University of Birmingham

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About

I am a historian of contemporary British history with a particular interest in political activism, non-governmental organisations, homelessness and Britain's relationship with continental Europe.

Qualifications

BA, PhD

Biography

I joined the Department of Modern History in September 1997. Previously I had been Director of Research at the Institute of Contemporary British History, University of London (1996-7) and a Fellow in the Department of Politics, The Queen's University of Belfast (1994-1996).

My Doctoral Research on the Conservative Party and appeasement 1937-40 was undertaken at the University of Southampton where I was a recipient of an Archival Studentship. An extended version of the PhD was published as *Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and the European Dictators 1935-40* (London: Routledge, 1997). My undergraduate studies were also undertaken at the University of Southampton.

Teaching

I undertake a range of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching.

Postgraduate supervision

- Modern British party politics
- Inter-war British foreign policy
- British European policy since 1945
- Non-Governmental Organisations and Social Activism
- homelessness

Research

Current Research

I am currently preparing a research project that explores homelessness in modern Britain.

Past research

NGOs in Britain 1945-1997

This project was funded by the Leverhulme Trust, and and was undertaken with my colleague Matthew Hilton. NGOs have raised new political agendas, transformed and revived associational life, re-politicised generations seemingly disillusioned with the politics of the ballot box and inspired numerous pieces of legislation and regulatory initiatives. By mapping the sector, examining its role and interpreting its power, this research will provide a better assessment of the role of NGOs in contemporary Britain as well as contributing to current policy and interdisciplinary academic debates regarding civil society, voluntarism and associational life, state-NGO relations and the role of the 'third sector' more generally. Two books have arisen from the project *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Palgrave, 2012) and *The Politics of Expertise* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2013). See **www.ngo.bham.ac.uk (http://www.ngo.bham.ac.uk)**

With an AHRC Resource Enhancement Grant I, along with Matthew Hilton, created the Database on the Archives of UK Non-Governmental Organisations since 1945 (**DANGO (http://www.dango.bham.ac.uk)**) This is a research tool to enable researchers to identify the archives of NGOs.

Prior to this my research has been concerned with the Conservative Party and resulted in two books, an edited volume and numerous articles and chapters (see Select Publications below).

Other activities

Editor, *Contemporary British History*

Publications

Books

The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain (http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199691876.do) with Matthew Hilton, James McKay and Jean Francois-Mouhot (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2013)

A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945 (http://www.amazon.co.uk/Historical-Guide-NGOs-Britain-Charities/dp/0230304443) with Matthew Hilton, Jean Francois-Mouhot and James McKay (Palgrave, 2012)

Britain and Europe : A Political History since 1918 (2010)

This book explores Britain's uneasy relationship with continental Europe from 1918 to the present day. It also considers 'Europe' in a wider sense and examines a wider histroy that just Britain's relations with the European Union (EU). Routledge ISBN 9780415400206

The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe? (2006)

The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945 adopts a thematic line based around two chronological periods, 1945–75 and 1975–2006, and uses different methodological approaches. It explores the shifting stances amongst Conservatives within an economic, political and international context as the party adjusted to the decline of Britain's world role and the loss of empire. It analyzes Britain's role and relationship with Europe together with the study of the Conservative Party, and deals with economic, commercial and monetary issues, successfully bridging a serious gap in any discussion of the UK's relations with the European Union and offers an appreciation of the political world in which Conservative European policy has been framed and pursued since 1945. Routledge ISBN 9780415400220 **Buy this book (http://www.routledge.co.uk/shopping_cart/products/product_detail.asp?sku=&isbn=9780415400220&parent_id=&pc=/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=crowson)**

The Longman Companion to the Conservative Party since 1830 (2001)

This book provides a wide-ranging compendium of essential facts and figures on the Conservative Party from its origins in the 1830s to the dawn of the 21st century. Central to the book are the detailed chronologies on the Conservative Party's years in government and opposition. In addition it contains fascinating information on the party's relationships with women, ethnic minorities, the trade unions, Europe, Ireland, ideology, social reform and empire. The book also provides extensive statistical material on general elections, by-elections, local and European elections. There is detailed information on Conservative leaders and cabinets as well as material concerning the party's organisation and structure. As well as a full glossary of key terms and phrases there are biographies of 120 ministers and significant personalities who helped shape the party. Longman ISBN 0-582-31292-2 **Buy this book (http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/Bookshop/detail.asp?item=100000000004849)**

Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Collin Brooks, 1932-1940 (1998)

This edited journal provides a personal account of he tribulations of working as a journalist and editor during the 1930s. Collin Brooks recorded for posterity his observations of the journalistic, political, literary and financial sets in which he circulated. The journals open with Brooks working at the Financial News. His move to the Sunday Dispatch, his rise to the editorial chair, and his intimate friendship with Lord Rothermere ensure that these journals offer a unique insight into the operations and mentality of a press baron. Further, the diaries offer a perspective upon dissident right-wing Conservatism during the leaderships of Baldwin and Chamberlain, giving insights into the debates over India, rearmament and foreign policy as well as the continued flirtations with Mosley and fascism. They offer a fascinating snapshot of Britain in the 1930s. Cambridge University Press/Royal Historical Society ISBN 0-521-66239-7 **Buy this book (http://www.cambridge.org/uk/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521662397)** **Preview (http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=uaxOlEq6wikC&pg=PT1&dq=facing+fascism+++crowson&client=firefox-a&sig=VK6lXVMs5d1oxWkmY1IMqOpegxM)**

Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and the European Dictators 1935-40 (1997)

From the time of the Abyssinian crisis through to the outbreak of the Second World War in western Europe, the British government was marked by very diverse attitudes with regard to, and adopted diverse policies towards, the fascist dictators of Europe. This book provides a complete examination of how the Conservative party responded to the problems of European fascism from 1935 to 1940. Facing Fascism provides the historical context for the foreign policy of the period. Drawing on neglected sources it gives a new perspective on the party's policies, focusing on members of the government aside from just Chamberlain and highlights important aspects such as the controversy over national service. It offers alternative and original interpretations of the reactions of various elements of the Conservative party to the deepening international crisis. Routledge ISBN 0-415-15315-8 **Buy this book (http://www.routledge.co.uk/shopping_cart/products/product_detail.asp?curTab=DESCRIPTION&id=&parent_id=&sku=&isbn=9780415153157&pc=/shopping_cart/search/search.asp!search=crowson)** **Preview (http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NeLdX34od1sC&printsec=frontcover&dq=facing+fascism+++crowson&client=firefox-a&sig=sAKd9Cm6yxQ4OUFOo-MkhquJXvw)**

Articles in journals

- **Revisiting the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act: Westminster, Whitehall, and the Homelessness Lobby (http://tcbh.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2012/10/13/tcbh.hws027.full)** *Twentieth Century British History* advance access 2012
- 'Lord Hinchingbrooke, Europe and the November 1962 South Dorset by-election' Contemporary British History 17, 4 (2003) pp. 43-64
- 'Conservative parliamentary dissent over foreign policy during the premiership of Neville Chamberlain: myth or reality?' Parliamentary History 14, 3, 1995 pp 315-336
- 'The Conservative Party and the question of national service 1937-39' Contemporary Record 9, 3, 1995 pp 507-528
- 'The British Conservative Party and the Jews in the late 1930s' Patterns of Prejudice 29, 2, 1995 pp 15-32

Contributions to edited works

- With James McKay 'Britain in Europe? Conservative and Labour attitudes to European integrations since World War Two' in William Mulligan and Brendan Simms (eds.) The Primacy of Foreign Policy in British History, 1660-2000 (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011)
- 'The Conservative Party and the Immigrant mid-1940s to mid-1970s' in S. Ball and I. Holliday (eds.) Mass Conservatism (London: Frank Cass, 2002) pp. 163-82
- Entries totalling 12,000 words for J.A. Ramsden (ed.) The Oxford Companion to 20th Century British Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- 'The Conservative Party and Europe since 1945' in R. Broad and V. Preston (eds.) Moored to the Continent: Britain and Europe (London: IHR/University of London Press, 2001) pp. 173-193
- '"Much ado about nothing": Macmillan and Appeasement' in R.A. Aldous and S. Lee (eds.) Harold Macmillan: Aspects of a Political Life (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999) pp 59-74
- 'The Conservative Party and its attitude to national service 1937-1957' in A. Beech and R. Weight (eds.) The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain 1920-60 (London: IB Tauris, 1998) pp. 205-22

Expertise

Conservative Party history and politics; British foreign policy towards Germany before World War II; Britain and European integration since 1945

Alternative contact number available for this expert: **contact the press office (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx)**

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