GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Sian Barber's excellent introduction to film and history is a fitting first volume in the Institute of Historical Research's new series of research guides. The series aims to introduce first-time researchers to a field or sub-discipline of history and then navigate them through its historiography, methodology and opportunities for original research. Barber's guide does all this very effectively, giving the reader a firm understanding of the challenges but also the rich rewards and insights that arise from using film as historical evidence. As Barber emphasises, film is one of the most important and familiar cultural artefacts of the twentieth century: it both shapes and reflects the social and political contexts in which it is made, and the skilled historian needs to be alert to the technology and aesthetics of film in order to understand better what is going on when the screen becomes the source.

The volume provides a thorough introduction to history in film, and of the history of film as a source. Barber is careful to introduce the practical aspects of using film as evidence in historical inquiry. I anticipate that this volume will equip the reader to carry through the research process, from the first formulation of research questions to writing up findings for publication.

The Institute of Historical Research, University of London, has long been a provider of guides and research tools for historians. I am so very pleased that Sian Barber's volume is the first of a new series that will carry on that tradition.

Professor Miles Taylor, Director, Institute of Historical Research