

THE JOURNAL OF BRITISH STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
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The Journal of British Studies, founded in 1961, is published at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle under the auspices of the Conference on British Studies. It was the result of the imaginative generosity of a Trinity College alumnus, Frederick E. Hasler (Hon. LL.D. 1957) who contributed funds to the College for the specific purpose of establishing a learned periodical in the field of British history. Several Trinity alumni subsequently contributed to the fund. The University of Illinois at Chicago Circle now supports the publication of the *Journal*.

The Conference on British Studies is a scholarly society affiliated with the American Historical Association and open to anyone in the United States and Canada interested in British civilization in its several aspects: historical, archaeological, literary, artistic, political, and sociological. Its North American constituency comprises about 800 members drawn from the fifty states and the ten provinces. Affiliated with the parent organization are seven regional conferences (New England, Middle Atlantic, South, Midwest, Rocky Mountain, Pacific Coast, and Northwest), each having its own officers, programs, and other activities and with a combined membership of more than 2,000. The Conference convenes at least once a year in the autumn, usually in joint session with one of its regional affiliates. It seeks to encourage the serious study of British institutions and culture among university and college teachers of British history, literature, politics, as well as allied subjects, and among the general reading public through meetings, book prizes, association with like-minded organizations in North America and Britain, and through its publications program.

The Conference sponsors a wide variety of publications. *The Journal of British Studies* is published at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. Another journal, *Albion*, issued four times a year at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, and sent to all members of the parent organization, includes articles, the proceedings of the Conference at its regional and national meetings, and book reviews. The Conference also sponsors several book series, including *Current Research in British Studies*, a periodic survey of research in progress, edited and published at Kansas State University, Manhattan; *Studies in British History and Culture*, a monograph series, edited at Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio, and published by Archon Books; and a biographical series, edited at Indiana University at South Bend, and published by Shoestring Press. Another series, on bibliography, is edited at Stanford University and published by Cambridge University Press. The Conference's news-

letter, *The British Studies Intelligencer*, also sent to its members, is published at the University of California, Irvine. It contains notices of meetings throughout North America and Britain devoted to British studies, news of appointments, moves, and retirements by those active in the profession, announcements of major new research projects, and notes on current publications and individual research in progress.

Through the award of a number of book prizes, the Conference seeks to encourage publications in the fields of British history, culture, and politics.

The Journal of British Studies appears twice in the academic year, in the Fall and in the Spring. Inquiries about subscriptions should be directed to Bentley B. Gilbert, Editor, *The Journal of British Studies*, Department of History, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Box 4348, Chicago, Illinois 60680.

Manuscripts, not exceeding 8,000 words of text, should be sent also to Professor Bentley B. Gilbert at the same address. Please send two copies and a self-addressed return stamped envelope.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY

The editor of a scholarly journal, rather like a lion tamer, is in danger of being consumed by his work, and surely he will know at once whether he is doing his job badly or well. He has certain authority over his subjects; likewise they have power over him. Hence, understanding on both sides is imperative and ought to be arrived at as soon as possible. In case some old lions think they know already the rules of their trade, what follows is addressed to the younger ones who do not. And even old lions sometimes forget.

The most important fact about *The Journal of British Studies*' editorial policy has always been that it seeks articles from serious students in all fields concerned with British culture, politics, and history. But while remaining eclectic in scope, it must look for articles that are comprehensible to a wide range of readers. This means that an author should endeavor to explain at the beginning precisely what is important and new about his study and how it fits into the general context of his discipline. A good author tells in the first few paragraphs what the conventional wisdom about the topic is, in what way the author's discoveries depart from this, and why it is significant. In this way, the general reader knows what to look for within the narrative. The narrative itself presents only the evidence necessary to prove the point the author has already made and makes clear what is crucial and what is secondary. The conclusion should explain that the author has indeed shown what he said he would show at the beginning.

A good scholarly article, then, is not a short book, a mini-biography, or a report on research, still less a chapter from a longer work. It must be original in point of view or evidence and above all must contain its own reason for being. It does not follow that *JBS* will never print articles of a polemic or bibliographic nature, but potential authors should be warned that the principal business of this journal is to keep its readers abreast of the most recent trends in interpretations and research in British studies.

A second point to be made, allied to the first, is that as a major journal with a large international circulation, which receives nearly a dozen submissions for every available space—a figure, by the way, which is growing—*JBS* looks for articles of the widest possible interest. For instance, a single, newly discovered letter from a literary or historical figure, no matter how important the person, does not justify publication unless the document also provides the basis for some major revision in the interpretation of the person's career or works. There is a large and increasing number of specialized journals for which such studies are appropriate.

None of this is intended to discourage the submission of articles. While the *Journal* receives many more manuscripts than it can use, it does not receive many more *good* manuscripts than it needs, and its managers hope within the next year to expand its size. Anyone, therefore, with an idea, the evidence to back it up, a knowledge of English, and a typewriter is a possible author for *JBS*. He need not write first to ask whether we would be interested in the topic. We always are.

Bentley B. Gilbert

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