

THE SAMUEL PEPYS AWARD TRUST

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Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War wins Samuel Pepys Award 2019

Stanford University professor and author David Como has won the Samuel Pepys Award 2019 for *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford University Press).

The biennial prize is awarded to a publication that makes the greatest contribution to our understanding of Samuel Pepys, his times or his contemporaries.

David Como will receive a cheque for £2,000 and a specially-cast silver medal designed by Philip Nathan in memory of Robert Latham, former Pepys Librarian at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and joint editor of the acclaimed eleven-volume edition of *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*.

Sir Keith Thomas, one of the 2019 judges, described the book as “*an outstanding work of meticulous research which throws new light on the origin of the radical political and religious ideas which led ultimately to the abolition of episcopacy, the execution of Charles I and the proclamation of a republic. According to Como, rather than emerging only after Charles I’s military defeat, the case for regicide and republicanism was propagated by sectarian preachers and secret printing presses from the very beginning of the Civil War. David Como’s exploration of this radical underground is a path-breaking contribution to the world in which Samuel Pepys grew up.*”

The judges for the Samuel Pepys Award 2019 are:

- **Eamon Duffy** is Emeritus Professor of the History of Christianity at Cambridge and the author of numerous books including *The Stripping of the Altars* and *Saints and Sinners, a history of the Popes*
- **Robin O’Neill** is a former British ambassador. He read English at Cambridge, and has a particular interest in diplomatic history and in English literature in the seventeenth century.
- **Caroline Sandwich** also read English at Cambridge and Middle Eastern politics at London. She has served on the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Historic Houses Association amongst others. Her work at her husband’s family house, Mapperton, has given her an interest in seventeenth century history.
- **Sir Keith Thomas** is an Honorary Fellow of All Souls and a distinguished historian of the early modern world, whose publications include *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, and *Man and the Natural World*.

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The author

David R Como is Professor of Early Modern British History at Stanford University. He is the author of *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in pre-Civil War England* (2004).

**For more information, please contact
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Notes to Editors

- The Samuel Pepys Award 2019 was open to non-fiction and fiction books written in the English language and published between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2019.
- The Samuel Pepys Award was founded by the Samuel Pepys Club and is run and financed by the Samuel Pepys Award Trust. It was first given in 2003 to mark the tercentenary of the death of Samuel Pepys in May 1703. For more information, go to www.pepys-club.org.uk
- Previous winners of the Samuel Pepys Award are:
 - 2003: Claire Tomalin - *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self* (Penguin), the multi-award-winning and bestselling biography, published to mark the tercentenary of Pepys's death in May 1703
 - 2005: Frances Harris - *Transformations of Love* (Oxford University Press), a vivid portrait of John Evelyn's 'chaste but passionate' friendship with Margaret Godolphin, a maid of honour at the Restoration court of Charles II
 - 2007: John Adamson - *The Noble Revolt* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson), an absorbing narrative of the period between the King's decision to fight the Scots in May 1640 and his flight from London in January 1642
 - 2009: JD Davies - *Pepys's Navy: Ships, Men and Warfare 1649-1689* (Seaforth Publishing), an authoritative study of the fledgling Royal Navy
 - 2011: Michael Hunter - *Boyle: Between God and Science* (Yale University Press), the biography of one of the key figures in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century
 - 2013: Henry Reece - *The Army in Cromwellian England, 1649-1660* (Oxford University Press), the first study to focus entirely on the army from 1649-1660, a period when England was ruled by a standing army for the only time in its history
 - 2015: Paul Slack - *The Invention of Improvement* (Oxford University Press), the first full account of how English improvement began and developed.
 - 2017: John Walter - *Covenanting Citizens* (Oxford University Press), provides novel insights into the emergence of a new, popular political culture during the English Civil War.
- Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) started to write his diary, in shorthand, at the age of 27 in 1660. Fear of losing his sight forced him to stop writing nine years later. Pepys wrote in shorthand and it was not until 1825 that the work was first published, in abbreviated form. His diary is justly famous for its record of the key events of the

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Restoration – the coronation of Charles II, the Plague and the Great Fire of London - but also for its close observation of people and the minutiae of daily life in 17th century London.

- Pepys left his library of 3,000 books to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he had been a student, with strict instructions that its contents should remain intact and unaltered. The library – with the original diary - is still there, in the bookcases that Pepys had made, and is still arranged in the same order in which he left it.
- *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews, is the complete, unabridged edition of the diary. The project took over thirty years and was published between 1970 and 1983. William Matthews deciphered anew the Shelton shorthand in which the Diary was written and Robert Latham edited the text and provided the commentary. Sir Arthur Bryant described the enterprise as “complete perfection” and AJP Taylor wrote that “Pepys’s Diary, as now published, is the finest work of English scholarship in our lifetime”.
- The Samuel Pepys Club was founded “to do honour to the memory of Samuel Pepys” on the bicentenary of Pepys’s death on 26 May 1903. The first dinner was held on 1 December 1903 at Clothworkers’ Hall, London. Well-known admirers of Pepys were invited to join the Club and membership was restricted to 70, the age of Pepys when he died. The number of members is now 140. Over a century after its foundation, the Club flourishes, more active than ever, with an annual dinner, visits, meetings and the Samuel Pepys Award.