



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of History

## Public and Popular History Seminar

### MICHAELMAS TERM 2021

Convenors: Helen McCarthy (hm234), Bernhard Fulda (bdf20) and David Reynolds (djr17)

The seminars will be held via Zoom from 5.00 – 6.30pm on the Wednesdays indicated.

Log in details will be sent to the mailing list.

To sign up to the mailing list please go to:

<https://lists.cam.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/history-publicandpopular>

### WHAT IS PUBLIC HISTORY, NOW?

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November

How does the past we study relate to the present in which we live? Is 'history' a given that we mustn't alter, or a constantly changing interaction of the people of today with the debris of earlier times? No mere 'academic' issue, this is a hot topic of debate in British public life today.

*What is History?* is, indeed, a perennial question. Sixty years ago, in 1961, it was the title of Edward Hallett Carr's Trevelyan Lectures at Cambridge. Short, punchy and controversial, the book became a staple of reading lists on historiography – variously stimulating, puzzling and irritating generations of students preparing for university admission interviews. Carr's answer to his question was unequivocal: 'History is interpretation.'

In September 2021, E.H. Carr's great-granddaughter Helen Carr – biographer of John of Gaunt – and the historian and podcaster Suzannah Lipscomb – who has written widely on Henry VIII and the Tudors – published *What is History, Now?* Their answer takes the form of a co-edited set of essays by a diverse mix of historians – ranging from best-sellers to emergent names – who explore the state of our discipline today, often showing how the agenda of current research has been shaped by topical questions. There are chapters, for instance, on global history, environmental history and queer history, on the history of racism and anti-racism, and hearing women's voices.

For the Public and Popular History seminar's first meeting of the new year, join Helen Carr and Suzannah Lipscomb, in conversation with David Reynolds, as they reflect on the challenges and pitfalls of doing history in public in the 2020s.



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of History

### **After the Virus: Lessons from the Past for a Better Future**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November

Why was the UK so unprepared for the pandemic, suffering one of the highest death rates and worst economic contractions of the major world economies in 2020? What answers can be found by looking to the past? And what can policymakers and the public at large learn from the work of historians? [In this new book](#) published by Cambridge University Press, Hilary Cooper and Simon Szreter reveal the deep roots of our vulnerability and set out a powerful manifesto for change post-Covid-19.

The Public and Popular History Seminar is delighted to welcome the authors of [After the Virus](#) to discuss the key arguments in their book and reflect on what role historians have to play in debating public policy for the present and the future.

#### About the authors:

Hilary Cooper is a former government economist and senior policy maker with expertise in labour markets, children's services and local development. Her current freelance work examines the challenges of ageing. She was the joint winner of the 2019 IPPR Economics prize for the essay 'Incentivising an Ethical Economics', with Simon Szreter and Ben Szreter.

Simon Szreter is Professor of History and Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, researching economic, social and public health history. His publications include *Health and Wealth*, which won the American Public Health Association's Viselwear Prize, and *Sex before the Sexual Revolution*, longlisted for the Samuel Johnson prize. He is co-founder and editor of *History & Policy*.

West Road  
Cambridge CB3 9EF  
Tel: + 44 (0) 1223 335340  
Email [gen.enq@hist.cam.ac.uk](mailto:gen.enq@hist.cam.ac.uk)  
<https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk>