

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE (CAMBRIDGE) HISTORICAL JOURNAL

The *Cambridge Historical Journal* was established in 1923 as the flagship academic journal of the Cambridge History Faculty. Serving on its earliest editorial committee under Harold Temperley were the Regius Professor of Modern History and the Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History of the day. They were, respectively, the classicist and historian of medieval Rome, John Bagnell Bury (1861-1927), and the political historian and renowned biographer of William Pitt the Younger, John Holland Rose (1855-1942). These two professorial posts continue to exist unchanged in name today, a hundred years later. But the *Cambridge Historical Journal* underwent a quiet name-change in 1958, dropping *Cambridge* from its title to embrace an agenda of ambitious—perhaps hubristic—generality. In renaming itself simply as *The Historical Journal*, it signalled a new intention to open itself up beyond Cambridge, and to embrace every aspect of history and every type of historian. Yet from 1958 until 2008, fully 76% of the *Historical Journal's* articles were in British history, and most of the remaining 24% were in French and German history.¹ In a book review published in 1956, the former Editor, Herbert Butterfield (ed. 1936, 1938-1952), wrote revealingly of his position on this matter:

From the time when the project of a 'general history' was being developed in the academic world two hundred years ago, the great desire was to make it truly universal... The field of survey came to be constricted, first, because the general historian ceased to have the delusion that he could be an 'orientalist' too. Secondly, it was too difficult to bring world-history to an organic whole—to achieve something more than the mere addition of the separate histories of India, China, etc. Thirdly, even those who tried to take the whole globe into their survey came to the conclusion that from the fifteenth century the European states were in the lead, and were, so to speak, the 'carriers' of universal history.

It is only a thin knowledge that we can have of a history embracing all the continents. We can have a thicker layer for our own, and, in fact, for the majority of us, there is bound to be a greater depth again when we come to western Europe. Until we reach the scale of the nation, our knowledge will naturally become more intensified as it comes nearer home.²

On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of its publication, we have collated below a full run of the *Cambridge Historical Journal* and its successor, *The Historical Journal*, and invite you to consider its path from left to right, through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. How far has it come in its bid to open up to diverse historical topics, authors, and editors? It's a fascinating exercise to browse through its collected pages over the last century, noting the shifts in historiography, contributors, and topics, and the way in which it produced scholarship continuously throughout the most placid and the most turbulent times—often, seemingly, in total isolation from them. On the eve of the Japanese invasion of China and the German invasion of Poland, topics covered in the journal included erudite meditations on English constitutional history, Florentine Jews in the fifteenth century, and vassalage in the age of Charlemagne. In the year of Stalingrad, the tumultuous events of Britain's contemporary present found expression in a single article on Germany's *Drang Nach Osten*, 'the idea of expansion towards the East'; it was accompanied by two other articles on evangelicalism and English medieval monasticism. Little can be found in the research articles published throughout the 1950s and 60s that registers more than a glimpse of the momentous transformations taking place in Britain's own empire in those decades—though some of the exchanges in the reviews, notes and communications do offer more contemporary reflections. Histories of the world beyond Europe have been, for most of the hundred years of the HJ, filtered through the prerogatives of political and diplomatic relations with Britain and the western world.

Things are changing. If slowly. We invite you to peruse the shelves from right to left, and judge for yourselves. As the first woman of colour to edit this journal in its hundred year history, I note that the editorial board of the HJ contained no women until 2001, that the first non-white editor took post only in 2016, and that 83% of its articles between 1958 to 2008 were authored by men.³ Yet no matter one's race, gender or creed, to reflect so tangibly on a hundred years of this journal is also to

meditate soberly on the scale of human accomplishment and mortality in the onward march of history—an exercise in which we can surely all find common ground. Contained in this compact collection of bound paper you see before you, filling just over one medium bookcase, are the multiplicity of academic lives of the last hundred years: the intellectual causes, scholarly obsessions and research energies to which the authors were devoted; the mantle of editorship passing from one Editor to the next, and the event horizon of their passing into history themselves; the multitudes of undergraduates and graduates who have moved through the History Faculty in this time, hovering like unwritten ghosts in the shadows of each printed page; all the events of history through which they toiled, thought and wrote, conversed and squabbled, lived and died. To survey this bookshelf is to survey the HJ *as* history. In scanning the accumulation of volumes to the left, we may take stock of where it has been; in contemplating the volumes that have yet to be added to the empty shelves to the right, where it might yet go in the future.

RACHEL LEOW

30 June 2023

on behalf of current Editors of the *Historical Journal*:⁴

Rachel Leow

John Gallagher

Bronwen Everill (reviews)

Editors of the (Cambridge) Historical Journal, 1923-2023

compiled with thanks to Bruce Bruschi and Mark Goldie

1923 - 1937	Harold Temperley	2004 - 2006	Clare Jackson (reviews)
1938 - 1852	Herbert Butterfield (+ 1936)	2007 - 2011	Clare Jackson
1953 - 1960	Patrick Bury	2007 - 2009	William O'Reilly (reviews)
1960 - 1970	Harry Hinsley (+ 1976)	2009 - 2012	Julian Hoppit
1971 - 1975	Derek Beales	2009 - 2016	Michael Ledger-Lomas (reviews)
1976 - 1986	Vic Gatrell	2013 - 2017	Phil Withington
1977 - 1985	Christopher Andrew	2012 - 2015	Andrew Preston
1986 - 1990	Tim Blanning	2016 - 2019	Sujit Sivasundaram
1987 - 1996	John Morrill	2016 - 2021	Andrew Arsan (reviews)
1991 - 2000	Jonathan Steinberg	2018 - 2022	Emma Griffin
1997 - 2001	Mark Goldie	2020 - 2021	Sarah Pearsall
2001 - 2003	Naomi Tadmor (reviews)	2021 -	Rachel Leow
2001 - 2008	Robert Tombs	2022 -	Bronwen Everill (reviews)
2002 - 2006	Peter Mandler	2023 -	John Gallagher

1. Mark Goldie, "Fifty years of the Historical Journal", *Historical Journal*, vol. 51, no. 4 (Dec. 2008), pp. 821-855.

2. Herbert Butterfield, review of *History in a Changing World* by Geoffrey Barraclough, *Cambridge Historical Journal* vol. 12, no. 2 (1956), pp. 189-191.

3. Goldie, "Fifty years", p. 822.

4. Current Editorial Board: Peter Mandler (Chair), Andrew Arsan, Gareth Austin, Annabel Brett, Paul Cavill, Clare Jackson, Pedro Ramos Pinto, Andrew Preston, Ulinka Rublack, Sujit Sivasundaram, Mark Smith, Emma Spary.