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OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Sir Edward Grey and the Outbreak of the First World War

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Historical Branch &
International History Department, London School of Economics

Lancaster House, London

Friday 7 November 2014

This one-day conference, organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the London School of Economics, focuses on reappraising Britain's decision to enter the First World War and on the role played by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.

Many of the standard surveys and interpretations of this topic are almost a generation old but the larger debate about war origins has continued to develop. Niall Ferguson's *The Pity of War* (1998) posed provocative questions about British involvement. More recently a succession of pre-centenary studies have attempted to dethrone the 'German paradigm' or concentration on German responsibility that characterized the Fritz Fischer debate in the 1960s, and to suggest that responsibility was shared or even lay predominantly with the Triple Entente. Meanwhile Grey himself remains an enigmatic figure in the conduct of British foreign policy. Historiographical developments, as well as the centenary of the start of the War, therefore suggest that a reappraisal of pre-war British diplomacy is overdue.

The conference will examine not only the July-August 1914 crisis but also the pre-war decade of relations between Britain and the Central Powers and between Britain and the Entente. It will consider how other Powers viewed British policy as well as how Britain viewed them. And although its focus will be on Grey's personality and leadership, the Foreign Office and the diplomatic corps, attention will be given as necessary to other parts of Whitehall, to Westminster politics, and to British public opinion more broadly.

Speakers will include: Roy Bridge, Christopher Clark, Keith Hamilton, John Keiger, Annika Mombauer, Thomas Otte, Keith Robbins, Richard Smith, Zara Steiner and Keith Wilson.

Attendance is free but numbers are limited. If you are interested in attending please RSVP, by 6 October, to historianevents@fco.gsi.gov.uk to be added to the registration list.

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