

**Citation to award Honorary Degree to Prof Sir David Cannadine
Presented by Lucian J. Hudson
Manchester Degree Ceremony, Bridgewater Hall, 10th June 2016**

Vice-Chancellor, colleagues, graduates, guests:

Professor Sir David Cannadine is one of the pre-eminent historians of his generation. He has made an outstanding contribution to academic scholarship, and his work has enriched British social and cultural life more broadly, helping us to understand better who we are and where we have come from.

Among David's best known books are *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, chronicling social and economic change across a century; *Ornamentalism*, emphasising the importance of class and status in contemporary understandings of Empire; and *The Undivided Past*, arguing for a radical new approach to history itself. His most recent book is a study of George V, reflecting his long-standing interest in the role and position of the British monarchy.

David read history at Cambridge and earned his doctorate from Oxford, before returning to Cambridge as a lecturer and fellow at Christ's College – that great stable of eminent historians – Jack Plumb, Simon Schama and Linda Colley are other great examples.

It was here he met the OU's Vice-Chancellor, Peter Horrocks, when he taught him History as an undergraduate student. I am told that even then Peter was hugely bright and destined for great things – although his journalism deadlines were known to overtake his academic ones on occasion. His outstanding essay on Sir Robert Peel and the Corn Laws remains eagerly awaited! Furthermore, Peter's wife Rosemary was also a student of History, which is how they met. The benefits of History appear to be endless!

He later took up a chair in history at Columbia University and subsequently became Director and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Professor at the Institute of Historical Research in London. He is now the Dodge Professor of History at Princeton and a visiting Professor at Oxford.

Raised on the work of Eric Hobsbawm, Asa Briggs, AJP Taylor and Hugh Trevor-Roper, David's own publications are in the best tradition of British historical writing: ambitious, expansive and accessible to the public. A further notable achievement was getting the 30 years' rule on release of government records reduced to 15. His work is astonishingly broad as well as deeply learned, stretching across social, cultural, economic, political and imperial history. It has been profoundly influential for several generations of scholars, while also informing popular understanding of British history. His extensive work on radio and television and in newspapers has made him a much respected commentator on current events as well as historical debates.

David is the general editor of the *History of Britain* and the *History of Europe* series for Penguin, and is the editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Outside academia, he has chaired the Blue Plaques Panel for English Heritage and the

board of trustees at the National Portrait Gallery. Sir David is a Trustee of the Wolfson Foundation, the Royal Academy, Historic Royal Palaces, the Rothschild Archive, the Gladstone Library and the Gordon Brown Archive.

Crediting his own passion for history to an inspirational teacher, David has a long-standing interest in the way in which the subject is taught in schools. His book, *The Right Kind of History*, argues for its importance in the development of engaged, responsible and active citizens. When meeting politicians and policy makers, he continues to champion the cause of exciting and effective history-teaching across a broad and imaginative curriculum.

A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, the Royal Society of Arts, the Royal Society of Literature, the Society of Antiquaries and the British Academy, David has been knighted for services to scholarship, and has been honoured many times for his exceptional academic achievements. We are delighted to recognise both his scholarship and his contribution to the historical profession more generally, as an advocate for history as an essential and relevant subject in a complex and changing world.

Vice-Chancellor, by the authority of the Senate, I present to you for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, David Cannadine.

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