of what religious others should look like, and how we should treat those who fail to live up to that standard, which simply does not map onto other settings where I have done research. In response, religious others in settings like the UK have to perform their identities in concert

with these and adapt to them.'

Ram-Prasad offered a related example. When the Ugandan Asians first came to this country, no distinction was made between Muslims and Hindus; they were Gujarati Indians. In time, 'global changes to the salience of Islam as an identity, not about culture but something that wove together people from different backgrounds, have had an effect on Gujarati Muslims.' And different forces have impacted on Gujarati Hindus. This has led to divergences which extend to the jobs people go into, their holiday destinations, their language about the country in which they now live.

These lines of development in the study of religion again open up debate about where such research is undertaken. Ben's own career illustrates this. Having started with a conventional text-based course at Oxford, he later undertook a masters' degree in Religion and Public Life at the University of Leeds; but as his interests developed, he found few obvious conversation partners, except among a few anthropologists of religion. Research in other fields, and particularly that of urban studies, seemed more vital and imaginatively engaging. Yet within African Studies he also encountered a (revealing) concern that studying religion in an African context is necessarily going to be a patronising exercise.

What emerged from their conversation was that those who study religions may have very different areas of focus, completely different regional and temporal interests, and different religious traditions, but overlaps emerge in the shared challenges that come from trying to account for the ways in which 'the idea of the religious has been figured in different settings, and particularly the influence of Western ways of framing religion and the contemporary salience of religious identities.' As Ben said, when specialists in religious studies engage with other disciplines or subject areas, 'scholarly reflection is often directed at troubling or disturbing either the absence of religion in accounts of certain phenomena, or the way it is positioned in relation to other phenomena.'

### Reflections

Both these conversations show how scholarship on religion is, and will increasingly be, multi-methodological. That does not mean that those involved in it must become 'Jills of all trades and mistresses

of none', although most do find themselves learning new methods throughout their career. Highly developed expertise is as important as ever – if not more so – whether in ancient and modern languages, philosophical reasoning, social scientific methods, fieldwork skills, historical analysis, and so on. As elsewhere in the humanities, multi-disciplinary collaboration may more and more become the norm – 'simply as a consequence of the need to understand complex issues that have become incapable of being understood by any one human being,' said Ram-Prasad. 'Decentring where we are coming from and not privileging any one sort of experience is one of the most exciting dimensions of growth.'

In April 2019, the British Academy has published a report of Theology and Religious Studies provision in UK Higher Education. That report demonstrates changes in provision and in its pattern, and necessarily concentrates on statistical analysis of contexts which are identifiably centres of the discipline. It reveals how the study of religion is becoming more dispersed, diverse and international, and with fewer students in the traditional TRS departments at public universities. This not only reflects the changing relationship between society and the question of God explored here, but also the changing nature of our universities in a time of mass higher education.

Although this report and the conversations recorded in this article were conceived as independent exercises, reading them together highlights the challenges and the excitement of the field, and, it is to be hoped, will provoke further conversations in which the British Academy will be keen to participate.

The two conversations were convened and edited by Judith Lieu.

### Further reading

The British Academy's report on Theology and Religious Studies provision in UK Higher Education, published in April 2019, can be found via [thebritishacademy.ac.uk/theology-religious-studies-UK](http://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/theology-religious-studies-UK)

# Language learning: turning a crisis into an opportunity

Neil Kenny and Harriet Barnes spell out the British Academy's call for action



Neil Kenny is Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2011, and is the British Academy's Lead Fellow for Languages.



Harriet Barnes is Head of Policy (Higher Education & Skills) at the British Academy.

Languages come in all shapes and forms – spoken, written, and sign; modern and ancient; UK-indigenous, European, Asian, Middle Eastern, African, indigenous American. But the UK has two problems with languages. First, many people emerge from formal education with a lifelong English monolingualism. The more disadvantaged their background, the more that happens. It means they miss out economically, culturally, and cognitively. Secondly, even where multilingualism does surround us in the UK, as it does especially in cities, we too often see it as a problem rather than as an under-exploited asset.

Things are, in many ways, getting even worse. The number of students studying modern languages at undergraduate level has fallen by 54 per cent since 2007–08.<sup>1</sup> In the same period, at least 10 university modern language departments have closed, and another nine have significantly downsized. Fewer than half the pupils in English secondary schools take a GCSE in a modern or ancient language. Half of sixth-form colleges in England have stopped offering at least one modern language A level. And can you guess how many secondary school pupils studied

German A level in Wales in 2018? A mere 70. With statistics like these, no one would deny that language learning is in crisis.

But, in a world where advances in machine-learning technology are improving Google Translate, and the Duolingo language learning app is reported to have 300 million active users, does the weakness of language learning in formal education really matter?

Google Translate certainly might help you a bit with communication in situations where big errors don't matter. But Google Translate doesn't profoundly enrich your brain, your cultural understanding, your capacity for empathy, in the way that language learning does. Google Translate doesn't give you a window into other worlds, broaden your mental horizons, make you more likely to be curious and respectful when encountering other cultures and communities. Nothing beats language learning when it comes to producing a mindset of cultural agility that is highly valued by employers in an increasingly global labour market. It enables people to navigate through unfamiliar environments, sensitive to differences in social norms – skills vital in business as well as in more formal diplomacy. And this

<sup>1</sup> HESA Student Record accessed via Heidi Plus online analytics service. Copyright HESA Ltd. Neither HESA nor HESA Services Limited can accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived by third parties from data or other information obtained from Heidi Plus.

cognitive flexibility has also been shown to be beneficial to our long-term mental health. Finally, numerous disciplines promoted by the British Academy have long shown that deep study of and research into languages, modern and ancient, go beyond personal benefit to increase the sum total of human knowledge about both the modern world and our past.

So we should be taking steps to reverse what risks becoming an inescapable downward spiral. The good news is that we appear to be at a point where there is a growing coalition of voices pressing for action.

Over a few days in late February and early March 2019, the air waves were full of these voices. The British Academy published a statement, *Languages in the UK: A call for action*. In this we gained the support of our sister national academies for science, medicine and engineering to call upon government to adopt and implement a national strategy for languages. We set out the evidence for how the UK's lack of language skills has resulted in the loss of economic, social, cultural and research opportunities. For example, the economic cost in terms of lost trade and investment has been estimated at 3.5 per cent of GDP (around £48 billion a year). We argue that the task of making the UK's language capacity fit for purpose cannot be solved through education policy alone, but requires a joined-up approach across government departments, and also across the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Our call aligns closely with a proposal, published a few days later by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Languages, for a National Recovery Programme for Languages. The APPG, chaired by Nia Griffith MP and Baroness Coussins, has set out a vision 'to meet the UK's goals in government, business and civil society by building a country where language skills are valued; where speaking more than one language is the norm; and where languages education and training are world class, equipping the current and next generations with the right language skills for the future.'

And a few days earlier, the BBC launched the findings of its own research, which elicited responses from over half the secondary schools in the UK. It provided further evidence of the decline in numbers of students taking languages, and consequently the reduction of provision within schools. The BBC's findings

suggested that many teachers believe students are turned away from languages because they perceive them to be difficult. Action is needed to rectify that perception. When taught well and graded fairly (rather than severely), languages are no easier or more difficult than other subjects.

Other bodies are acting too. The Arts and Humanities Research Council has invested £16 million in the Open World Research Initiative, a series of four major programmes aiming to show the crucial role which languages play in contemporary issues, evidence which is showcased in their recent Power of Languages report.

This concentration of activity does seem to be bearing fruit. The issue is certainly attracting attention within Westminster and Whitehall. In the last few weeks we have seen questions and debate, in both the Commons and the Lords, on the need for a strategy (though disappointingly answered solely in relation to relatively modest policy actions for secondary education in England), on actions to address the fall in numbers in higher education, and on how the supply of teachers and interpreters and the opportunities for year abroad study will be maintained in the new immigration system.

The British Academy itself is now working with partners with interests across the education system to flesh out what the education and skills part of a national strategy for languages might look like. We are seeing how we can build on existing structures and initiatives – such as the Scottish Government 1+2 policy (where every pupil should have opportunity to learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue), the MFL Mentoring Scheme pioneered by Cardiff University, and the MFL Centre for Excellence and associated school hubs which are central to the Pedagogy Pilot for secondary education in England.

Finally, a key finding of the BBC research was that, while numbers taking French and German continue to fall, there has been an increase in the uptake of Spanish – and also of other languages, such as Portuguese, Polish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese. None of this changes the fact that overall numbers are very low. And the numbers studying these less traditional languages are very small in absolute terms.

But they do indicate where there is huge untapped potential to boost the

UK's linguistic capacity. The UK is a multilingual country, but this extra linguistic competence in 'community', 'heritage' or 'home' languages is rarely recognised. The language learning that goes on in thousands of complementary or supplementary schools has little public visibility, and some children may actively conceal their abilities, feeling them irrelevant or embarrassing. There is clearly an educational dimension to this, joining up such learning with mainstream schools. But a co-ordinated national languages strategy which goes across government departments would be an opportunity to develop the role that these languages can play in building social cohesion, and in improving accessibility to public services such as the courts system, policing and health through better quality interpreting and translation.

The UK has the potential to become a linguistic powerhouse. But to achieve this, concerted action is needed. There are signs that the momentum is building. We must capitalise on the opportunity this presents.

### Further reading

The British Academy's statement, *Languages in the UK: A call for action*, published in February 2019, can be found via [thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/languages-uk-academies-statement](https://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/languages-uk-academies-statement)



Links to further evidence and reading are available in the online version of this article, available via [thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/british-academy-review/35](https://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/british-academy-review/35)

# The interviews with

**Ian Christie  
Rosemary Cramp  
& Roger Kain**

For more information on  
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# Ian Christie

On understanding film – from the father of British cinema, to a new language for new media

Ian Christie is Anniversary Professor of Film and Media History at Birkbeck, University of London. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1994.

## Is there anything in your background that might have suggested that you would end up working in film studies?

I grew up in Northern Ireland on the outskirts of Belfast. There wasn't a lot to do socially or culturally, so as a youngster I gravitated towards the cinema: my main recreational activity was going to the Saturday matinee. Films loomed quite large in my life. When I was at the Belfast Royal Academy, I wrote a piece for the school magazine – I came across it recently – called 'The Liveliest Art', saying that film was the only art form that was alive and kicking, and the others were all a bit ossified. This would have been in 1962, when I was 17.

That same year, I went to Queen's University Belfast, to read philosophy and English. I was surrounded by a remarkable range of writers – a generation that is now much discussed and researched. As the editor of *Interest*, the magazine that Stewart Parker had created, I felt I had to reject a couple of Seamus Heaney's poems: he wrote some rather lame ones, as every young poet does. But we

published some of the poems that appeared in his debut collection, *Death of a Naturalist*, along with work by Parker, Michael Longley, Bernard McLaverty and others less famous today.

Film was an important part of our culture. The Queen's Film Society was very traditional, and showed Bergman and other approved classics of the period. The New Cinema Club was edgier, and showed less mainstream things. I was between the two. The first piece of writing I published at Queen's was probably on Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*. But I was also following other new developments, because there was a lot going on in many different quarters – not only the French New Wave, but *cinéma vérité*, and in Eastern Europe too.

I abandoned English, but stuck with philosophy. We had a very inspiring young lecturer, François Bordet, who had come out of phenomenology and existentialism in France, before encountering the cold shock of ultra-analytic philosophy when he came to England. In his own way he had fused them, and I became a product of that. I went to the new Warwick University to do a PhD

on the potential crossover between European and Anglo-American philosophy: it was conceived as 'Merleau-Ponty meets J.L. Austin', which I still think might be an interesting project.

I continued to do a lot of things connected with film. I was invited back to Queen's to give a talk about film for the Extramural department; and it was in extramural departments and Workers Educational Association branches that a lot of early film education began. In those days, there was no organised study of film: we were all self-appointed experts, picking up information where we could, and above all developing our analytic skills by viewing and discussing wherever we could. In the mid-60s, with 'new waves' appearing everywhere, even in Britain, it seemed even more obvious that film was the only art actually communicating with significant numbers of people, and provoking real debate.

I never completed the philosophy doctorate because 1968 intervened. I became very active in cultural politics and political activities. From Warwick I would get on my motorbike and go to philosophy seminars in Oxford; but I also went to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University, where I came to know Stuart Hall. My biggest inspiration at Warwick was the historian E.P. Thompson. Edward was an absolutely charismatic figure, and he got me into politics through a

public meeting he held on campus on the morning after the Greek colonels' coup in April 1967, at which he gave an impassioned speech about how we should all resist it. Through Edward and Stuart, I got involved in the *May Day Manifesto*; and for the 1968 Penguin Special version, edited by Raymond Williams, I contributed a section on 'The Cold War moves outwards', based on my research into the origins of the Greek coup. So there was an extremely lively political context in Warwick, and when 1968 took off in a big way I became very much caught up in it. Philosophy research retreated into the background, and after a motorbike accident that put me out of action for a while, the idea of getting the thesis done in a sensible timespan was pushed to one side.

#### **How did you convert your interest in film into a more formal role?**

Since my PhD grant had run out, I needed a job. The first paid teaching I got was at Lanchester College of Advanced Technology in Coventry, teaching communications studies. They needed somebody to explain Marshall McLuhan, who had published the hugely influential book *Understanding Media* in 1964 and was the flavour of the decade. I had been excited

**I feel a strong sense of continuity. What I was doing in the mid-1970s, then at the BFI in the 1980s, and what I do today are not that very different - although addressed to successive generations whose relationship to film and media continues to change.**

by his first highly original book, *The Mechanical Bride* (1951) – discovered by chance in the Queen’s library – and was continuing to follow him. McLuhan’s paradoxes were considered in those days to be really difficult to understand, and it was thought that somebody with a background in philosophy would be the right person to teach about him. His decoding of advertisements was fascinating, so I homed in on that for a couple of terms.

Then in 1969 I got a job at Derby College of Art, teaching complementary studies. I think the assumption was that I would mainly teach elementary philosophy to the students. But I started introducing film, which seemed logical and appealing in an art school. We installed some projectors, turned a studio into a kind of cinema, and taught film under the rubric of complementary studies. There was no curriculum that forced you to go in one direction; it could be anything you wanted. And film seemed to work very well – for fashion students, for future fine artists, and particularly for Derby’s very ambitious photography students.

We invited a lot of part-timers to come and teach film – one of whom was Laura Mulvey, now also a Fellow of the British Academy, and hugely influential in launching film theory. Derby was one of the few places in the country in the mid-1970s that was teaching film in an organised way. This was still well before film studies became something that you could actually get a qualification in, except at the Slade. The British Film Institute (BFI) was seed-funding fixed-term lectureships at Warwick, Keele and Essex as an experiment to see if film could be injected into universities. So there was a sense in which film studies was bubbling up, just becoming visible above the parapet.

### **In 1976, you went to work at the BFI. How did that come about?**

I was headhunted by somebody I knew who was working at the BFI, at least partly because I was ‘not one of the London mafia’. My job was to organise the programming of the regional film theatres that the BFI was supporting – it eventually had over 40 venues that it was involved with. The battle cry of the period was: ‘Don’t show films just because they’re new and highly praised by the London critics. Let’s have “structured programming”, with a cultural purpose.’ I have to admit this was sometimes interpreted as ‘showing people films that are good for them.’

We were very interested in neglected, then inaccessible areas in the history of cinema. For example, many knew about the founding moment of Italian neorealism in the late 1940s, because of *Rome, Open City* and *Bicycle Thieves*. The key figure, Roberto Rossellini, was still alive, but he was now making dramatised

films about the great philosophers – such as Socrates, Descartes, Blaise Pascal – creating a kind of audio-visual encyclopaedia. They were wonderful films, but they were totally inaccessible and nobody knew anything about them. Remember, this was before video. So we made it our job to bring Rossellini’s films into distribution; and to create awareness of them, the BFI published a parallel series of informal publications – here my magazine-editing background proved useful. I also brought unknown Soviet films into distribution, to ‘refresh’ the old Film Society canon.

Later, when it became clear that the days of 16 mm film were numbered, I launched the BFI’s video publishing activity. We became the most avant-garde publishers of video in Britain, helped by an alliance with the great French producer Anatole Dauman, who gave us access to his catalogue of modern classics such as *Hiroshima mon amour*, *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Wings of Desire*. We issued a box set of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s monumental *Hitler: A Film from Germany* – eight hours long – and in the same month a box set of Lanzmann’s *Shoah*, because nobody else wanted to take a risk on these huge, seemingly uncommercial works.

### **What sort of audiences were going to see the films in the BFI’s programme?**

They included people who would later become film makers, film teachers, and workers in the evolving structure of the regional arts associations – what it became fashionable to call ‘film culture’ was beginning to emerge, and posts were starting to appear across the country.

But many were the traditional audience of film societies, dedicated to the art and history of cinema. I think film societies continue to be a major cultural resource in this country. I still enjoy going to film societies and introducing an evening of film, giving a talk, or even teaching a day school. Many of these are on Russian cinema, because there is interest in both Soviet and post-Soviet cinema that is not being catered for anywhere else. I try to enlarge people’s understanding that Soviet cinema was more than just Eisenstein, although I continue to work on Eisenstein too, as he is revealed to be so different from the old stereotype of a calculating propagandist by the writings and especially drawings that are now available.

I must say I feel a strong sense of continuity. What I was doing in the mid-1970s, then at the BFI in the 1980s, and what I do today are not that very different – although addressed to successive generations whose relationship to film and media continues to change.

**You also had the opportunity to promote awareness of the British film makers Powell and Pressburger at the BFI.**

In 1978 I fought to put on a big retrospective at the National Film Theatre of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, our greatest, but then neglected film makers. To accompany it, I produced a small book for the BFI in my own time. The retrospective was repeated all over the world, and the book circulated widely. Then in 1985, to mark Michael Powell's 80th birthday, I wrote another book about Powell and Pressburger, entitled *Arrows of Desire*, an account of their partnership as The Archers. I managed to persuade Martin Scorsese to write a foreword for it – he was passionate about their work – and that led to Powell suggesting I assemble interviews with Scorsese into a book.

**At this point, you were clearly doing a lot of things of an academic nature, but you were not actually in an academic post.**

I had been teaching a London University extramural course, and was being asked to give visiting lectures; I also had a year out at the Art Institute of Chicago, which allowed me to teach Russian art history. And for the CNA, the body that validated polytechnics' degrees, I was on the Art History panel, with responsibility for film studies – as it was becoming an academic subject. Through that I got to know a lot of art historians and people in media and communications studies. In a sense, I had an advantage over them, in that I was in a position to make things happen. I could get films into distribution, or into the London Film Festival; we could publish things.

So I was edging closer to academia, but still essentially working at the cultural end of the film industry, as well as becoming involved with the EU's MEDIA programme. Then, when my great friend and mentor at the BFI, Tony Smith, left to become President of Magdalen College, Oxford, through him I had the opportunity to become Oxford University's first lecturer in film, and a supernumerary fellow of Magdalen. The post was funded by John Paul Getty, who loved film and was a wonderful benefactor for the BFI.

More or less simultaneously, I got a letter in the post saying that I had been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy. I remember my first reaction was 'What on earth is this? A scam?' The relevant Section of the Academy's Fellowship had just changed its scope to cover 'Modern Languages, Literatures and other media' in 1994, and so I think they needed some 'other media' people. It was quite strange and daunting, to put it mildly. But I saw it as a further opportunity to get film

onto the agenda and taken more seriously – which is really what I've spent most of my life doing.

**You have indeed done a lot with the British Academy. For example, there is an article by you in the British Academy Review, arising from the conference you co organised in 2001 on 'Lantern Projections'.**

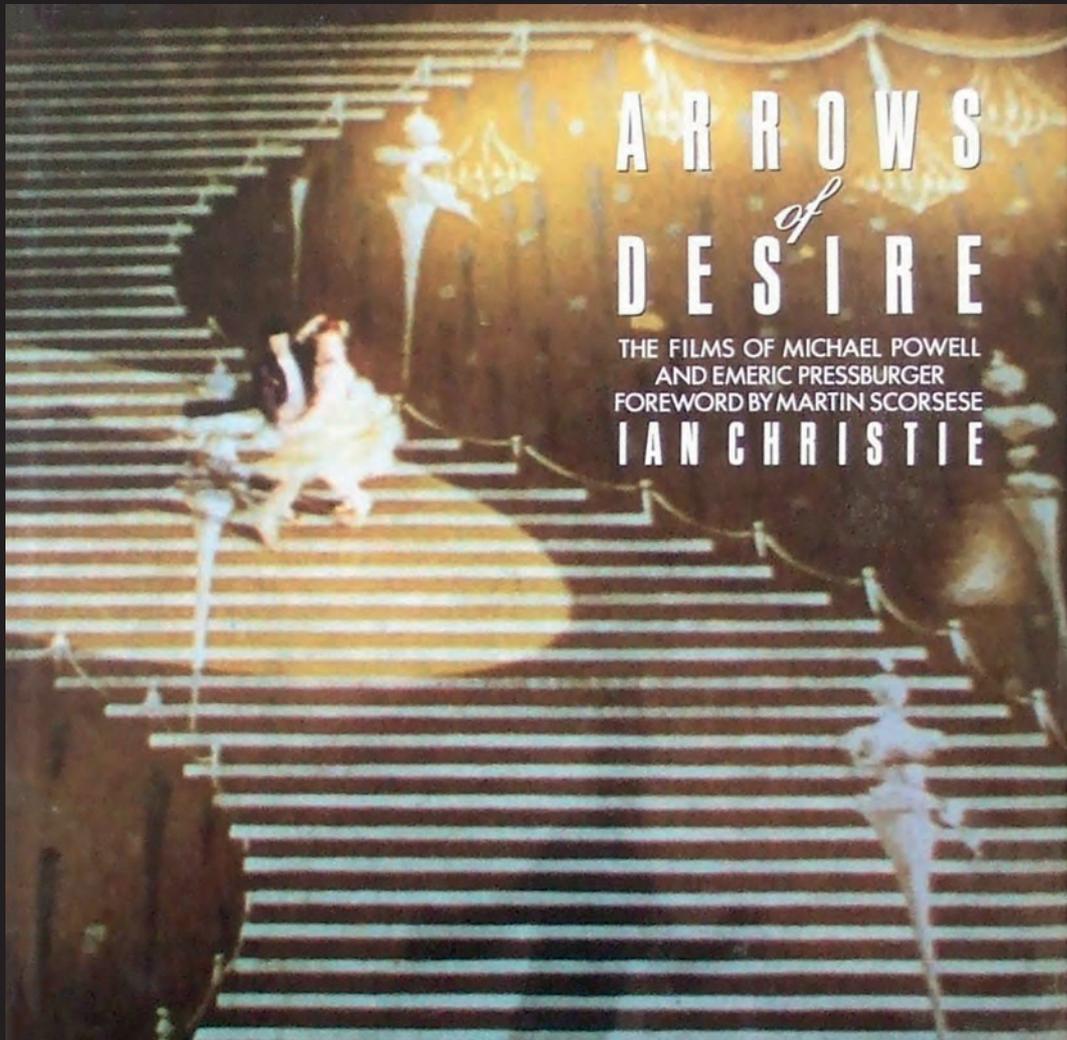
That conference had some excellent contributions on the history of the magic lantern, from art historians as well as lanternists. I still have copies of that issue, and refer to it. Subjects such as this, outside of conventional film, are very important to me, as part of what I call the 'long history' of projected images – of which cinema is only one phase in the last 100 years.

I talk to students at film schools and universities whenever I can about the meteoric rise of the stereoscope in the mid-19th century, still little appreciated, and the magic lantern. They need to know about these, especially because it's all coming full circle. Students today are really interested in virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), and this takes us right back to the 1890s. That was the moment when 'extended reality' first became a practical possibility through combinations of the magic lantern, the stereoscope and moving pictures. Moving pictures were actually the disappointing part of it, because they were not in 3D. The cinema took off unexpectedly as a 'flat' spectacle, and was of course vastly successful, but it temporarily killed some of the other forms that had been current in optical media.

Today, we are living in a new kind of digital multi-platform era, when all of these experiences are back on the agenda. When I show students a stereograph of people looking into a stereoscope, they instantly say that it looks like VR glasses. This was a hugely popular parlour activity in Victorian times; Queen Victoria herself was a stereo enthusiast. Now we can see how relevant it might be for the current debate about whether VR will 'happen'. Naysayers claim that nobody wants to wear a headset. But in the Victorian era they had no problem at all with using stereoscopes. So this is a very interesting area for speculation.

**Your own current focus of interest is the early British film maker, Robert Paul. What do we need to know about him?**

In the mid-1990s, for the 'Centenary of Cinema', I wrote and co-produced a television series for the BFI called *The Last Machine*, about 'early cinema and the birth of the modern world'. Terry Gilliam fronted it, so it got a



*Arrows of Desire* took its title from the name of Powell and Pressburger's production company, The Archers, intended to signal their determination to aim high and wide in their films – in James Agate's verse, 'It's better to miss Naples than hit Margate.'

remarkably good slot on BBC 2 – on Saturday evenings at 8 o'clock. I also wrote a book to accompany it.

While making that series, I realised that we knew very little about the person who was obviously the key British pioneer, Robert Paul. We just had a few of his films. So I thought I should do some proper research on him. That is finally coming to fruition this year: 2019 is the 150th anniversary of his birth.

It has been a difficult subject to research, because Robert Paul left no personal papers and there is no traceable family. Only recently did I discover that he actually had three children, who all died in early infancy. A Paul Mellon senior research fellowship gave me a year to do some archival research, which has also taken me to Australia and Canada, where his films were widely shown in the 1890s. But I had to accept that there were many things I was never going to know about him because they seem to be unrecorded, and then write the book anyway. Even so, it is going to be a very big book. Disappointingly, it was hard to find a publisher. Even though I had previously produced best-selling film books such as *Scorsese on Scorsese*, British publishers all said 'Robert who?', and declined to take a chance on it, which I think is a shame. However, the University of Chicago Press were happy to take the book, and even to wait nearly 20 years for delivery!

My aim in 2019 is to show that cinema as we know it actually started in Britain – not in America or France, as we are accustomed to believe. The Lumière brothers invented a form of moving pictures with their Cinématographe that was influential and spread all over the world; but these were essentially 'views', and could hardly be considered cinema. Quite soon after he started in 1895, Robert Paul had a very clear vision. In 1898 he placed an advertisement saying that the public was weary of watching trains, trams and buses on screen. 'The capacity of animated pictures for producing breathless sensation, laughter and tears has hardly been realised', he declared. The advertisement went on to announce that 'A staff of Artists and Photographers have been at work in North London, with the object of producing a series of animated Photographs (Eighty in Number), each of which tells a tale, whether Comic, Pathetic or Dramatic ... with such clearness, brilliancy and telling effect that the attention of the beholders should be riveted.'

In February 2019, as a Visiting Professor at Gresham College, I gave a lecture on 'Taking London to the World: Robert Paul Shows his Native City in Motion', which can be seen on the Gresham College website. In it I talked about one of the humorous little films that Robert Paul released in autumn 1898: 'Come Along, Do!' This is actually the world's first two-shot film – an exterior scene followed by an interior – even if, unfortunately, the second shot is lost. But Paul also invented the illustrated



The first image, which shows a couple taking refreshment on a bench before making their way into an art gallery, comes from the existing first shot of Robert Paul's 1898 film 'Come Along, Do!' The lower two images are taken from the film catalogue that Paul printed, and are all that exists for the lost second scene.

film catalogue, and in one of these we have two images from that second shot, so we have an idea of what was in it. I have persuaded my son, who is an animator, to use these images as the basis for a digital reconstruction and tinting – so that we can show what the world’s first two-shot film looked like.

From April to July 2019, there will be an exhibition about Robert Paul at Bruce Castle in Tottenham: that’s in the London Borough of Haringey, which also includes Muswell Hill, where he built his studio.

And as well as the large academic book, I have scripted a graphic novel on Robert Paul, covering the beginnings of his career, titled *Time Traveller: Robert Paul and the Invention of Cinema*. It shows the story of how Paul made the first film in Britain, in Barnet in February 1895. For many years, people in Britain believed that the true inventor of cinema was William Friese-Greene, who still has a tomb declaring this in Highgate Cemetery. The 1951 film *The Magic Box* showed Friese-Greene demonstrating his first success to a patrolling policeman, played by Laurence Olivier, who enters the workshop and sees the first moving pictures on the screen. Robert Donat plays Friese-Greene, and declares tearfully, ‘I’m not saying it’s perfect – far from it – but it works!’ The film was based on a popular biography that was widely accepted up until 1960, when the photo-historian Brian Coe demonstrated that Friese-Greene had not done any of the things claimed on his behalf. However, the truth is that what we see in this climactic scene of *The Magic Box* did happen – but to Robert Paul. When Friese-Greene died in miserable circumstances in 1921, the story got transposed to his memory. And in fact, new revisionist research on Friese-Greene by Peter Domankiewicz demonstrates that he did successfully shoot a number of frames of film of Kings Road in London, even though he had little chance of showing them.

I feel it’s really important to get this botched history straight, to put Robert Paul where he belongs, along with his early collaborator Birt Acres – and indeed to vindicate Friese-Greene. Paul was in many ways as important as Edison. And his achievements up to 1900 certainly shaped the beginnings of our film industry. He was popularly known as ‘Daddy Paul’ by the pioneers of British cinema, because he was the man who led them up to 1908. But somehow, Britain forgot about him. Yet people today need to know that the international cinema industry did start here, which conveys an important message for a truer sense of British history.

### **Looking to the future, in the discipline of film studies, what do you think are the potentially new, exciting directions of travel?**

Roughly speaking, I think there are three directions – or corrections to where we are.

First of all, we need to get audio-visual media more firmly integrated into the traditional narrative of modern history. It is depressing that the average historical monograph dealing with aspects of the 19th to the 21st centuries, is still quite primitive in its understanding of the role of cinema in society. The same few examples are trotted out, and they are usually wrongly described. There seems to be a limited grasp by most historians of the way that film has shaped people’s perceptions.

As an example, I have just written again about Powell and Pressburger’s *The Red Shoes*, after many previous commentaries and studies, arguing that the film is really valuable for understanding austerity Britain in 1948. It offered audiences a vision of many things that they could aspire to: the luxury of colour and high fashion, travel to the south of France, and the cosmopolitan world of ballet. But it did so in a climate where the heroine’s ultimate crime is that she goes out to work, because the taboo against women having a career in 1948 was absolutely ferocious.

More generally, I believe the way we conceive of lives today is very much influenced by film. For the British Academy centenary volume *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography*, edited by Peter France FBA and William St Clair FBA, I wrote a chapter called ‘A Life on Film’, in which I give many examples of how film both contributed to, and drew on, the revolution in biography in the early 20th century.

### **What is your second ‘new direction’?**

We need to broaden the scope of film studies as an academic subject to include both pre-cinema and post cinema visual media.

I believe that we are living in a post-cinema age. Although of course there are still cinemas, seeing films in this context is only a small part of the continuum of everyday audiovisual experience. I took part in some research on multi-platform viewing for the BFI back in 2011, which showed that only 6 per cent of film viewings happened in a cinema. Clearly, if we are mainly watching films on home screens, on mobiles or on iPads, we are living in a post-cinema era. It does not mean that such viewing is somehow inferior; it just means it’s different, and in significant ways.

We need to have a much better understanding of the whole sweep of engagement in mediated worlds that goes from at least the 18th century, or even further back,



Pages from the graphic novel by ILYA and Ian Christie, *Time Traveller: Robert Paul and the Invention of Cinema*, showing a key scene in the Robert Paul story that was later mis-attributed to William Friese-Greene in the film *The Magic Box*.



– THE CLOVELLY CRICKETER –

“Overnight, Success!”

‘We had made such a cheering over our success that the **police** came in to know what was the matter...’



through the magic lantern and all the optical excitement of the 19th century, into cinema in the 20th century, and then into post-cinema and the on-line world of the 21st century.

And it's not just about films. It's can be about intergenerational exchanging of video messages. If I am watching messages from my daughter in Edinburgh about my grandchildren, that is audio-visual mediation in a new register. You can relate it to the history of amateur film, but it doesn't really belong there. It is a new 'communication space' that we are living in, as the distinguished French scholar Roger Odin terms it. In a recent book that I co-edited, *Stories: Screen narrative in the digital era*, Odin asks what language can be used to analyse the semiotics of live video messaging through Skype. He believes we cannot just use the old terminology of film – shot, reverse shot, tracking shot – we need a new one. We are living in an exciting world that offers us lots of opportunities and challenges, yet film studies as a discipline seems too often to be carrying on as it did last century.

### And your third?

We need to have much more interplay between film academics like me and people working in neuroscience and cognitive psychology.

One of my colleagues at Birkbeck, University of London, Tim Smith, is an experimental psychologist who does a lot of work using eye-tracking and other physiological measurement techniques. We have done some presentations together, and I do think there is a

**I am promoting Robert Paul's 150th anniversary in order to say, 'Don't you realise that Britain was actually in at the beginning, before there was any American film industry at all?'**

lot to learn about the perceptual structures that enable us to assimilate ever more complex representations, especially in new media. If film studies as a subject fails to get involved in experimentation in vision science, it is missing an important source of insights. There needs to be much more interchange across disciplinary boundaries.

If I could free up enough time and space, I would definitely get involved in a research project into what MRI scanning, eye-tracking and techniques like that can tell us about the way we consume images and how we multi-task with images. Indeed, I'm hoping my current work on screen 'space and place' will benefit from cognitive science data.

### Understanding how we consume images presumably helps our understanding of their impact on us?

Yes, and it connects with my first point. If historians looked more deeply at the impact of visual and audio-visual media, we would understand more about how so much of the 20th century – and indeed the 19th century too – was shaped by it.

We have had the recent example of '£350 million' on the side of a bus. It is not just painting that on the bus; it is reduplicating that image, amplifying it, recycling it and returning to it. It is the quotation, re-quotation and multiplication of images that is hugely influential.

And it has been thus for a long time. Winston Churchill's favourite film was *Lady Hamilton*, almost certainly the one he watched more than any other, and made in Hollywood by Alexander Korda to try to bring America into the war in 1940. Churchill absolutely loved it, and probably had a hand in scripting it. There is a wonderful account by the travel writer H.V. Morton, part of his staff during the war, about Churchill watching it for the umpteenth time on a battleship while crossing the Atlantic. For me, this story connects the world of propaganda, the use of romanticised history in real political situations, and the way that films work on the individual and collective psyche, embedding images that remain important to people.

### You have talked a lot about the need to raise awareness of film. Do we in this country have a particular problem with taking it seriously?

In 1996, I participated in a British Academy discussion about 'The English Suspicion of Cinema'. My fellow speaker, Professor John Carey FBA, pointed me towards *The Lost Girl*, one of D.H. Lawrence's great diatribes

against cinema, which Lawrence absolutely hated. A year earlier, I had written quite a big piece for the *Times Literary Supplement* on British prejudice against – and resistance to – film. The gist was that we mistrust it, feel it is always lying or misrepresenting, in ways that are more coercive than the routine misrepresentation of literary historical fiction. And, perhaps as a result, we doubt that it deserves any serious state support.

Of course, in France cinema is famously taken very seriously. As it is in America too: the year I spent in Chicago, where you could have real discussions about movies with academic heavyweights, was an eye-opener.

And within academic film studies, there can also be an elitist a view of cinema, which limits the potential impact of our discipline. In November 2018 I wrote a piece for *Sight & Sound* about Peter Jackson's colourisation of the First World War footage, *They Shall Not Grow Old*, because I was irritated by silent film aficionados saying that he shouldn't have tampered with archive film. Of course he wasn't tampering with it: he was enhancing it in a novel and effective way. I watched it in a cinema, surrounded by an audience that was riveted and moved. Perhaps Jackson was too bombastic in his claims, but I think this was an example of experts disliking the fact that their niche subject had been made too mainstream.

I continue to be fascinated by Edwardian figures such as Rudyard Kipling, and H.G. Wells, who both understood the importance of film very early. Wells never forgot an early meeting he had with Robert Paul, to discuss creating a 'time machine' experience. J.M. Barrie also wanted to get involved in film much more than he was able to. He made lots of amateur films, and even wrote a script for *Peter Pan* – which was rejected by Hollywood. The more you know about Barrie, you realise that film really was the guiding dream that he wanted to follow, if only he could have found a way into it professionally. And indeed Hitchcock, who had to leave Britain to realise his full potential, had a lifelong desire to film Barrie's *Mary Rose*.

One of the reasons why I have been promoting Robert Paul's 150th anniversary is that I want to say to the British, and especially young people, 'Don't you realise that Britain was actually in at the beginning, before there was any American film industry at all? We had a film industry, but we let it all slip through our fingers. And we have continued to dissipate our talent, through dereliction and, at certain levels, due to a kind of distaste.'

## Further reading and viewing

Some of Ian Christie's books etc. mentioned in the interview.

1985 book: *Arrows of Desire: The films of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger*. Second edition 1994.

1989 book, co-edited with David Thompson: *Scorsese on Scorsese*. Third edition 2003.

1994 book: *The Last Machine: Early Cinema and the Birth of the Modern World*.

1995 television series, written and co-produced: *The Last Machine*

1995 article: "'Has the Cinema a Career?' Pictures and prejudice: the origins of British resistance to film', *Times Literary Supplement* (17 November 1995).

2001 article: 'Through a Glass Brightly: The Magic Lantern in History', *British Academy Review*, [5] (January–July 2001), 21–3.

2002 book chapter: 'A Life on Film', in *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography*, edited by Peter France and William St Clair (British Academy Centenary Monograph). Paperback edition 2004.

2018 book, co-edited with Annie van den Oever: *Stories: Screen narrative in the digital era* (The Key Debates: Mutations and Appropriations in European Film Studies).

November 2018, article: 'They Shall Not Grow Old review: Peter Jackson brings controversial colour to WWI footage', *Sight & Sound*.

February 2019 lecture: 'Taking London to the World: Robert Paul Shows his Native City in Motion', Gresham College Lecture.

2019 (forthcoming) book: *Robert Paul and the Origins of British Cinema*.



# Rosemary Cramp

## On celebrating the stone sculpture of the Anglo-Saxons

Rosemary Cramp is Professor of Archaeology Emeritus at Durham University. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2006.

### Is there anything in your background that would have suggested you would pursue a career in archaeology?

I come from a very deeply rooted farming background. My father was a farmer, my grandfather was a farmer, my great-grandfather was a farmer, and so on. I lived in the country at a place called Glooston, near Market Harborough in Leicestershire.

When I was about 12, I became an archaeologist – or I thought I did – because we found a Roman villa on our land. To be strictly truthful, my sister said she had found some nice things for the floor of the little house which we were building, as children do in the country. She had found the *pilae* tiles of a Roman building. At least I thought it ought to be Roman. I only had a children's encyclopaedia, and I looked it up there. Then I went to see the rector, as the most learned person in the village. Like most rectors, he took away part of the Roman things and put them in his garden.

I thought I ought to report this find to somebody else.

The only archaeologist I had ever heard of was Kathleen Kenyon, who had been digging in Leicester. She sent me back the first typewritten letter I had ever received, saying, 'This is evidence, and you must not destroy it. You must stop what you're doing, report it to a museum and leave it for the moment.'

So we dispensed with the rector, and the site lay fallow until I was about to go to Oxford University. Then an aged man came, saying he was a real archaeologist – he had dug with Mortimer Wheeler. We dug another wavering trench into the site, and found more wall. And this was reported in the *Market Harborough Advertiser*.

When I got to Oxford, I received a note from the Ashmolean Museum saying, 'Dear Miss Cramp, Will you come and visit me? M.V. Taylor.' I thought, 'Now, I am an archaeologist.' Miss Taylor had been assistant to F.J. Haverfield, and was now an elderly woman. When I went to see her, I saw to my slight embarrassment the *Market Harborough Advertiser* spread in front of her, with this picture of me leaning on a spade and the caption: 'She is going to Oxford.' Miss Taylor said, 'You think you

have found a Roman villa. What makes you think it is a villa?’ I didn’t know there was anything except Roman villas, so she destroyed that thought. She asked if I had been taught to survey? No. Could I draw sections? No. She went through everything an archaeologist ought to be able to do, and then said, ‘I think you had better be trained.’

So I went on a training course to Corbridge, and spent all my leisure time with the Oxford University Archaeological Society. We had a brilliant Society at that time, with many people involved in it going on to be professional archaeologists.

### **But your degree wasn’t in archaeology, was it?**

I hadn’t known whether to read History or English at Oxford – I liked both – and in the end had plumped for English. At the end of my first year, I was taught by Dorothy Whitelock. She told me I should specialise in ‘Course II’, which ranged from primitive Germanic to Spenser. And when I was 21, I turned from being a disorganised undergraduate to being a disorganised young don, teaching Anglo-Saxon at St Anne’s College, Oxford.

I realised that my interest in archaeology and my interest in Anglo-Saxon were coming together. I taught my students a lot about the historical background and the archaeological evidence. In those days, there weren’t many people bringing those two together. And then, working with Christopher Hawkes, I started a B.Litt.

thesis which had the catchy title ‘Some aspects of Old English vocabulary in the light of recent archaeological evidence’. My first paper, on ‘Beowulf and Archaeology’, came out of that.

### **How did you come to move to Durham University?**

A rather strange job came up in Durham. It required you to be able to teach History, English and a fledgling Archaeology group. On Christopher Hawkes’s advice, I applied rather half-heartedly, got it, and a bit reluctantly came north.

After a few years, we started an Archaeology course on its own, and then broadened that into what became, I’d like to think, a great Archaeology department.

### **You have been at Durham ever since. And it is an area rich with Anglo-Saxon possibilities.**

It was certainly a great thrill living so near to where Bede was, and Durham itself is a town that is steeped in Anglo-Saxon history. I have stayed and been very happy here.

I was extremely lucky to have fall into my lap the excavations at both sites of the double monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. Although at both Monkwearmouth and Jarrow there are still the churches that date – in part, anyway – from the 7th century, there



Part of an early 8th-century frieze showing a plant-scroll inhabited by men and a beast, built into a wall in the church of St Paul, Jarrow. A male figure is shown in profile, naturalistically striding over the branches, and appears to be bare-footed. His hair falls in a lock behind his ear. His features are conveyed lightly, his eye by a single punch mark. He is dressed in a short kirtle with what seems to be a fold around the waist which passes over his shoulder and flies out behind him.

*Photo: T. Middlemass,  
© Corpus of Anglo-Saxon  
Stone Sculpture.*



is nothing left of the monastic buildings on either site. Indeed, no one knew where they were. We know a certain amount from Bede about the Monkwearmouth-Jarrow monastic community, and people used to say to me, 'It must be nice for you digging a site that Bede has talked about'; but he tells you nothing about how it was laid out.

At Monkwearmouth, they were doing a development and were going to pull down houses near to the church. Somebody said that perhaps we ought to see if there was anything left of the monastery of the Venerable Bede. When I worked on the south side of the church, the houses were still occupied, and I was digging in people's backyards; it was sometimes difficult to get access to them, but eventually you were nobody unless you had a trench in your yard. We recruited small children to look after the trenches at night. As a reward they were allowed to trowel through the barrows of excavated soil to see if any bit of pot had been missed and tipped in with it; sometimes they found them. And when they had done three years of that, I had a special trench in which they could learn how to trowel properly. I have always involved the local communities in my digs. You can show them the past and make them enthused about it, part of it and willing to protect it, all of which is important.

I did find buildings that were the heartland of the monastery. However, I had not finished Wearmouth when I started Jarrow and, for two or three years, I dug both at the same time in the summer, which probably was not a sensible thing to do.

At Jarrow, the Ministry of Works had restored the existing buildings and made them safe, and then wanted to date them. That was all I was asked to do. I started with a couple of trial trenches. And then the next year – in 1965 – I dug inside a building and found, underneath the walls, another stone structure and one with an *opus signinum* floor, which I knew would be Anglo-Saxon. Nothing stopped me after that. I dropped the idea of just dating the standing buildings, and went for trying to find the plan of the monastery.

Over the years, we dug a huge building there – it was 90 feet long. The last dig we did at Jarrow being in 1984: it was a large part of my life, and hundreds of students went through this experience.

**That same year, 1984, saw the first fruit of the major endeavour that you have been working on ever since, the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, which is a British Academy Research Project.**

The idea of recording the pre-Conquest stone sculpture of England came up when I was still teaching in Oxford. V.E. Nash-Williams had just published his book on *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales*, and he came to lecture in Oxford. He said, 'Something like that needs to be done for England. You should try it.' As soon as I got to Durham, I looked around for a research project that would be suitable. We do have in this region an extensive collection of carved Anglo-Saxon stones, and I decided that – with the help of my first two research students, Richard Bailey and Jim Lang – we would try to record these.

In my hubris, I thought that I should do the whole of England, so I went to the British Academy and asked for money. We got some starter funding, and from that period onwards the British Academy has supported us. I am desperately grateful because, without the Academy's support, the project would never have lifted off.

The three of us made a start – myself on the counties of Durham and Northumberland, Richard Bailey on Cumbria, and Jim Lang on the East Riding of Yorkshire. South-East England, including Professor Martin Biddle's excavations at Winchester, was completed. We recruited other authors from both the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and English Heritage. But everything was controlled from Durham, with myself as General Editor, and with first Eric Cambridge and then Derek Craig as the publication editors.

In 2018 we published Volume XIII, on the Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture of *Derbyshire and Staffordshire*. At the moment I am working to finish Volume XIV, which will include Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. We will then have completed Northumbria, Wessex and

**Left**

A stone grave-marker, dating from the early to mid 11th century, from the Old Minster, Winchester. It was discovered in the archaeological excavation north of Winchester Cathedral, in 1965. The arcade may be a representation of the building around the Tomb of Christ in the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The lamp hanging in the central arch between curtains, and with rays shining from it, may symbolize the resurrection and eternal life.

Photo: © P.M.J. Crook.

Mercia. For the final two volumes in the series, we move into East Anglia, where there isn't a lot of sculpture, I'm afraid. But the series wasn't meant just to publish the grand pieces which everybody knew about. It publishes the small pieces which contribute to building up the overall picture.

### **Has the *Corpus* project identified a lot of previously unknown sculpture?**

In the late 19th century, they were aware of about 167 sites containing Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture. Sir Thomas Kendrick FBA found some more, working for the Britain Museum. But to date we have recorded 3,528 stones from 1,101 sites – an extraordinary wealth of material.

We first look at written records, to see if we can find things that have been written up long ago and forgotten. Then there is fieldwork, which usually takes many years for each volume. In some areas, every medieval church has been looked at, to make absolutely certain nothing has been missed. It has been a remarkable effort by my colleagues, because they are only paid their travel expenses, and they normally give up their holidays. Once the project is known, people do ring you up and ask, 'Do you know about this?' And this can be very helpful. We also answer a lot of queries from the curators of sculpture sites.

The sad thing is that a lot of this sculpture is in a secondary context. After the Norman Conquest, because the Normans – so miserably, I think – despised Anglo-Saxon architecture, pieces were built into walls and they have emerged later. At the Reformation, a lot were destroyed, as Popish monuments. So, many sculptures are shattered fragments. This contrasts with Ireland, where so many crosses are still standing in their place.

### **Is the stone cross a special British and Irish phenomenon?**

It is. Where it began in stone is a moot point. I still think it probably is Northumbria. I put this forward as a theory and I still believe it: when people like Benedict Biscop at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, or Wilfrid at Hexham, imported stonemasons from France to build their churches, these trained English masons. The native masons were then capable of replicating the idea of wooden crosses in stone, and that is how you get some of the really grand, early 8th-century crosses that everybody knows about, like Ruthwell and Bewcastle. The grandest crosses tend to be put up on the borders of the Anglo Saxon kingdom – the early ones are meant to impress. Some of them are meant to educate as well, via



the scenes that are on them. They are the source not just of sermons but of inspiration, I suppose, and meditation.

By the Viking Age, you get many more crosses merely put up in memory of individual people, and here you get pictures of secular figures, sometimes armed, not only Christ or the Apostles.

### **What is particularly striking about the sculpture of Anglo-Saxon England?**

It is a sign of achievement if you look at Europe as a whole. My Italian friends are absolutely amazed by Anglo-Saxon sculpture. In Italy and in parts of France, professional carvers carried on working after the Roman period, and they kept on turning out the same stuff. But in England there is a real break, and a true vernacular in stone carving develops, producing a much greater variety.

We can also see influences from one English kingdom to another, depending on which was in the ascendant. In its heyday, Northumbria influenced areas right down into northern Mercia. When Wessex became the dominant kingdom at the end of the period, in the Midlands you can see something changing and becoming more Wessex-like or using Wessex imagery. So you can see it as an influential art.

There are also interesting links between the iconography in the sculpture and that used in manuscripts and metalwork.

### **Can you detect different schools or even hands?**

I wish one could. Sometimes you can detect particular hands. Only the other day I was thinking that two pieces which are located very near to each other must be by the same person.

But we are still not absolutely certain where the carvers were. There is no doubt that, to begin with, they were in monasteries. Whether the kings later had their own carvers is something that I think still has to be thought about, and probably will never be proved. Certainly by the 10th or 11th centuries, you seem to have carvers who were itinerant and were doing lesser work, turning out monuments for parvenu Vikings who wanted new memorials.

### **To what extent is the *Corpus* producing a permanent record of sculpture that is at risk?**

It is an unfortunate fact today that items in churches seem to be much more at risk than they were. And there have been cases – just a few – where things have gone. When I first began the work with sculpture, I started looking down in the South West and worked my way northwards. When I came back to writing my *Corpus* volume on South-West England, I was looking at places that I had visited many years before and, in several places, pieces had gone and my photograph of what had been there before was the only thing I could include.

You can also have the situation where a church has a leaking roof, a diminished congregation and a huge debt, and it is tempting to sell the sculpture. This is rare, but I have had to try to stop it in a couple of places. There are at least two pieces of sculpture which are still at risk in England now.

At least the *Corpus* is making a record of it all. Of course, that does draw attention to things, but I think that is a lesser evil. We do get a lot of enquiries from the general public. And we help churches to produce displays that show their stones off well. That makes them value them more.

### **The *Corpus* is heading for completion, with just three volumes left to be published. But a lot of the content is also available online.**

The printed books remain important, quite apart from the fact that I think they are rather beautiful objects in themselves. There is still a convenience in flicking through a book to find a comparable image.

But the catalogue photographs and descriptions of the first nine volumes are all now available online. This

#### **Left**

A stone cross, dating from the first half of the 9th-century, in St Paul's churchyard, Irton, Cumbria.

Photo: T. Middlemass, © *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*.



is particularly useful for students abroad, who use the material extensively.

At the end of the project, we will deposit the *Corpus* records with the Archaeology Data Service. But we will keep copies in Durham University Library, so that they will remain accessible for people to do further work on them in the future.

And we will conclude with a programme of workshops, organised by the Co-Director of the project, Professor Sarah Semple, which will show the world what we have done, and sum up the achievement.

### Have you enjoyed your life in archaeology?

Yes, I have – and I still am enjoying it.

My life wasn't anything planned. It emerged in the shape that it did. When I first went to Oxford, I would not have thought I would finish up as a professor in Durham. But here I have been able to have an input into all sorts of things in the region, and that is one of the nice things about a university like Durham.

Perhaps because I was the first female professor of archaeology – happily there are now plenty of them – I was asked to serve on lots of committees, and I did get an enormous education out of that. For over 25 years I was on the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, which was very enjoyable. I was a Trustee of the British Museum for 20 years, and that was fascinating too. I was also one of the first Commissioners for English Heritage. And I served as President of both the Council for British Archaeology, and later the Society of Antiquaries.

Finally, I am glad that Anglo-Saxon England is seen as what it is: the beginning of everything that was English. So much of our laws and our statutes started there. Our parishes and our settlement patterns were laid down then. And in spite of the Norman Conquest, vigorously and rigorously people continued to speak and write in English, and maintained what had been some of the earliest vernacular literature in Europe.

#### Left

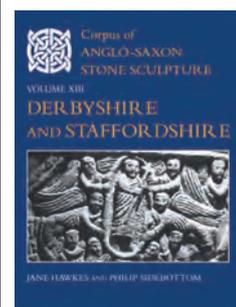
The so-called Hedda stone, in Peterborough Cathedral, is from the late eighth or early ninth century, probably from the earlier Anglo-Saxon monastery. On this face are represented Christ, the Virgin and four other figures.

Photo: © Joanna Story.

**I am glad that Anglo-Saxon England is seen as what it is: the beginning of everything that was English.**

#### Further reading

Information about the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* can be found via [ascorpus.ac.uk](http://ascorpus.ac.uk)



*Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Volume XIII, Derbyshire and Staffordshire*, by Jane Hawkes and Philip Sidebottom, was published by the British Academy in 2018.



# Roger Kain

## On the history of maps, and mapping the future of the British Academy

Roger Kain is Professor of Humanities at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1990, and has been the Academy's Vice-President (Research and Higher Education Policy) since 2014.

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### Was there anything in your background which would have indicated an interest in geography, and specifically in maps?

I was brought up in Harrow, in north-west London, just on the edge of the greenbelt, and so not far from my house were open woods and fields. One big passion was coarse fishing, and my mates and I used to go off on our bikes to the south-west Hertfordshire canals, lakes and especially to the rivers coming off the Chiltern Hills. So I became interested, probably subliminally, in landscape. At my grammar school in Harrow Weald, I had an inspirational geography teacher, and what really interested me was how geography seemed to explain the form of the rivers, valleys and hills that I liked to spend a lot of time in.

When I read geography at University College London, I had another inspirational teacher, Hugh Prince, who taught a course on English historical geography – all about the way the human landscape had evolved. That opened my eyes to a whole new dimension, and from

being an ardent science geographer, I switched almost overnight to become a human and especially historical geographer.

### A major focus of your research was on tithe surveys. Can you explain what that is about?

For my doctorate, I decided that I wanted to do something on computing and historical geography. In the 1970s, a lot of work was being done on computer applications in humanities and social sciences research. This involved huge mainframes that occupied a whole building, yet had far less processing power than a modern smartphone. You used trays of cardboard punch-cards, and the programs ran overnight.

I cast around for a set of source materials which could answer questions impossible using manual methods. I turned to the tithe surveys of the mid-19th century – a series of maps produced on a parish basis for about three-quarters of England and Wales. Tithes were the

notional tenth of a farmer's produce that went to support the established Church of England. In 1836 an Act of Parliament commuted these tithes for a money payment. An army of surveyors was sent out into the parishes of England and Wales to find out what tithe was payable, where it was due, and what was a fair produce of the land. The whole survey was done between 1836 and about 1855. It produced highly detailed maps, showing every field – a fabulous set of data for me as a historical geographer to use. It could tell you who owned the land, who farmed the land, whether it was arable, pasture or woodland, field by field. I chose the county of Kent, because it was virtually all surveyed, and I transcribed data from these maps and the written records that went along with them, on punch-cards for computer processing.

I then thought that it would be good to take the methodology that I had used for one county and extend it to the whole country. With a Small Research Grant from the British Academy of £653 – I remember it exactly – I did some preliminary work to test how to extend the methodology. From that I picked up an Economic and Social Research Council grant, which enabled me to employ assistance, and with improved computer processing we went on to produce a national study – *An Atlas and Index of the Tithe Files of Mid-Nineteenth-Century England and Wales*.

So my interest began with maps as a source of data, and from that I became interested in the maps themselves, their construction and use.

### **By this time you had moved to the University of Exeter. How did you continue your interest in maps there?**

I embarked on a 20-year undertaking to produce studies of all the types of manuscript large-scale maps that pre-dated the printed large-scale maps of the Ordnance Survey which came in at the end of the 19th century. And the University of Exeter was very good in supporting me to do such a long-term project.

In *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales*, we generated a catalogue of all the details of the maps as a tool for future researchers, and added to it a narrative about the cartographic material.

Then we turned to the enclosure maps of England and Wales, which cover approximately that quarter of the commissioners in the 1840s – including quite a lot of midland England. For those we produced an abbreviated catalogue in book form, with the main catalogue held in digital format at the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex.

The final part of this trilogy was the mapping of towns. My project on 'British Town Maps, 1470–1895' was adopted as a British Academy Research Project in 1998, and that helped me to secure large grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and from the Leverhulme Trust to do the work. And I wrote an article about the project for the very first issue of the *British Academy Review* in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

The town maps work was finished in 2015. We published a popular, highly illustrated narrative history of the evolution of the mapping of towns, from the medieval period through to the end of the 19th century. But the serious research output from the British



The great tithe barn at Abbotsbury in Dorset dates from c. 1400. Barns such as this came to symbolise the antipathy that developed between farmers who paid tithes and the established Church, and which exploded into rural riots in the early 1830s before Parliament enacted the Tithe Commutation Act in 1836.

*Photo: Roger Kain.*

1 Roger Kain, 'British Town Maps, 1470–1895', *British Academy Review*, [1] (July 1998–July 1999), 25–28.



Academy Research Project is a digital catalogue, curated by the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, which enables researchers to find out what maps there are for a particular town and what they contain. That also serves a conservation function, in that it helps prevent unnecessary consultations of fragile originals in archives.

So that brought to an end a trilogy of studies of large-scale maps – which the British Academy helped make possible.

**You have written about the different ways that maps have been used in the past, including in an acclaimed book about the use of the map in the service of the state.**

Maps are a valuable resource for modern historians. But in our book, *The Cadastral Map in the Service of the State: A History of Property Mapping*, Elizabeth Baigent and I turned the lens around to look at the role that maps played in the past. How were they used in

contemporary societies, and how did they affect change?

Napoleon I, for example, used maps to eradicate the pre-revolutionary geography of France. The *ancien régime* and all its regions and provinces were swept away and you had the *départements and the communes*, and those were mapped. The map then becomes an instrument for erasing the past.

**And you now are involved in an even bigger project on the history of maps.**

*The History of Cartography* is an even longer-term project than anything else that I've been involved in. This project, based at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, was established by Brian Harley and David Woodward. They both died tragically young, but one of David Woodward's PhD students took on the overall directorship of the project.

I came on board to help them complete it, and specifically to direct and edit the volume on the 19th century, a period characterised by the internationalisation of maps and mapping. I go out to Madison several times a year, working with the staff employed there to co-ordinate an army of some 200 contributors from across the world who are writing sections for us. It's going to be about a million words, a thousand images and two big, fat books, and should appear in 2024.

*The History of Cartography* project has developed an interesting publishing model, which is quite topical in the light of current debates about open access. The latest volume of the project, *Cartography in the 20th Century*, was published for sale as a printed book and a for-purchase e-book by the University of Chicago Press in 2015; but after two years, PDF files of the volume have been made freely available. Without being too presumptuous, we think these big reference books are going to remain relevant for 50 years or more. So, the

**Left**

An extract of the tithe map of Gittisham, Devon, 1838. Numbers in the fields relate to information about their ownership, occupation and use which is recorded in accompanying written documents known as tithe apportionments.

Photo: Devon Record Office.

**Below**

Surveyors in the field working on the enclosure map of Henlow, Bedfordshire, c. 1795.

Image: derived from the cartouche on the map held by Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service.



fact that people have had to wait two years before they can get free access to them is not a big deal in the long perspective of the project. But it has been important for meeting the understandable desire of the project's federal funders that the outputs produced from public funding should be made freely available.

**Does *The History of Cartography* serve a missionary function in helping to explain to historians how to use maps – how to understand the context and reasons behind their production?**

The historian J.H. Parry said, 'Old maps are slippery witnesses. But where would we be without them?'

Traditionally historians have held the written word as prime, with maps simply illustrative. But conceptual developments in the history of maps and mapping have shown how maps can be read as text in the same way that you can read, for example, a painting as a text – and so can decode its meanings.

So yes, there is a proselytising role for *The History of Cartography*. It inspires a humanistic and interdisciplinary approach to map studies. It is making a statement that the history of maps and mapping is a legitimate sub-discipline of history, with its own set of methods and techniques. It's a history of an artefact – a map. But it's much more than just a history of the artefact. It's the artefact in its society, why it was done, how it was produced, how it was used.

I think the project is already having an effect. Historians who have nothing to do with maps are recognising *The History of Cartography* volumes published to date as making substantial contribution to historical understanding.

**In that context, how important is it to judge maps in the past by modern standards of technical accuracy?**

Accuracy and the quest for accuracy, a progressivist notion of the history of maps and mapping, has now been debunked. The history of maps is not how maps got more and more accurate until you get to the point now where you can place the table in front of us this afternoon in its exact location on a map of London.

The accuracy of a map has to be related to the question: what is its purpose? I could draw a sketch map of how to get from here in the British Academy to my flat in Bloomsbury, and you'd be able to follow it and get there. It would look totally hopeless as a piece of accurate cartography, but it would have on it all the information that you need.





John Hooker's celebrated map of the city of Exeter, 1587. Photo: The British Library.

And we all get around the London Underground using Harry Beck's wonderful 'Tube map'. It bears no relation at all to topographic accuracy, but it is topologically accurate. It shows how all the lines link to each other,

so that you can travel unerringly through the network.

Historians of cartography in the days before the 1980s got obsessed by accuracy, but it was a cul-de-sac. *The History of Cartography* project was conceived as a way out of that cul-de-sac, to show instead that maps are social constructs, not just technical artefacts.

### **In 1990 you were elected a Fellow of the British Academy.**

I can still remember the frisson with which I opened a very small manila envelope, which looked very unprepossessing on the outside, but which contained a letter from the Secretary of the British Academy telling me that I had been elected a Fellow. This was most amazing, and a huge honour. I still don't understand why I was honoured in that way, but it was humbling to think that my peers at that time felt that I was worthy of it.

When I look back now, I'd probably describe myself up to that point as a somewhat selfish academic, one who had been generously treated by my university at Exeter and given time to pursue personal and collaborative research, and I hadn't involved myself in academic administration or management. Attending British Academy meetings in London provided a fantastic opportunity to network with colleagues – which increasingly I did as I became more familiar with the ways of the Academy. And then in 1997, I received a letter from the President, Sir Tony Wrigley, asking me to serve for two years as a Vice-President. And that's how my involvement in the work of the British Academy began to develop.

### **In 2002, the British Academy's Centenary year, you became Treasurer of the British Academy.**

I might mention, in connection with the Centenary, that the Geography Section published a British Academy centenary monograph which looked back on A Century of British Geography, and Catherine Delano-Smith and I contributed a chapter on 'Geography displayed: maps and mapping'.

In terms of my role as Treasurer, a particular concern was the need, following the British Academy's move to 10–11 Carlton House Terrace in 1998, to rebuild the Academy's Development Fund, the fund that gives the

Academy some measure of financial independence. But that was a gradual process.

As one of the Academy's Officers, what I was aware of at that time was a view from outside that the voice of the British Academy was not as strong as it should have been in championing the humanities and social sciences, and that we needed to 'get our act together'. When Onora O'Neill became President in 2005, she acknowledged and took on that challenge.

In this, Onora worked very well with Sir Martin Rees, the President of the Royal Society, who was a huge supporter of the humanities and social sciences, in explaining the indivisibility of knowledge – at a time when government was taking a much narrower view of what 'science' meant. That unified approach, undertaken in collaboration with the other national academies – the Royal Society, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Academy of Medical Sciences – has been pursued vigorously by all the succeeding Presidents of the British Academy, to the great benefit of the humanities and social sciences and the whole UK research base.

### **Since 2014, you've been Vice-President for Research & Higher Education Policy, so you have become the person responsible for the Academy's voice in higher education policy matters. Does the British Academy have a louder voice now?**

Yes, I think we now do speak with more authority and purpose.

The higher education policy aspect of the Academy's activities has become much more significant. We have been developing a strategy that identifies those non-discretionary activities that we absolutely have to address – the things that our community really expects the British Academy to say something about – and then some other discretionary activities that we think are important.

The first category of higher education policy issues on which the Academy has spoken have included the like of the Research Excellence Framework, the Teaching Excellence Framework, and now the Knowledge Exchange Framework. We have put in a submission to the Augar review of university fees, as our community would expect us to. And we have contributed to the current debates about open access – which I made reference to earlier – and here we have also been developing our position as both a research funder and an academic publisher.



Roger Kain is editing the volume on *Cartography in the Nineteenth Century*, in *The History of Cartography series*. Illustrated here is Pedro García Conde, *Carta Geografica General de la Republica Mexicana* (London: James Wyld, 1845).  
Image: courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

## British Academy Small Research Grants are hugely valued by humanities and social science academics

### What are the other higher education policy issues that the British Academy has chosen to engage with?

Given the amount of resource that we've got, we have had to choose those very carefully, and we have had some very grown-up discussions with the community and with the other academies about what these should be.

On the issue of language learning, the British Academy has really made a difference in recent years in drawing attention to the problem. Most recently, we have issued a statement entitled *Languages in the UK: A call for action*, about which there is an article elsewhere in this issue (pp. 12–13).

We have also highlighted the importance of quantitative numeracy skills in the social sciences – working in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation. More broadly, business needs graduates who are comfortable working with numbers and data as well as having the ability to write and to argue critically. This programme of work has been superbly led for the Academy by Sir Ian Diamond FBA,<sup>2</sup> and we have produced a number of reports that have, in my view, significantly influenced policy.

### Your remit as Vice-President also covers the British Academy's research funding schemes.

In money terms, the British Academy's portfolio of research funding schemes has grown out of all recognition.

Over the time that I've been actively involved in the

work of the British Academy, a major concern has been ensuring that excellent people from each generation can enter academia to sustain our subjects. There have been times – as is the case now – when permanent posts are few and far between, and it's difficult for people to get a step on the ladder. Our flagship British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme provides a mechanism to help people get from being a PhD student to becoming an academic. It offers three years of funding to enable early career researchers to translate their PhD work into a significant publication, and equally importantly to embark on their next piece of research. There is strong competition for these Postdoctoral Fellowships, and those who get them go on to be very successful in securing posts in the research world. So, we know that the scheme helps sustain the flow of excellent people into the future humanities and social sciences workforce.

### What can you say about the new scheme of British Academy / Wolfson Fellowships?

The Wolfson Foundation has generously awarded the British Academy £10 million to support the humanities and social sciences. Part of the money is to enable us to construct a new lecture theatre and other public spaces in the basement of 10–11 Carlton House Terrace.

Another part of their gift is for a new scheme of British Academy / Wolfson Fellowships. These seek to provide support between our Postdoctoral Fellowships for those at the outset of their careers, and our Mid-Career Fellowships for those with a more established career. The Wolfson scheme will enable those who've got a permanent post, but are still early in their careers, to have some time to do a piece of work that will help get them to the next stage in their university or equivalent research institution.

At the time of speaking, the first call for applications is open, and I have to say they are proving extremely popular.

### Do British Academy Small Research Grants remain as popular as ever?

'Small Research Grants' sounds a bit pejorative. The maximum award is £10,000, which is a small sum in terms of research funding, but these grants really do have a value beyond the number of pounds. They can start people off on a trail, or can help them finish off something: so they can be pump-priming, or they can help people sunset a project.

They are hugely valued by humanities and social science academics. At the time of the 2010 Spending

2 See Ian Diamond, 'Interview', *British Academy Review*, 31 (Autumn 2017), 11–16.

Review, the then Department for Business, Innovation & Skills took the mistaken view that Small Research Grants were not ‘strategic’ and should not be paid for out of public funding. The Leverhulme Trust stepped in with very generous sums of money to enable us to continue the scheme, and the British Academy’s own Fellows have also contributed to funding Small Research Grants. Happily, the current Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has been persuaded of the value of our Small Research Grants, and we are delighted and very grateful that there is now secured public funding for these awards.

with other matters, as a truly shared enterprise between the Academy’s Fellows and its hugely talented and dedicated staff.

### **We are now approaching a new government Spending Review. How is the British Academy preparing for that?**

We will be collaborating with the other national academies to make a powerful statement about the value of continued public funding for academic research. We have been working together to show how the UK’s investment in research and development is distributed, and to collect evidence of how the benefits of research are measured.

### **What broader hopes do you have for the future of the British Academy?**

Perhaps inevitably, we still elect people to become Fellows of the British Academy relatively late in their academic career. I do think that we need to do more for those at the start of their career. And I have a fervent hope that, with a combination of will on our part and some of the Wolfson Foundation funding, we might see the development of a Young Academy.

Very many European countries have Young Academies – indeed the Royal Society of Edinburgh has a Young Academy of Scotland. They provide an opportunity for those earlier in their careers to come together, to network, to do all the kinds of things that we as Fellows of the British Academy do, but in a separate space. We have talked about it for a while, and it would be wonderful if we could now give it a final push to make it happen.

More generally, I would hope to see, in 10 years’ time, a more diverse British Academy than it is currently. We have worked to improve the gender balance, but we still have further to go. We’ve hardly started on ethnicity. And the geographical diversity across the United Kingdom needs to be considered too. We are over-concentrated in some areas, and does that properly reflect where excellence lies? It is good to see that the Academy is now grappling with these issues in a very serious way and, as

### **Further reading and viewing**

Some of Roger Kain’s books etc. mentioned in the interview

1986 book: *An Atlas and Index of the Tithe Files of Mid-Nineteenth-Century England and Wales*.

1992 book, co-authored with Elizabeth Baigent: *The Cadastral Map in the Service of the State: A History of Property Mapping*.

1995 book, co-authored with Richard R. Oliver: *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A cartographic analysis and county-by-county catalogue*.

2004 book, co-authored with John Chapman and Richard R. Oliver: *The Enclosure Maps of England and Wales 1595–1918*. Electronic catalogue maintained by UK Data Archive ([essex.ac.uk/em/index.html](http://essex.ac.uk/em/index.html)).

2015 book, co-authored with Richard R. Oliver: *British Town Maps: A History*. Electronic Catalogue of British Town Maps ([townmaps.data.history.ac.uk/](http://townmaps.data.history.ac.uk/)).

# Picturing others

*Annabel Tremlett* illustrates how everyday images can challenge stereotypes of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people



Dr Annabel Tremlett is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Portsmouth.

**D**iscrimination against Roma, Gypsy or Traveller people is often said to be the last ‘respectable’ form of racism,<sup>1</sup> with the use of offensive terms and blatant prejudicial comments prevalent and uncontested in many public spheres. Stereotypes of these communities have a strong visual element: from the glitzy world of elaborate Traveller weddings, to the impoverished beggars from Romania on London streets, or the unauthorised encampments of Travellers’ caravans surrounded by spewing rubbish. Such images are heavily selected, edited, sensationalised, and often unrepresentative of the majority of people from these communities, yet are the ones circulated again and again in our media. So how can such entrenched stereotypes be challenged? What would a ‘non-stereotypical’ image of Roma people look like?

These are the questions asked by a current British Academy Small Research Grant project, led by myself, Dr Annabel Tremlett at the University of Portsmouth, in partnership with John Oates from the Open University. The basis for the project was a question I grappled with when co-editing a special issue of *Identities* journal in 2017, entitled ‘Romaphobia and the media’. Working with Roma and non-Roma authors, the special issue aimed at exposing and deconstructing some of the entrenched racism against Roma across the media in Europe – which can at times be very stark and direct, and at other times nuanced and insidious. Myself and my co-editors, Vera Messing and Angéla Kóczé (both from Hungary,

Angéla is also from a Roma background), started to call our special issue the ‘especially depressing issue’, as the persistence of racism against Roma in the media from so many different outputs and countries was relentless. We realised that there seemed to be nothing else on offer to the public about Roma people apart from these negative images, and in turn, this is what we were offering in our journal. We therefore decided to include three articles in our special issue written by professional Roma from varying backgrounds, on how they negotiate and challenge prominent racism. These articles showed that Roma people are not just the passive victims of racism, but confront and change the way Roma people are perceived.

However, whilst this special issue showed the agency of Roma people in resisting racism, there was still the question of how the public image of Roma people could be challenged – what could be a visual alternative to ingrained negative stereotypes? I knew, from my own research on the everyday lives of Roma people in Hungary, that they have a lot of joy and warmth in their lives, even in difficult times. I’ve been visiting the same town in Hungary for nearly two decades now (including over four years of living there). This has put me in a very privileged position of seeing those who were children at the start of my research (around 7 or 8 years of age) growing up – they are now in their mid-20s. Over the years I’ve asked them to take pictures of their everyday lives, and then interviewed them on that basis (a research method called ‘photo

<sup>1</sup> Sir Trevor Philips, then Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, 2004.

elicitation’). I also ask them to reflect on previous photograph projects, so I get a real sense of how they see their lives changing, how they want to represent themselves to me as a researcher, and what they think of the choices they’ve made in their lives or how life events have impacted on them.

What I love about the photographs they produce is the way they are just of everyday lives – families larking about having fun, people working on their homes, cooking, mending bikes, looking after pets, talking to their grans, posing for ‘selfies’ – pictures any of us might take. This doesn’t take away the struggles people can face with poor housing, dilapidated streets, very precarious wages and racism in their everyday lives – all these adversities came out in the interviews. But these images show us that people have the urge and vitality to live their lives in the best way they can, even if that’s in really tough circumstances.

These photos have become powerful in ways I certainly didn’t imagine at the start. They are products of self-representations – the children/young people are given disposable cameras, and they choose what they take photographs of. This means that they are the image-makers, which is unusual for Roma people who are so often misrepresented by others. Well-meaning documentary makers and photographers tend to romanticise or exoticise or produce ‘poverty voyeuristic’ shots that are very depressing; media outlets tend to criminalise or demonise Roma people. It’s quite rare to see ‘ordinary’, everyday lives as seen by the people themselves.

The British Academy Small Research Grant has allowed me to take a long look at these images, alongside those produced by my project partner, John Oates, a developmental psychologist from the Open University. John carries out activist fieldwork (for example, he was a consultant on setting up a version of the UK ‘Sure Start’ programme in Hungary). He also documents the everyday lives of Roma people, leading to exhibitions and films such as *Vortex*, which give invaluable insights into the complex challenges that Roma people face and how they survive. Through the project, we hired a research associate, Sanna Nissinen, who has expertise in the ethics of humanitarian photography used in charity and non-governmental reports. The three of us set about analysing hundreds of our fieldwork photographs of the everyday lives

of Roma people, using a theoretically informed framework that draws on the work of visual analysts Per Ledin and David Machin. This approach deconstructs the image content – e.g. people, places, activities, colour, materials, and perspectives employed – and analyses the symbolic effect of each, and then thinks through the effect of the image as a whole. We also included in our analysis awareness of power, inequality and racism, drawing on the work of cultural theorists Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall to build our understanding of how racialised, fixed and stereotypical views of Roma minorities are reproduced and continue to be circulated.

We found that images from our fieldwork still, at times, contain so-called stereotypical traits – such as run-down buildings, children with dirty faces and no guardians, passive adults – that denote the negative, backward stereotypes of the Roma. However, we started to understand that some images had definite differences from the usual stereotypes. We found four main elements that differed from prominent stereotypes, and these are illustrated on pages 46–53.

### Exhibitions

As a part of our project we are holding exhibitions to display these images. We are asking our audiences (some of whom are also from Roma, Gypsy or Traveller backgrounds) for responses to them, both to test our analysis and to encourage new discussions around the ‘non-stereotypical’.

The first was a photography exhibition at the Hungarian Cultural Centre in London in June 2018. The aim was to draw people out of their passive attitudes as viewers, and transform them into active participants in a shared world. We invit-

ed audience members to create collages to represent their views of the images on display.

The second exhibition was held at Portsmouth Guildhall at the end of 2018. As well as displaying images from our own research, we also gathered fantastic examples of anti-racism campaigns and projects from Roma, Gypsy and Traveller organisations and independent photographers. We also didn’t forget that Portsmouth itself is a city that has many Traveller and Romani families at the heart of its community and histories: we were very pleased to have permission to show photos and stories from the family of one of Portsmouth’s most famous boxers, Traveller Johnny Smith.

We are still analysing the feedback from the two exhibitions, but we have found the experience of interacting with audience members and asking for their opinions fascinating. Overall, the collages and other audience response sheets provide a means to show how complex and multi-layered responses to images of a marginalised minority can be.

Our British Academy-supported project runs until August 2019. One of the main findings so far is that, in order to break down stereotypes, we need engagement. We must think of people not just as others but as ourselves, and must look at how we relate to each other, our shared histories, identities and experiences. In some ways, perhaps, the lives of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people seem very distinctive; in other ways, we might totally relate to them. The important thing is to recognise people as humans, who have dignity, humour, difficulties, self-respect, frustrations, struggles, in complex or banal lives. We can be different, yet we can also connect in so many ways.

**What I love about the photographs is the way they are just of everyday lives - pictures any of us might take**

## Other ways of picturing...



### 01 – Everyday activities

Showing people as active in their everyday lives, even in very poor circumstances, contrasts with public images that tend to show Roma people as passive and parasitic.

A Roma man has asked his two friends from work (who are non-Roma) to fix his gate after some vandalism in the street.



Two female friends sit in a courtyard, one is hugging her grandson. There are clothes hanging out to dry beside them. The photograph shows ordinary activities involved in taking care of family life, even when the backdrop looks dilapidated. In fact, when we looked at this photograph, the woman pictured with her grandson said (with laughter), 'Oh no, [the courtyard] looks like a mess – when you show these pictures tell them we are in the middle of renovating it, otherwise they'll think we're slovenly Gypsies!'

*Photos: taken by the daughter of one of the women; from Annabel Tremlett's fieldwork.*



## 02 – Connection with the viewer

Many news images of Roma tend to show them as a faceless group, or looking sad or delinquent. Eye contact, or a sense of ‘being with’ (meaning a kind of intimacy), creates a connection with the viewer and breaks down power relations.

A couple pose with their young son in a ‘selfie’. Note the warmth from the closeness of the couple and the way the little boy is leaning into his father. This is also a mixed ethnicity relationship (the woman is Roma, the man non-Roma). Such unions are rarely discussed in public spaces, unless as an aberration or problem. In my experience, mixed couples were a common occurrence, and show that integration and connections between communities are lived out in the intimate lives of families.



*Photo: from Annabel Tremlett's fieldwork.*



Here we see a grandmother with her grandson – a private moment which shows their closeness. We can almost feel the warmth in the contact between their bodies and the soft feel of the child's hair on his grandmother's face.

*Photo: taken by John Oates from his fieldwork.*

*Photo: taken by John Oates from his fieldwork.*



A mother and her two boys are enjoying an outdoor picnic provided by a local organisation. Exhibition audience members have said how they like the ordinariness of the scene and how the little boy is interacting with the camera man/viewer.



*Photos: self-representation taken by the mother of the little girl and partner of the man; from Annabel Tremlett's fieldwork.*

## 03 – Being playful or funny

Everyday images taken by Roma people themselves are far more likely to be playful and funny than any public images, which tend to show Roma people as sad, deviant or criminalised. This humour creates an obvious connection with the viewer and creates another way Roma people can be seen, rather than just as hapless victims.



A father and child have fun posing in sunglasses with a mobile phone. We can imagine the little girl is either copying her father, or has 'ordered' her father to pose in the same way as her! Images of Roma fathers with their children are rare in the public sphere, giving substance to the idea that Roma fathers are absent and uninterested in their children.

## 04 – Difficulties with dignity

To avoid falling into the trap of only showing 'happy' photographs of Roma people (which may detract from the often devastating circumstances they face), the phrase 'difficulties with dignity' emerged from our analysis as a means to show people in tough situations, but without them being shown as wretched. Which images came into this category was not always agreed on by our research team – the concept of 'dignity' itself in photography has been described as 'amorphous and its use uncertain' (Langmann & Pick).

A mother and child sit on a bed. Though the backdrop is bare and impoverished, the woman is engaged, confident, talking to someone off camera, while her baby is protected on her lap and looks well cared for and relaxed.



*Photo: taken by John Oates from his fieldwork.*



*Photo: taken by John Oates from his fieldwork.*

Two children look out of a window and a third is leaping on the bed to join them. There is a sense of despair with the children alone in this dilapidated room, but the light from the window and the children looking out does give some hope. There is a lot more to the story behind the image, but our audience members said that even without knowing the story, this image is very powerful in showing the conditions that some Roma children face.

# Time out!

## Ayşe Üskül and Michelle Ryan applaud the transformative impact of the British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship scheme



Ayşe K. Üskül is Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Kent.



Michelle Ryan is Professor of Social and Organisational Psychology at the University of Exeter, and (part-time) Professor of Diversity at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

**A**s researchers progress in their careers, they face a growing number of challenges. There are increasing expectations to take on teaching and administrative duties, which require greater responsibility and initiative, growing numbers of students and postdoctoral fellows to supervise, more and more time spent on external roles, such as journal editing. For some, family responsibilities get added to the mix.

Although it might sound positive and exciting, these increasing duties can mean less time for research, writing, thinking, and reading. Studies that need to be written up for publication start to accumulate. And mid-career academics find themselves yearning for some uninterrupted time that will give them the head space they need to run their projects through the finish line.

Two social psychologists, Ayşe Üskül from the University of Kent, and Mi-

chelle Ryan from the University of Exeter and the University of Groningen, have each benefited from a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship that has enabled them to focus their time on finishing projects and establishing new research ideas.

In this article, they share their experiences of having that much-needed break from the daily demands of academic life, and describe what this has meant for their research careers.

### **Ayşe**

Shortly after finishing my PhD, I secured a postdoctoral fellowship, awarded to me by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. It funded two years at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Michigan, where I had uninterrupted research time, free from teaching and administrative duties. It was wonderfully enriching, and I realise as I look back that the experience shaped the direction of my academic

career immensely. At the time, I was frequently told that I should cherish every moment of my fellowship, as a similar opportunity would most likely never come my way again.

Yet it did. In the midst of juggling a family with my academic partner working at a different institution in a different city, being practically a single mother to an infant, and having lost my study leave (which I terribly needed to finish off projects) during the transition from one institution to another due to changing jobs, I found out about the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme of the British Academy. It seemed to have been designed exactly to support academics like me, who needed time off from normal teaching and administrative commitments to focus on the

completion of a major piece of research and the dissemination of its findings.

I had just finished a research project (funded by a British Academy Small Research Grant) that examined how adults and children respond to social exclusion in farming and herding communities in north-eastern Turkey. I had already collected data for a series of studies funded by the British Academy grant, but I was asked by journal editors to collect more data in order to clarify some of the unresolved issues in the existing studies. This required more trips to the region (which had to be carefully scheduled to take account of seasonal changes in weather conditions), more time to analyse new data, and more write-up time for dissemination. That meant that I needed extra

time to finish off this project, time that could not be easily planned in my existing schedule. A British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship awarded to me for the academic year 2013–14 came to my rescue. I used every moment of it to run the additional studies and prepare two multi-study papers for submission to the top journal in my field – both of which were eventually published there.

These publications were highly instrumental in helping me establish myself as a researcher who works at the intersection of the economic environment and human behaviour. And this led to a domino effect, making my publications grow in number and scientific impact. For example, they formed the basis of an influential review piece, led to several invitations to contribute chapters to edited volumes, and most recently to an invitation to edit a special issue on socio-ecological psychology.

In addition, the Academy's scheme allowed me to spend time reading the relevant literature in different disciplines (which I hardly get to do during normal working times). This enabled me to see the connections between different disciplines with regard to how they approach the role of economic environment in human psychology and to identify strengths and limitations of the existing work in this field. These observations laid the foundations of a multidisciplinary book project which I co-edited and published with Oxford University Press in 2018 (*Socioeconomic environment and human psychology: Social, ecological, and cultural perspectives*, edited by Uskul and Oishi).

The British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship also helped me make connections outside of academia. As part of the Fellowship, I co-organised a research impact event titled 'Researching Social Exclusion: Relevance for Public Policy and Practice', and it gave me the opportunity to network both with key academics doing research on social exclusion researchers and with non-academic agencies working in the same area. The meeting included presentations from the Three Faiths Forum, Greenwich CID, Schools Linking Network, the McPin Foundation, Age UK, the Economic and Social Research Council, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Allowing me to establish myself as a successful mid-career researcher with links within and beyond academia, the British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship paved the way to a European Research



Professor Ayşe Üskül, shown here on a 2018 field trip to rice farming villages in Japan, conducts research into how different cultural settings shape social cognition, conceptions of self, and interpersonal relationships.

Council (ERC) application. ERC schemes are designed to support individual researchers to carry out scientifically excellent projects, at a larger scale and with greater impact. In the Consolidator scheme, the ERC looks for 'investigators who must have already shown research independence and evidence of maturity'. The Academy's support had helped me to achieve exactly this.

My application to the ERC Consolidator Scheme in 2016 was evaluated positively, but didn't get funded. Two years later, I submitted a significantly revised application, and in October 2018 I heard good news. This ERC funding will allow me to conduct my dream project. Collecting data in 12 different locations, with a focus mostly on cultural groups around the Mediterranean, I will examine the role that honour plays in how people co-operate with others, how they compromise in decision-making situations, and how they apologise for wrongdoings. Through

this project, which will start in September 2019, I will be able to ask novel questions, and explore them in unresearched settings, using multiple methods.

The British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship came at a very critical period in my career, when I was going through multiple transitions as a female academic. It provided a refuge for me to concentrate and continue working on my research, without which I possibly would have slowed down significantly – to the degree that an ERC application (and success) would have been an unreachable goal.

### Michelle

If I think about what has been most helpful for me throughout my academic career, number one on my list would definitely be the excellent mentors and colleagues with whom I have had the privilege to work. But a very close second would be the fellowship grants that I have been lucky enough to hold. The year I

was awarded my PhD (2004), I secured a Research Councils UK (RCUK) Academic Fellowship – a terrific (although unfortunately now defunct) scheme that was designed to help postdoctoral researchers secure a permanent position. The RCUK fellowship funded part of my salary for 5 years, which facilitated my transition into an academic role. It was a wonderful opportunity, giving me the security of a permanent position, with the concentrated research time of a postdoctoral fellow. In this period I had my son (in 2008), and the RCUK kindly extended my fellowship for the length of my 6-month maternity leave.

Within a year of my fellowship ending, I had agreed to take on a 3-year administrative role, as Associate Dean (Research) for our faculty, overseeing the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) returns for five very different disciplinary 'Units of Assessment'. This was an exciting challenge, which I enjoyed enormous-



Professor Michelle Ryan is conducting research into the role of identity in the work-life balance.

ly; but the burden of the REF and raising a small boy as a single parent took its toll. My research – which looked at the ‘glass cliff’ and women’s leadership positions in times of crisis – still continued, but it was in dire need of an injection of time and energy. The British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship scheme seemed to fit the brief perfectly. I was lucky enough to be awarded a Fellowship for the 2014 calendar year.

The Mid-Career Fellowship allowed me space to step down from the Associate Dean role (once the REF documents had been submitted), and to have the courage to start a new line of research. While our work on the glass cliff was exciting and rewarding, I knew I needed to broaden my research agenda and try something new. I used the full year of uninterrupted research time to develop, somewhat ironically, a new approach to work-life balance – conceptualising it as balancing identity (who one is at home, and who one is at work) instead of just balancing time. The Fellowship allowed me space to draft a theoretical paper on identity and work-life balance, to analyse complex organisational data sets on fit and work-life balance that had been languishing on my computer for years, and to prepare a TedEx talk on to present these ideas to the public.

The British Academy award also enabled me to travel, to extend my network of collaborators – in particular, visiting Cordelia Fine at Melbourne, Tori Brescoll at Yale, and Madeline Heilman at NYU. And it allowed me to establish connections with industry collaborators, such as EY and the NHS. Through these collaborations we developed and extended the analysis of work-life balance to begin thinking about how context and identity might shape other career attitudes, such as those around ambition and risk-taking.

This time and space, which allowed me to explore new and innovative research ideas, was truly a career-enhancing opportunity. I took on a new leadership role in my university at the end of the Fellowship, becoming Dean of Post-Graduate Research and establishing the University of Exeter Doctoral College. However, the new research ideas that we developed during the Fellowship lay a clear foundation for opportunities ahead. Indeed, they led directly to an application for an ERC Consolidator grant, expanding on the ideas of how context and identity shape and constrain women’s career choices.

I prepared the application for the Con-

solidator scheme throughout 2015 (in between many Dean meetings), submitted it early 2016, and was awarded it in November 2016. That ERC funding has allowed me to take my research to the next level. It has given me 5 years of time that I can dedicate almost exclusively to research and mentoring, and has enabled me to bring together an exceptional team of early-career researchers to work on an integrated programme of research. It has also given me time to travel and work with inspiring research groups across Europe and more widely.

But none of this would have been possible without the British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship. It paved the way – giving me intellectual space, giving me practical time to write and analyse data, and giving me the opportunity to make and strengthen collaborative networks. But most of all it gave me confidence – the confidence to try something new, and the confidence to build on those new ideas and take them forwards.

The British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship is an excellent initiative. A scheme that identifies researchers facing obstacles in their career paths, and provides them with what they need – which is mostly just time – is bound to breed future success. The two of us are living examples of how career-defining this can be.

British Academy Mid-Career Fellowships are funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

**A scheme that identifies researchers facing obstacles in their career paths, and provides them with what they need - which is mostly just time - is bound to breed future success.**

# New tools for new research questions and answers

Brett Greatley-Hirsch and James Baker talk to the British Academy Review about the potential of digital research in the humanities



Dr Brett Greatley-Hirsch is University Academic Fellow in Textual Studies and Digital Editing at the University of Leeds.



Dr James Baker is Senior Lecturer in Digital History and Archives at the University of Sussex.

‘Advances in computing have changed the nature and scope of the work we do in the humanities,’ says Dr Brett Greatley-Hirsch. ‘It’s not just a matter of efficiency – i.e., doing what we’ve always done, only faster. Nor is it simply a matter of scale – i.e., doing what we’ve always done, only bigger. Computing enables us to ask questions that were simply inconceivable for previous generations of scholars.’

Dr Greatley-Hirsch, University Academic Fellow in Textual Studies and Digital Editing at the University of Leeds, is among the first recipients of the British Academy’s new Digital Research in the Humanities (DRH) grants. Awarded at the end of 2018, in partnership with Jisc, the grants fund innovative research that applies new digital methods and tools to existing digital resources in order to yield new insights.

For his project, Dr Greatley-Hirsch will be using statistical procedures and machine-learning techniques associated with computational stylistics to analyse various samples of English drama, poet-

ry and prose from the late Elizabethan to the early Jacobean period. The aim is to find out whether a specific literary genre affects an author’s style, and, if so, how significant these differences are. He explains: ‘It’s about testing a longstanding assumption that genre affects style – an assumption that currently hampers authorship attribution study.’

It is only thanks to the recent development of new technology that Dr Greatley-Hirsch can attempt this kind of research. The sophisticated searches enabled by the combination of large-scale digitisation projects and natural language processing now allow scholars not only to trace the histories of generic forms, like the novel, sonnet or sermon, but also to investigate what Daniel Shore has termed ‘the genealogy of syntactic forms’. ‘The difference,’ explains Dr Greatley-Hirsch, ‘is whether you are studying the history of a specific phrase – e.g. “but me no buts” – or a broader phraseological unit – e.g. “(verb) me no (noun)” – or more general syntactic structure – e.g. “(verb) (pronoun) (adjective) (noun)”.’

Dr James Baker, Senior Lecturer in



© The British Academy

James Gillray's *La dernière ressource*, published by Hannah Humphrey in 1791, is one of over 12,500 prints described by Dorothy George in the *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*. Image: British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Digital History and Archives at the University of Sussex, is another DRH grant-holder. He and his colleagues are examining the catalogue of personal and political satirical prints produced by the historian Mary Dorothy George for the British Museum between 1930 and 1954. These prints cover political and social topics and everything in between. 'The political prints tend to be ephemeral responses to political dramas of the day,' says Dr Baker, 'while the social satires tend to cover topics with a longstanding appeal – for instance, jokes about gouty priests, ridiculous fashions, and roguish Irishmen that draw on stereotypes.'

Working with his co-investigator Dr Andrew Salway to combine traditional archive work with corpus linguistic methods, Dr Baker hopes to develop a generalisable toolset for understanding works of this kind. He is also looking at individual types and groups of words within Dorothy George's archive – analysing how the historian used the words, which words she used around them, and how she introduced various quotations.

So, what is it about Dorothy George's work that so interests Dr Baker?

'Every scholar who has used a "Golden Age" satirical print is indebted to Mary Dorothy George,' he says. 'Her descriptions of satirical prints are a substantive work of scholarship that elevated their subjects to canonical status among historians of long-18th-century British history. In turn, both the prints and George's descriptions of them have been integral to studies of print, culture, politics, and social life in Georgian Britain. Whether in book form, on microfilm, or online, George has been a constant interlocutor between the historian and this remarkable era of graphic reproduction.'

As with Dr Greatley-Hirsch's project, it is recent developments in technology that have made Dr Baker's research possible. These developments, particularly relating to image search and recognition, are of special interest to Dr Baker.

'I was lucky enough to be invited a couple of years ago to do some work for another British Academy project run by a colleague in Edinburgh called Anouk Lang,' he says. 'She was running some workshops on digital methods, and she asked me to do something on computational image recognition. I found then that we had just hit the point where there were open source toolsets that I could use and install. They were very good at

finding images where there were two prints of very similar things. They could sometimes pick out generic landscape scenes, and they could just about work out that most landscapes had a church on the left or the right and a tree in the middle, and that kind of stuff. That was actually quite exciting at the time because, at the very least, it was finding matches.

‘But what is interesting to me is that this technology is changing rapidly. Every time I step away from it for a few months, I look back at it again and find that there are massive advances.

‘For me, it is exciting to think about how we can take the work we are doing with language to describe an image and join it up with the work that is going on at the computer vision end around how you look at an image and figure out which parts are which.’

The development of this kind of technology has occurred in tandem with the rise of artificial intelligence, especially ‘deep learning’, a concept which rose to wider fame in 2015 when Google’s Alpha-Go became the first computer program to defeat a Go world champion. Alpha-Go’s deep learning model mastered Go by competing in thousands of games against human players. In just a few years, it has introduced a series of innovative winning moves and overturned centuries of received wisdom.

But as impressive as this may be, Dr Greatley-Hirsch points out that the use of artificial intelligence presents a challenge to those working in the humanities that is perhaps more disciplinary than technical.

‘Neural networks of the sort used in deep learning exemplify the so-called “black box” problem,’ he says. ‘We can

observe and study the inputs and outputs, but the inner workings of the model that transforms them are essentially unknown. Humanities scholars will no doubt find this lack of explanation deeply frustrating.’

There are also challenges associated with capturing and processing information in the digital age. As a society, we create more information in one day than we have ever created before, which, Dr Baker says, means the historians of the future will have to be well-versed in digital methods and up to date with the newest toolsets.

‘There are going to be some real challenges,’ he says. ‘Though there is a large amount of information in public which is at risk – things on Twitter, Tumblr and Geocities, for example – there are projects trying to capture that. But the task of capturing personal archives is going to require an enormous amount of investment in infrastructure. Archivists have been doing an amazing job in very embattled circumstances for over a decade, trying to develop methods for capturing personal archives: for the person who walks in with a laptop, not a stack of papers. There is a lot of information on that individual device, but because of the difficult nature of working with that device, they are not able to take too much of that material.

‘We need time and energy to be spent thinking about how we support the creation of broad digital archives of personal papers of that kind.’

So, what do the researchers think lies in store for humanities research generally? Will we see a pivot towards digital research methods, and to what extent might these methods displace more traditional

approaches?

‘“Displace” may be the wrong word,’ says Dr Greatley-Hirsch. ‘It perpetuates a fear of mechanisation, of being replaced by machines, which I’m convinced goes some way to explain the resistance to digital scholarship from certain quarters. Something closer to “augment” is more accurate, because there will always be a space and need for traditional approaches. Put simply, there are things that machines can do that human beings cannot – but the reverse is also true, especially when it comes to interpretation of language and expression, thought and emotion.’

More broadly, Dr Greatley-Hirsch believes the adoption of digital research methods offers an important opportunity to encourage truly interdisciplinary research.

‘Understanding digital research methods in the humanities is also a necessary step towards preparing ourselves, and our students, for a changing world in which the digital is fast becoming the primary means of cultural creation, dissemination, and preservation. This means that our disciplines should value and promote numeracy as well as different types of literacy.’

So are digital history posts likely to increase as the years go by, and, more to the point, would that be a good thing?

Dr Baker isn’t sure. ‘I would partly be putting myself out of a job by saying digital history posts should not be there!’ he says. ‘But I have always imagined that in time they would not be.

‘History has always had a range of different methods that people have used. A recent methodological turn was towards oral histories, but people do not describe themselves as being an “oral history historian”. They still refer more to their areas of historical interest.

‘History and art history will change as disciplines when we start working with more contemporary sources. The introduction of home computers in the 1990s was huge – and since then our archives have become increasingly more digital. Historians will need to be more adept at using large web archives, or a personal archive that might not be a series of boxes but a hard drive instead. That will be the most natural tipping point.’

Brett Greatley-Hirsch and James Baker were talking to Joe Christmas.

**Understanding digital research methods in the humanities is also a necessary step towards preparing ourselves, and our students, for a changing world**

# Exploring medieval liturgy in medieval churches

John Harper tells a story of evidence, imagination and realisation

© The British Academy



John Harper is honorary professor at the University of Birmingham, emeritus professor at Bangor University, and emeritus director of the Royal School of Church Music. He led 'The Experience of Worship' research project.

The landscape of Britain is still studied with late medieval churches and cathedrals, often restored or refashioned, but still used for worship by the few and visited in great numbers by the many. Neither worshipper nor visitor has much idea of the ritual practices that originally shaped the buildings, or of the experience of late medieval worship within the space. Back in 2011 there was an opportunity to encounter a series of late medieval Latin liturgies in two contrasting late medieval buildings: Salisbury Cathedral, and the tiny church of St Teilo in the National History Museum at St Fagans outside Cardiff. These formed the core of the AHRC/ESRC-funded research project, 'The Experience of Worship in late medieval Cathedral and Parish Church'. That research is proceeding and still bearing fruit, most recently in the two-volume edition of *Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the Use of Salisbury*, published in the British Acad-

emy's *Early English Church Music* series.

Undertaking re-enactments of historical events, even of past life-styles, has now become a familiar phenomenon at a variety of levels and with a diversity of intentions, including pastime, education and entertainment. Some of that activity is informed by significant investigation and serious research. What distinguished 'The Experience of Worship' project was the direct participation of the researchers themselves in the enactment of the medieval rituals. In addition to research informing performance, performance became an essential mode of research. Such engagement – like all other forms of historical enquiry – requires the use of imagination, recognition of restrictions and limitations, and – in the case of liturgical enactment – the compromises determined by the actualities of location and time. The late medieval buildings used for the enactment of these liturgies are busy places with their own timetables and



The relocated and recreated interior of the church of St Teilo, National History Museum, St Fagans.



Newly constructed Tudor organ by Goetze and Gwynn, painted by Fleur Kelly and Lois Raine. Photo: Adrian Holgeth.

demands. Furthermore, although Salisbury Cathedral retains its 13th-century profile, it has been subject to internal change over the centuries; and St Teilo's Church, having become derelict in the 1980s, has been moved over 50 miles east from a site just south of Pontarddulais to St Fagans Museum, and re-erected, furnished and decorated as it might have been in the early 16th century.

While the investigation was directed to historical understanding of medieval

worship in a medieval space, we were always clear that we were enacting rituals in the present: we did not pretend to be people in the late Middle Ages. Clergy, their assistants, singers, organ player, and those taking the part of the congregation were asking questions related to their own specific role in and experience of medieval liturgy, and reflecting on them in the context of the whole ritual. Repeating the same liturgies over each of three days at St Fagans enable us to revisit and refocus.

We are still unpacking the outcomes and taking forward new questions raised.

The intensity of the period of enactments between May and October 2011 was the culmination of 18 months of preparation and making. Apart from the administrative complexity, there was a Tudor organ to be commissioned and built; furniture and vestments researched and made; and a series of necessary artefacts either identified or constructed. We worked with more than 20 artists and craftspeople; for instance, no less than five of them were involved in making and decorating the Pax Board based on the survival at St Andrew's Church, Sandon, Essex. Archaeological remains, archival documentation and iconography informed the making of the organ, benches, stools, pyxes and cruets. Medieval brasses of priests provided details of vestments. Questions had to be addressed: discussion with Jeremy Glenn, who made the furniture, asked questions about seat height, posture and the physical processes of sitting and standing which extended into the enactments. Similar issues arose in practice regarding the constraints of clothing on movement and posture.

None of the makers was instructed to copy; working from a model or models where possible, and using traditional skills and materials, they were encouraged to be imaginative and creative. In some cases there were unexpected outcomes. Fleur Kelly, engaged to paint the organ case, immediately saw the opportunities afforded by two plain oak doors that protected the metal pipework when not in use. On the outside she envisaged two angels about to open the doors; and when opened, she imagined an Annunciation scene on the left, and a Nativity scene on the right. She raised additional funds herself to realise her concept, thereby creating an instrument that is visually as well as aurally striking – revealing images of the harmony between God and humankind expressed in the Incarnation, and sounds of divine harmony perceived in music by medieval thinkers.

Use of artefacts also led to new exploration. Two double-sided lecterns, one based on that at Ranworth with desks of different heights, encouraged us to gather singers round a single book. The ocular focus on a single text changed the dynamic of the singing group. Following on from that, a great lectern has now been made, large enough to hold a physically substantial book of chant, such as the

**Alleluya***At the daily Mass in the Lady Chapel**Sunday Alleluya* **Vs.** *Obtine sacris*

**A** L- le- lu- ya.

**Versus**

Ob-ti- ne sa- cris pre- ci-bus pi-a de-  
 i ge- ni-trix ve-ni-am de-lic- to-rum  
 tu- is sup-pli- ci- bus.

*Monday Alleluya* **Vs.** *Per te dei genitrix*

**A** L- le- lu- ya.

**Versus**

Per te de-i ge-ni-trix no-bis est vi-ta per-di-ta da-ta  
 que de ce-lo su-sce-pi-sti pro-lem et mun-do ge-nu- i-sti  
 sal-va-to- rem.

Two Alleluya chants from Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary *per annum*: a page from the British Academy's new *Early English Church Music* edition, with Hopyl typeface newly designed by Tim Symons, based on the 16th-century printed Gradual.



Newly constructed great lectern in use, with the 15th-century Ranworth Antiphonal.  
Photo: Mark Cator.

15th-century Antiphonal at Ranworth Church, Norfolk, or one of the great polyphonic choirbooks from the early 16th century, such as those in the libraries of Caius College, Cambridge, Eton College, and Lambeth Palace.

Pragmatism and practicality had inevitably to be exercised. This was particularly true in the preparation of texts and ritual directions for both clergy and singers. Apart from limited time for rehearsal, there was no hope of achieving the accumulated memory, mores, habits and conventions that medieval clergy and singers took for granted in their recitation of 60 or more liturgies each week. Recitation and singing in Latin may have been attainable, but rubrics had to be adapted and in English. In the Mass, a medieval priest or singer was used to turning to at least three parts of the Missal or Gradual to find the necessary texts; these needed to be placed in sequence. Even so, the three clergy, the four assisting servers, and the singers all have their own ritual narrative to follow; and only the priest and the singers have constant access to a text. Furthermore, up to five different actions may be taking place simultaneously.

In all, three liturgies took place in Salisbury Cathedral, including a major procession around the cathedral and cloisters; and nine in St Teilo's Church at St Fagans. The audio-visual recordings provide a record not of polished performances but of a fluent working through of these rituals. The procession and two Masses were enacted in both buildings, and revealed

some of the challenges faced by local parish clergy, who lacked both the space and human resources of Salisbury Cathedral. The ritual of Salisbury (the so-called Use of Sarum) was used in over 7,000 churches by the end of the Middle Ages, all varying from the cathedral and from one another to a greater or lesser extent in configuration and resources. St Teilo's is about an eighth of the length of Salisbury Cathedral, yet the same texts and ritual directions were to be followed in both buildings. Where did the priest of St Teilo's go in procession in a church without the choir aisles and cloisters that are part of the directed route on great feast days? Where, on days when the Gospel was to be recited from the pulpitum above the choir screen, did the two clergy and three servers specified undertake this ritual when the only access to the top of the screen was a ladder – bearing in mind that they were processing formally, wearing vestments and carrying either book, candlestick or thurible? The texts recited and the chants sung may have been identical, but, notwithstanding the directions of the rubrics, the ritual had to be adapted.

Clergy, singers and the furniture, vestments and artefacts they required, formed one dimension of medieval worship at the east end of the church. The people formed the other dimension, unspecified in number, and largely unscripted, in the nave. Most of the participants in the enactments were either engaged in master's or higher degrees or were research-active staff, and most were practising Christians,



though from a variety of denominations, traditions and spiritualities. Freed from expectations to follow a book text or to participate actively, they found themselves alert to a richer mix of the sensory, emotional, spiritual and intellectual qualities of worship, including long periods of silence during the Canon of the Mass; to use images or memorised devotional text as a focus, and to be enveloped by the whole experience of worship, thereby discovering new means of participation. Certain moments of engagement proved especially significant, like the kissing of the Pax Board by each person present, often the nearest that medieval laity came to contact with the consecrated bread and wine of the priest's sacrifice. These were experiences of 21st-century individuals, but they have offered new insights on the artefacts, decorative elements, and devotional texts of late medieval religion.

The most recent outcome of 'The Experience of Worship' project, the new edition of *Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, published in two volumes in the British Academy's *Early English Church Music* series, is in its way a distillation of both the underpinning traditional textual research and the more experimental prac-

tice-led research of the enactments.

The edition is distinct in two ways. Hitherto the *Early English Church Music* series has focused on polyphonic music. The two new additions inaugurate a sub-series of volumes publishing chant and monophony.

The edition also serves as a model of the operation of medieval liturgy by presenting the relevant elements of five distinct liturgical books – Gradual (for choir chant), Missal (for the priest), Customary (for ritual directions), Directory (to interpret the Calendar), and Ordinal (to specify the precise contents of each Mass according to day, season or feast) – in ways accessible to and usable by scholars, students and performers. What has often been assumed to be three seasonal forms of Mass of the Virgin Mary turns out to have in excess of 60 variant orders. They lie latent within the two volumes. The edition serves as a more permanent element of a project that has sought to bring a new level of understanding of late medieval cathedrals and churches – a remarkably prolific and important part of our medieval cultural heritage.

### Further reading

The methods, processes and outcomes of 'The Experience of Worship' project can be explored further in *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted*, edited by Sally Harper, P.S. Barnwell and Magnus Williamson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016; reissued in paperback, 2019). A comprehensive website, including audio-visual recordings of the enactments and performance texts, can be found at [experienceofworship.org.uk](http://experienceofworship.org.uk)

*Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary According to the Use of Salisbury* has been published by the British Academy in 2019 (*Early English Church Music*, Volumes 59–60). More information can be found via [thebritishacademy.ac.uk/early-english-church-music](http://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/early-english-church-music)

Salisbury Cathedral cloisters: procession before Mass as on a great festival, October 2011. Photo: Russell Sach.



# Recent publications from the British Academy

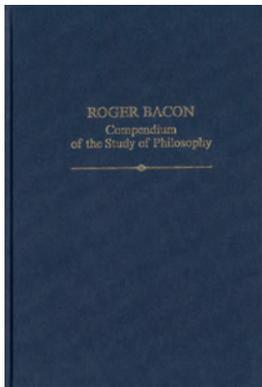
## Roger Bacon: Compendium of the Study of Philosophy

Edited and translated by Thomas S. Maloney

ISBN 978-0-19-726634-2

Professor John Marenbon FBA, director of the *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* series, writes: 'Although education involved learning Latin, medieval people were usually blind to linguistic diversity. For instance, 13th-century thinkers devised a universal grammar without looking beyond Latin. But not Roger Bacon.

A cantankerous, eccentric master at Paris turned Franciscan, whose long life almost spanned the 13th century, Bacon claimed his contemporaries had cut themselves off from the sources of wisdom by their ignorance of Greek and Hebrew, and that the translations they relied on were inaccurate. In his (misleadingly named) *Compendium of the Study of Philosophy*, newly edited and translated in the *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* series, Bacon also stressed the importance of acknowledging linguistic difference, insisting that every educated person should know enough of other languages to recognise and understand their vocabulary within the Latin texts they studied.'

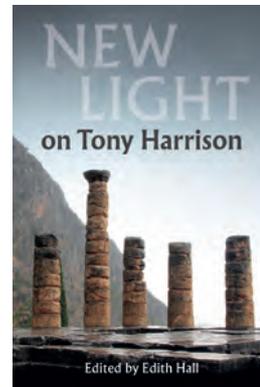


## New Light on Tony Harrison

Edited by Edith Hall

ISBN 978-0-19-726651-9

This is a landmark exploration of the lifetime achievement and influence of one of Britain's most important poets. This comprehensive study helps students at all levels and general readers to understand a body of poetry that has changed culture, and it is enriched by personal insights from major poets and playwrights into how they have been influenced by Harrison's work.



**Discover more:**

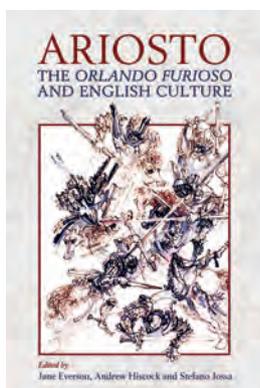
All these British Academy publications are available from Oxford University Press.

More information on the Academy's publications can be found via [thebritishacademy.ac.uk/british-academy-publications](http://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/british-academy-publications)

## Ariosto, the Orlando Furioso and English Culture

**Edited by Jane Everson,  
Andrew Hiscock and Stefano Jossa**  
ISBN 978-0-19-726650-2

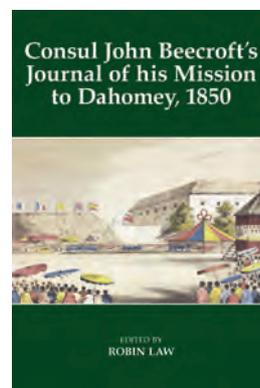
The *Orlando Furioso* remains a masterpiece of Italian literature, and stands as a key contribution to European Renaissance culture as a whole. Its influence across the continent was immediate and pervasive, and the epic poem continued to wield enormous power over the imaginations of writers, poets, artists and critics for generations in England.



## Consul John Beecroft's Journal of his Mission to Dahomey, 1850

**Edited by Robin Law**  
ISBN 978-0-19-726653-3

John Beecroft was appointed Consul in West Africa in 1849, to promote the British government's campaign to suppress the transatlantic slave trade. His first assignment in this role was a mission to the kingdom of Dahomey (in what is today the Republic of Bénin), to attempt to persuade its ruler, King Gezo, to accept a treaty banning the export of slaves from his dominions. Although this mission was a failure, Beecroft's hitherto unpublished journal is an important source for the history of Dahomey, not only for its documentation of Gezo's response to British pressure for abolition, but for its detailed description of the ceremonies of the 'Annual Customs', the principal festival of the Dahomian monarchy.



# From the Archive

**The 1949 'Palace  
Revolution' at the  
British Academy**

**A**t the meeting of the British Academy's Council on Wednesday 6 February 1949, an early item of business was the 'Secretaryship'. The minutes record:

The President reported that at an informal meeting of some of the members of the Council who had sent in suggestions on the subject it was decided to recommend that Dr. Mortimer Wheeler be invited to accept the appointment.

After discussion this recommendation was unanimously approved. ...

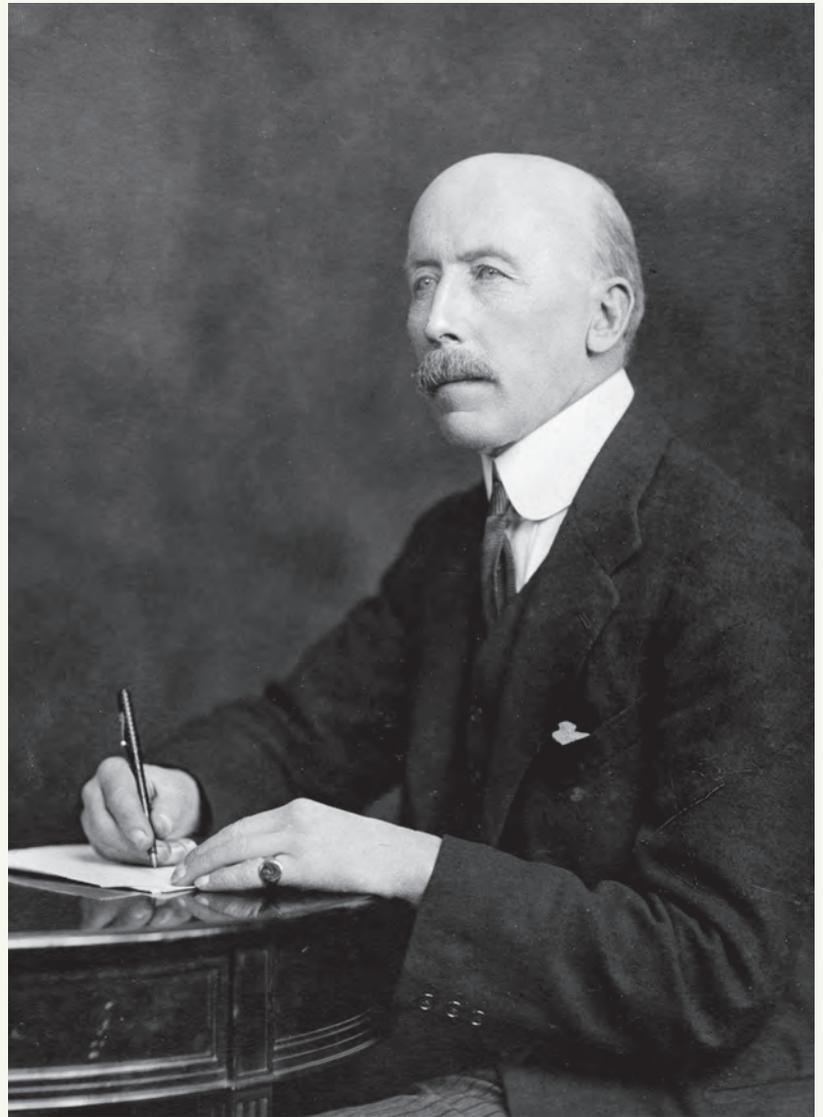
It was further suggested that Sir Frederic Kenyon should continue as Joint-Secretary for a time to carry on the more formal business of the office and to assist Dr. Wheeler in taking over the more responsible duties.

The man identified as the appropriate successor to take over the running of the British Academy, Mortimer Wheeler FBA, later wrote:

Exactly what happened I cannot record at first hand; I was not at that time a member of the Council and had indeed been an absentee-Fellow overseas since my election. But reliable report had it that at a meeting of the Council early in 1949 there had been a Palace Revolution. Sir Charles [Webster], unable to contain his impatience, had demanded uninhibitedly a change in the Academy's administration, and Kenyon with characteristic coolness and courtesy had taken the point. He expressed his intention to resign the Secretaryship forthwith and to look round for a successor.

Wheeler wrote those words in 1970, in *The British Academy, 1949–1968* – his own rather self-congratulatory memoir of his time as Secretary. His characterisation of what happened as being a 'Palace Revolution' is a little unfair to his predecessor, Kenyon, in that the minutes of the previous Council meeting in October 1948 clearly record that 'The Secretary asked permission to retire from the Secretaryship, or at any rate from the more responsible part of its duties'. So there was no actual need for a *coup d'état* to replace the head of the administration.

But the British Academy certainly needed shaking up. Sir Frederic Kenyon, 86 years old at the time of the February 1949 Council meeting, had been Secretary of the British Academy since 1930 – when he had taken on the role as he was about

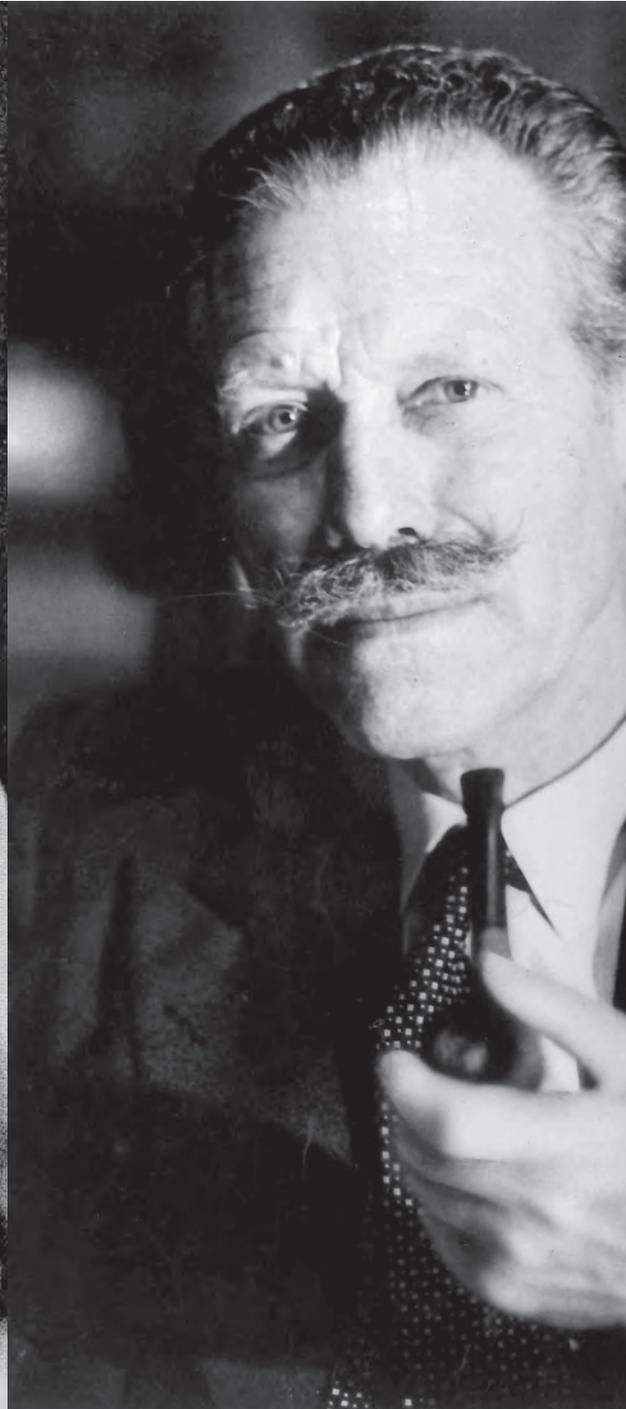


Frederic Kenyon FBA, Secretary of the British Academy 1930–1949.

to retire as Director of the British Museum. It can be conceded that fate had been unkind to Kenyon: the Academy's modest annual grant from government had been cut during the economic crises of the 1930s and then again during the Second World War. But in truth Kenyon lacked the networking skill and showmanship of the first Secretary, Sir Israel Gollancz, who had conjured resources for the Academy in its earliest years. And the perception had grown that the institution lacked vitality. Indeed, in his July 1948 Presidential Address, Sir Idris Bell acknowledged the existence of a 'criticism brought against the Academy, both from within and from without our ranks, ... that our publications in the field of scholarship are wholly insufficient, indeed, unworthy of a body like ours; it has even been unkindly

suggested that the main official function of Fellows is to write obituary notices of one another.' Or as Wheeler later put it bluntly: 'In effect, the Academy was at a standstill'.

But a saviour was at hand. To quote Wheeler again, 'In the ranks of the Council there was one member who saw more clearly than his colleagues: an honest, sociable, fearless, scholarly, internationally-minded son of Lancashire, the historian Charles Webster. That name should be written large in the annals of the Academy.' Sir Charles Webster had himself only been appointed to join the British Academy's Council at the October 1948 meeting, but he clearly threw himself into the pressing issue of the Secretaryship. According to his obituarist (Sir George Clark FBA, who was a witness to the events),



Charles K. Webster FBA, President of the British Academy 1950-1954, and Mortimer Wheeler FBA, Secretary of the British Academy 1949-1968, shared an interest in reforming the British Academy – and in pipe smoking.



for this 'one piece of business which was necessarily done behind closed doors ... Sir Charles Webster was the driving force. His cheerful energy, his considerateness and his single-minded attention to the interests of the Academy earned their reward.'

The reward was Mortimer Wheeler. After service in the Eighth Army commanding an anti-aircraft brigade, followed by senior archaeological responsibilities in India, Wheeler had returned to London in 1948. The Council meeting on 1 June 1949 began with a discussion of the initial length of Wheeler's term of office and of his salary, and confirmation that Sir Frederic Kenyon would continue as Joint-Secretary 'for a time'. Then Wheeler joined the meeting. He later wrote, 'looking round the table, [I] had no difficulty in seeing what was wrong.' The minutes reveal that Wheeler had come armed with a list of 'three matters which he had in mind', and which reveal his priorities for change. He wanted 'an Advisory Committee of Fellows in or near London to assist him', which was clearly intended to provide more incisive decision-making than Council itself provided; a membership of five was agreed – including Webster. Wheeler wanted to increase the staffing of the Academy – which at that time consisted of just one person, a Miss Doris Pearson. And he wanted 'an urgent application to the Treasury for an increased grant'.

The Advisory Committee met on 23 June 1949, and it drafted an agenda for change. It recommended fresh approaches to the Academy's traditional lecture programme and the publication of papers in the annual *Proceedings of the British Academy*. It raised Miss Pearson's salary, and lined up the recruitment of a Miss Molly Myers to assist her (Wheeler 'stole' her from an Egyptologist in Oxford). The Committee bemoaned 'the inadequacy of the present rooms of the Academy' in Burlington Gardens, and agreed to explore the possibility of a better home within Burlington House. But the item that was 'discussed at length' was 'the present financial position of the Academy': how could the Academy position itself better to get more money from the Treasury, either as a channel for funds to other learned societies, or for the support of 'specific pieces of work'.

When the full Council met again for a 'special meeting' on 13 July, it adopted the recommendations of the Advisory Com-

mittee almost verbatim. And the minutes reveal that the designation of Sir Frederic Kenyon as still being Joint-Secretary had already been abandoned – though he retained for now his position as Treasurer.

The changing of the guard was complete when Council put forward Webster to be the new President of the British Academy in the summer of 1950. And this time it was Mortimer Wheeler who had done the plotting. 'I was still a new boy at the Academy, and conferred privately with my oldest friend, Sir Alfred Clapham, who was a member of the Council. I put to him the name of Sir Charles Webster, leader of what I have called the Palace Revolution, on the double or alternative plea that Webster was plainly a man of courage and initiative, and/or that he would be something of a nuisance otherwise than in the presidential chair; to which he was duly and very properly elected.' Wheeler and Webster 'became the closest of friends', and together they 'shared revolutionary ideas' and 'hatched dreadful plots'.

Mortimer Wheeler's time as Secretary of the British Academy, from 1949 to 1968, did prove to be transformative. The Academy's events and publications activities blossomed. Its ability to fund research, particularly in the humanities, expanded dramatically. And it was eventually able to move to better accommodation in Burlington House.

According to our current President, Sir David Cannadine, 'The "Palace Revolution" of early 1949 is truly a milestone in the history of the British Academy, which owes Mortimer Wheeler a great deal. The issues he faced are recurring ones, and we are determined to meet them with the same energy and ambition in our time as he did in his own day.'

Text by James Rivington

# CURIOS?

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## The British Academy Summer Showcase 2019

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**Friday 21 June, 10:00–16:00**  
**Saturday 22 June, 11:00–17:00**

Join us this June as we throw open our doors for our annual two-day Summer Showcase, a free festival of ideas for curious minds. Featuring 15 interactive exhibits, alongside pop-up talks, workshops and performances, our Summer Showcase brings the best new humanities and social sciences research to life. Drop in to meet the brightest minds in archaeology, art history, politics and more, and explore eclectic exhibits designed to educate and inspire – from why our ancestors started to invent stone tools, to how 3D printing is changing lives.

*Free, drop-in (booking required for school groups and groups over 8 people)*

**Late**  
**Friday 21 June, 18:30–21:00**

Come along to a special late-night view of the Summer Showcase, a free festival of ideas for curious minds. Explore the exhibits, enjoy talks and performances, or simply relax with a drink at the bar.

*Free, drop-in*

*All activities are on a first come, first served basis*

**Discover more**  
[thebritishacademy.ac.uk/  
summershowcase2019](http://thebritishacademy.ac.uk/summershowcase2019)

Photo taken by John Oates (see article on pages 44-53)

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