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DOING DIARIES: DAVID MARTIN, THE ROYAL SOCIETY AND SCIENTIFIC  
LONDON, 1947–1950

by

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David Christie Martin (1914–76) was the Assistant Secretary (1947–62) and Executive Secretary (1962–76) of the Royal Society. During his long tenure he oversaw the modernization and expansion of the Society's administration, finances, publications and premises, and worked closely with the Officers, Council and the Society's many subcommittees. He was closely involved with the national and international aspects of the Society's work, and with the Fellows, visitors and external relations at all levels. The key link between the Royal Society and Whitehall, he developed strong informal contacts with civil servants in the Treasury, other government departments and the research councils, which greatly facilitated the Society's work. He was a significant point of continuity in the administration and governance of the Society over this long period, yet it is remarkable that we know little of Martin's work. Drawing on Martin's diary for 1947–49, recently unearthed at the Royal Society Library, this paper gives an account of his activities in the Royal Society and in postwar scientific London in this period. In so doing it sheds new light on British science at the beginning of the Cold War, and on the key role of the 'invisible administrator' in modern science.

**Keywords: David Christie Martin; Robert Robinson; Royal Society  
administration; science–government relations; postwar British science;  
'invisible administrator'**

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INTRODUCTION

David Christie Martin was the long-serving Assistant Secretary (1947–62) and Executive Secretary (1962–76) of the Royal Society. Officers and Councils come and go, but as the Society's chief executive officer, Martin provided a significant point of continuity in the administration and governance of the Society over this long period. Through his central and enduring role in the Society, he was involved with its staff and premises, its publications, its finances, its Council and Council's many subcommittees, the dozens of other national and international committees dealing with all aspects of scientific work and

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organization, and of course with the Fellows, visitors and external relations at all levels. He was the key link between the Royal Society and Whitehall, and developed close contacts with civil servants in the Treasury, other government departments and the research councils. He was pivotal to the administrative modernization of the Society in the postwar years, and oversaw its administrative growth and the extension of its reach into the scientific affairs of the postwar British state and the Commonwealth, as well as its developing international relations.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the Royal Society, Martin also played a major, but less well known, role in the broader scientific life of postwar London. He was active in the British Council-sponsored Society for Visiting Scientists, a postwar continuation of wartime arrangements for foreign scientific visitors to London and the UK. He became a Visitor and Manager of the Royal Institution. For several years he also continued to be involved with the affairs of the Chemical Society, from which he was recruited to the Royal Society in 1947. Through his official role at the Royal Society and this broader network of scientific societies and organizations, Martin also became a familiar face in the capital's social world of clubs, diplomatic receptions and grand dinners, where he often conducted Royal Society and other scientific business informally, and further widened his extensive network of connections.

Historians of science have long been interested in the 'hidden' support structures of science—the laboratory assistants, technicians, instrument-makers and others who are crucial to the practice of science but who often do not appear in formal accounts of scientific work.<sup>2</sup> Much less historical attention has been paid to the roles of scientific administrators and managers, despite the enormous growth of the institutional structures and organizational bureaucracy of science in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, the lack of suitable primary sources has been a significant barrier to studies of scientific administrators. Beyond organizational routines, filing systems, memoranda and official correspondence, little information can usually be gleaned about the day-to-day practice of scientific administration, because few administrators or bureaucrats have left autobiographical accounts of their work or careers, still less personal archives, reinforcing the preconception that administration is unworthy of attention. Yet the historian's interest in administrators is that they not only oil the wheels of science, they also make and maintain the wheels. They create and manage the institutional, organizational and financial forms and structures within which science develops. They are closely involved in decisions about funding, strategic direction and policy. And they act as the key points of contact between scientists and the larger structures within which they operate.

Fortuitously, staff in the Royal Society Library recently unearthed David Martin's diary, written during his first years as Assistant Secretary.<sup>4</sup> This is no mere desk diary of appointments. Running from October 1947 to March 1949 with a break from March to December 1948, for which he provides a fairly comprehensive retrospective summary, the diary records Martin's observations on the activities and conduct of scientists in the Royal Society and beyond, the day-to-day routines of the Society's activities at Burlington House, the scientific landscape of postwar London and the Society's reach into the wider scientific life of the nation.<sup>5</sup> Marked 'CONFIDENTIAL', the diary runs to 63 pages of mostly single-spaced foolscap typescript, with an index (figure 1); it is not clear whether it was typed up by (or for) Martin at the end of the working day, or whether it was typed up at later intervals from a draft (the very few corrections inserted by hand in ink and other compositional evidence suggest the latter). The entries range from simple statements of

CONFIDENTIALROYAL SOCIETY DIARY

I propose to jot down in this Diary or Journal some personal notes which will be of use in the administration of the Society's affairs and will also put on record some of my personal reactions to the main events in the Society's affairs.

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FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1947

- I. I discussed with P.R.S. (Sir Robert Robinson) the proposals made by Sir Ralph Glyn, past Master of the Salters' Company. These proposals offer accommodation for a library and some offices in new premises which are to be erected in St Swithin's Lane, apparently because the Bank of England, a nationalised institution, is in need of further office premises. The final action taken by the President was to reply to Glyn saying that the Chemical Society would be asked to look into the proposals. His private view is that such building would not be justified in the present emergency. My own view is that these much talked of proposals which envisaged a Chemistry House are now in the form presented by Glyn very poor and unlikely to be accepted.
- II. As part of the Society's drive to reduce the delay in the publication of scientific results, two officials of the Printing Trades Union were sent here to-day by the Ministry of Labour - Mr Warren, the President, and Mr Eastwood, the Assistant Secretary. They were met by the President, myself and J.C.C. They had a completely false impression of the work in hand and the meeting was spent in getting their ideas straight on the true aspects of the problem. They were given copies of the Council's report of our publications and the publications of other societies. They promised to study these documents and to invite the co-operation of specialised Trades Unions with a view to speeding up output. Mr Warren promised to do his best but could guarantee no improvement at this stage. Mr Piggott of the Ministry of Labour attended as a Liaison Officer.

I am doubtful that much will be gained by these discussions with the Trades Unions but the problem is such that every possible source of help must be fully explored.
- III. In the evening I attended the Annual Dinner of the South London Entomological & Natural History Society and delivered for the first time an after dinner speech to about 100 people. It appeared to be well received.

SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBER 1947

- I. I discussed the Salters' proposals with L.R.Batten (General Secretary) of the Chemical Society. He agreed that the offer did not amount to very much.
- II. The South London Entomological & Natural History Society held their annual exhibition in the Society's Rooms. These natural historians possess an enthusiasm for their scientific pursuits which is not only sincere and happy but also very infectious.

Figure 1. The first page of Martin's diary, October 1947. (Royal Society Archives.)

his professional and personal activities to more subjective (and sometimes judgemental) comments on the people and situations he encountered. The overall tone is one of pride in the Society's—and his own—achievements, tempered by humility, with an occasional more portentous remark, and even the odd burst of self-satisfaction.

The diary shows how Martin helped overhaul and modernize the Society's administration and sheds new light on its activities in this period, including major conferences and the abortive plan to move to a new Science Centre. It shows exactly how, in his day-to-day running of the Royal Society—usually a six-day working week—he was in regular communication not just with the Officers and office staff but also with the Fellows, with Whitehall civil servants and with a wide range of those who had business with the Society. It is also more obliquely informative about people, events and situations and helps us to get a broader sense of the everyday activity of the Society and its embedment in the life of postwar London and the nation. The diary is thus a significant new resource for our understanding of the postwar Royal Society and of scientific administration more generally. In this paper I draw on the diary to sketch out Martin's activities, what they reveal about the Society's history in postwar Britain, and how they might illuminate the significance of administrative work in the history of science. I begin with a brief account of Martin's background.

#### FROM CHEMISTRY TO SCIENCE ADMINISTRATION

Born in Kirkcaldy in 1914, Martin was educated at Edinburgh University, where he received a first-class degree in chemistry in 1937, followed in 1939 by a PhD (supervised by J. A. V. Butler and supported by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR)) on the properties of deuterium compounds. He initially continued research at Edinburgh supported by a Carnegie Trust senior research scholarship but, having impressed Sir Thomas Holland, Vice Chancellor and Principal of the university, with his efficiency in the organization of a new students' union for the scientists, he soon afterwards resigned the scholarship to become Assistant Secretary to the Royal Society of Arts. His appointment coincided almost exactly with the outbreak of war, however, and after only a few weeks with the evacuated Royal Society of Arts in Sussex he was recruited to the Ministry of Supply's Department of Research and Development in December 1939.<sup>6</sup>

As with so many others, the war changed his horizons and reshaped his future. The Ministry of Supply was responsible for the procurement and supply of weapons and the materials of war, including 'explosives, fuses, chemical warfare, smoke screens, flame throwers, biological warfare, the growth of flax, and new polymers and rubbers.'<sup>7</sup> In the Ministry he initially gained substantial administrative experience managing extramural research contracts and dealing with the organization of technical records. He then joined the staff of Herbert Gough, Deputy Controller of Research and Development, as scientific assistant, where he was involved in liaison between various departments and ministries and was required to 'draft correspondence and directives and act as secretary to various meetings conducted by the Controller General of Research and Development'.<sup>8</sup> In the context of a growing organization and its attendant bureaucratic politics, he organized a 'Model Room' in the Ministry of Supply 'designed to show by means of models, diagrams, photographs, films, etc. the more important lines of current research and development to the senior officials of the Ministry of Supply, the War Office and General

Staff, and to important visitors from overseas.<sup>9</sup> When Gough became Director General of Research and Development in 1943, Martin's duties expanded commensurately; he was Secretary to several high-level committees dealing with various policy aspects of chemical research and development, and several technical committees including the Explosives Research Committee (Chemistry), the Surplus Explosives Panel (chaired by Robert Robinson) and the Plastic Explosive Oils Sub-Committee.<sup>10</sup> Through his work at the Ministry he not only honed the skills of scientific and technical administration but came into regular contact with several leading scientific advisers, including Cyril Hinshelwood, Patrick Linstead and Robinson, all of whom would be significant to his subsequent career.<sup>11</sup> In the ferment of wartime London he was also able to make connections with the scientists attached to the various allied governments-in-exile, establishing an enduring interest in the international sodality of science.

In May 1945, Martin capitalized on the skills and contacts he had acquired during the war in his successful application for the position of General Secretary of the Chemical Society, in succession to Stanley Carr. His references for the application were from the great and the good of chemistry with whom he had worked at the Ministry of Supply, including Gough, Robinson (who had himself been President of the Chemical Society from 1939 to 1941) and Hinshelwood (who would become its President in 1946).<sup>12</sup> When he moved to its home at Burlington House, one of his first tasks, beyond setting the Chemical Society on a peacetime footing, was to organize its centenary celebrations, planned for 1947.<sup>13</sup> At the neighbouring Royal Society, meanwhile, Robert Robinson became President in November 1945 in an election that caused considerable debate among the Fellowship.<sup>14</sup> When the Royal Society's Assistant Secretary, John Griffith Davies, resigned in 1946, Robinson suggested that Martin apply for the post. With Robinson's patronage his application was successful, and he took up his duties at the Royal Society on 1 January 1947.

As he began to familiarize himself with the Royal Society's staff, officers and operations in the first few months of 1947, Martin continued to work on the arrangements for the Chemical Society's centenary celebrations alongside Ruck Keene, who had been employed for the task (and who later himself became the organization's General Secretary).<sup>15</sup> It was after the end of this work that he began the diary, in October 1947: 'I propose to jot down in this Diary or Journal some personal notes which will be of use in the administration of the Society's affairs and will also put on record some of my personal reactions to the main events in the Society's affairs.'<sup>16</sup> In what follows I draw on the diary to discuss Martin's relations with Society Officers and Fellows, its administrative processes, its staff and premises; his formal and informal relationships and networks with officials in government and the research councils; and his involvement with other scientific institutions and the wider scientific life of postwar London (figure 2).

#### OFFICERS, COMMITTEES AND THE SHAPING OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

As the Society's chief executive officer, Martin naturally developed a very close working relationship with its elected Officers: in the period covered by the diary these were Robert Robinson (President, 1945–50), Thomas Merton (Treasurer, 1939–56), Alfred Egerton and then David Brunt (Physical Secretary, 1938–48 and 1948–57, respectively), Edward Salisbury (Biological Secretary, 1945–55) and Edgar Adrian (Foreign Secretary, 1946–50) (figure 3). He was in frequent contact with them, attended their meetings, and was



Figure 2. Martin at work in his office at the Royal Society. (Royal Society Archives.)

both a sounding board and a source of intelligence for them on Society matters generally. A typical diary entry from January 1948 indicates the scope of his conversations with Robinson, for example:

The President called to-day and in discussion we covered a wide range of subjects including possible nominees for the Vice-Chancellorship of Edinburgh University, the wording of the message prepared by Andrade about Planck, the encroachment of the D.S.I.R. on functions hitherto conducted by the Royal Society—in particular the South American Chemical Congress—, the publication delays existing in the Chemical Society, the acceleration of the reprints of his Anniversary Address, the future of the Society for Visiting Scientists, and various other topics. He appeared to me to be overwhelmed with business which had accumulated during his visit to Sweden.<sup>17</sup>

Through such informal discussions, Martin increasingly had a key role in the governance mechanisms of the Society—as, for example, in a February discussion with Robinson ‘on the succession to the Treasurership’.<sup>18</sup>

Meetings with other Officers, too, are revealing of Society politics. In January 1948 Martin informed Merton ‘of the Treasury’s letter received on Saturday indicating that they were willing to grant only £10,000 out of the £15,000 asked for by the Society for Scientific Publications. He was of the opinion that we should go into battle on this but that no action should be taken until after the Council meeting on 15 January.’<sup>19</sup> In the event, a meeting with Mr Symons of the Treasury squared matters, and the full amount was after all granted—Martin’s contacts with government officials were, as we shall see,



Figure 3. Royal Society Officers' Meeting, 1950. Left to right: Edgar Adrian (Foreign Secretary), Thomas Merton (Treasurer), Robert Robinson (President), David Brunt (Physical Secretary), Edward Salisbury (Biological Secretary), David Martin (Assistant Secretary). (Royal Society Archives.)

particularly useful and productive.<sup>20</sup> Discussions with Officers and Fellows could also be revealing of individuals' views of the Society's activities outside the usual collective responsibility of Officers' and Council meetings. In February 1949 Merton 'expressed concern at the number of foreigners who seemed likely to appear in the list of new Fellows and felt that it would be discouraging to young British scientists especially in the field of mathematics where a number of foreign "inventors" seemed likely to be rather high. He was also somewhat concerned about the category of "general" candidates.'<sup>21</sup>

Although always of interest inside and outside the Society, deliberations over the elections of Fellows do not figure prominently in the diary—Martin presumably did not sit in on the subject committees that made those decisions. In March 1949, however, he records an 'interesting discussion on Statute 12 candidates' at an Officers' meeting:<sup>22</sup>

The President tentatively suggested that Dr Chaim Weizmann, President of Israel, might be nominated although the timing of such an election might be undesirable politically. He emphasised that Dr Weizmann had all the qualifications for a Statute 12 candidate, having had a distinguished scientific career as well as being a prominent political figure. The Biological Secretary favoured the nomination of Mr Havelock, administrative secretary of the Agricultural Research Council. This did not find very strong support, although later in the day at Council two members, Hardy and Thornton, strongly supported the suggestion. The Biological Secretary stated that it was a departure from precedent but that in this case he thought it was a very sound step to take.

In the afternoon Lord Samuel was proposed by Professor Zuckerman and my opinion is that I think Samuel will be elected or there will be no election at all this year.

Details of the subsequent discussions are not recorded, but in the event there was no Statute 12 election in 1949.

As these remarks indicate, Martin was an acute observer of committees at work. In addition to Council and Officers' meetings, he attended most of the Society's other committees and subcommittees, and usually sent a representative from his staff when he himself was otherwise committed. His comments on many of the committees are direct and informative. In November 1947, for example, 'a small group discussed in great earnest the view which the British delegation should adopt towards the proposals which will be discussed at the 1948 meeting of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics.'<sup>23</sup> Early in 1949 the diary offers a classic example of the Secretary's art, and an object lesson to anyone who takes meeting minutes at face value as a historical record:<sup>24</sup>

The Warren Research Fund Committee met to-day and although it won't be minuted there was a strong feeling of distaste concerning the claim submitted by Randall, Sayers and Boot in respect of the cavity magnetron. Professor M. L. E. Oliphant, in particular, felt that payment for a discovery of this kind made by a research team, of which the above-named are only a few members, would strike at the roots of co-operation in research teams. The Committee was inclined to agree but felt that the claim having been made and one of the claimants being a Warren Research Fellow it had to proceed.

Such business, he thought, did 'not suit the atmosphere of Royal Society committees.'<sup>25</sup>

As he became familiar with the Society's committees and their members, Martin was able to nudge the organizational structures in directions he considered to be to the Society's advantage. This could involve the creation of new committees, or the discreet manipulation of existing ones. In January 1948 he began discussions with Owen Wansbrough-Jones, Scientific Adviser to the Army Council, on the possibility of establishing a Military Research Services Committee.<sup>26</sup> The outcome was the establishment of the Defence Services Research Facilities Committee, which first met formally in January 1949 and acted as a conduit through which civilian scientists could access military research facilities.<sup>27</sup> This Committee operated successfully into the 1960s, with Martin continuing to take a strong interest in its activities.

In addition to prodding members to attend more frequently, Martin could also push committees in particular directions when he felt it necessary. In October 1947, for example, a group of physicists expressed concern over proposals 'concerning the formation of a national body to represent the country in the field of optics.' The International Union of Physics had established a Commission on Optics, to which the Royal Society had nominated three Fellows: R. W. Ditchburn, E. H. Linfoot and C. G. Wynne. However, the delegates felt strongly that to 'help on the propaganda front in competing with the optical manufacturers of France and other European countries', the body should be recognized, and named, as a national committee, rather than as a subcommittee of the British committee adhering to the International Union of Physics, as required by nomenclatural convention. His ear ever to the ground, Martin noted 'an undercurrent of feeling by the physicists concerned that the Royal Society is forcing them into a mould of which they do not approve.' After consultation with Linfoot, Edgar Adrian and Nevill Mott (Chairman of the National Committee for Physics), Martin wrote a memorandum and secured Mott's 'concurrence to the proposals as I had stated

them’—a victory for bureaucracy, orderly convention and for Martin’s authority over procedure (and the Fellows!).<sup>28</sup>

#### BURLINGTON HOUSE AND WHITEHALL: MANAGING THE SCIENCE—GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP

Clearly, Martin was beginning actively, self-consciously and, to some extent at least, independently to direct the Society’s affairs in significant ways through the committees he serviced. After a particularly efficient meeting of the Paul Instrument Fund Committee in his own office in February 1949, for example, he noted that ‘my desire that this Fund should be more widely used seems to be meeting with some measure of success.’<sup>29</sup> His position at the centre of the Society’s administration and his extensive network of contacts also gave him an unusually broad view of the activities of the Fellows and the larger circles in which they moved, and allowed broader interventions. In particular, the diary is replete with examples of Martin’s day-to-day contacts with government officials, and shows where and how the business of science was transacted between Piccadilly and Whitehall.

One of the most mundane but pressing problems facing postwar British science, for example, was the shortage of paper for publications. Martin was quickly drawn into the Royal Society’s efforts to improve supplies of paper for its own publications and to explore more efficient ways of disseminating scientific work—the latter the basis of the large and very successful Scientific Information Conference in June–July 1948.<sup>30</sup> In the autumn of 1947, as ‘part of the Society’s drive to reduce the delay in the publication of scientific results’, he met both with officials of the printing trades union at the behest of the Ministry of Labour and with publishers’ representatives.<sup>31</sup> In his information-gathering about the problem, he found that informal networks could be extremely valuable in conferring advantage. From one of its Secretaries, he learned that the Physical Society, through ‘the personal intervention of Lord Cherwell... has already obtained from the Board of Trade all its requirements of paper to meet its essential needs.’<sup>32</sup>

As he sought to deal with this issue through his own contacts at the Board of Trade and the DSIR, Martin also grappled with the related matter of quotas on the import of scientific publications, which were impeding the circulation of up-to-date scientific information. On 8 December 1947 he ‘gave considerable attention to the question of import of scientific literature and read the account of the discussion in the House of Commons on this subject which took place on 5 December. It seems that there is a clear case for some alteration of the existing legislation and I arranged to see the appropriate Board of Trade official on Wednesday next.’<sup>33</sup> A few days later he ‘attended a meeting convened by O. F. Brown of the D.S.I.R. concerning the importation of scientific literature. A number of leading booksellers were represented. The meeting was informal and a number of useful views were exchanged. It was agreed that the D.S.I.R. together with the Royal Society should make representations for an increase in the import quota.’<sup>34</sup> A letter to the Board of Trade duly followed, asking for an increase in quota to ‘reduce the delays now experienced by scientists in obtaining American text books.’<sup>35</sup>

Reflecting on the Scientific Information Conference late in 1948, Martin saw the meeting as a great success. In addition to noting the useful official reports, Martin indicated the press campaign that a small cabal had launched against the Conference’s prime mover J. D. Bernal and his proposals for the management of scientific information ‘into which his attackers read all sorts of motives of a political character.’ These he felt to be ‘completely unjustified

because they dwelt on issues which were not before the Conference and in some cases were written by Fellows of the Society who ought not to have made a comment before the actual proposals were discussed at the Conference itself.' 'Happily,' he added, 'in the Conference these Press comments were completely ignored and the political aspects found no place.'<sup>36</sup> The other good news was that the Treasury agreed to 'foot the bill' of the conference, which came in at rather over the expected cost. Importantly, this allowed Martin to consolidate his personal links with Treasury officials, where '[w]e have found a very sympathetic attitude in Mr P. D. Proctor who has succeeded Sir Alan Barlow.'<sup>37</sup> This link soon proved particularly valuable in discussions with the Treasury over the estimates for the Society's Parliamentary Grant application for 1949/50, which were 'quite friendly', although cuts were to be expected because in the midst of austerity 'strict economy is being urged within the Treasury on everything that does not make a direct contribution to "productivity".'<sup>38</sup> As it turned out, perhaps thanks to the biddable Mr Proctor, the cut was only £3000, and the Society's final award was £43 500.<sup>39</sup>

A second instructive example of Martin's links with Whitehall concerns the 'Newman project' for the development of computing equipment at Manchester University, and the way in which the Royal Society acted as a vehicle for the management of British science.<sup>40</sup> Newman had successfully applied in 1946 for a Royal Society grant of £35 000 to support the development of computing at Manchester. As the project grew in scope and applications came into view, in January 1949 Martin noted that the new Physical Secretary, David Brunt, 'informed me that he had discussed this project with Sir Ben Lockspeiser and had made the suggestion that the first payment for the computing machinery at Manchester should be made by means of the Treasury Grant already obtained by the Royal Society.'<sup>41</sup> After a meeting with an official from the Contracts Department of the Ministry of Supply, Brunt had discovered that

the contract with Ferranti for the Newman mathematical computing machine was likely to be of the order of £100,000 spread over a period of four years. The Ministry of Supply had the administrative machinery for dealing with a financial transaction of this magnitude and also the scientific staff for seeing that its progress would be satisfactory. On this basis he proposed to recommend to Council that after consultation and approval by the Treasury the Ministry of Supply should take over the whole of this project.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Royal Society seemed here to be acknowledging the limits to its capacity to manage large projects, the informal processes by which the business was managed are equally interesting. On Sunday 16 January, Martin and Brunt met Newman and Williams from Manchester at the Athenaeum to discuss the computing project.<sup>43</sup> A few weeks later Martin was able to draw on wartime contacts in Whitehall to seek further information, when he 'had lunch with Haylor, a former colleague at the Ministry of Supply and with D[avid] B[runt] we discussed the arrangements being made for the Manchester Computing Laboratory. It appeared that within the Ministry of Supply there was some considerable doubt about the scientific and technical progress of the work ...'<sup>44</sup> There were larger ideological considerations in play, too. Martin's discussion with Sir James Chadwick after the Council meeting on 13 January 1949 proved interesting:

He was particularly anxious that the Society should be careful to discourage fundamental research being placed in the hands of Government departments and urged the greatest vigilance. His reasons for doing this seemed to lie in his own experience, in the nuclear physics field, although he felt that in supporting the Newman project in

Manchester the Society should take the greatest care in having the last word on the programme of the work that is to be carried out on or by the machine.

But it wasn't all work: 'We also had a chat about sea trout fishing!'<sup>45</sup>

There were also, of course, limits to Martin's own authority and autonomy, even if this was sometimes a matter of drawing strategic boundaries. In January 1948 a meeting to discuss arrangements for the first meeting of the National Committee for Crystallography was

interrupted by a flying visit from Blackett and Bernal who had expended a few thousand pounds without getting proper cover from the Royal Society or the D.S.I.R. and wished to have the matter quickly put straight. There was nothing that the Royal Society could do to help them and it was up to Blackett and/or Bernal to make peace with the Treasury.<sup>46</sup>

In another case, Martin declined to help 'fix' a situation when, in March 1949,

[the] Science Director of the British Council telephoned . . . and said that an advertisement had appeared for the Director of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. He said that the British Council regarded it of the highest importance that if possible a United Kingdom citizen should fill the post. He stated that the British Council would be prepared to subsidise the salary in a substantial way to the extent of at least £1,000. He strongly desired me to make a few suggestions and I promised to discuss it with the Secretaries.

When he raised the matter with the former Physical Secretary, Alfred Egerton, at a meeting at the Royal Institution later in the day, Egerton was initially chagrined that the British Council 'had not made contact with him about this' directly, but quickly came up with the name of Norman Haworth. Martin felt it best for Egerton to continue the discussion directly himself with the British Council and Haworth 'and that the Society should take no official part in submitting suggested names.'<sup>47</sup>

Despite the boundaries he sometimes chose to draw around what counted as 'proper' conduct for himself and for the Society, the extent and depth of Martin's links to government and the civil service are clear. The diary contains many other examples. In January 1948 there was a visit to 'Mr. Bevir [*sic*] of 10 Downing Street' for a discussion of scientific relief matters.<sup>48</sup> Over lunch with his old friend Haylor he 'discussed various aspects of the work of the Research Policy Committee and the Advisory Committee on Science Policy.' Martin was particularly pleased that Haylor 'kindly agreed to introduce me to Montgomery, Secretary of the above two projects.'<sup>49</sup> Such introductions were invaluable for extending his range of contacts, for mediating business informally, for fixing preferred outcomes, and for resolving difficulties when (and, if possible, before) they arose. In early 1948, for example, Martin responded resolutely to a letter from the DSIR inviting the Royal Society to 'nominate delegates to a Congress of Chemistry due to take place in South America. I made contact with his department immediately and objected to this action which should properly be carried out by the Royal Society.' This act of 'encroachment' on the Society's rightful responsibilities quickly led Martin to seek a meeting with the Foreign Office, where he met B. McDermot, the relevant official, and was able to smooth out the formalities of arranging a UK delegation to the Fourth Chemical Congress in Santiago.<sup>50</sup>

While at the Foreign Office, Martin also met Mr Mason, the official 'who is apparently responsible for authorising cultural visits overseas. He informed me that any applications

by the Royal Society for foreign travel for culture purposes would have the support of the Foreign Office and that no difficulties should occur in respect of currency.’

[I] had the feeling before I made the visit that McDermot and his colleagues were not altogether au fait with the functions of the Royal Society with regard to delegates to overseas conferences but I think this impression was wrong and in actual fact McDermot is thoroughly aware of our responsibilities in this connexion. He did mention, however, that the use of the diplomatic bag had been very greatly restricted within the Foreign Office itself and he referred to a specific instance in which a copy of *The Listener* had been sent to Frau Planck. He asked me, therefore, not to communicate anything but the most important documents through the diplomatic bag.<sup>51</sup>

In mediating the Society’s relations with the Foreign Office and other government departments, Martin’s developing network of contacts acted both ways, and *he* could become the useful informal source. When concerns arose about Communists in government employment in 1948, scientists came under as much suspicion as anyone else in the emerging Cold War national security regime.<sup>52</sup> An interesting diary entry on 20 January 1949 indicates one way in which information about individuals’ political views circulated informally through Martin and the Royal Society:

Early this morning I had a call from the Foreign Office saying that [Foreign Secretary] Mr Bevin wished to have an opinion about the political views of Dr Trefouel, Director of the Institut Pasteur. Dr Trefouel was known personally to Sir Howard Florey who vouched that Dr Trefouel was not a Communist and if anything had de Gaullist sympathies. I indicated this information to Mr Lamb of the Foreign Office who was very grateful to have it so quickly.<sup>53</sup>

Clearly, we need to know more of such interactions to gauge how typical this exchange was, but it is a telling indication of the covert and ideological uses to which the close, informal links between scientific institutions and government could be put—and of Martin’s role as a conduit for information and intelligence.

#### THE ‘BIG HOUSE’: ROYAL SOCIETY ADMINISTRATION, STAFF AND PREMISES

Martin clearly took enormous pride in his work and in the Royal Society, closely identifying himself with the organization and its values. In November 1947 he reported that the ‘big news of the week was that the President and Sir Edward Appleton have been awarded Nobel Prizes, which news was received with great satisfaction.’<sup>54</sup> And in taking stock of 1948 Martin highlighted the improvement of morale among office staff, especially in the wake of the successful Scientific Information Conference: ‘I feel my policies on Staff responsibilities, salaries, etc., are working well and the loyalty and dutiful devotion of the team is the most rewarding experience of the year’ and ‘my wish that they should all be proud of their place in the team and their particular duty in the team is largely fulfilled.’<sup>55</sup> The improvements that Martin had worked hard to effect in the Society’s meetings, publications and soirées were having positive results ‘in the general respect which the Society has won among its sister societies.’ Much remained to be done to fulfil Martin’s vision, of course, and there were ‘shadows which I hope may be dispelled. We must safeguard our right to defy the bureaucrats when we feel it is in the interests of science—a keen vigilance is necessary here.’<sup>56</sup> So complete was Martin’s identification

with the Society that the 'we' and 'our' are particularly interesting here, coming as they do from an administrator.

This sense of pride and engagement also extended to the staff and fabric of the Society. As he began to get the Society's committees in order, Martin quickly stamped his authority on its administration. He inaugurated a monthly staff meeting in October 1947 'at which a Monthly Progress Report was discussed with the senior members of the Staff. I hope this will prove a useful forum for the discussions of Office matters in the future.'<sup>57</sup> There were, too, the usual markers of the ebb and flow of office life. After the inaugural staff meeting there was 'a special meeting at which tea and sherry were served' to mark the retirement of Mr Pocock, 'who had been in the Society's service for over 42 years. . . . On my invitation Mr. Davies, my predecessor, made the presentation to Pocock consisting of a watch, cutlery and a cigarette lighter.'<sup>58</sup> Martin was a considerate manager with respect for his staff. He was particularly pleased that he was able to persuade the Treasurer to improve the pension arrangements for the Librarian, H. W. Robinson, on his retirement. But there were less pleasant duties too: on 23 January 1948, '[f]ollowing a discussion in which I strongly rebuked him for insubordination, I received this morning the resignation of Screech who replaced Pocock a few months back.'<sup>59</sup>

His responsibilities naturally also extended to the maintenance of the Society's premises and facilities. In November 1947 he received Messrs Whipp and Hubble of the British Thomson-Houston Company, who 'came to discuss the installation of fluorescent lighting in the Society's apartments.'<sup>60</sup> Alongside this material refurbishment, he oversaw plans to improve the comforts of Burlington House in other ways. Early in 1949 he 'visited Barkers and selected a dinner set which I hope will be distinctive and attractive for the use of the Officers at Society luncheons in future.'<sup>61</sup> This was doubtless connected with plans to establish a staff restaurant, which came to fruition with a grand opening on 10 February—'a historical occasion as it was probably the first time that the Officers of the Society and the Staff all met together for a meal on the Society's premises.' Appropriately enough it was also 'the first occasion on which the "potato masher" made by Lord Rutherford when he was ten years old and presented by Dr E. Marsden, FRS, had been used as a gavel [sic] at a Society function.' At this gala event, 24 staff, 5 Officers and D. N. Lowe of the British Association sat down to a lunch of cream of tomato soup, roast stuffed turkey with brussels sprouts and risolée potatoes, apple pie and custard, cheese and biscuits and coffee. Martin pasted a copy of the menu of this 'happy occasion' into his diary, and confided that he hoped the restaurant 'in addition to providing good and inexpensive meals may be a means of bringing together the staffs of the societies in Burlington House and building up a community spirit.'<sup>62</sup> This grand experiment in (at least partial) egalitarianism also allowed Martin to show off the new facilities to guests and visitors for weeks to come, and illustrates how his contacts worked at all levels: his guests included his 'neighbour Mr Clark, of Staines Kitchen Equipment Limited' who was able to 'sample the lunch cooked in the equipment which he had been instrumental in supplying.'<sup>63</sup>

Despite these improvements to the amenities, the Society and its neighbours were beginning to feel rather cramped at Burlington House. Following the lead of his predecessor Henry Dale, Robinson pursued a controversial policy of trying to secure new premises for the Society and the other scientific societies. Stafford Cripps's Treasury was sympathetic to rehousing the scientific societies in a new Science Centre, perhaps alongside the Patent Office and Library, which needed new premises after the war.

To coordinate the needs and views of the learned societies, a Scientific Accommodation Committee was established, in which Martin took the prominent managing role—even if he took a rather jaundiced view of its activities. In a December 1947 meeting there was ‘a good deal of talk’ that only ‘provided an opportunity for ventilation about this question.’ Prophetically, Martin ‘felt that the Royal Society would be rather unwilling to leave the present premises in Burlington House and that the whole question of a scientific centre was made a great deal more difficult.’<sup>64</sup> Robinson was disappointed with Martin’s initial pessimism, but matters took a turn for the better in February 1948 when ‘representatives of the Ministry of Works called and laid before the Officers proposals that a site should be acquired in the Kensington High Street for a Science Centre.’ This would have provided spacious accommodation for the Royal Society and other scientific societies, and prompted a renewed burst of enthusiasm and administrative activity.<sup>65</sup> In the event, discussions over the proposed Science Centre dragged on for years, going through several proposed sites and many cycles of optimism and pessimism, until they finally petered out in the late 1950s.<sup>66</sup>

#### OUT TO LUNCH: THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL WORLDS OF SCIENTIFIC ADMINISTRATION

Alongside his formal duties, Martin acted as a hub for news, inside information and scientific intelligence. In October 1947,

Professor Hirst called... and informed me of the various changes in the Chairs of Chemistry which are to take place in Manchester University. His successor, E. R. H. Jones, has been instructed by his doctor to rest for a year and, if possible, to visit Switzerland to complete a cure for T.B. Polanyi is forsaking chemistry for philosophy, which fact will shortly be announced. This means that the Chemistry Department will need to have guidance from Professor Hirst from Edinburgh during part of 1948.

Over lunch, Martin and Hirst then ‘talked much about Scottish affairs.’<sup>67</sup> Indeed lunch figures prominently in the diary as a vehicle for mixing social and professional activities through the informal exchange of information—gossip, in other words. Over lunch he listened to the Marxist science journalist and former British Council official J. G. Crowther describing his recent visit to Poland in glowing terms.<sup>68</sup> New Year’s Day 1948 saw business as usual: a discussion with Professor Turnbull about ‘the proposal for assistance in connexion with the Newton Letters’; a conversation with Ian Heilbron, who ‘got rather worked up about his visit to France on behalf of the International Union’; and then lunch with Major Freeth of ICI to discuss ‘the possibility of obtaining Mr. Arnot’s assistance for the Scientific Information Conference.’<sup>69</sup> Here, indeed, was a nice example of the pleasurable effectiveness of lunch: within days, Arnot, of the Information Section of ICI Plastics Division, was duly appointed as assistant to the conference.

Whereas the Fellows’ professional socializing typically took place at the nearby Athenaeum, Martin’s social and professional networks came to centre on the Savage Club. In January 1948 he was ‘pleased to have notification of temporary membership of the Savage Club and a letter from Davidson Pratt inviting me to come along and have lunch with him there so that I can be introduced to Brother Savages.’<sup>70</sup> When his membership was confirmed, lunch at the Savage became a regular diary entry, with various kinds of business transacted, including a discussion of the Wilkins Lecture with

Andrade,<sup>71</sup> and a tête-a-tête with William Wardlaw, a former colleague from the Chemical Society with whom he discussed ‘a number of matters of mutual interest. We saw Roche Lynch [also of the Chemical Society] who encouraged me to nominate Wardlaw as a member of the Club.’<sup>72</sup> At the Savage and elsewhere, meals thus continued to serve a valuable function in the managing of business through convivial society. To some extent his work even permeated his home life. On Saturday, 14 February 1948 ‘Dr and Mrs Linstead were our guests at dinner and we discussed one or two matters of interest to the Society, in particular the names of fellows to the Chile Congress.’ After dinner, the Martins and their guests ‘enjoyed a television programme on a set which had been installed earlier in the week.’<sup>73</sup>

This socializing in the interests of work extended much further, and the diary sheds fascinating light on how social occasions mediated business and extended Martin’s networks of contacts. After a ‘meeting at the Armourers and Brasiers Hall at which they agreed to award a scholarship to the value of £850, plus 10% superannuation’, Martin ‘lunched with the Master and other members of the Committee and this was done in magnificent style’<sup>74</sup>—worthy of note in Cripps’s austerity Britain. A day later he ‘attended the annual luncheon of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee at the Savoy’, at which Sir John Anderson and Sir Charles Darwin were speakers, Anderson urging ‘the formation of Institutions like the M.I.T. and the Cal.Tech.’<sup>75</sup> In February he was the guest of Professor William McCrea at the Royal Astronomical Society Dining Club at Oddenino’s and attended an evening Royal Geographical Society dinner at the Rembrandt Hotel before a joint Royal Society/Royal Geographical Society meeting at which the Swedish oceanographer (and erstwhile nuclear physicist) Hans Pettersson was the star attraction.<sup>76</sup> Clearly, one needed to have a robust constitution to stand up to this barrage of hospitality.

If clubland and lunch were important in the informal management of Society business, the diary also shows how a wider range of social and honorific functions punctuated and shaped the Society’s activities and Martin’s professional life. At Burlington House there was a constant flow of overseas visitors and dignitaries, among them Pandit Nehru, who visited in October 1948.<sup>77</sup> On a more elevated plane still, the patronage indicated by the Society’s name occasionally gave rise to court occasions. On the morning of 6 November 1947, Martin joined a Royal Society delegation to Buckingham Palace to present ‘an Address of congratulations to His Majesty on the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Lieutenant Mountbatten’:

The Royal Society delegation was very colourful in academic robes of various colours. We arrived at the Palace about ten minutes to eleven and proceeded to a gallery adjacent to the Throne Room. I was much impressed by the freshness and richness of the decorations and by the pictures (mainly of the Dutch school) which adorned the walls of the gallery. Our deputation was second in the list of nine deputations being received—the first being the Lord Mayor and the Corporation of London, about 100 in all. We rehearsed the approach to the King which consisted of entering the door of the Throne Room, bowing, advancing to another pre-destined point, and bowing again. Apart from the Dean of Westminster, the Royal Society deputation was the only one in coloured robes.

The ceremony and the exchange of message and reply seem to have gone smoothly, and each of the delegation was presented to and shook hands with the King, Queen, Princess Elizabeth

and Lieutenant Mountbatten, before taking their leave from the Throne Room. After all this excitement, in the afternoon ‘Council sat and conducted a less than usual amount of business’, followed by a ‘largely attended’ and ‘wholly successful’ Bakerian Lecture ‘at which Dr Ricardo gave an excellent account of the development of the high speed Diesel Engine.’<sup>78</sup>

Martin began to move in the London diplomatic circuit, too. In November 1947 he ‘attended a Reception at the Russian Embassy. This was very crowded and I met very few people I knew. Professor and Mrs Andrade were there but I saw no other scientists of my acquaintance.’<sup>79</sup> Contacts at the American Embassy were more fruitful. In January 1948 he ‘met Professor Earl V. Evans, Chief Scientific Officer of the U.S. Embassy at lunch-time and introduced him to the Royal Institution, the Society for Visiting Scientists and our own premises. He seemed much interested in all these organizations and particularly in the Royal Society. . . . He struck me as being a very sincere and admirable ambassador for U.S. science.’<sup>80</sup> A few weeks later he had lunch with Evans and a couple of colleagues at the US Embassy canteen, ‘where the food sent from the USA was much above British standards’<sup>81</sup>—even, we must assume, the epicurean delights of the Society’s own staff restaurant.

#### WIDER HORIZONS: MARTIN AND POSTWAR SCIENTIFIC LONDON

Even in austerity Britain, food continued to mediate scientific business. In February 1949 he ‘had the Secretaries of the Burlington House scientific societies to lunch in my room. This was a very pleasant affair and some of them were meeting each other for the first time.’<sup>82</sup> His own standing among his fellow scientific administrators was clearly of concern to him. Beyond those immediately connected with his work for the Royal Society, however, Martin was active in several other scientific organizations, and his diary illuminates the broader scientific activities and politics of postwar London. On 24 October 1947 he ‘attended the Annual Dinner of the South London Entomological and Natural History Society and delivered for the first time an after dinner speech to about 100 people’, which ‘appeared to be well received.’ The following day he attended that Society’s annual exhibition, observing that the ‘natural historians possess an enthusiasm for their scientific pursuits which is not only sincere and happy but also very infectious.’<sup>83</sup> He also maintained his links with the Royal Society of Arts, attending a November meeting ‘where Princess Elizabeth, the new President, took the Chair. . . . She emphasised the desirability to us in these austere times of good design in industry and warmly supported the Society in its efforts in this direction. . . the Princess acquitted herself with great confidence and distinction.’<sup>84</sup>

It was the Society for Visiting Scientists (SVS), however, that occupied much of his time and energy outside the Royal Society. The SVS had been formed in 1944 as a result of an initiative by the Foreign Office, the British Council (through its then Science Director J. G. Crowther) and the Royal Society, initially as a meeting place for the many overseas scientists in exile in wartime London, but intended to continue after the war as a centre for visiting scientists. Its first President was the chemist F. G. Donnan; on the recommendation of A. V. Hill, Esther Simpson, of the Society for Protection of Science and Learning, became its Secretary (and remained so until its demise in 1966).<sup>85</sup> It organized wide-ranging discussion meetings and—in principle at least—served a

valuable social function as an international meeting place. In late October 1947, however, Martin attended a meeting of the SVS that was

very poorly attended, the number not being more than about ten in all. Sir W. Wavell Wakefield, M.P. and Captain A. R. Blackburn, M.P., spoke about the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, somewhat laboriously and without bringing matters to a point. Blackburn especially seemed to me to be dangerous because of his departure from scientific fact. . . . It seems a pity that the interest of scientists in law-making should be so luke-warm.<sup>86</sup>

In January 1948 Martin heard an account of the organization of scientific research in Belgium, where an 'unusual significance seemed to be given . . . to the political associations of scientists and collaborative development was greatly retarded because of the strong views held by the catholics.'<sup>87</sup>

If the talks were eye-openers in different ways, there were significantly larger management problems at the SVS, in which Martin became involved. He attended a meeting of its Executive Committee, which 'had been informed in a very roundabout and unbusinesslike manner that its liquidation was imminent. A considerable discussion on the management of the S.V.S. and its possible future took place. I advocated a go-slow movement and an interview with the Chairman of the British Council and it was agreed that Sir Harold Spencer Jones should do this.'<sup>88</sup> Martin was becoming a shrewd tactician, which was a valuable asset in his work for the troubled SVS. In mid 1948 the organization was thrown into crisis 'when the British Council withdrew £2,000 of its £4,000 annual grant'; there were also 'political difficulties . . . some of the key offices being held by a communist'—presumably J. G. Crowther—and 'the British Council threatened to withdraw all support.' A change of officers was made and a 'great deal of effort has since gone into re-organizing the affairs of the Society. The first step was to regain the goodwill of organized science in this country and secondly, to increase the membership. Steps towards this end are being taken.'<sup>89</sup> These 'steps' seemed to work, because within a couple of weeks the British Council was 'taking a more favourable view of the Society's activities', and a meeting with its representatives on 19 January was 'useful'<sup>90</sup>—to the extent that the Council found £500 a week or two later 'to help in the redecoration of the premises.'<sup>91</sup>

Martin was also much involved with the Royal Institution—where his later experience was similarly fraught. The diary notes many of the discourses he attended, and sometimes his evaluations of them. In February 1948, for example, Canon C. E. Raven, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, gave a talk on the history of science that 'referred to a number of neglected aspects and painted a picture on a very wide canvas extending over many centuries.' Raven 'appeared to be seeking to impress and was in this sense unsatisfactory. It was unusual to find the gospel of science being so fervently preached by a theologian.'<sup>92</sup> But again, management issues exercised Martin most. He was appointed a Visitor at the Royal Institution in January 1949—and later a Manager—and took a characteristically active part in the governance of the institution. When he attended the General Meeting of the Royal Institution in February he was 'somewhat discouraged to hear the intimation that Lord Brabazon of Tara is to be nominated as President in succession to the late Lord Rayleigh. As far as my experience goes Lord Brabazon's scientific experience seemed to be somewhat limited for such a high office.'<sup>93</sup> He also played a significant mediating role in the unfortunate Andrade affair in 1951–52.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, the Royal Institution, and the SVS, remained important to him as vehicles for the wider engagement in and promotion of science that he considered important but that were, then, outside the remit of his employer.

#### AFTER THE DIARY: MARTIN'S LATER CAREER

Punctuating the routine of meetings, committees, management of the office and working lunches, the diary shows that Martin undertook several other tasks on the Society's behalf, some of which were particularly enjoyable. Early in January 1949 there was a trip to the Public Records Office with Andrade (recently appointed Honorary Librarian) to obtain advice about rebinding the Society's original copy of Newton's *Principia*. They took the opportunity to see the Domesday Book and letters concerning the Gunpowder Plot on display in the Public Records Office's Museum.<sup>95</sup> Later the same day, the discussion of arrangements for A. K. Lawrence's official portrait of Robert Robinson involved an interesting tour of the Society's portraiture.<sup>96</sup> The diary gives the occasional indication of Martin's wry sense of humour: 'Professor Bernal called this afternoon and described himself as being in a state of mental exhaustion. This did not prevent him from dilating at large on the question of publication of scientific papers with which he is very much pre-occupied at the present time.'<sup>97</sup> And it shows that word of his capabilities and acumen was spreading. In February 1948 he met E. P. Hudson, a Director of Scottish Agricultural Industries and representative of T. & H. Smith Ltd, an Edinburgh firm of manufacturing chemists.

He explained that T. & H. Smith were anxious to re-staff the senior posts of the organization with a view to converting its conservative policy (introduced by a liberal board of directors) to a forward looking progressive policy in chemical manufacture and he invited me to consider joining with the managing director in re-staffing and re-organizing the firm, indicating that an initial salary of £2,000 a year would be available.

Martin 'pointed out the attractions of my present post and indicated my lack of experience in the material field' but agreed to consider the offer. He immediately discussed the offer with Society Officers, who expressed the hope that he 'would not decide to leave the Royal Society.'<sup>98</sup> He did not leave, remaining with the Society until his death at his home in the Society's apartments in 1976.

Some of the issues that began to emerge in the period covered by Martin's diary only came to fruition later: for example, the search for a larger home for the Royal Society was not resolved until the mid 1960s, when the Society acquired its current premises in Carlton House Terrace. Martin naturally had a key role in the negotiations with government officials, in organizing the new premises and the move, and in the arrangements for the royal opening ceremony on 21 November 1967.<sup>99</sup> Other issues emerged as new challenges and opportunities unforeseen in the diary. Just as he had overseen the Scientific Information Conference of 1948, Martin was indispensable in the organization of the Royal Society's—and the UK's—contribution to the International Geophysical Year (IGY) in 1957. He oversaw both the scientific and popular reporting of the IGY, and published several articles about it.<sup>100</sup> Following his death, a geographical feature of Antarctica was named the Martin Ice Rise.<sup>101</sup> After the IGY, among other key contributions he had a pivotal role in the development of institutional structures for and

the administration of British space science, organized the Royal Society's tercentenary celebrations in 1960—another virtuoso performance—and created the machinery for integrating the Royal Society with a changing political and scientific landscape in Europe, the Commonwealth and more widely still through international organizations. The Society's administrative structures, its staff and its financial responsibilities continued to expand: during his tenure, the Society's annual Parliamentary grant-in-aid increased from £36 000 to about £2 million, and its staff grew from about 30 to about 100.<sup>102</sup> Martin did more than administer this growth: he helped create it and, even by the late 1960s, publicly marvelled at it in reflexive recognition of his own achievements.<sup>103</sup>

Of course, the Royal Society shaped Martin just as he helped shape the Royal Society. His career was made possible by the institution whose prestige he worked hard to sustain and promote: he benefited as much as any Fellow from the Society's status and the social spheres in which it allowed him to move. And he was shaped in other ways, too. For much of his career he remained the 'invisible administrator', working quietly behind the scenes, monitoring, facilitating and directing the Society's work. Afterwards he was accorded the exceptional honour for a non-Fellow of a full Royal Society Biographical Memoir. His obituarists, Harrie Massey and Harold Thompson, both Officers of the Society who had worked with him, recorded Martin's character, his career and his accomplishments, including those listed here.<sup>104</sup> But the bare outlines of his professional life do not do justice to the rich texture of everyday activity revealed by the diary. As an administrator, Martin ranged across every aspect of the Society's activity, from choosing cutlery for its restaurant to paying court at Buckingham Palace, and from Burlington House to Antarctica and even the reaches of space. His actions facilitated the growth of British science and its institutions and—even in the short span of the diary—show in telling detail how the close and informal links between the Royal Society and the centres of political and financial power actually worked. In the twentieth century, the lived practice of scientific administration was not incidental to scientific work: it was a precondition for it.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### NOTES

- 1 H. Massey and H. Thompson, 'David Christie Martin', *Biogr. Mem. Fell. R. Soc.* **24**, 390–407 (1978). Also see 'Dr. D. C. Martin. The Royal Society's chief of staff', *New Scient.* (22 December), 1646–1647 (1960).
- 2 S. Shapin, 'The invisible technician', *Am. Scient.* **77** (November–December), 554–563 (1989).
- 3 For one good example, see S. Shapin, *The scientific life: a moral history of a late modern vocation* (Chicago University Press, 2008).
- 4 D. C. Martin, 'Royal Society Diary', Royal Society Archives. In what follows, all quotations are cited as 'Diary' with the relevant date or (in the case of amalgamated entries extending over a longer period) page number.

- 5 There is also a brief interruption in the flow from 10 to 22 November 1947 when Martin was unwell at home, but still making diary notes, recording for example the award of Nobel prizes to Robinson and Appleton and the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh on 20 November.
- 6 D. Hudson and K. W. Luckhurst, *The Royal Society of Arts, 1754–1954* (John Murray, London, 1954), p. 362.
- 7 Massey and Thompson, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 393.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 See, for example, D. C. Martin papers [hereafter DCM] Box 3, folder ‘Utilisation of surplus explosives’, Royal Society Archives.
- 11 J. Rowlinson, ‘The wartime work of Hinshelwood and his colleagues’, *Notes Rec. R. Soc. Lond.* **58**, 161–175 (2004).
- 12 Details of Martin’s job applications and testimonials can be found in DCM Box 1, folder ‘Private File M.1’, Royal Society Archives.
- 13 D. H. Whiffen and D. H. Hey, *The Royal Society of Chemistry: the first 150 years* (Royal Society of Chemistry, London, 1991), pp. 16–17.
- 14 P. Collins, ‘Presidential politics: the controversial election of 1945’, *Notes Rec. R. Soc.* **65**, 325–342 (2011).
- 15 This work was later recognized by the presentation to Martin of a silver bowl; the occasion and his acceptance speech are recorded in the diary, on 5 February 1948.
- 16 Diary, p.1.
- 17 Diary, 10 January 1948. Robinson had visited Stockholm in December 1947 to receive the 1947 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.
- 18 Diary, 24 February 1949. Merton continued as Treasurer until 1956.
- 19 Diary, 13 January 1948.
- 20 Diary, 19 January 1948.
- 21 Diary, 2 February 1948.
- 22 Diary, 3 March 1949. Statute 12 allows for the election of not more than one person per year who, in the judgement of Council, has ‘rendered conspicuous service to the cause of science, or are such that their election would be of signal benefit to the Society by reason of their great experience in other walks of life.’ See J. S. Rowlinson and N. H. Robinson, *The Record of the Royal Society of London: supplement to the fourth edition for the years 1940–1989* (Royal Society, London, 1992), p. 45.
- 23 Diary, 27 November 1947.
- 24 Diary, 17 February 1949.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Diary, 23 January 1948.
- 27 Diary, 23 January 1948; the first meeting was held on 10 January 1949.
- 28 Diary, 27 October 1947.
- 29 Diary, 15 February 1949.
- 30 *The Royal Society Scientific Information Conference. Report and papers submitted* (Royal Society, London, 1948).
- 31 Diary, 24 and 30 October 1947.
- 32 Diary, 3 November 1947.
- 33 Diary, 8 December 1947.
- 34 Diary, 12 January 1948.
- 35 Diary, 21 January 1948.
- 36 Diary, p. 25; D. Muddiman, ‘Red information science: J. D. Bernal and the nationalization of scientific information in Britain from 1930 to 1949’, in *The history and heritage of scientific and technological information systems* (ed. W. B. Rayward and M. E. Bowden), pp. 258–266

- (Chemical Heritage Foundation and American Society for Information Science and Technology, Philadelphia, PA, 2004); D. Muddiman, 'Red information scientist: the information career of J. D. Bernal', *Journal Document*. **59**, 387–409 (2003).
- 37 Diary, p. 27.
- 38 Diary, 3 January 1949.
- 39 Diary, 12 January 1949.
- 40 On the background to this project, see M. Croarken, 'The beginnings of the Manchester computer phenomenon: people and influences', *IEEE Ann. Hist. Comput.* **15**, 9–16 (1993).
- 41 Diary, 4 January 1949. Lockspeiser was then Chief Scientist at the Ministry of Supply. In February 1949 he was appointed head of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research; a month later he was elected FRS. See A. P. J. Edwards, 'Ben Lockspeiser', *Biogr. Mem. Fell. R. Soc.* **39**, 246–261 (1994).
- 42 Diary, 10 January 1949; D. Edgerton, 'Whatever happened to the British warfare state? The Ministry of Supply, 1945–1951', in *Labour Governments and private industry: the experience of 1945–1951* (ed. Helen Mercer *et al.*), pp. 91–116 (Edinburgh University Press, 1992).
- 43 Diary, 16 January 1949.
- 44 Diary, 28 February 1949.
- 45 Diary, 13 January 1949.
- 46 Diary, 16 January 1948.
- 47 Diary, 7 March 1949.
- 48 Diary, 26 January 1948.
- 49 Diary, 25 February 1948.
- 50 Diary, 5 January 1948.
- 51 Diary, 13 January 1948.
- 52 P. Hennessy and G. Brownfeld, 'Britain's Cold War security purge: the origins of positive vetting', *Hist. J.* **25**, 965–973 (1982).
- 53 Diary, 20 January 1949.
- 54 Diary, entry for 10–15 November 1947.
- 55 Diary, p. 29.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 Diary, 31 October 1947.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 Diary, 23 January 1948.
- 60 Diary, 7 November 1947.
- 61 Diary, 7 January 1949.
- 62 Diary, 10 February 1949.
- 63 Diary, 11 February 1949.
- 64 Diary, 4 December 1947.
- 65 Diary, 26 February 1948.
- 66 On the various 'Science Centre' plans, see J. Hughes, 'A New Jerusalem for British science? Government, the Royal Society and postwar London', *Br. J. Hist. Sci.* (Forthcoming.)
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- 68 Diary, 4 November 1947.
- 69 Diary, New Year's Day 1948.
- 70 Diary, 6 January 1948. On the importance of informal meeting-places for the conduct of scientific business, see P. Chaston, 'Gentlemanly professionals within the Civil Service: scientists as insiders during the interwar period', PhD thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury (1997).
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- 72 Diary, 1 February 1949.

- 73 Diary, 21 February 1948.
- 74 Diary, 26 January 1949.
- 75 Diary, 27 January 1949. On discussions of educational reform in this period, see G. Ortolano, *The two cultures controversy: science, literature and cultural politics in postwar Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- 76 Diary, 21 February 1949.
- 77 Diary, pp. 27 and 28.
- 78 Diary, 6 November 1947.
- 79 Diary, 7 November 1947.
- 80 Diary, 7 January 1948.
- 81 Diary, 26 January 1948.
- 82 Diary, 25 February 1949.
- 83 Diary, 24–25 October 1947.
- 84 Diary, 5 November 1947.
- 85 R. M. Cooper (ed.), *Refugee scholars: conversations with Tess Simpson* (Moorland Books, Leeds, 1992), pp. 48–51. F. Donaldson, *The British Council: the first fifty years* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1984), is strangely reticent on the Council's postwar activities in science.
- 86 Diary, 29 October 1947.
- 87 Diary, 16 January 1948.
- 88 Diary, 27 January 1948.
- 89 Diary, p. 26.
- 90 Diary, 12 and 19 January 1949.
- 91 Diary, 2 February 1949.
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- 97 Diary, 8 January 1948.
- 98 Diary, 10 February 1948.
- 99 D. C. Martin, 'Former homes of the Royal Society', *Notes Rec. R. Soc. Lond.* **22**, 12–19 (1967); 'Formal opening of the Royal Society's new home', *Notes Rec. R. Soc. Lond.* **23**, 1–10 (1968).
- 100 For example, D. C. Martin, 'The International Geophysical Year', *Science News* **45**, 3–24 (1957); 'Some achievements of the International Geophysical Year', *J. R. Soc. Arts* **107**, 406–422 (1959). On Martin's role in the organization of media coverage of the IGY, see DCM Box 2, Royal Society Archives.
- 101 DCM Box 1, folder 2, 'Martin Ice Rise', Royal Society Archives.
- 102 Massey and Thompson, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 394.
- 103 D. C. Martin, speech at Council Dinner, 18 January 1968, DCM Box 4, Royal Society Archives.
- 104 For an example of the 'invisible administrator', compare the accounts of the Royal Society and UK space research in Massey and Thompson, *op. cit.* (note 1) with that in K. Pounds, 'The Royal Society's formative role in UK space research', *Notes Rec. R. Soc.* **64**, S65–S76 (2010).