

Team of three historians appointed to John Ellerman Foundation's History Project

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John Ellerman Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of Drs Felix Waldmann, Michael Taylor and Timothy Twining, of West Room Research Ltd, to deliver the next phase of our History Project. The appointment is part of a series of activities that we have organised this year to celebrate our 50th anniversary.

As a result of turning 50, and in common with other philanthropic foundations, we want to learn more about the origins of our endowment by exploring the business and philanthropic histories of our founder Sir John Ellerman II, his father, Sir John Ellerman I, and his sister Bryher (born Annie Winifred Ellerman).

This appointment was made following an open call for proposals launched in August 2021. We received 14 responses, and interviewed three groups in October 2021. Over the next 12 months, Felix, Michael and Timothy will conduct further research that allows us to understand the origins of the Foundation's wealth and respond to this accordingly. In terms of our business history, this will include an analysis of the business related activities undertaken by Sir John Ellerman I and Sir John Ellerman II, such as acquisitions; investments; partnerships; and holdings, as it was the wealth generated from these activities which was subsequently used by Sir John Ellerman II to set up John Ellerman Foundation.

Felix, Michael and Timothy have demonstrated a robust understanding of our requirements, and presented us with a 12-month programme of work that is ambitious, thorough and eminently aware of the challenges research like this will face, such as accessing archives in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, and dealing with sensitivities relating to what we might learn. We are confident of their ability to embrace these challenges and opportunities.

Our History Project started several years ago with oral history work involving interviews with former employees of the Ellerman family business, acquaintances, family members, and former Foundation Trustees and Directors. This process is due to be concluded in the next few months.

In 2020 we commissioned an initial archival analysis into the Ellerman family and companies. In 2021, we organised a translation of 237 letters written mainly in Afrikaans by our founder that were discovered by colleagues in South Africa in late 2019.

Felix, Michael and Timothy met while studying History at the University of Cambridge. They also completed their MPhils and PhDs at Cambridge. We are looking forward to working with them and sharing the findings of this phase of our History Project as soon as we are able to.

Our thanks to our Board for their continued investment and interest in this work.

Peter Kyle, Foundation Chair-elect, said *"We were very pleased to receive wide interest in the role from an exceptionally strong field. Felix, Michael and Timothy are an outstanding team, who presented their ideas with obvious enthusiasm for the project and full commitment to excellence and integrity of process, matching our own values at John Ellerman Foundation.*

"We want to learn more about our business and philanthropic histories and to share findings openly in order to help inform our future funding programmes."