President’s Report

AGM 2016

This is my third, and final, report as BASEES President as my term of office comes to an end at the association’s annual general meeting at the start of April. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to work alongside the enthusiastic and committed group of colleagues who have been members of the BASEES committee over the past three years and have contributed to the success of the association’s activities.

Two members of the committee will be standing down during the coming year and their work has been of major importance in putting the association’s affairs on a sound footing. Melanie Ilic has worked wonders with the BASEES membership system, while Jon Oldfield has been a careful steward of the association’s finances, reminding us that BASEES needs to have reliable sources of income to enable us to continue to support the study of our subjects.

The annual conference in Cambridge forms the centrepiece of the association’s work and, once again, some 400 delegates will gather this Easter to debate topics that range right across the association’s fields of interest. Matthias Neumann and his team have again worked hard to put together a very varied programme for the conference weekend, including a theatre performance by Molodyi Teatr, a London-based ensemble who will be performing Bloody East Europeans, a piece of theatre that reflects on the experience of immigration and social equality. The conference allows us to see the present through a variety of prisms and we shall welcome the Counsellor for press, culture and information from the Russian Federation’s London embassy to discuss the importance of maintaining cultural relations at times of wider international tension. An important part in the conference’s success is played by the work of Charlie and Suzy Howes, the conference administrators. Their skill and good humour help to set the tone for the gathering and we very much appreciate their efficiency and contribution to our work.

The association supports the publication of high-quality research through a number of initiatives. The long-standing BASEES-Routledge monograph series goes from strength to strength and is now well into its second century of books. The immense range of work being carried out in our area is well reflected in the topics that the series has covered in the past year, with central themes such as disability, migration, consumer culture and conservative nationalism all forming the subjects of recent monographs. Europe-Asia Studies continues to be one of the leading journals in our area, attracting large numbers of high-quality submissions and publishing special issues on such subjects as family health and state and civil society. Richard Sakwa, Peter Sowden and Terry Cox are each owed a debt of gratitude by the association for their careful work in fostering significant research in our area.

The financial health of the association means that BASEES continues to be able to support a wide variety of activities by postgraduate research students. Research visits to Russia and eastern Europe, fieldwork and the presentation of papers at major international conferences have all been supported by grants made by the association’s research and development committee. New work in our area is dependent on graduate students being able to spend substantial periods of time working in Russia and eastern Europe and the BASEES committee is strongly supportive of the association’s grants schemes. >>
BASEES acts as the UK national representative body for scholars working on all aspects of Russia and eastern Europe. The association has continued to play a full part in national organisations, making our views known to research councils, government and funding bodies. The newly-renamed Arts and Humanities Alliance brings together all the learned societies across the humanities and has been very active in responding to UK government policy initiatives. BASEES has had discussions with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the UK’s national expertise capacity in our field and we have also had substantial dialogue with the embassy of the Russian Federation in London about ways in which cultural relations between this country and Russia can be sustained and enhanced. Discussions have emphasised the importance of developing Russian and east European studies in the UK and we have been able to identify some of the ways in which governments can help foster study and research. The high profile of Russian cultural events in the UK gives some hope that the value of the academic study of Russia and eastern Europe is widely recognised. More disturbingly, however, the association has made representation to the University of Nottingham about its recent proposals to reduce the scope of its teaching and research in our area.

Professor Judith Pallott will be nominated to succeed me as the association’s President at the annual general meeting in Cambridge in April. I am deeply grateful to all my colleagues for their support during my tenure of the office and I sure that Judy will enjoy the same good-humoured enthusiasm for the work of BASEES from everyone connected with the association.

Peter Waldron
March 2016

UTRES thesis database approaches 5,000 entries

The UTRES online database listing British and Irish university theses in Russian and East European studies has had a further 179 entries added in its latest annual update. Reported from 59 different institutions, the additions bring the total number of theses recorded on UTRES up to 4,937.

The update brings to light a wide variety of topics that have inspired doctoral research, from gambling in Russia to the Kosovo Turks, the 1715 Confederation of Vilnius, and the problems of translating Beatrix Potter into Romanian. A dozen or so theses deal with the situation of Central and East European migrants now living in the UK and Irish Republic.

Supported by the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA), UTRES is free to access at http://utrees.mhra.org. The database allows searches by keyword, subject, area, and a range of other terms. We are always happy to make additions and corrections. Please send them to the Editor at gpmwalker@btinternet.com.

Gregory Walker
Editor, UTRES

EXHIBITION: Russia and the Arts: The Age of Tolstoy and Tchaikovsky

National Portrait Gallery, London
17 March-26 June 2016

This unique selection of masterpieces from the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow focuses on the great writers, artists, composers, actors and patrons who helped to develop such a vibrant cultural scene in Russia between 1867 and 1914. A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue by curator Rosalind P. Blakesley is available to pre-order from npg.org.uk/shop. There will also be an associated conference on Friday 10 June.

For further information please contact Dr Nicola Kozicharow at nlek2@cam.ac.uk.

Ivan Morozov by Valentin Serov, 1910
Professional News

Dr Katya Vladimirov (Kennesaw University, USA) has received a CETL grant for her research project entitled “Youth, Violence, and the Causes of Modern Terrorism”, which is a comparative case study of Russian revolutionary youth organizations engaged in terrorist activities in the 1900s and Ukrainian youth proto-nationalist movements in the 2000s. She has also recently translated the memoirs of the Socialist Revolutionary Grigory Gershuni as From My Recent Past: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Terrorist (Lexington Books, 2015). ISBN: 9781498522175.


Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens (Washington D.C.) is pleased to announce the acquisition of the personal library of Professor Anthony Cross, historian and scholar of 18th century Russian studies and professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Cambridge from 1985 to 2004. The collection, built over the course of 60 years, includes 2330 books in Russian, English, French and German, on literature, art, architecture, drama, history, freemasonry, history of science, geography, bibliography, and St. Petersburg. It includes hundreds of offprints and several linear feet of Cross’ personal files on individual authors and subjects. Please see http://hillwoodmuseum.org for more information.

BOOKS RECEIVED


Reviews will appear in the next issues of the Newsletter.

DOUBLE FEATURE: Meet the Postgrads

SIOBHAN HEARNE
University of Nottingham (and BASEES Postgraduate Rep)

Q: What was your academic background before beginning your PhD?
I did my undergraduate at Swansea University, where I received a joint honours degree in History and English Literature and History. The friendly feel of the History Dept at Swansea, and the close links between undergraduates and postgraduates, made me decide to do a PhD. For my first MA, I returned to my hometown and studied Twentieth-Century History at the University of Liverpool. Before starting my PhD, I did another MA in Russian and East European Studies at the University of Nottingham.

Q: What is your PhD topic?
My PhD (at the University of Nottingham) is a study of the regulation of female prostitution in urban Russia between 1900 and 1917. My project explores the ways in which prostitutes, their clients and the wider urban community experienced, and resisted, the legislation and policing characteristic of regulation. I am supervised by Dr Sarah Badcock and Dr Nick Baron.

Q: How are you organizing fieldwork for your research?
I am in the second year of my PhD, and almost finished my archival fieldwork. I was lucky enough to receive a generous overseas fieldwork grant from the ESRC, which allowed me to work in various archives in Moscow, St Petersburg, Arkhangelsk and Tartu over seven months. I recently took on the role of postgraduate representative for BASEES, and I am looking forward to presenting some of my findings at the annual conference in April, as well as sharing some of my fieldwork experiences at the Women’s Forum roundtable.

Q: What’s next?
During the remainder of my PhD, I plan to visit several archives in Latvia in the cities of Riga and Liepaja. When I finish, I hope to apply for postdoctoral projects.

PETER KORMYLO
University of Glasgow

Q: What was your academic background before beginning your PhD?
My undergraduate degrees were completed with Edinburgh University and the Open University many years ago. I am now a retired civil servant complete with bus pass and Senior Rail Card.

Q: Tell us about your research
My PhD is with Glasgow University and is entitled “The Migration, Settlement and Assimilation of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Scotland – a diachronic study.” Having lived in contact with Scotland’s Ukrainians for the last 65 years I have always wanted to take time to contribute academically to charting the progress of my small community. My supervisors are Dr. Valentina Bold and Doctor Moya Flynn. I am in my second year of studies and, with ethics committee approval, have begun conducting interviews. My timeline starts with the Tsarist lawyer Semen Desnysky, a pupil of Adam Smith here in Glasgow. I am keen to track “Little Russian” medics who studied in Scotland during the Enlightenment.

Q: What are your plans for the future?
My community in Scotland deserves to be left a legacy of robust research and valued archival material. If I complete this degree I hope to publish a book entitled Scotland’s Ukrainians. If my efforts leave only a few robust journal articles, I will have done something useful. To stimulate interest in this area, I launched a blog tryzubscotland.com, which has attracted a goodly number of hits.

There is one particular chapter of my research that is challenging and I am hopeful for help from BASEES members.

I am attempting to muster biographies of early migrant Ukrainians who may also have been known as Jews, ‘Little Russians’, ‘Poles’, and ‘Austrians’ and who have lived or worked in Scotland over the last 250 years. If you can help, please contact me at p.kormylo.1@research.gla.ac.uk.

I am brand new to BASEES and looking forward to meeting members at the April Conference in Cambridge.
New Books in the BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies

Disability in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: History, policy and everyday life
Edited by Michael Rasell and Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova
There are over thirty million disabled people in Russia and Eastern Europe, yet their voices are rarely heard in scholarly studies of life and well-being in the region. This book brings together new research on disability in culture and society by internationally recognised local and non-native scholars in a range of countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The book will be of interest both to regional specialists, for whom well-being, equality and human rights are crucial concerns, and to scholars of disability and social policy internationally.
April 2016.
For more information, see: routledge.com/products/978138687400

The EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood: Migration, Borders and Regional Stability
Edited by Ilkka Liikanen, James W. Scott, and Tiina Sotkasira
This book explores a wide range of complex and contested questions related to borders, security and migration in the emerging “European Neighbourhood” of the former Soviet Union, which includes countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as the countries which immediately border the EU. Issues discussed include new forms of regional and cross-border co-operation, new patterns of migration, and the potential role of the EU as a stabilizing external force.
May 2016.
Hardback: 9780415722865. £95.
For more information, see: routledge.com/products/9780415722865

Political Theory and Community Building in Post-Soviet Russia
Edited by Oleg Kharkhordin and Risto Alapuro
This book revisits many aspects of current social science theories, such as actor-network theory and the French school of science and technology studies, to test how the theories apply in a specific situation, in this case after 1991 in the city of Cherepovets in Russia, home of Russia’s second biggest steel producer, Severstal. Using political philosophy to analyse the down-to-earth details of the real techno-scientific problems facing the world, the book examines the role of things - and urban infrastructure in particular - in political change.
February 2016.
For more information, see: routledge.com/products/9781138995017

Eastern Europe and the Challenges of Modernity, 1800-2000
By Stefano Bianchini
This book presents a concise and comprehensive overview of the mainstream flows of ideas, politics and itineraries towards modernity in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans over two centuries from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of the Gorbachev administration. Unlike other books on the subject which view modernity based on the idea of Western European supremacy, this book outlines the various different pathways of development, and of growing industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation which took place across the region.
April 2016.
For more information, see: routledge.com/products/9781138687318

20% DISCOUNT OFFER: If you would like to purchase the above books or any of the books in the BASEES Series, simply enter the code AME26 at checkout to receive a 20% discount. (N.B. the discount code is valid from 1st March 2016 - 30th April 2016 and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer).