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# Noticeboard

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## Conference

THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, at the  
Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 22–3 September 1995  
Theme: BRITAIN IN EUROPE SINCE 1789

Friday 22 September:

*Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe:*

- J. Black, 'Britain as a European State? 1789–1815'  
M. Duffy, 'Britain as a European Ally, 1789–1815'

*The Nineteenth Century British Economy in Europe*

- P. O'Brien, 'The British Industrial Revolution and the Industrialisation of Europe, 1763–1914'  
J. Davis, 'The British Sonderweg: the Peculiarities of British Free Trade, 1845–80'

*Ideological Linkages in the Mid-nineteenth Century*

- J. Breuilley, 'Variations in Liberalism: Britain and Europe in the Mid-nineteenth Century'  
C. Eisenberg, 'Variations in Socialism: Britain and Europe in the Mid-nineteenth Century'

*Reluctant Britain and Europe*

- P. Salmon, 'Reluctant Engagement: Britain and Continental Europe, 1890–1939'  
E. Goldstein, 'The Foreign Office and Europe in the First Half of the Twentieth Century'

Saturday 23 September:

*Britain Rejecting Europe*

- E. Dell, 'Why Britain Rejected the Schuman Plan'  
C. Wurm, 'Britain and Europe 1945–57: the View From the Continent'

*Britain's First Application to Join the EEC*

- A. Deighton, 'Above the Glass Ceiling: Politics, Personalities and the First British Application to the EEC, 1961–3'  
A. Milward, 'Britain, Europe and the Wider World, 1960–3'

*Britain in Europe*

- C. Jackson, MEP, 'Styles and Strategies of British MEPs'  
Sir M. Palliser, HM Ambassador to the European Communities 1973–5, 'The Role of Whitehall'  
Ministerial speaker to be announced

For booking forms write to the Executive Secretary, Royal Historical Society, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, UK. Forms should, if possible, be returned by 11 August.

THE GREAT WAR AND CHANGE: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE,  
at the University of Trieste, Italy,  
28 September–1 October 1995

The conference is organised by the Comitato di Studi Storici of the University of Trieste, the universities of Modena and Siena and the Historial de la Grande Guerre, Péronne (Somme). Further information on this international conference can be obtained from Prof Simoneta Ortaggi, Dipartimento di Storia, Università di Trieste, via Economo 4, 34123 Trieste.

### **New Association**

A European Business History Association (EBHA) was established during a Conference on Business History held at Rotterdam on 24–5 October 1994. The new Association aims to organise a biannual conference and other seminars, to publish a newsletter, to enhance inter-European research contacts and to encourage the exchange of business history students between European countries. The founding committee includes business historians from Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Further details about the Association can be obtained from Dr Keetie E. Sluyterman, Kruisbergseweg 42, 7009 BP Doetinchem, Netherlands. There is a new e-mail noticeboard associated with EBHA. It can be accessed by sending an e-mail message to [mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk](mailto:mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk) and simply using the following wording: 'join euro-business-history (your name)' followed by 'stop' on a new line.

The launch of the EBHA comes at a time when there is accelerating interest in business history. In the past, business history had a poor reputation among other historians because it seemed largely concerned with commissioned histories of companies, many of which did not meet scholarly standards of objectivity. Over recent decades, and heavily influenced by the work of Harvard Business School's Alfred D. Chandler, the subject's intellectual horizons have widened. It has become concerned with understanding the historical evolution and role of business as a whole – rather than individual firms – and it has sought to place the history of business in its wider historical context. Individual company histories continue to be written, but many of them are now first-class works of historical scholarship. A growing number of younger researchers attracted to the subject has helped to make it one of history's specialist growth areas.

Business historians have often found that their work has attracted most interest from economists and business strategists. Developments in economics, notably the rise of the new institutional economics, have provided economists with a more realistic view of how entrepreneurs and firms function than in the past, when neo-classical orthodoxy had little interest in such matters. There has been a convergence of research interests between these economists and business historians researching, for example, the history of multinational enterprises. Mainstream historians, on the other hand, often remain unaware of the new trends in business history research. The new Association will hope to reach out to other historians as well as to economists, and establish stronger collaborative contacts.

As a subject, business history has been heavily influenced by American scholars such as Chandler. This influence has been benign, not least because Americans took the lead in urging the need for generalisation and the development of concepts, but in some ways it has led to biases in the intellectual development of the subject. US scholars from David Landes in the 1940s to Chandler in the 1990s have criticised as inefficient the long-term European preference of family firms rather than US-style corporations run by professional managers. Yet such criticism runs counter to the considerable evidence in twentieth-century Europe

that family firms could be equally if not more successful than managerial firms. Prominent examples extend from France's Michelin – now the world's largest tyre company – to the numerous North Italian textile producers. The foundation of the EBHA is partly a recognition of the need to set a distinctly European agenda to future research.

The establishment of EBHA comes at a time when a proliferating number of national business history associations are being formed. The first European society was the *Gesellschaft für Unternehmensgeschichte*, which was founded in Germany in 1976. This publishes the journal *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte* as well as the English-language *German Yearbook of Business History*. In Italy, the *Associazione di Studi di Storia dell'Impresa* (ASSI) was founded in 1983. It holds regular international conferences, and has become a focal point for a particularly vigorous research community in Italy. Britain's Association of Business Historians (ABH) was formed in 1990. Within three years the ABH attracted a membership of almost 200, and established close links with Britain's two business history journals, *Business History* and *Accounting, Business and Financial History*. Finally, in 1994, Dutch business historians established the *Stichting Bedrijfsgechiedenis* to promote research in business history. In France, while no formal business history society exists, researchers coalesced in the foundation of the journal *Entreprises et Histoire* in 1992.

### New Guide to French Archives

*La seconde guerre mondiale: Guide des sources conservées en France 1939–1945* by Brigitte Blanc, Henry Rouso and Chantel de Tourtier Bonazzi has recently been published by the Archives Nationales in Paris. 'Cinquante ans après la fin du second conflit mondial, la quasi-totalité des sources d'archives connues des années 1939–1945 sont enfin recensées dans ce guide, qui met à la disposition des chercheurs une documentation d'ensemble cohérente et exhaustive. L'enquête systématique réalisée depuis 1991 par l'ensemble des archivistes français porte non seulement sur les archives publiques, nationales, départementales, communales, mais aussi sur de nombreux organismes et institutions de caractère public ou privé qui ont joué un rôle pendant la guerre ou en ont conservé la mémoire. Plus de trois cents archivistes ont contribué à la réalisation de l'ouvrage, dont la coordination scientifique a été assurée par la section contemporaine des Archives nationales avec la participation de l'Institut d'histoire du temps présent (CNRS)' (Paris: Archives Nationales, 1994), 1218 pp., 350 F.

The publication of this guide is a major event which will certainly facilitate research in France. It appears comprehensive, and is clearly and logically set out. All university libraries will require a copy, as well as many individual historians, particularly those with responsibility for graduate students.

Historians of the period will also wish to know that a previous publication of the Archives, *Les Archives nationales. Etat général des fonds, Tome V: 1940–1958. Fonds conservés à Paris* (Paris 1988), 468 pp., 220 F, will provide 'une description détaillée de certaines séries des Archives nationales présentées dans le guide'.

Copies of either or both may be ordered from La documentation Française, 124 rue Henri Barbusse, 93308 Aubervilliers cedex, France. Add 15 F for postage.

### Cultural Yearbook

In the last issue of the journal (March 1995) there was a review of *The Low Countries: Art and Society in Flanders and the Netherlands*, a yearbook for 1993–4. Volume 2 for 1994–5 has now been published, with the aim of presenting to the English-speaking world the culture and society of the Dutch-speaking area of the Low Countries. It contains a number of substantial articles on literature, art and society, as well as a cultural chronicle, with brief contributions on events, happenings and books of interest to the English-speaking world. A copy can be ordered from *Stichting Ons Erfdeel*, Murissonstraat 260, 8931 Rekkem, Belgium.