

**CAL Undergraduate Research Scholarships Scheme 2017
Project Proposal Form**

| | |
|--|--|
| Project Proposer/s: | Nick Crowson and Matthew Francis |
| School/Dept: | History |
| Project Title: | The Sound of the 'Big Bang': Cataloguing the Douglas French Archive |
| Project Summary | |
| <p>The 'Big Bang' of October 1986 – the reform of financial services regulation, and the introduction of electronic trading – had a major, long-lasting effect on the British economy. The reforms transformed the City into arguably the preeminent financial centre in the world, intensified the economic dominance of the south-east of England, and were arguably one of the causes of the 2008 financial crisis. The processes by which the 'Big Bang' came about, however, remain little-studied by historians, and there remains important work to be done in assessing the political and institutional impacts which drove reform.</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to catalogue and, where necessary, to digitize the private archive of Douglas French. A special advisor to the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Geoffrey Howe, French has an extensive (and hitherto unseen) private archive of material relating to the conduct of economic policy between 1981 and 1984, and in particular to the 'Big Bang' in financial services of the autumn of 1986, which has been made available to researchers at the University of Birmingham.</p> | |
| What the researcher will do | |
| <p>The role of the researcher will be: first, to sort and catalogue the contents of the French archive; second, to assist with the transfer of the audio recordings from cassette/CD to digital formats; and, third, to produce a research report detailing the scope and content of the material in the archive, and summarising its potential usefulness for historians.</p> | |
| Skills required by the Scholarship holder | |
| <p>The Scholarship holder must have basic IT skills (familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel, etc. or equivalent) and in particular must be comfortable working with audio software. Some prior experience of working with archival material would be desirable, but is not essential.</p> | |
| How will your Project benefit the Scholarship holder? | |
| <p>The project will give the Scholarship holder the opportunity to work with a hitherto unexamined set of primary sources which promise to throw new light on an important moment in the course of contemporary political history. The project will also give the Scholarship holder the opportunity to develop archiving and cataloguing skills, and to practice different genres of historical writing.</p> | |
| How will the Scholarship benefit your Project? | |
| <p>The Scholarship would make available for the first time important new material on the conduct of economic policy in the 1980s, and would provide lay the groundwork for a research which will contribute to an enhanced understanding of the way in which government policy towards the financial services industry developed after 1979. The project will also provide important new primary source material for the third-year Special Subject, <i>Where There Is Discord: Making Thatcher's Britain</i>.</p> | |