

**CIRCULAR TO ALL
ISECS-AFFILIATED SOCIETIES**

**From: Penelope J. Corfield (President)
and Daniel Fulda (Vice-President)
August 2022**

We are delighted to announce that, as reported to the ISECS EC at Lund in August 2022, we have formed a Working Group to study/publicise the History of ISECS. The group is led by PJC and DF, with expert assistance from historian Gregory Brown (Univ. Nevada, Las Vegas/ Senior Research Fellow, Voltaire Foundation, University of Oxford). Membership of the Working Group is open to all interested colleagues; and currently comprises 10 members, respectively from Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, UK and USA (2).

It's high time that our international Society, now 60 years in operation, is fully documented and appreciated for its contribution to global intellectual sharing. We hope that you can inform your own Society's membership - and invite all interested parties to join the Group. NB: Our original Mission Statement follows as an Appendix to this circular.

We also draw to your attention the following specific points:

(1) The Working Group has begun a collaborative effort to construct a full bibliography of published studies and/or sources relating to the history of ISECS and its affiliates, and on the social/intellectual context behind the growth of eighteenth-century studies in the post-war period. **Our goal is to collate all references into a common bibliography which will be publicly available.** To this end, all affiliated societies and individual scholars are invited to contribute information about all published works or published primary sources that bear upon this history.

(2) We also plan to document all archival materials relating to the formation and growth of eighteenth-century studies in general; and the emergence of ISECS and its affiliates specifically. **A full listing of relevant archival materials will then be made available; and we hope also to make them readily accessible to researchers in some format or other.** To that end, all individuals and affiliated Societies are encouraged to send details of all archival materials that they may possess or know about, with specific information on the nature, current condition, and location/repository of all such materials.

(3) We are also collecting information about oral testimonies by individuals who have been active in the history of ISECS, its affiliated societies, and eighteenth-century studies more generally. We intend also to conduct our own on-the-record interviews with colleagues who have contributed notably. **The aim is to establish a listing of all relevant oral history records, alongside our own Oral History Archive.** To that end, individuals and affiliated Societies are invited to notify us about all existing oral history material; and to nominate (and don't hesitate to self-nominate!) all colleagues who should be interviewed for our ISECS Oral History Archive.

(4) Lastly, we encourage all Affiliated Societies **to study their own history**, before it gets lost in the mists of poor memories and generational turnover. And, if helpful, we are delighted to offer expert assistance from our team.

**Please communicate responses to ISECS President Penelope Corfield
(penelopecorfield@gmail.com),
who will share all information with the Working Group.**

Many thanks!

APPENDIX:

MISSION STATEMENT WORKING GROUP ON THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES

The Working Group on the History of the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is a scholarly group seeking to advance a fuller understanding of the history of ISECS, as an expression of, and actor in, the intellectual, social and political history of the contemporary world.

We seek to promote the study of the History of ISECS, including the institutional history of its formation and leadership, and that of its constitutive societies and affiliates. We seek to compile a documentary record, and to interpret that record, not only of the institutional founders and leaders but of all those who have contributed to this history – and to recover their scholarly, educational and civic work at the international, national and regional level. We seek to recover not only official documents which reflect stated intentions but also archival materials, correspondence, memoirs and oral history interviews, which bring to light the lived experience and explicit or implicit intellectual social and political commitments of its members and affiliates.

To advance these goals, the Working Group proposes to facilitate broad collaboration in scholarly research by identifying and making known the extant documentary source record; promoting and facilitating oral histories of former and current members and leaders; and compiling and maintaining a bibliography of scholarship.

The Working Group hereby invites collaboration from all who seek to document, record, promote and sustain a living record of historical inquiry. We intend this record to be scholarly, activist, and participative. We also intend our work to be intentional in our efforts to confront the biases, exclusions and silences of the recorded past of ISECS. Participation is open to all regardless of professional status, with no requirement of current or past membership in ISECS, and no predetermined intellectual, ideological or historiographical position.

Circulated by:

Penelope J. Corfield (ISECS President); **Daniel Fulda** (ISECS Vice-President)
and Prof. **Gregory S. Brown** (Univ. Nevada, Las Vegas/ Senior Research Fellow,
Voltaire Foundation, University of Oxford)

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