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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

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Much like its predecessor, 2025 has brought its share of opportunities and challenges, with the overall picture remaining very positive. Following the appointment of a second co-editor in January, Paul Readman, the editorial team is again running at full steam. As a former member of the UK editorial board, Paul already knew the journal very well. His appointment ensures continuity and adds editorial experience, as the *Transactions* continues its journey as a leading Open Access journal showcasing some of the best research the historical profession has to offer.

In terms of content, there is a great deal of good news to report. Readers of the print edition will instantly note that this year's volume has again increased in size. Our ambition for *Transactions* to cover all historical periods and geographical areas from late antiquity to the present is firmly on course to being realized. Medieval, early modern, modern and contemporary history are all well represented in this volume, with a wide range of methodological approaches also evident from the published articles. But the common denominator here is the interest and significance of the research on show, which reflects the growing number of high-quality article submissions received by the journal. While we will continue to publish articles based on lectures given at Royal Historical Society meetings – subject, of course, to peer review – a clear majority of this year's research articles emerged from submissions received from the Society's membership and the wider historical profession. Readership, meanwhile, is substantially up. Online engagement with the journal grew by fifty percent last year, consolidating a threefold increase since the start of the Seventh Series in 2022.

The Common Room section continues to thrive, providing a unique space for reflection and discussion of the many issues confronting our discipline, including the ways it can be taught, how it can be made accessible, and how it can best serve to commemorate the past. We have been particularly pleased to offer a space to pay tribute to the scholarship of the late Jinty Nelson, the Society's first female president. An occasional series of early career reflections on 'archive encounters' has also provided considerable food for thought, while roundtable debates reflect on the state of the field in a variety of subdisciplines. Please do continue to send us ideas for Common Room submissions.

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This year's volume also sees the publication of the journal's first Special Section. Conceived by our predecessors as mini-special issues, each of these sections contain a series of typically shorter contributions on a coherent theme. We are grateful to Paulina Kewes and Paul Seaward for the good cheer and extreme competence with which they shepherded an exciting collection of articles on parliamentary cultures and indigenous traditions through the production process. The format does pose logistical challenges for a journal that publishes only once a year, however. With several Sections on a host of topics still in the pipeline, we are not currently commissioning new ones.

As editors, we have made several changes that are worth highlighting. Most visibly, we have updated and simplified the author guidelines for submission, bringing a document still preoccupied with rooting out accents on foreign loanwords (élites, rôle) into the internet age. There have been changes under the hood as well. We are increasingly relying on the Society's Members' Directory to identify expert reviewers, with the aim of of utilizing the Society's collective knowledge base and providing opportunities for early career and independent scholars whose expertise is so often overlooked. Less happily, on the advice of the editorial and advisory boards, we have also adopted similarity detection software as part of our review process.

Finally, this year's principal challenge relates again to the balancing act of continuity and change. Originally appointed in 2022, most members of the editorial and advisory boards are now reaching the end of their terms. We would like to thank them for the wisdom and support they have provided over the past few years. Their departure, however, has also provided an opportunity to revisit the journal's support structures. With the Society's blessing, we have taken the decision to merge the UK editorial and international advisory boards. Given the increasingly international composition of the RHS fellowship and membership, the continued existence of two boards – one for the UK, one for the rest of the world – seemed to impose a false distinction. While the precise process of appointment of new members is still to be finalized at the time of writing, the aim will be to create a single editorial board with a diverse range of backgrounds and expertise. We warmly encourage fellows of the Society to consider applying when the call is announced.

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