Tips and Strategies for publishing a research monograph
Why write a Monograph?

- It encapsulates a BIG idea or argument
- It allows you the space and depth to convey the richness of your research and the reach of your argument
- It is important (in History especially) for jobs, promotions etc.
- Monographs normally c.100,000 words
- It is NOT your PhD
- And it is a BIG commitment
Which publisher?

- Choose a publisher that publishes the kind of book you want to write.

- Prestige? The University presses in UK and USA have most prestige BUT may be slow, have smaller lists and less reach than the commercial presses (eg. Bloomsbury). Also consider RHS Monograph series; IHR New Historical Perspectives which have early career lists and will offer significant support.

- MUP and Palgrave both have Women’s and Gender History series. A series will have series’ editors who advise the publishing editor on quality of proposals etc and who also solicit proposals.

- It is worth contacting a commissioning editor or series’ editors before you send in a proposal to test the water.
Pitching a Proposal

• Use the publisher’s template or form
• Will usually require (from a first author) a full, persuasive proposal plus two chapters
• Identify the key features of your work – how does it stand out? Why this topic and why now? And why you?
• Get an experienced author to look over your proposal (ideally get sight of a successful one)
• If pitching to a series can be useful contacting the appropriate series editor beforehand
• Send it in to the commissioning editor
First monographs

- NOT A PhD!
- MUP states:
  - ‘We do not publish PhD theses. In a small number of cases, where the research is of exceptionally high quality and broad appeal, we can consider a book that takes thesis research as its starting point and expands upon it significantly, on the strict understanding that it must have been entirely rewritten and restructured for a wider audience.’
- Normally require significant NEW material (eg two chapters and a rewrite)
- Monographs would normally exclude much of the framing and scaffolding required in a PhD
From pitch to contract

- See MUPs summary of the process here: https://manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/the-peer-review-and-commissioning-process/
- Proposals are normally sent to at least TWO external reviewers who are asked to provide detailed reports
- Reports are sent to the author, usually with accompanying text from the commissioning editor
- Normally (unless outright reject) author is asked to respond to the reports and defend against criticisms etc.
- At this stage editor might request a new or revised proposal, additional chapters or a full manuscript
- For first time authors, contract not normally issued until full manuscript is received and had been favourably reviewed by a reader (and there still might be changes to take on board at this stage)
- Contract will specify delivery date, word length, number of illustrations etc.
- REMEMBER: decisions are made on basis of the scholarly quality of the proposal but also commercial considerations (will it sell? What is the market?)
From contract to book

- Once you have a contract you will be left alone to finish the book (at this stage use your network of colleagues/friends to read chapters or the whole thing. Don’t submit a MS without having had it read by someone you trust to be critical.)

- Publishers expect the Manuscript to be delivered on time – if delayed you must speak to them as they have fixed publication schedules

- Following submission of a final MS (ensure you adhere to publisher’s style – it saves much work later on!) it will be approved in house then sent to a copyeditor to ensure conformity to house style etc. Copyeditors do not pick up your mistakes! They are not historians.

- Copyeditor will contact you to clarify any changes/edits. This is your last change to make substantive changes

- Proofs of the final book are sent to you for checking which you MUST do with a fine tooth comb! There are always mistakes. You cannot add additional material at this stage.

- And that’s it – the publisher has the book printed and you have a lovely book launch.