

Symeon

Issue Two, 2012

Welcome to the second issue of *Symeon*. We are continuing as we began last year, as a student-run magazine for alumni and friends of the Durham University history department, publishing a selection from the on-going research by members of the department at all levels. Whilst we hope that you enjoy simply receiving news from your old department, we are also aware that *Symeon* has its place in the increasingly noticeable groundswell of change in the way that universities communicate with the world around them. Spaces previously divided by a clear boundary between 'academia' and the 'extra-mural' are becoming a much more open field of interaction. This is partly a consequence of new technologies, (you might be reading this magazine in electronic PDF or in paper-and-ink format). But there are also new paths of thought and new imperatives and solutions at work, and two recent developments in Durham illustrate this well.

You may already be aware that Durham alumni now have free access to the huge online archive of scholarly journals at JSTOR, a notable step towards realizing the full public benefit of the electronic dissemination of research. We would love to hear how readers have been able to make use of this resource for work or pleasure. At the other end of the technological spectrum was a conference recently hosted by the department for teachers of history in secondary schools. The teachers met with academics and postgraduates to discuss ways in which tertiary and secondary layers of education could support each other in their teaching, discussion which by chance against the background of the education secretary's announcement that universities may in the future be asked to play a greater role in developing school curricula. But whatever the politicians at the centre decide, these are exciting times for initiatives which are growing from the ground up, at Durham no less than elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the department's research takes on new forms all the time, but the essence of thoughtful enquiry remains the same. For this issue colleagues have kindly contributed a range of articles: some topical, some that may act as postcards from the north east for those you who have moved away, and some more personal reflections on life in research and teaching, as well as two impressive pieces by undergraduates and more besides. Once again, we hope that you enjoy the read and look forward to hearing from you via the usual channels – please see the last page for details.

Philippa Haughton, Ben Pope and Lindsay Varner

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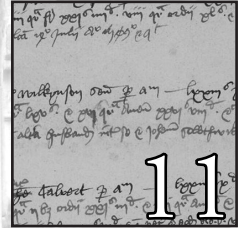
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Front: Ranald Michie's office (design: Philippa Haughton); inside front: County Court magistrate James Yosea Ramadalla, wearing the colonial chief's Belt of Honour and Equatoria Province badge of his father, Chief Yosea Ramadalla of Dimu, in his house in Yei town, South Sudan, 2005 (photo: Cherry Leonardi); inside rear: The Durham Gospels, f.38 (Durham Cathedral Manuscript A.II.17, with permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral); rear: Palace Green in the eighteenth century (with permission of Durham University Library)

Durham History on the Web

Throughout the magazine we will be introducing websites and blogs run by staff and students, so that you can also read about (and interact with) current research from Durham on the internet.

The Queen in Australia



Prof Jo Fox was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University in 2011. Her visit coincided with the sixteenth official visit to Australia by Queen, and she was asked to introduce a film made of her first visit in 1954. That film

was Stanley Hawes' *The Queen in Australia*, which became an important landmark in the evolution of Australian documentary production: it was the first full-length documentary, and the first in colour.

While Australia had received royal visitors before, 1954 marked the first visit by a reigning monarch. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived into Sydney Harbour on the SS Gothic in February of that year, and undertook an extensive tour of the Australian states, covering Canberra, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. *The Queen in Australia* was the official record of that visit, but to the Director, Stanley Hawes, and his Film Unit, it represented much more.

Stanley Hawes, whose papers are held at the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA), was born in 1905 in England. He worked as a clerk in the City of Birmingham where he also co-founded and acted as secretary to the Birmingham Film Society. This latter association brought him into contact with the founder of the British documentary film movement, John Grierson, at a conference of Film Societies in Welwyn Garden City in the early 1930s. Hawes moved to London in the hope of breaking into the film industry and, although he was initially unable to secure a position with Grierson's General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit, another contact, documentarist Paul Rotha, found him work alongside Mary Field and Bruce Woolf at Gaumont-British Instructional.¹ He moved to Strand Production with Rotha, and began to produce films under contract to Grierson's unit from the mid-1930s. Hawes was very much a documentary purist, a label he perceived as a badge of honour which he wore proudly when in conflict with colleagues later in his career. This came from his early association with Grierson's documentary idea and his productions from the mid- to late-1930s, such as *Dry Dock* (1936), *Here is the Land* (1937), *Water Power* (1937) and *Monkey into Man* (1938).

The outbreak of war in September 1939 initially proved disastrous for Grierson's

¹ Correspondence between Stanley Hawes and Paul Rotha, January-March 1935, Box 83 (312), Stanley Hawes Papers, National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA), Canberra. Materials from the Stanley Hawes Papers are reproduced here with the kind permission of his family. Research at the NFSA was carried out whilst a Visiting Fellow with the Humanities Research Centre, RSHA, Australian National University.

‘documentary boys’, as they had become known, and their prolific output of the 1930s slowed considerably. As Hawes recalled, production ‘was at a standstill... most of us were out of work, but were classified in reserved occupations.’² It is therefore unsurprising that when Hawes received an invitation to join Grierson at the newly formed National Film Board of Canada in 1940 to cover the Canadian contribution to the war, he jumped at what he described as this ‘real pioneer job.’³ He took up the post of Head of Production.

The experience at the National Film Board of Canada was to prove crucial for Hawes. Following in the footsteps of his Canadian colleague Ralph Foster, Hawes assumed control of the fledgling Australian National Film Board (ANFB) in 1946. Despite only being on loan from the Canadian National Film Board and despite his threats to return there following numerous run-ins with politicians in Canberra, Hawes remained in Australia and in post until his retirement in 1970. During that time, Hawes oversaw the emergence of a state-sponsored documentary in Australia, embodied within the Australian National Film Board and its production arm, the Commonwealth Film Unit. This Unit was responsible for numerous productions, including *The Queen in Australia*, which played a significant role in the projection of Australia and Australian national identity both within national borders and beyond them.⁴

The concept of a National Film Board was new to Australia. Emerging from the initial work of the Empire Marketing Board and the Imperial Relations Trust in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s and largely due to the direct and indirect influence of Grierson, the formation of National Film Boards in a number of countries provided the basis for the beginning of formal documentary film networks with the aim of producing a transnational model for state-sponsored film units. The units not only produced films to reflect national concerns, but they also had the expressed aim of crossing borders, responding to increasing globalization, confronting the Americanization of culture and drawing world attention to shared challenges such as the preservation of democracy, human and civil rights and the importance of education. The film board idea, as articulated by Grierson, sought to unite the national and international through a film programme that, in his words, projected ‘the horizons of national achievement... and the reality [which] lies outside the film-maker... [the reality that] lies all across the country, in the need for getting things done: in the plans... of economists, agriculturalists, engineers, civil servants,

² Interview with Stanley Hawes, National Film Board of Canada, Series 2, McGill University Archives, Montreal, Canada.

³ Ibid.

⁴ For a detailed discussion of the Commonwealth Film Unit and the work of Stanley Hawes, see Albert Moran, *Projecting Australia. Government film since 1945* (Sydney, 1991); Albert Moran, ‘Documentary Consensus: The Commonwealth Film Unit: 1954-1964’, in Tom O’Regan and Brian Shoemith (eds.), *History on/and/in Film* (Perth, 1987); Ina Bertrand and Diane Collins, *Government and Film in Australia* (Sydney, 1981); Ina Bertrand, ‘Theory into practice: Stanley Hawes and the Commonwealth Film Unit’, *First Release* 7 (1999). For a discussion of Post-War Australian documentary more generally, see Deane Williams, *Australian Post-War Documentary Film: An Arc of Mirrors* (Bristol, 2008).

traders, explorers, scientists, aviators, conservationists: in growing points of constructive action taken by communities and cities. These are the realities to which documentary seeks to give dramatic shape in order to fire the public imagination and the public will.' By taking such a projection of the nation forward, he continued, the documentary could 'clarify... problems common to every land. The understandings which it seeks to create are understandings demanded by all men. The imagination which it seeks to fire is an imagination necessary to the whole world if human progress is to be orderly and concerted'.⁵ Inspired by this concept, Grierson and his associates set up state-funded and sponsored National Film Units in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and Malaya and performed consultancy duties for international organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations. While the structure and operation of each unit differed according to local circumstance, this central idea remained the same, and they operated on a basis of mutual exchange and co-operation towards this end.

It was from this international idea, then, that the Australian National Film Board and the Commonwealth Film Unit (later Film Australia) were born. Grierson had initially recommended an Australian Unit to co-ordinate existing State activities to Prime Minister Robert Menzies on a visit for the Imperial Relations Trust in 1940. A combination of the demands of war, pressure from existing Australian film producers not to undercut their business and probably a personal dislike of Grierson himself meant that his recommendations were not initially acted upon, apart from the creation of a Documentary Film Committee under Alan Stout in New South Wales.⁶ However, by 1944, there was renewed pressure to revive the idea of a National Film Board to tackle the challenges of post-war reconstruction. A Commonwealth Film Conference was held in September 1944, bringing together state and educational representatives with members of government agencies. Using the Canadian Film Board aims and structures as a model, the Conference recommended the formation of an Australian Film Board. It was formally established by a Federal Cabinet decision in April 1945. Although it was not an independent body like its Canadian counterpart, its aims of national projection, education and international engagement remained the same.⁷ It was this unit that Hawes was to lead from 1946.

This background is essential to an understanding of the form of *The Queen in Australia*. In keeping with the Film Unit's remit of 'projecting Australia', its life, its people, its environment and its institutions, the film was as much an articulation of Australian

⁵ Parting letter from John Grierson to the National Film Board of Canada. This copy is undated. Box 68, Stanley Hawes Papers, NFSA.

⁶ The papers for this visit are kept at the John Grierson Archive, G4, items 1, 2 and 7, University of Stirling Special Collections, Stirling, Scotland. Some papers can also be found in the ANFB collections at the NFSA (title no. 392582, rack RMM001495-RMM001496). Alan Stout's papers may be consulted at the NFSA.

⁷ Details on the formation of the Australian National Film Board can be found in the ANFB collections at the NFSA (title no. 622535, rack RMM006336 and title no. 392582, rack RMM001495-RMM001496).



Image courtesy of Jonathan Pearson (Pearson Graphics)

The Queen on her sixteenth official visit to Australia in 2011

industry, nature, landscape, agriculture, and the evolution of a progressive, modern democracy as it was the story of a Royal Visit. Production notes made by Stanley Hawes confirm that the film, in his words, was ‘not going to be a mere record of the Tour, following the Royal Party around from place to place, but will attempt to be a film with a cohesive form.’ It was to ‘present Australia against a Royal background, rather than Royalty against an Australian background.’⁸ The various sequences reflect the themes and interests at the centre of the Unit’s productions of the late 1940s to the late 1950s, as well as Hawes’ own ‘purist’ vision derived from his training within the documentary film movement. It also reflects some of the tensions inherent in developing a pre-existing documentary tradition in a new and different environment with limited access to technical and experienced personnel, something Hawes frequently commented upon in his personal correspondence in this period. British documentarist Harry Watt, advising the Australian National Film Board in 1946, encouraged them to be ‘self-critical [rather than] self-laudatory’, and to embrace significant themes such as ‘soil erosion, conservation of water, reafforestation etc’. ‘Let’s hope we get them,’ he stated, ‘I’m terrified that we will see kangaroos, koala bears, and fields

⁸ Letter from Stanley Hawes to Kevin Murphy, 9 December 1953. Available at: http://www.abc.net.au/aplacetothink/#watch/mh_1950/queen/productionFiles. Excerpts from the film and stills can also be consulted here.

of waving wheat.⁹ *The Queen in Australia* would not have allayed Watt's fears, but equally it does attempt to present a new and progressive Australia in some of its sequences.

To the modern audience, as Albert Moran and others have pointed out, there are a number of phrases and sequences that jar in this film; at the same time, it is a product of post-war progressive aspiration, and the film offers a specific vision and indeed a record of some aspects of the 1950s – of hope, unity, and affluence. It is unsurprising, given the focus of the Unit, that it does not have the feel of a deep, self-critical reflection of Australian society in the period, but, in this way, becomes a fascinating historical record of how Australia was to be seen and its self-image as understood by Hawes and his team.

There is much to say of this film's achievements. *The Queen in Australia* was the first Australian colour feature film, shot on 35mm film instead of the unit's normal 16mm for non-theatrical distribution. The task in hand was formidable for Hawes' unit – in 1952, it had only 33 production staff and 16 supporting administrative posts, producing c.23 films per year.¹⁰ Now, it was charged with covering an extensive Royal Tour, lasting from 3 February to 1 April 1954. In preparation for filming, a rough script was mapped – it could not be finalized due to the fluidity of the tour and, as Hawes noted at the time, due to the unpredictability of the weather in February and March which may have forced changes to the official programme. In October 1953, Hawes and his co-producer Jack Allen travelled over 8000 miles in three weeks across Australia meeting with state representatives, finding camera positions, and constructing a plan of action. The unit had to obtain security clearance for its teams. Transportation and accommodation for crews had to be arranged. Obtaining enough colour stock took Hawes months.¹¹ He had to settle on Ferrania colour stock, since Kodak could not guarantee an adequate supply for a six-reel film and for such a large-scale project. Hawes' cameramen had 'almost no experience at all of shooting colour film' until August 1953, just months before the royal tour was due to start.¹² Most problematic of all was the timescale – Hawes was clear that in order to maximise the publicity and to exploit the 'full commercial value' of the film, final prints had to be ready for release so that audiences would not have already tired of coverage of the Royal visit. Moreover, the Queen had been promised a print to show to her children, Charles and Anne, on her return in early May.¹³ Ferrania could not be processed in Australia. This meant that Hawes' team had to split up – with Allen and Frank Bagnall remaining on the ground with the film unit and Hawes travelling to London to process and edit the film.

⁹ Harry Watt, cited in Moran, *Projecting Australia*, p. 30.

¹⁰ Moran, *Projecting Australia*, pp. 16-17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-22.

¹² Letter from Stanley Hawes to Stuart Legg, 3 November 1953, Box 83 (313), Stanley Hawes Papers, NFS.A.

¹³ Letter from Stanley Hawes to Kevin Murphy, 9 December 1953.

Hawes called upon his old colleagues within the documentary film movement to assist – he left Australia in mid-March to take up Grierson’s offer of using his Group 3 studios at Denham, while Arthur Elton of the Film Centre acted as ‘agent on technical matters.’ His colleague from the GPO film unit and Canadian National Film Board days, Stuart Legg, assisted with editing and recording the commentary, while Ken Cameron worked on sound. Exposed footage had to be sent to Sydney, then three or four days on to London, and then on to Denham.¹⁴ This pressure, as Hawes wrote to Allen during the Tour, required the unit to ‘strain every nerve.’¹⁵ Clearly, there was no space to reshoot sequences, and no time to spare, given the pressure of the production schedule. Despite disasters, such as poor footage of the state banquet and ball, Hawes and his team delivered the film on time, with one of the first prints being sent to Buckingham Palace for a special screening to Prince Charles and Princess Anne.¹⁶

This would have been an extraordinary achievement under normal circumstances. However, it is worth remembering that the Unit itself was under constant threat of closure throughout the period from its formation until well into the 1960s. In June 1953, Hawes wrote to Rotha that ‘the situation here finally got me down. The constant attacks, investigations, enquiries, the basic resentment of so many people in a position of authority, and the whole atmosphere of the Australian public service have had their effect.’¹⁷ Legg sympathised with Hawes’s feeling that ‘a million hairy hands were grasping at [his] throat every minute of the day.’¹⁸ Undermined from within and persecuted from without, Hawes recalled that he was not prepared for government ‘interference’. ‘How can a man trying to run a complex film operation justify almost every action to people who know little or nothing about film and seem to believe that he spends his time surrounded by glamorous blondes?’ he asked, ‘There was hardly a period of three months between 1950 and 1960 where there wasn’t someone investigating [us]... We were never quite sure when we came in on Monday morning whether the unit was still in existence. The remarkable thing was that in such an atmosphere it continued to turn out a [commendable] volume of work.’¹⁹ It was in this atmosphere that Hawes and his colleagues managed to sustain enough momentum to produce *The Queen in Australia*.

The productions of Film Australia are not just ‘curios’ in the history of cinema, as is commonly assumed. The collection held at the National Film and Sound Archive is a

¹⁴ Letter from Stanley Hawes to Kevin Murphy, 9 December 1953; Letter from Stanley Hawes to Jack Allen, 5 March 1954. See also Boxes 62 and 83, Stanley Hawes Papers, NFSA and Moran, *Projecting Australia*, pp. 18-22.

¹⁵ Letter from Stanley Hawes to Jack Allen, 5 March 1954.

¹⁶ Cable from Kevin Murphy to Stanley Hawes, n.d.

¹⁷ Letter from Stanley Hawes to Paul Rotha, 13 June 1953, Box 83 (312), Stanley Hawes Papers, NFSA.

¹⁸ Letter from Stuart Legg to Stanley Hawes, 7 July 1953, Box 83 (313), Stanley Hawes Papers, NFSA.

¹⁹ Handwritten notes by Stanley Hawes on ‘The Function of a Government Film Unit’, Box 69, Stanley Hawes Papers, NFSA.

rich source for historians and film scholars not simply to understand the evolution of Australian documentary. It stands as a visual historical record of aspects of Australian life from 1946 to the present. Moreover, it allows us to interrogate the relationship of Australian cinema to the wider international documentary film community and brings into sharp relief the problems of the uncomfortable relationship between Government and the Arts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Excerpts of the film can be watched online at: http://www.abc.net.au/aplacetothink/?#watch/mh_1950/queen/watchVideo.

Durham History on the Web

Gemma Wain is currently finishing an AHRC-funded PhD which explores representations of Eve in the twelfth century. She also teaches on the first year module 'New Heaven, New Earth: Latin Christendom and the World 1000 - 1300' and in Combined Honours, 'Perspectives on Human Nature'.

She writes, "I blog about my research into medieval representations of Eve, and also about teaching and engaging with medieval history more broadly. It's generally assumed that Eve was portrayed by medieval authors as a disorderly and sinful temptress, since medieval scholars are largely imagined to be male and misogynistic. In fact, for twelfth-century commentators on Genesis, the creation and temptation of Eve provided the perfect opportunity to discuss human nature rather than female faults – so anyone expecting antifeminist ranting about apples, snakes and women of questionable virtue is likely be disappointed. The blog mostly shares my thoughts about conceptions of Eve and of women in the middle ages, and about modern conceptions of the medieval period itself."

Read it here: <http://originalvirtue.wordpress.com>

Changing Fortunes during the Fifteenth Century Recession



A.T. Brown is a PhD student who specialises in the economic and social history of rural society in the late medieval and early modern periods. Here, he explores the impact of the fifteenth-century recession on agrarian Durham.

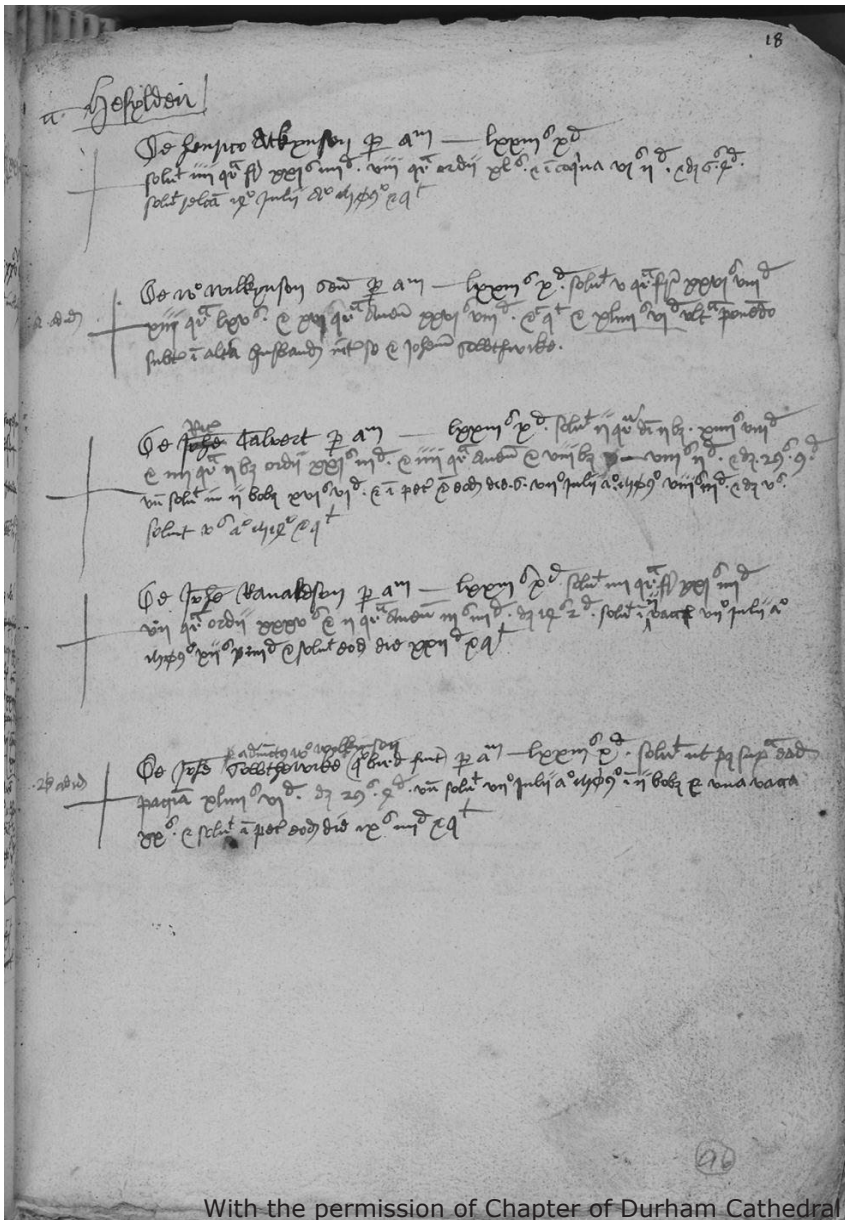
The global financial crisis of the past five years has been described as the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, with the Levin-Coburn report finding that ‘this was not a natural disaster, but the result of high risk, undisclosed conflicts of interest, and the failure of regulators’.¹ The fifteenth-century recession, by comparison, was a product of one of the worst natural disasters of documented English history: the Black Death. In the late thirteenth-century there was immense pressure on resources, with a population that Bruce Campbell has estimated to be as large as the land could sustain without agricultural innovation. On the eve of the Black Death the population was some five or six million, but by 1377 it had been reduced to just 2.5 million, with low fertility and subsequent outbreaks of pestilence further diminishing the population to just 2.1 million by 1490.² This demographic crisis created a whole host of problems for landlords centred on the relative abundance of land, with the years from 1430 to 1465 witnessing ‘one of the most sustained and severe agricultural depressions in documented English history’.³ Postan famously described the fifteenth century as an ‘age of recession, arrested economic development and declining national income’, whilst Hatcher aptly summarised the pervading historiographical gloom surrounding this period when ‘tales of falling land rents, of retreating cultivation, of dilapidated holdings, and often also of chronic insolvency, pervade the rural history of the fifteenth century’.⁴

¹ ‘Senate Financial Crisis Report, 2011’ http://www.hsgac.senate.gov//imo/media/doc/Financial_Crisis/FinancialCrisisReport.pdf.

² Stephen Broadberry, Bruce Campbell, Mark Overton, Alexander Klein, and Bas van Leeuwen, *British Economic Growth, 1270-1870* (currently unpublished, 2011), p. 54.

³ Mark Bailey, ‘Rural Society’, in R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 153.

⁴ John Hatcher, ‘The Great Slump of the Mid-Fifteenth Century’, in Richard Britnell and John Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 237-72.



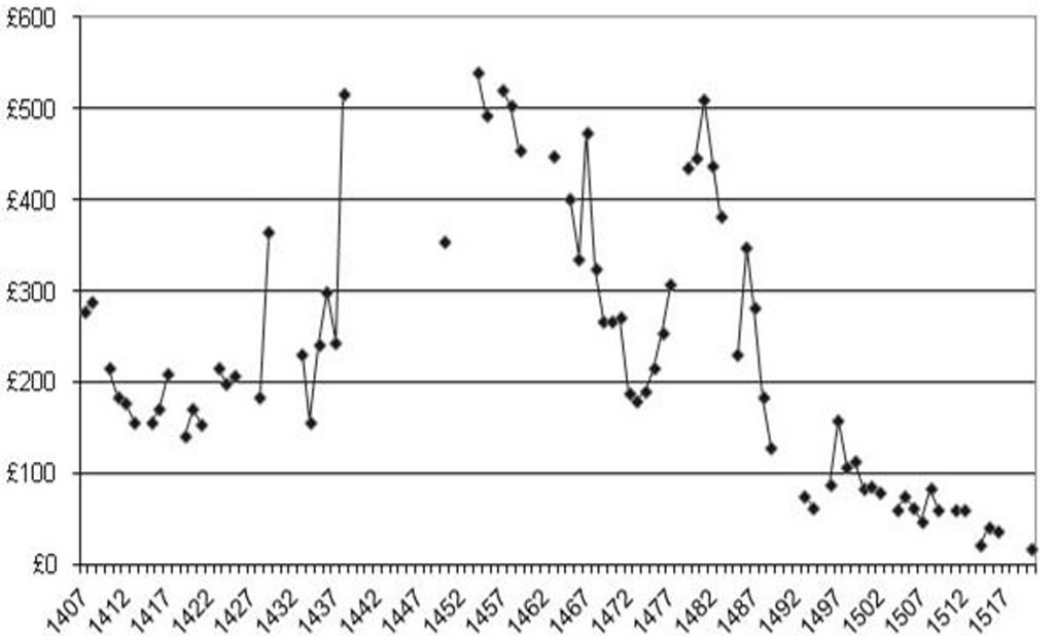
With the permission of Chapter of Durham Cathedral

Bursar's Rent Book, 1495/6

Thorold Rogers and A. R. Bridbury were lone voices in their generations advocating that this was actually a period of economic growth and rising living standards for the vast majority of the population. Rogers described the fifteenth century as the 'golden age of the wage-labourer' as the scarcity of labour led to rapidly rising wages and low agricultural prices, whilst Bridbury pointed out that although the GDP of medieval England was in decline for over a century, so was the population; GDP per capita was actually on the rise.⁵ In her review of Bridbury's book from the 1960s, Margaret

⁵ A. R. Bridbury, *Economic Growth: England in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1962), p. 15.

Figure 1: Sum of Arrears, Waste and Decay for the Current Accounting Year for the Bursars of Durham Priory, 1400-1520



Source: DCM, Bursars Accounts, 1400/1-1519/20 published in A.T. Brown, 'Surviving the Mid-Fifteenth-Century Recession: Durham Cathedral Priory, 1400-1520', *Northern History*, 47 (2010), pp. 209-231.

Hastings praised Bridbury's greatest contribution in questioning the orthodoxy that 'when [landlords] flourished, the whole world prospered, and when they suffered, the whole world was plunged in gloom and depression', drawing the comparison with a statement made by a member of Eisenhower's cabinet that 'what is good for General Motors is good for the United States': a prophetic comparison given the current economic climate.⁶

How far did the fifteenth-century recession change the relationship between landlords and tenants in Durham? There can be little doubt that this was a period of hardship for landowners. In 1432, Prior Wessington appointed the now infamously deficient Thomas Lawson as bursar 'in the absence of a more suitable candidate', under whose administration annual arrears rose from £124 in 1433/4 to £265 in 1435/6. He was later accused of hiding the heavy debts he was incurring to the amount of £1,210 'concealed from the prior and convent'.⁷ This was more than a corrupt or incapable official, with the 1430s experiencing some of the worst harvest failures of the fifteenth century, whilst Lawson was alleged to have been on the point of committing suicide. In 1446, Prior Ebbchester described the state of the monastery as nearing collapse, whilst several of the Priory's manorial farmers were ruined by the agrarian depression.

⁶ Margaret Hastings, 'Review: Economic Growth', *Journal of Economic History*, 25 (1965), pp. 134-36.

⁷ R.B. Dobson, *Durham Priory, 1400-1450* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 285.

Figure 1 shows the arrears, waste and decay on the estates on the monks of Durham Cathedral; given that their income was between £1,200 and £1,500, they were clearly in financial straits when they were unable to collect over a third of their income in the year it was due.

The income of the Bishops of Durham suffered a similarly catastrophic decline, being reduced from £2,900 in 1417 to just over £1,700 by the 1450s, and although there was to be some recovery, agricultural rents were to remain low on their estates for centuries to come.⁸

The fortunes of peasants, labourers and artisans diverged from those of their social betters. It was this fundamental change in economic conditions which led to many of the remarkable transformations in this period, such as the commutation of labour services for cash rents, the *de facto* end of serfdom, and the engrossment of many peasant holdings. There was no longer the pressure on resources which had so dominated the landlord/peasant relationship during the thirteenth century. In the thirteenth century, for example, if a peasant defaulted on rent, the landlord could evict him and replace him with ease; by the fifteenth century, landlords were desperately trying to fill tenancies, often offering incentives for peasants to take up land. Even contemporaries such as William Langland in his *Piers Plowman* spoke of the world being turned upside down with peasants becoming more assertive in their demands, culminating in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and the demand for the end of serfdom.

In 1349 the townships of Durham Cathedral Priory contained approximately 825 holdings in the hands of some 740 tenants, but by 1495 there were no more than 375 holdings in the hands of 330 tenants.⁹ This naturally led to large-scale engrossment on their estates, with bond tenants whose ancestors had farmed between c.25 to c.50 acres, now farming holdings in the region of c.50 and c.150 acres. Living standards similarly improved for the majority of the population of medieval England. Higher wages and lower agricultural prices not only greatly benefited labourers and urban dwellers, but also resulted in a change in agricultural pursuits. Pastoral farming was less labour-intensive than arable, and so many tenants turned to rearing cattle and sheep, flooding the market with affordable meat, cheese and milk, allowing peasant families to diversify away from their monotonous diets of cheap grains.¹⁰ Although the fortunes of cities and towns are still much in debate, we certainly should be careful of taking the numerous complaints of overly burdensome taxation at face-value; as Hastings wrote, 'Englishmen have always been champions at complaining about the high level of taxation'.¹¹

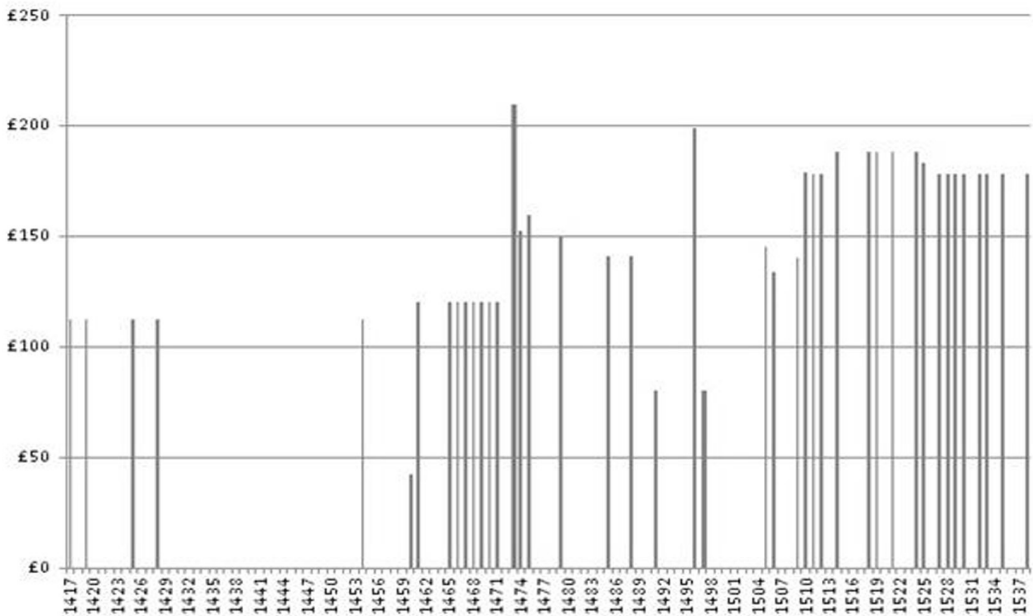
⁸ General-Receiver's Accounts: CCB B/1/1-CCB B/12/139.

⁹ R.A. Lomas, 'Developments in Land Tenure on the Prior of Durham's Estate in the Later Middle Ages', *NH*, 13 (1977), pp. 27-43.

¹⁰ C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England, c.1200-1520* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹¹ Hastings, 'Review', pp. 134-36.

Figure 2: Receipts from the Bishops' Railey Mines, 1417-1537



Source: General-Receiver's Accounts, CCB B/1/1- CCB B/6/69

Another interesting glimpse into the living standards of medieval peasants in Durham is provided by a schedule of sales attached to one of the Bishops' rolls dealing with coal mines which shows who was purchasing coal in the region. Between Christmas 1460 and 12 January 1461, twenty-three chaldrons and seven bushels of coal were sold to twenty-five people scattered throughout the surrounding region of Stockton, Houghton-le-Side, West Auckland, St Helen Auckland, North Auckland, Woodhouse, Evenwood, Eldon, Coundon and Escomb with amounts varying from five loads costing 5d and eight wagonloads worth 6s 8d.¹² As Richard Britnell, an historian no doubt familiar to many Durham alumni, went on to suggest, these lists give no indications of industrial usage, and even though a Thomas Smythson of Escomb purchased a wagonload which could suggest usage in a blacksmiths, a William Gregge, who purchased four wagonloads, was a chaplain.¹³ Figure 2 shows the revenue of the lease of the Railey coal mines, but because expenses incurred by coal mining in this period often halved gross receipts, sales would have needed to be double just for the lessee to break even. Given that these coal mines were landlocked, the vast majority of this coal was sold to local tenants who brought their wagons and barrows to the pithead. This is all the more surprising not only because it was occurring during the very depth of the mid-fifteenth-century recession, but also because of the sheer quantity of coal involved.

¹² Bishop's Clerk of Mines: CCB B/79/1- CCB B/79/12.

¹³ Richard Britnell, 'The Bishop of Durham's Interests in Coal, 1350-1540', in M. Bailey and S. H. Rigby (eds.), *England in the Age of the Black Death: Essays in Honour of John Hatcher* (Turnhout, forthcoming).

The fifteenth-century recession was indeed one of the worst agricultural recessions in documented English history, but we should be careful about drawing generally pessimistic conclusions from the experience of landlords just because it is their records through which we view much of the period. Durham tenants in the fifteenth century were farming enlarged holdings, diversifying away from a monotonously grain-based diet, and often using coal to heat their homes: luxuries which were beyond their early-fourteenth-century counterparts. The recession had a catastrophic impact on the incomes of the two largest landowners in Durham, the Bishops of Durham and Durham Cathedral Priory, but for the majority of the population the fifteenth century was a period of comparative opportunity, potential economic advancement, improving living standards, and personal freedom.

A. T. Brown recently won the New Researcher Prize at the Economic History Society Annual Conference (Oxford, 2012)

Durham History on the Web

Charlie Rozier is a PhD student researching the place of historical writing in the social and intellectual culture of monastic and ecclesiastical life in the Anglo-Norman period. He also teaches on the undergraduate module ‘New Heaven, New Earth: Latin Christendom and the World 1000 - 1300’.

He writes, “My blog is loosely based around teaching medieval history. Sometimes I write about seminars I’ve taught or lectures I’ve given and how they went. Other times, I might be stirred to write a review of a television programme about medieval history, or a particular place I’ve visited (especially castles!). Most recently, I’ve reported back on the Durham Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies’ visit to the 2012 Kalamazoo International Medieval Congress, with pictures of the conference site, and one of me giving my paper. My blog is about teaching history to everybody from small children to adults, and including academic audiences.”

Charlie’s blog can be found at Rozierhistorian.wordpress.com

The Qing Colonial Endeavour? 1666-1800



Nicholas Rooney has just finished his first year as an undergraduate in Durham. In this piece, adapted from an essay written for the module 'Introduction to Chinese History', he asks how we can relate the concept of colonialism to the Qing dynasty.

Much of the scholarship on world history in recent years has been concerned with refuting the euro-centrism that has plagued modern historiography and establishing globally applicable criteria for an early-modern society. The treatment of the Qing Empire within this broader context and particularly the attempts to place it within a global trend towards colonial empires offers a valuable insight into the difficulties faced by early modernists, particularly in terms of both the appropriateness of terminology and the diverse nature of early-modern societies in a global context.

There are a great many similarities between the methods of ruling and of claiming legitimacy employed by the Qing in their outer provinces and those of the western colonial powers. Most notable was their reliance on local elites to act in both a symbolic and administrative capacity as the representatives of central authority.¹ This relationship entailed more than the simple preservation of and dependence on the existing order, and constituted, as it did for the western powers, a renegotiation of the social, cultural and political sources of power within the new territories.² Although the Qing declared their determination to preserve the individual cultures of their empire and maintain them as separate from each other, what actually occurred was a re-orientation of local cultures so that the ultimate source of power and legitimacy lay in Beijing with the Manchu emperor.³ By claiming to be the heirs to the legacy of Chinggis Khan the Qing effectively precluded the formation of a Mongolian identity that set itself in opposition to their rule, and simultaneously appropriated a key source of cultural and political legitimacy in Mongol society for their own use.⁴ Similarly

¹ Michael Adas, 'Imperialism and Colonialism in Comparative Perspective', *The International History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1998), pp. 372 and 374.

² Nicola Di Cosmo, 'Qing Colonial Administration in inner Asia', *The International History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1998), p. 300.

³ Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu and Donald S. Sutton (eds.), *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (London, 2006) available from: <<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost>> p. 19; Peter C. Perdue, 'Comparing Empires: Manchu Colonialism', *The International History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1998), p. 261.

⁴ Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the state in late imperial China* (Honolulu,

in both Tibet and Mongolia the Qing were able to use their sponsorship of the Dalai Lamas to adapt Buddhism to their own imperial interests and to project an image of the emperor as a *chakravartin*, or universal ruler, to the non-Han subjects of the empire.⁵ This system of cultural manipulation matched but was more sophisticated and effective than contemporary European colonial systems.

This marked capacity for domination over the cultural development of the outer territories can be explained by deeply rooted historical and cultural links tying the Qing Empire together.⁶ The regions of Inner Asia and China proper had been engaged in a cultural dialogue for over a millennium prior to the political union of the different regions under the Qing, making it easier for the Qing to influence cultural traditions with which they would have been at least partially familiar with. This was in stark contrast to the very alien cultures which the European colonialists found themselves engaging with. This cultural interrelatedness raises one a major obstacle in applying a colonial interpretation of Qing activity, the problem of 'territorial contiguity'.⁷ It is very difficult to argue that the contiguous nature of the Qing territories does not represent a fundamental contrast with the western European maritime empires; alternative topographical obstacles to Qing communication did not remove the fact that Qing administration was far more centralized and less alien to its subject peoples than those of the western maritime empires.⁸ This set the dynamic of Qing imperialism apart from the western brand, and it prevented the Qing from turning the outer regions into discrete units, separated culturally and socially from the rest of China, thus creating transition regions and a lack of clear demarcations.⁹

The approximation of the Qing Empire with colonialism must also be called into question on a more theoretical level. The obvious, and only viable, candidate for the role of metropole, or political centre, within the Qing Empire was China proper, which was composed of the former Ming territories. These *nei* or inner territories performed this role with respect to the Qing 'colonies' in Inner Asia and the South. The outer territories experienced increasing Han immigration aimed at using newly available territory to ease the 'ever increasing population pressure' of the inner regions.¹⁰ Migration also contributed to the opening of the outer territories' markets

2006), p. 84; also Joanna Waley-Cohen, 'The New Qing History (Review)', *Radical History Review*, Issue 88 (Winter, 2004), p. 199.

⁵ Pamela Crossley, 'Making Mongols' in Crossley, Siu and Sutton (eds.), *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, p. 68.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁷ Di Cosmo, 'Qing Colonial Administration in Inner Asia', p. 290.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306; also C. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past* (Stanford, California, 1975), p. 314.

⁹ Waley-Cohen, 'The New Qing History (Review)', p. 203; also Di Cosmo, 'Qing Colonial Administration in Inner Asia', p. 294.

¹⁰ James A. Milward and Laura J. Newby, 'The Qing and Islam on the Western Frontier' in Crossley, Siu and Sutton (eds.), *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* p. 116; also Arthur Cotterel and David Morgan, *China: An Integrated Study* (London, 1975), p. 257.

to Chinese merchants and their 'economic integration with China proper.'¹¹ From this economic perspective the tribute missions from the outer territories to Beijing also seem to take on new significance in encouraging, as well as ritually representing, the economic relationship between the 'colonies' and the 'metropole'.¹² This allowed the Qing state to appropriate some of the excess revenue from the local territories under its jurisdiction for the use of the state, in a manner that mirrors the half-parasitic, half-symbiotic relationship between many colonies and their metropolises in the western colonial empires.¹³

The Qing Empire thus seems to fit the colonial model, but closer inspection reveals a number of problems. The Qing's conception of empire was 'multiethnic' and was conceived of as a 'universal Manchu monarchy'.¹⁴ Thus, the centre of the Qing Empire was not a Chinese 'metropole,' but the Qing Emperor himself who presided over a vast and disparate territory and took great pains to avoid total association with any particular region or group, instead, projecting a variety of different personas to the different regions of the empire.¹⁵ The Qing did not conceive of China as the centre of their territories but merely as a part of them. This was highlighted through the Qing imperial project, and its interaction with Inner Asian polities. A re-examination of the tribute missions reveals that they support Qing and not Chinese supremacy. Thus, their economic aspect and suggestion of a parasitic approach to empire was not part of the Qing imperial vision.¹⁶

As useful and tempting as the comparison to colonialism is, the Qing Empire should be viewed on its own terms and not through a western model of empire. This does not entail viewing Qing as totally distinct from, or in any way inferior to, the rest of the early modern world, but simply acknowledging the need for an alternative model. The Qing Empire mirrors many trends that are also apparent in other early modern empires, including those of the western colonial powers. Qing rule ultimately rested on local elites and the Qing presence in their outer territories, and relationships with these elites led to a major shift in the social and political order of the territories. However, the colonial model's need for a central or 'mother' country cannot be applied to the Qing Empire without recourse to a dangerously sino-centric view of events. It is also overly western in its approach, despite the insistence of some historians to the contrary the term colonialism is indelibly associated with the west. It seems more appropriate to acknowledge Qing similarities with other contemporary empires, and to acknowledge the subtle but significant differences between them.

¹¹ Di Cosmo, 'Qing Colonial administration in inner Asia', p. 293.

¹² Ning Chia, 'The Lifanyuan and the Inner Asian Rituals in the Early Qing (1644-1795)', *Late Imperial China*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1998), p. 74.

¹³ Adas, 'Imperialism and Colonialism in Comparative Perspective', p. 375.

¹⁴ Jane Kate Leonard, 'The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions (Review)', *China Review International*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), p. 201; also R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and their Provinces: The evolution of territorial administration in China, 1644-1796* (Seattle, 2010), p. 351.

¹⁵ Crossley, Siu and Sutton (eds.), *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* p. 14; also Waley-Cohen, 'The New Qing History (Review)', p. 198.

¹⁶ Chia, 'The Lifanyuan and the Inner Asian Rituals in the Early Qing (1644-1795)', pp. 78 and 83.

Capturing the Future: Time in the work of Fernand Pelloutier and Georges Sorel



Alexandra Paulin-Booth is a Masters Student in the department, specialising in modern French history. This piece provides an overview of the themes and questions of her undergraduate dissertation, for which she won the 2011 History Dissertation Prize.

The importance of time and its conceptualisation for historical study is now fairly widely acknowledged in academic circles. From E.P. Thompson's seminal 1967 study of how changing notions of time affected workers in the transition to industrialized society to Reinhart Koselleck's expositions of conceptual history in the 1980s, time has come to be seen as a valid and fruitful analytical category.¹ My undergraduate dissertation sought to explore notions of time in the work of two syndicalist thinkers, Fernand Pelloutier and Georges Sorel, in order to better understand not just their diverse writings, but to gain a unique and fascinating perspective on the intellectual landscape of Belle Époque France.

Koselleck provided the inspiration for my title, 'capturing the future': in *The Practice of Conceptual History* the future is configured as 'an elusive present', a phrase which emphasizes a state just out of reach.² Both Pelloutier and Sorel keenly felt that they were trying to capture an elusive future: as a way of doing this, both authors attempted to bring revolution into the present. This provides a marked point of contrast with more mainstream socialist thought – particularly Marxism – which tended to see revolution as a shimmering possibility in the distant future. Pelloutier, in his work as a journalist and in his capacity as General Secretary of the *Fédération des Bourses du Travail* (FBT) 1895-1901, sought to instigate a revolutionary process in the present in order to bring about his desired social organization, which would take the form of an association of free producers. Much of Sorel's intellectual output in the early years of the twentieth century was directed toward the same purpose.

¹ Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present* 38 (1967), pp. 56-97; Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing Concepts, Spacing History* (Stanford, 2002) and *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York, 2004).

² Koselleck, *Conceptual History*, p. 111.

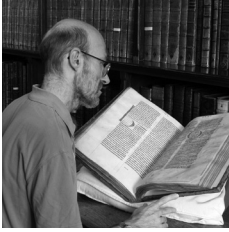
By studying Pelloutier's and Sorel's ways of conceptualizing past, present and future and how their notions of time interacted with their political beliefs, we can understand why they focussed on revolution in the present and how they did so; it is vital to understand this because it animated their entire social mission. Pelloutier and Sorel studied history to find that change over time was often in the hands of individuals, and that the future was therefore largely unpredictable. This made them highly conscious of the need to act in the present.

Study of time allows us to elucidate some of these two writers' most complex and interesting ideas. Foremost among these is the concept of revolution itself: by advocating a revolution which began in the present and which built progressively toward the event of the general strike, Sorel and Pelloutier challenged the notion that revolution had to present a complete rupture with the past. In the same way, we begin to see how the dichotomy between reform and revolution can be broken down: revolution could also have a gradual element. Pelloutier's initial anarchist beliefs led him to stress that revolution was the beginning of a process of social transformation; Sorel's Marxist roots, on the other hand, meant that he depicted the revolution as an end in itself.

The two writers provide us with a point of entry for consideration of time in syndicalist thought (although of course it would be futile to pretend that they were completely representative of the movement). The social mission of syndicalism was unusual in socialist discourse for being present-oriented; the distant future was more commonly the focus point for socialism. But Sorel and Pelloutier were still highly conscious of the possibilities that the future held, and it is this in part which distinguishes syndicalism from anarchism, which often focussed exclusively on the present. The two authors thereby allow us to see the ways in which syndicalism, with its focus on the present and its simultaneous consciousness of the future, occupied a middle ground between anarchism and more mainstream socialism and Marxism. Given that Sorel came to syndicalism through Marxism and Pelloutier through anarchism, the two also evince the plurality of the syndicalist movement.

More broadly, Pelloutier and Sorel provide a window into the intellectual atmosphere of Belle Époque France by typifying a shift toward focus on the individual and acknowledgement of the subconscious as a legitimate epistemology: this was highly influential for notions of time because it demonstrated that the future was largely unpredictable, and it was a strain of thought present in writers from Marcel Proust to Henri Bergson.

The Lindisfarne Gospels in Durham



Prof Richard Gameson specializes in the History of the Book. Here, along with Julie Biddlecombe-Brown, the Exhibitions Officer of Archives and Special Collections, he describes how Durham University is preparing to welcome the Lindisfarne gospels back to the North East.

The Lindisfarne Gospels, one of the greatest treasures of the British Library, is a masterpiece of early medieval book production, calligraphy and illumination; it is equally the product of particular historical circumstances. Thanks to a note that was added to the manuscript in the tenth century but draws upon an earlier source, we know the names of the makers of the manuscript and can localise its production to Lindisfarne before 721/2. This was a period of rapid evolution and dramatic change in the Northumbrian church, as traditions established by Irish missionaries were augmented and challenged by resources and conventions from Rome, and representatives of the two traditions jockeyed for influence. With an Italian type of Latin text presented in forms of script and decoration which are of Irish origin but reformulated under Roman influence, the Lindisfarne Gospels vividly reflects the tensions and possibilities of this religious and cultural melting pot.

Lindisfarne was first ravaged by Vikings in 793. The community held out there for the best part of a century before embarking on seven years of journeying (from 875) that finally brought it to Chester-le-Street. Here in the third quarter of the tenth century the Latin text of the Lindisfarne Gospels was supplied with an interlinear Old English translation; the scribe responsible also added to the manuscript the note recording the names of its original makers, and linking it to the cult of St Cuthbert. A generation later (995) the community relocated to Durham. Reformulated after the Norman Conquest, the new Benedictine community of Durham used the Anglo-Saxon past to establish its spiritual credentials: highlighting the cult of St Cuthbert, the history of the house that was written by Symeon of Durham at the beginning of the twelfth century recounted the story of the Lindisfarne Gospels, celebrating the manuscript as a witness to the devotion of a previous age and declaring that it was still to be seen in the cathedral church at that time.

From July to September 2013, the Lindisfarne Gospels will be the centrepiece of the most ambitious and spectacular exhibition ever mounted in Durham. A suite of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and artefacts on loan from institutions in Cambridge,

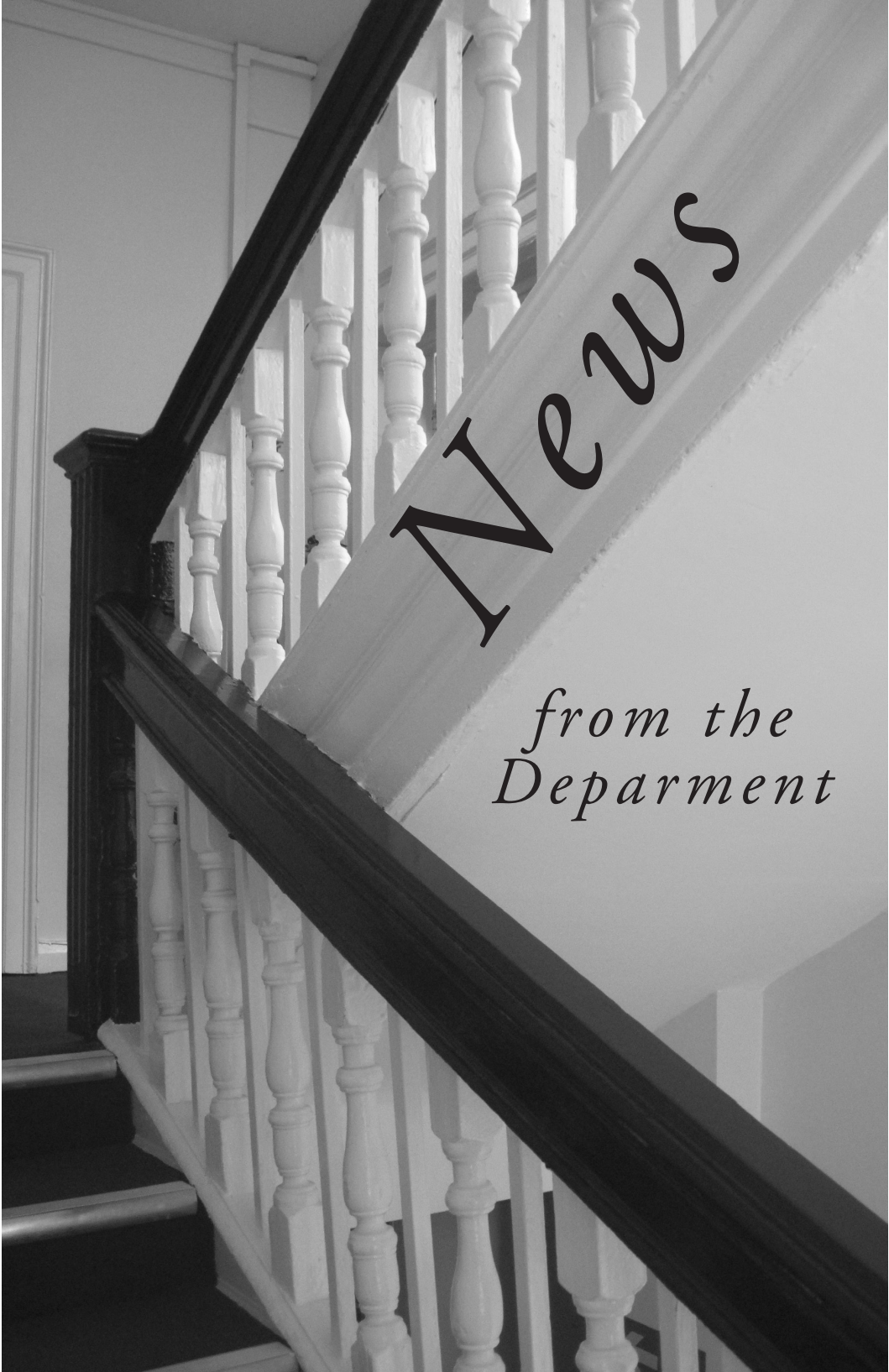
Edinburgh, London, Norwich and Oxford, as well as the incomparable collections of Durham itself, will be used to explicate the making and meaning of the manuscript, to present its history and evolving meaning from Holy Island to Durham, to highlight points of comparison and contrast with other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and artworks, and to explore its relationship to the cult of St Cuthbert. *RG*

Preparations for the exhibition have been underway for over two years and the Exhibitions Team have been travelling the length and breadth of the country to identify potential objects to display alongside the manuscripts. As a 'wish list' of display items emerged, the lengthy process of applying to borrow the items for the duration of the exhibition began. The enthusiastic response from potential lenders to the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition has been most gratifying, and as committees meet across the country to consider our loan applications we are confident that the exhibition will be supported by some of Britain's most prestigious museums and libraries.

Running alongside the research for exhibits has been the work to ensure that the galleries and showcases meet the environmental and security standards required for such a high profile exhibition. The exhibition itself will spread over three gallery spaces at Palace Green Library, each one with its own distinct identity. Since 2010, a major building project has been taking place at the Library to create new gallery spaces and improve facilities for researchers. The Wolfson Gallery on the first floor opened in 2011 and will be completely redisplayed for the 2013 exhibition. The two ground-floor galleries will be completed during the summer of 2012, allowing time for monitoring the environment in advance of the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition. With the base build in place, the work then begins on design of the exhibition itself. Throughout 2012, the detailed design of the exhibition will emerge to create an exhibition that will engage a wide range of audiences in 2013. *JBB*

Throughout the calendar year 2013 a programme of seminars will present new research on the Lindisfarne Gospels and its world. For more information, please email Jacky Pankhurst at administrator.imrs@durham.ac.uk, or visit the Lindisfarne exhibition website, www.lindisfarnegospels.com.

See the inside back cover for an image taken from the Durham gospels, which are closely related to the Lindisfarne Gospels.



News

*from the
Department*

Dear Alumni,

History at Durham continues to be an immensely popular student choice. In 2011, the department again achieved a 98% satisfaction rate in the National Student Survey, and in October 2011 we welcomed a particularly large cohort of new undergraduates – the equivalent of 156 full-time students in our single and joint honours programmes.

You will be pleased to hear that again this year the excellence of colleagues' research has also been recognized in various ways. **Chris Brooks** has been awarded the Fletcher-Jones Foundation Distinguished Fellowship in British History at the Huntington Library, in California, for the academic year 2012-13; **Kay Schiller** has been appointed to a visiting professorship at the university of Dresden for 2012-13. **Len Scales'** book *The Shaping of German Identity: Authority and Crisis, 1245-1414*, has come out with Cambridge University Press; **Christine Woodhead's** edited volume on *The Ottoman World* came out with Routledge; **Paul Bailey's** monograph on *Gender and Education in China*, first published in 2007, has just been reissued as a paperback; and the *Sudan Handbook*, in which both **Cherry Leonardi** and myself were involved, has been recognized as a *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title for 2011. The work of doctoral students' has also been acknowledged: **Alex Brown**, a third-year doctoral student won the New Researcher Prize at the annual Economic History Society conference, for his paper 'Divergent Responses to Recession: Ecclesiastical Estates in Durham, c.1400-c.1600' (you will find some of Alex's work elsewhere in these pages).

We have also been busy in developing our links with history teachers. You will, I am sure, understand how important our links to schools are, and in April this year we held a history teachers' conference, largely organized by **Julian Wright**. The aim of this was to communicate what we do more effectively to secondary school teachers. We hoped that they might find this interesting and useful, but we also aimed to help them prepare students for the sometimes difficult transition from school to university, and to encourage both teachers and students to see us as approachable. The event was a great success, with attendance from schools across the UK, and as a result we have strengthened existing links and developed new ones.

We will, sadly, be saying goodbye to several members of staff this year. **David Moon** and **Lawrence Black** are moving a little way south to join the University of York; **Paul Stephenson** is crossing the North Sea to take up a post at Nijmegen; **Alastair Thompson** is also moving on. We wish all of them the very best for the future; and our good wishes also go with three colleagues who have been with us on short-term contracts, and whose contribution to the Department has been much appreciated: **Catherine Fletcher**, **Elizabeth Lapina** and **Gesine Oppitz-Trotman**. Two of our office staff also left during the year, each moving elsewhere in the university to take up more responsible positions after doing excellent work in this department: **Anne Park** had been with us for some years as Postgraduate Secretary, and **Lisa Cossey** had joined us in 2010 as Admissions Secretary.

The good news is that we will be welcoming a whole new group of colleagues – the largest single influx of new staff for many years. The department has just been strengthened by the arrival of **Stephen Taylor**, a historian of the religious and political history of early modern England; and in September we will be joined by **Graeme Small**, whose work concerns the political and historical culture of elites in the Low Countries and France in the later Middle Ages, and **Chris Vaughan**, an early-career colleague who works on north-east Africa. Chris was an undergraduate and postgraduate student in the Department. We also expect to appoint another four colleagues in early July: two lecturers in the history of modern Britain, and two lecturers in the cultural history of modern Europe.

The performance of our undergraduate students continues to be excellent – as I am sure you would all expect. We have just held the final examiners' meeting, and the external examiners have commented again on the outstanding quality of student work. Particular mention should go to **William Vick**, the winner of this year's Edward Allen prize for the best overall performance in the first year; to **David Hynes**, winner of the Alumni prize for best overall performance in the second year, to **Elizabeth Gallagher**, winner of the Gibson prize for the best dissertation on a local history project; and to **Sarfraz Ali**, who won both the Thompson prize for the best overall result in the History single honour programme, and the prize for the best dissertation.

This record of success means that we continue to attract many applicants. After careful consideration, we raised our entry requirements this year: students coming in to single honours History must now have an A* at A level. In combination with the new undergraduate fee system, this might have been expected to reduce the number of applications we receive, but it has not: the admissions staff have been as busy as ever this year. This is a challenging time in higher education, and it is very encouraging to know that our reputation is so strong, and our work so well appreciated by students; we will all be working hard to make sure that the new cohort of students find history as challenging, exciting and rewarding as you all did.

Justin Willis

Head of Department

Image courtesy of Durham University



Each year, a drinks reception for the department's new graduates is held. Please get in touch if you'd like to share your photos with us – either via email or through the Facebook page. See p. 48 for more details.

New Insights into the Architecture of Palace Green: Bishop Cosin and Restoration Durham

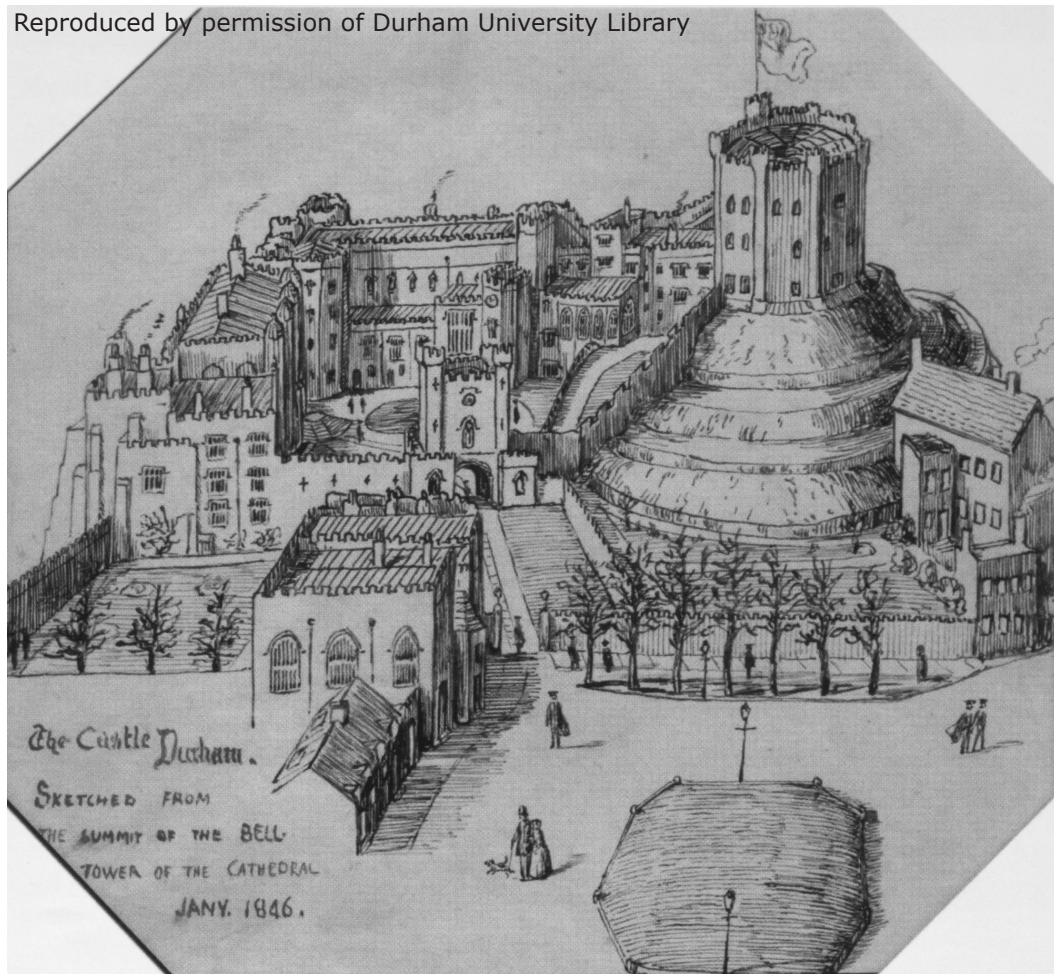


A specialist in the social and economic history and archaeology of the period 1450-1750, Dr Adrian Green's main research topic is housing in Britain and its colonies. In this article, he considers the significance of Bishop Cosin to Durham.

Cosin's Library has recently been restored and Palace Green Library turned into an exhibition space. This exciting development adds a further dimension to Durham's cultural riches, while reflecting the broader trend for historically privileged institutions to turn their treasures towards the world. In doing so, Durham University has made a positive response to pressures encouraging an outward-facing institution, able to demonstrate its significance in the world and turn a coin. But this is far from Durham's first make-over, and a new exhibition – 'Restoration: How One Man Changed Durham' – shows how Palace Green was remade for Bishop Cosin in the 1660s. Opening in June 2012 the exhibition follows on from my earlier community exhibition for Durham Heritage Centre and Museum – 'The Power and the Glory: The Life and Architecture of John Cosin (1595-1672)'. Both exhibitions have provided a welcome opportunity to share my research on Durham's architecture beyond the (not always rapt) attention of History undergraduates. I am also preparing a book for a general audience – *Building for England: John Cosin's Architecture in Seventeenth Century Cambridge and Durham*, to be published by Durham's Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in 2013.

Before its reincarnation for the university, Palace Green conveyed the power of the church, with its architecture intended to uphold the Durham Bishopric as an organ of piety, charity, law, and learning. Palace Green was first laid out for Bishop Flambard in the early twelfth century as a ceremonial piazza between the cathedral and bishop's palace. We know from excavation that this area was previously occupied by houses and possibly a market. The contrast created by Flambard between the ceremonial square on the high ground and bustle of Durham market place below remains to this day. The division was even greater when the North Gate stood at the head of Saddler

Reproduced by permission of Durham University Library



The Castle, Durham, sketched from the summit of the Bell Tower of Durham Cathedral January 1846

Street, dividing town from rock. By the early seventeenth century Durham's urban fabric had frayed somewhat. When Charles I visited in 1633 he sent a post-visit letter complaining about the shoddy state of the place, ordering the removal of extraneous buildings, livestock and laundry from around the cathedral. The instigator of this royal missive was one John Cosin, then a cathedral canon. For Cosin was ever committed to making the English Church and Durham in particular a beautiful edifice appropriate to God's majesty on earth.

Chiefly a Cambridge cleric, Cosin came to Durham as part of Bishop Neile's entourage. Immediately attracted by Durham's antiquity and connections to the early English saints, Cosin was ultimately drawn by the sheer power of the church in Durham. He even married into the Durham clerical establishment, marrying Frances Blakiston of Newton Hall at St Margaret's Crossgate in 1626. For the following fourteen years Cosin was at his happiest with his wife and children at Brancepeth Rectory, four miles from Durham. Away from home, Cosin pursued his career at Cambridge, becoming Master

of Peterhouse in 1635 and Vice Chancellor of the University in 1639. A high-flyer, Cosin was also made Dean of Peterborough in 1640. With the outbreak of the civil wars, Cosin's royalist roller coaster ride took a precipitous dip. He lost his preferments and income, fleeing into exile (reputedly disguised as a miller) to avoid impeachment for contributing Peterhouse plate to the king's cause. He even lost his wife, who died in 1642 and was buried at Peterborough. His children were generally a disappointment – his only son became a Roman Catholic priest, one daughter went mad, and another had an abusive husband. And Cosin's exile was spent in seventeen years of penury, ministering to the Protestants among Queen Henrietta Maria's household in the Louvre. Disliked by the Queen, Cosin was 'as lean as Lent' in Paris, though he may have savoured the architecture. Yet, as for so many in post-Reformation Christendom, such persecution only tended to reaffirm a sense of righteousness.



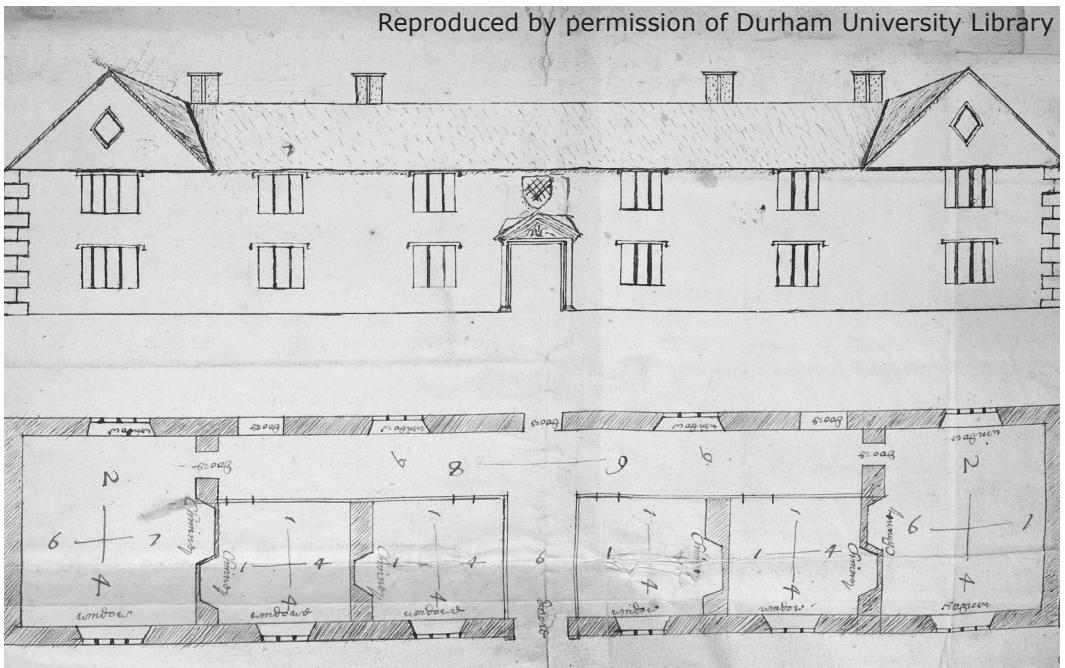
View of Bishop Cosin's Library and the entrance to the Castle Photo by Adrian Green

Seemingly with God's grace, the restoration of Charles II in 1660 enabled Cosin to return to England, and be appointed Bishop of Durham later the same year. Now an old man in a hurry, Cosin set about restoring the Durham Bishopric as a testament in stone to the enduring power of the English Church and rightful place of episcopacy. The bishopric's lands restored, a massive windfall in overdue estate income enabled Cosin to fund repair of the episcopal palaces at Bishop Auckland and Durham. At Auckland he even created a chapel that echoed Peterhouse and King's College, Cambridge. Designed as his mausoleum, St Peter's Chapel Bishop Auckland was his primary monument along with Palace Green to a munificent bishop. At Durham Castle, Cosin's works were no less modest, as he installed the great stair, elaborate woodwork throughout the building, a new porch to the hall, and a lead fountain in the courtyard. In the public space beyond, Cosin set about re-ordering Palace Green.

To grasp what endures of Cosin's work we can best consider Palace Green from today's perspective. The 2012 'Restoration' exhibition, in the 140th anniversary year of Cosin's death, is opening in time for graduation on Palace Green in June. When the university first began, graduation ceremonies took place in Cosin's Library. To accommodate proud parents a gallery was installed with an external stair in 1833-4. This rather gloomy Gothic turret is mimicked by the University Library of 1882 and Pemberton Building of 1931. These university additions to Palace Green aside, the buildings are pretty much as built in Cosin's day. Cosin's Library, joined to the Bishopric Treasury and Chancery Court building, stand by the entrance to Castle. At the other end of the Green was the County Court House, with its arcaded loggia. Next to it, facing the cathedral, was Durham Grammar School, now the Music Department, also rebuilt in the 1660s. Opposite, what is now the Theology Department was a private house, rebuilt flamboyantly in brick in the later seventeenth century, with the site alongside occupied by stables. Next, and dominating this side of the Green, are Bishop Cosin's Almshouses – a refoundation of Bishop Langley's earlier hospital, with a song and writing school at either end, rebuilt for Cosin as emblems of episcopal charity. Next along, 'Cosin's Hall' somewhat confusingly dates from after Cosin's time. Built in the 1690s and added to in the eighteenth century, the name refers to its nineteenth-century use as a university hall of residence. Now the Institute for Advanced Study, Cosin's Hall was known in the seventeenth century as the 'great house', an elaborate complex extending to North Bailey, incorporating part of the History Department. Built for one of Durham's legal dynasties, the great house accommodated legal clerks and lawyers in training, as well as members of the Mickleton family. Even the public convenience at the edge of Palace Green has a seventeenth century air, being the bishop's stable in Cosin's time. Across Owengate, the handsome wall along the north end of Palace Green was built for Cosin by his mason Langstaffe. Behind the wall, Cosin's garden terraces cut into the mound of the keep remain visible, faced in red brick. Sadly demolished is the belvedere turret that stood overlooking the riverbanks at the end of Cosin's garden walk (in what is now the Fellow's Garden). On the other side of Castle, overlooking town, Cosin laid out a balustraded terrace, and a balcony projected towards Framwellgate Bridge from Cosin's 'black chamber' at the high-end of the great hall. Cosin also arranged for the Town Hall on the Market Place to be rebuilt, reflecting his concern with the bishop's role in civic life. Yet Cosin denied the freeholders of Durham a representative in parliament, considering himself their rightful representative in the House of Lords. Our Restoration Man was remarkably effective in restoring the powers and privileges of Durham Bishopric. But Cosin was never universally acclaimed, and cannot have been popular with those tenants paying off Interregnum rent arrears, many of whom had enjoyed parliamentary representation in the 1650s.

The architecture of Palace Green still embodies Cosin's faith in hierarchy. Founded as a 'public' library, Cosin's Library was funded from the revenues of the bishopric estate. But the library was only intended to benefit the Durham population indirectly – just as the Bishop provided virtual representation of Durham folk in the House of Lords. For

Cosin's Library was created as an amenity for clergy, lawyers, and educated gentlemen. Stocked with their needs in mind, this was a provincial library for the bishopric's governing elite; Cosin's most personal books were left to his family. The library's elitist function was symbolised by its classical doorcase onto Palace Green. In deliberate contrast the entrance to Bishop Cosin's Almshouse across Palace Green received a plain doorcase. The executed building differs from the design of Cosin's master mason, John Langstaffe, who drew a pedimented classical doorcase on his 'draught'. Cosin rejected this classicism as inappropriate for an entrance used by the poor. Through Cosin's other portal across Palace Green, educated gentlemen could find the learned materials necessary for rule and recreation in northern England. If Cosin could observe the restoration of his Library in 2012, the old boy would surely feel some pride mingled with regret over the shrinkage of the church – and doubtless a severe disapproval at throwing the door open for a paying public to admire his Library, but not to actually read.



John Langstaffe's draught for Bishop Cosin's Almshouse, 1666

Landscape and the Imagination in Early Medieval Hessia

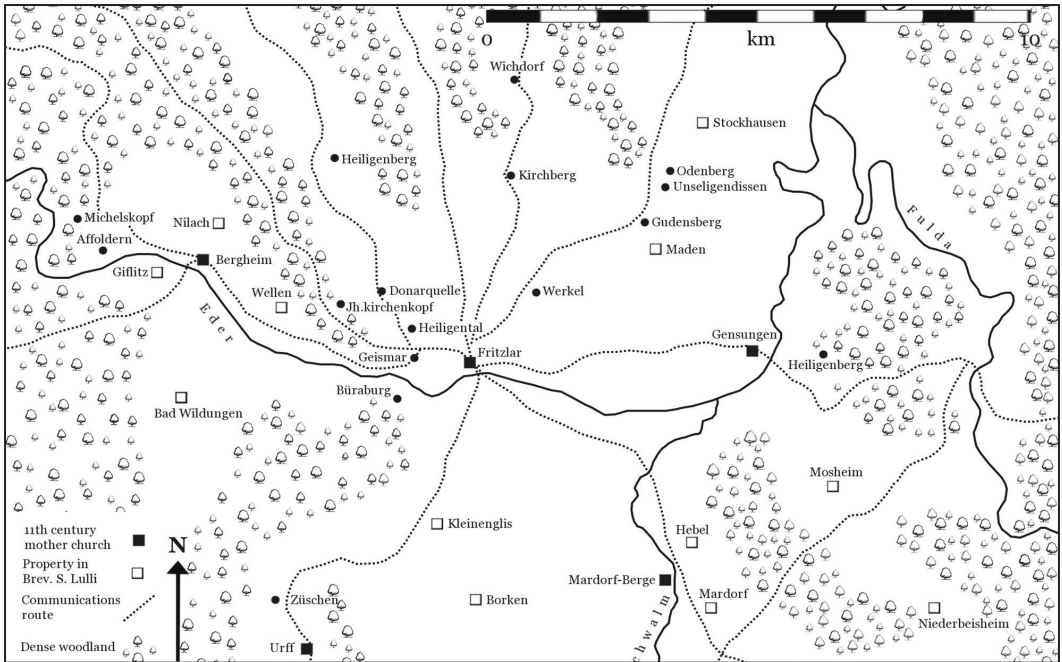


Dr John Clay's work focuses on themes of conversion and religious identity, landscape perception and the transition from the late Roman to the early medieval period both in Britain and on the Continent. Here he explores the relationship between landscape and imagination.

For better or worse, early medievalists can be very pedantic sorts. We tend not to have the quantity of sources available to historians of later periods, and have learned to make do with the scraps of material that have survived: the occasional chronicle or collection of letters, a relative abundance of saints' lives, a few volumes of charters, poems, religious tracts, if we're lucky some original manuscripts, and so on. A positive consequence of this poverty, however, is that we have also learned to share our meagre scraps with archaeologists, linguists and other specialists, and so interdisciplinarity becomes almost second nature. Another is that the imagination is given more space to breathe, and sometimes – securely held to earth by a line of rational thinking, of course – allowed to take flight.

Aside from history, archaeology and linguistics, one form of evidence close to my heart is the landscape itself. It is one thing to sit in the still, moted air of a library with a Latin dictionary and a pile of historical sources – in my case, the letters of an eighth-century missionary community in what is now central Germany – and quite another to find yourself beneath the sky where those sources were written and read, with a map, a rucksack and a good pair of walking boots.

The letters I study were written by monks who had journeyed from their Anglo-Saxon homeland to the hills and valleys of Hessia. Theirs was a mission of conversion, and this was the frontier of Christianity at the time. Behind them, back towards the Rhine, was the kingdom of the Franks, its rulers long Christian and eager to spread the Word; before them lay the thick blanket of forest which had defeated the Romans centuries before, when Varrus led his doomed legions across the Rhine and never returned. But a new Age had dawned since then, the Sixth Age of the World, the era of Christ, and these missionaries did not fear to tread where the Romans had failed. Where the light of Roman civilization had been extinguished, the light of Christianity, the pope reassured the missionaries, would 'glitter through the gloomy forests'. Divine mandate or not, he would be proved right.



Central Hesse (Clay, In the Shadow of Death, p. 296)

Today this part of Germany is a pleasant rural backwater. Managed conifer plantations cling to the hills and their lower slopes, the country is peaceful and orderly, farmland runs unbroken from valley to valley. Thirteen centuries ago it would have looked, and felt, very different. Each small hamlet and farmstead would have been an island of human cultivation in an ocean of forest. The forests were hardly primeval, being used for fuel, building materials and pannage, but they still had a wildness to them; these were the valleys, after all, where the Brothers Grimm later collected their folk tales, in which fear of the forest is a permeating theme. Wolves and wild boar roamed freely through the wooded depths, not to mention bison, elk and brown bear.

Near Kassel the modern traveller can still visit a rare preserved patch of *Urwald*, a forest left to revert to its natural state, and get a feel for what the remoter parts of medieval woodland would have been like. Without any human interference a forest turns into an enormous, slow-motion battle for survival, which of course is what it is. The ground is thick with broken limbs where trees have collapsed and died. As you pick your way through the undergrowth you can almost see the saplings sprouting up wherever they can find an open patch of ground, the young trees grappling with their roots and branches for whatever air, sunlight and water they can get. Then you come into the glaring light of a glade and see an oak towering over you: four hundred years of twisting, victorious trunk, its arms thrown triumphantly in every direction, its roots sucking the ground beneath your feet dry. There are few things as majestic in nature. It is not surprising, then, that the pagan Hessians had taken to venerating just such an oak as a manifestation of the god Jupiter. The roots of pagan belief went deep into the Hessian soil.

It was the mission of the monks to tear these roots out. Our sources record how the leader of the mission, Boniface, soon after his arrival in 721, strode with his courageous party of monks up to the ancient face of this oak. He cut a single notch in the trunk, and by divine intervention it fell at once, splitting into four equal parts. 'At the sight of this extraordinary spectacle,' Boniface's biographer wrote some forty years later, 'the heathens who had been cursing ceased to revile and began, on the contrary, to believe and bless the Lord'. Soon the Word of Christ spread throughout Hestia. Faith and courage had won the day.

Archaeology and the landscape help us cast a different light on this dramatic event. The biographer writes that the oak stood near a place called Geismar. He does not mention that a couple of kilometres away from Geismar, just across a river, was Büraburg, the largest Frankish hillfort yet excavated east of the Rhine. When Boniface felled the Oak of Jupiter, he was hardly taking his life in his hands. He must have known he was safe in the shadow of this fortress, with its massive stone ramparts, and its garrison of Christian Frankish soldiers and infantry whose commander was obliged by royal decree to protect him. It was a carefully planned and heavily symbolic gesture, a public declaration that Christ had come to Hestia and that the landscape now belonged to Him.



View from the Helfensteine

Beyond Geismar historical sources fail us, since no other specific location of pagan worship is mentioned in the surviving documents. Instead we find vague, formulaic references to pagan rituals – incantations, libations, augery – focused on natural sites such as groves, rocks, lakes and springs. This is where the landscape becomes more valuable and informative than ever. If we accept that such places existed, and that many of them would have been prominent in the landscape, is it unreasonable to try to seek them out?

It starts with many hours spent scouring over detailed topographical maps. Perhaps this sounds tedious, but with a little imagination it becomes a kind of exploration in itself; you can almost feel yourself moving through the country, tracing its rivers and rambling over its hills. You keep an eye on the place-names, and layers of history begin to appear. In the fertile basin at the heart of Hessa you find *Fritzlar*, *Lohne*, *Werkel*, *Dorna*, and other places. These are ancient names, some from deep in prehistory. Not far from Geismar is a conical basalt hill with the name *Gudensberg*, which derives from *Wodenes berch*, or ‘Wodan’s Mountain’. This hill, named for the powerful god known to the Norse as Odin, rises like a pyramid from the Eder basin, crowned with an outcrop of dark rock. Immediately south is the village of Maden, fairly undistinguished today, but formerly the seat of the highest court in medieval Hessa, and long before that the main temple of the ancestors of the Hessians, razed by the Romans in AD 15.

Gudensberg and Maden form a pair of holy pagan sites. The village was an ancient place of law and assembly, accessible and convenient. The hill, meanwhile, was attractive for the opposite reason. It took long effort to climb, but at the top, removed from the cultivated land of men, one was close to the heavens, that is, to the realm of Wodan himself. Its peak was perhaps the site of such arcane heathen rituals as one Carolingian document condemns with amusing vagueness: ‘Those *things* which they [i.e. the pagans] do upon rocks.’

Venturing deeper into Hessa, similar places seem to rise out of the landscape. Not far away are two *Heiligenbergs*, ‘holy mountains’, each with a striking rock formation at its peak. One of these rock formations has been artificially cut with steps leading up to a platform apt for sacrifices, and a nearby rock face is carved with runes that have never been deciphered. Even farther north, rising high above the Twiste valley, is the greatest of all the Hessian volcanic outcrops: the *Helfensteine*, a veritable palace of twisted black spires and bizarre natural staircases erupting from the earth. It too has an artificial altar carved into it, giving the effect of a deformed, devilish kind of natural cathedral. We understand the geological processes that led to such a bizarre rock formation, but the missionaries of course did not. This is the limit of where imagination can safely take us; but it is not stretching things too far, perhaps, to wonder what an Anglo-Saxon monk, exiled in this rugged landscape out of love for Christ, fearfully attuned to the malevolent forces dwelling within it, would have made of the Helfensteine.

The value of the landscape, to me, is that it remains our most enduring connection to the people of the past. This is the popular appeal of places like Stonehenge – I mean not just the monument, but the flowing chalklands around it, and its galaxy of neighbours at Avebury, Silbury Hill, West Kennet and elsewhere. But there are many less obvious landscapes to be explored, indeed landscapes which appear quite mundane, but where history, archaeology and place-names, combined with a little imagination, can tell a story more expansive and vivid than documents alone. Hessa is one such landscape.



Ancient oak in Reinhardswald, near Kassel

John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hesse*,
721-754 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011)

Comedy and Cultural Change in the 1960s



Daisy Srblin is a second year undergraduate student. Using sources that include Monty Python, *That Was The Week That Was* and *Til Death Us Do Part*, she considers here how comedy can assist historians in assessing change in British culture and taste in the 1960s.

In the gradual ‘redrawing of cultural boundaries’ during the sixties, from high culture to mass culture, comedy, as a form of popular media, plays an important role in the assessment of these changes and their impact.¹ Yet comedy has tended to be ignored by historians, perhaps as a result of its inherent lack of seriousness. Analysis of the period is subsequently poorer for it, as what a social group laughs at can reflect the cultural assumptions, prejudices and preoccupations of the age.² Historians who do pay attention to comedy, however, tend to over-emphasise the modern ‘satire boom’ and ‘humorous cultural revolution’ which apparently overturned the established political and social order.³ It is important to look beyond this narrow approach and pay some attention to non-satiric comedy, to see the role of both tradition and modernity in the period, and to appreciate the unusual dynamics between them. In this way a more sensitive understanding of the 1960s can be achieved, looking at these themes within a broader framework of cultural change. Whilst there is much that it cannot tell us, it is clear that comedy has a far more significant and complex role than has hitherto been acknowledged by historians.

The ‘satire boom’ remains a preoccupation of the historians who do consider comedy, which says much about what is deemed to be ‘important’ or ‘serious’ history. A focus on satire has resulted in a disproportionate examination of the elements of modernity in the period, at the expense of continuity. Equally, this approach stresses the ‘high-minded’ nature of comedy, over the less intellectual forms of other comedy.⁴ However, whilst this skews our understanding of what constitutes popular culture in the period,

¹ Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg (eds.), *Come On Down? Popular Media Culture In Post-War Britain* (Routledge, London, 1992), p. 5.

² A more sociological discussion of the power of comedy can be found in Medhurst’s contribution in Therese Daniels and Jane Gerson (eds.), *The Colour Black* (BFI Publishing, Essex, 1989), p. 15.

³ Peter Hitchens, *The Abolition of Britain* (Quarter Books, London, 1999), p. 156 presents satire as a creative, subversive and revolutionary force.

⁴ For a narrative heavily focused upon the more modern elements of comedy at the time see Sandbrook’s discussion of satire in Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (Little Brown, London, 2005) pp. 535-557.

satire is important: both in terms of the sociological context of its development and the nature of its approach to the breakdown of traditional authority, as well as what it reveals about existing power structures in 1960s Britain.

Satire's transition into an accepted comedic form relates directly to post-war socio-economic developments, such as rising affluence in the 1950s, which framed approaches to authority and establishment institutions. As Crisell demonstrates, the provision of better education as well as technological developments allowing for more leisure time, contributed to a 'clearer, less romantic view of the world', one less inclined to automatic deference to traditional sources of authority.⁵ The satire boom can therefore be seen as a direct response to wider changes, as its 'anti-deference, anti-hierarchy, anti-privilege' nature, far removed from the family-friendly comedies of the 1950s, sought to challenge existing power bases.⁶ As former Python Michael Palin stated, 'authority has to win respect now, when in those days it was automatically granted it.'

The shift away from deference is best seen in the 1961 *Beyond the Fringe* sketch, 'The Aftermyth of War'.⁷ As the name suggests, the sketch controversially challenged the view that the recent war had been a time of absolute national unity, through Cook's instruction of Miller's self-sacrifice in order to raise spirits: 'we need a futile gesture at this stage... take a shufti, don't come back'.⁸ The myths of the heroism and sacrifice of war had previously been unquestionable, but the sketch served to challenge and scrutinize their morality. This approach to authority presents a modern shift in culture in the period, and a marked reluctance to take such myths at face value.

Whilst other targets of satire included everything from self-important Oxford academics to race relations in Mississippi, another important cultural shift can be seen in the influence of consumerism on framing opinions of modern society. Frost's controversial 'Consumer Guide To Religion' sketch on *That Was The Week That Was* in 1963 accurately identifies the role of such factors in framing attitudes towards deference. In his 'value for money' criticism of the main religions he takes a crude consumerist approach to the 'products on the market,' rating, for example, Catholicism's 'continental line plus international performance'.⁹ This way of thinking also relates to the impact television had on leisure patterns and lifestyle: partially as a result of the proliferation of consumer choice, people began to think as individuals, rather than 'collectively' as citizens. Comedy, therefore, points to a changing culture, one dabbling in permissiveness: challenging the authority of society's traditional sacred cows.

⁵ Andrew Crisell, 'Filtch, Sediton and Blasphemy: the rise and fall of television satire', in John Corner (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain* (BFI Publishing, Norfolk, 1991), p. 148.

⁶ Hitchens, *The Abolition of Britain*, p. 173.

⁷ Michael Palin quoted in Chapman, Cleese, Gilliam, Idle, Jones, Palin ('The Pythons'), *The Pythons Autobiography: By The Pythons* (Orion, London, 2003), p. 54.

⁸ Beyond The Fringe – The Aftermyth Of War – Part 2, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R_19KbYpag&feature=related – the sketch is also discussed in Hitchens, *The Abolition of Britain*, p. 157.

⁹ That Was The Week That Was – 1963, 'Consumer Guide to Religion' at 9:43 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INxp98-2i6A>

Satire's 'anti-political' nature, in viewing public life as a veil, and politics as posturing, helped to dismantle established authority, and present politics as an invasion of privacy regardless of political stance.¹⁰ This built on the foundations of surrealism in *The Goon Show* which reflected the only finely disguised madness of everyday life. The apolitical aversion to politics is seen in *Private Eye's* reaction to the election of a fairly progressive Labour government in 1964, showing the Queen opening Parliament with the words 'I hope you realise I didn't write this crap'.¹¹ This not only reflects the non-partisan stance of satire's vehicles but also the idea that the truth, in this case what the Queen is really thinking, lay only just beyond the surface. Similarly, the sense that politics was not to be taken too seriously would be affirmed in 1963 with the Profumo affair. It is debateable whether satire was creative or reflective in the diminishing of political authority, but it is clear that there were some fundamental cultural shifts regarding the role of politics, the legacy of which remains, which were part of the gradual transition to an understanding of culture in its popular sense.

The paradox, however, of viewing satire simply through the lens of a developing modern culture arises when considering production. The privileged backgrounds of the individuals involved in writing and performing satire were remarkably similar: many were publicly-educated, most had studied at Oxford or Cambridge and almost all were white and male. These were the sort of young men destined for positions within the establishment themselves, making satire to some extent a 'revolt of the privileged'.¹² In addition, its 'high-minded' subject matter did not appeal to, and was not aimed at, the vast majority: *Private Eye* was, to begin with, only available in a few obscure outlets in affluent west London. Therefore, while it is important to consider satire's role in the development of a modern culture, it is also necessary to examine its ability to reflect elements of continuity. Satire undermined traditional sources of authority and reflected the cultural effects of post-war changes. Yet the nature of its production points to the continued prevalence of the elite: in complicating the image of the 1960s as more than just an age of 'social and cultural transformation', satire reflects the complex and contradictory cultural patterns existing at the time.¹³

The less satiric and more traditional forms of comedy were more popular than satire, and also have much to contribute to understanding culture change. Although historians' favour of satire and modernity tends to skew appreciations of what constituted culture at the time, it is important to bear in mind the elements of tradition and continuity that framed comedy. Non-satire was far more diverse and enduring than satire, and often sought to reflect the preoccupations of its viewers, an idea reinforced by its sheer popularity.

¹⁰ Strinati and Wagg (eds.), *Come On Down?*, p. 7.

¹¹ *Private Eye*, Issue no. 75, 30 October 1964, in Richard Ingrams (ed.), *The Life and Times of Private Eye* (Penguin Books, Bucks, 1971), p. 112.

¹² Wagg, 'You've never had it so silly', in Strinati and Wagg (eds.), *Come On Down?* p. 255 – for example, consider the fact that the main editors of *Private Eye* had known one another at public school.

¹³ Argued by Marwick in Aldgate, Chapman and Marwick (eds.), *Windows on the Sixties: Exploring key texts of media and culture* (I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2000), p. xii.

The rise of the situational comedy as a genre is noteworthy in demonstrating cultural uncertainties at the time, particularly as a result of a new concern with reflecting working class life.¹⁴ The struggles of fulfilling social mobility, also an outcome of socio-economic improvement in the post-war years, are seen through the somewhat tragic sitcom *Steptoe and Son*, as well as *Hancock's Half Hour*. In the latter, Hancock's middle-class aspirations are thwarted as he remains on the cusp of affluence, living in East Cheam, the less prosperous side of the south London suburb.¹⁵ Sitcoms of this kind, whilst traditional in their domestic settings and humour, reflected the frustrations regarding the gap between the 'never had it so good' rhetoric and the reality. The popularity of these programmes also points to popular identification with such experiences: at its peak *Steptoe* had over 21 million viewers.¹⁶ Yet again this indicates the complex nature of popular culture at the time, where modern ideals of affluence were met with the harsh realities of poverty, and modern impulses of the 1960s held back by the past.

There are other areas in which we might also see traditional comedy as emulating reactionary themes, such as discussion of race. Often watched by over eighteen million viewers, *Til Death Us Do Part* was one of the most popular sitcoms of the mid-1960s. It is interesting to consider the extent to which the millions that tuned in to watch were laughing at or with the 'monstrous hero', Alf Garnett, which would affect the observed importance of modernity or intransigence in the period. The significance of *Til Death Us Do Part* was to vocalize brutally concerns surrounding immigration and race relations, suggesting the development of more open discussion, which was largely not present in Parliament. This demonstrates the nature of the growing climate of popular culture and debate.

In many ways tensions between tradition and modernity can also be seen in the presentation of women in other comedy of the time, particularly in the *Carry On* films. Whilst the prevailing view of the films is that of preoccupation with 'saucy slap and tickle', Gray argues that there is more to the presentation of women.¹⁷ In fact, women are largely on equal terms with men in the sexual and working relationships presented in the films, a significant cultural shift. In 1964's *Carry On Spying*, a parody of the popular James Bond films where women are faced with the choice of 'bed or dead,' Barbara Windsor plays a spy whose successes are thwarted by incapable men.¹⁸ In this way the complex presentation of women fits in with what Wagg describes as the development of a 'multiplicity of political realms', where discourse and debate about

¹⁴ Wagg, 'Social class and the situation comedy', in Wagg (ed.), *Because I Tell A Joke Or Two*, p.8.

¹⁵ Peter Goddard, 'Hancock's Half Hour: a watershed in British television comedy', in Corner (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain*, p. 79.

¹⁶ <http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/mostwatched/1960s.html> – This can obviously be contrasted with *That Was The Week That Was*'s comparatively pitiful peak in 1963 of 12 million.

¹⁷ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National identity in Britain 1940-2000*, (Macmillan, 2002), p. 373.

¹⁸ Gray, Frances, 'Certain liberties have been taken with Cleopatra: female performance in the *Carry On* films', in Wagg (ed.), *Because I Tell A Joke Or Two*, p. 99.

key elements of society become part of a popular conversation.¹⁹ This is also seen in previous examples of social mobility and race, particularly in consideration of the complex presentations of these themes.

There is a great deal that comedy cannot tell us about the past. Comedy is just one form of popular culture, most useful perhaps when considered alongside other mediums such as film and music. Yet comedy was a diverse medium through which the British public, in their millions, sought to understand and discuss the changes occurring around them. The way they understood these changes often pointed to fundamental uncertainty, seen through the tensions between modernity and tradition. Because of this, comedy offers a particular insight into 1960s culture. Perhaps more so than anything else, we should remember that comedy in this period was funnier and more popular than it had ever been, and it came in many different forms. In short, Brits were laughing more in the 1960s than they had ever done, possibly as a sigh of relief from the austerity and reconstruction years, indicating a culture more at ease with itself and fundamentally more democratic.

You, the Graduate. *Where are you now?*

Christiane Kroebel studied Anglo-Saxon history at Durham (2003) and is now a librarian with experience in special libraries in the US, Zimbabwe and the UK. She volunteered to be honorary librarian and archivist of the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society after she had a baby. Twelve years on, she is still there managing sixteen volunteers and a number of projects. The Society was founded in 1823 for the purpose of establishing a museum with a library to support the curators. However, it has become a repository for anything about the local area ranging from single sheet items to multi-volume sets with a strong collection on Whitby's maritime history, geology and industrial heritage. The library is open to members and the public. Currently, the library is conserving and digitizing the Whitby Merchant Seamen's Hospital muster rolls in partnership with the North Yorkshire County Record Office and is about to move the archives and special collections into a new strong room.

Where are you now? We'd love to hear what alumni have been up to since they graduated. Email history.alumni@durham.ac.uk or join us on Facebook in the 'Durham University History Alumni' group.

¹⁹ Wagg (ed.), *Because I Tell A Joke Or Two*, p. xii.

Peace, Piety and Public Opinion: the promotion of the papacy in the reign of Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605)



Christian Schneider's PhD investigates how the papacy responded to challenges to its supranational authority by the Reformation and the interests of secular states in the early-modern period. Here he explores the tactics used by Pope Clement VIII to promote the papacy.¹

Returning from his embassy to Rome in 1595, the Venetian ambassador Paolo Paruta explained to the Venetian senate that 'the Roman Pontiff can be considered under the two persons that he sustains: that is, the head and universal shepherd of all Christendom, and the apostolic Vicar of Christ and true successor of Peter in the Catholic church; and besides [this] that of a temporal prince who holds a state in Italy.'² Obviously, this posed the problem that two different heads had to be united under one, admittedly triple-crowned, papal tiara. The pope's position as temporal prince could be in stark contrast with his role as spiritual ruler: calls for universal peace in Christendom and papal military campaigns in Italy hardly go together. The blatant temporal preoccupations of Renaissance popes, such as Julius II 'the Warrior Pope',³ proved this well enough. Conversely, it seems that the papacy was aware of this conflict and tried to counteract it in the face of scrutiny from Catholic princes and people alike.

¹ This article is based on a paper delivered at the Tudor Symposium (Sheffield, Sept. 2011) and on research trips to archives that have been generously supported by the Durham History Department and Durham University, the Royal Historical Society, the Senior Common Room of University College (Durham), and the Society for Renaissance Studies.

² Eugenio Albèri (ed.), *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, vol. 10 (series 2, vol. 4) (Florence, 1857), p. 359; translation by Opher Mansour, 'Prince and pontiff. Secular and spiritual authority in papal state portraiture between Raphael's *Julius II* and the portraits of Pius V and Clement VIII', in Jill Burke and Michael Bury (eds.), *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 209-229, here p. 212.

³ Christine Shaw, *Julius II. The Warrior Pope* (Oxford, 1993).



*Pope Clement VIII, Bronze statue by Flaminio Ponzio, 'Tomb of Clement VIII'.
Cappella Paolina, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.*

From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, with the growth of the Catholic Reform, popes started to demonstrate their personal piety ostentatiously. Although the pontiff's personal virtue was not a prerequisite for the legitimacy of his rule, 'supererogatory display of piety could, in practice, send appropriate political signals and bolster the pope's prestige.'⁴ Popes such as Clement VIII Aldobrandini (1592-1605) and Paul

⁴ Mansour 'Prince and pontiff', p. 212.

V Borghese (1605-1621) were compelled to preserve their position as a secular ruler among the other princes by displaying courtly grandeur. Excessive and temporal splendour, which could threaten the promoted image of papal spiritual lordship, was thus delegated to a relative of the pope among the cardinals. This so-called cardinal-nephew feasted envoys and princes in his villa in the presence of the pope. The costs were reimbursed by the pontiff but the nephew was the host at such displays of courtly representation. In short, the cardinal-nephew took up the role of representing the secular aspects of papal rule. If the nephew exaggerated beyond what was esteemed as within the (then rather generously-conceived) norm, the pope dissociated demonstratively from these extravagances. Only the cardinal-nephew seemed to be responsible for splendour and prodigality and could be criticised for it; the pope remained untouched by this. In his role as the Vicar of Christ, he was beside, or better aloof from, these temporal displays.⁵

Indeed, Pope Clement VIII was extremely preoccupied with his image as the Vicar of Christ as well as with the political prestige of the papacy. In 1598 the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Delfino reported to the Venetian senate that the Pope celebrated Mass daily with such devotion and effusion of tears that it was astonishing.⁶ Consequently, 'Clement was noted for fervent public prayer, fasting, weeping and frequent celebration of Mass'. These 'acts of personal devotion and self-abasement intended to foster a reputation for piety and humility, and to demonstrate that he aligned himself with the "reformed" popes of the preceding decades.'⁷ Clement VIII's ostentatious personal piety, however, did not convince everyone.

Paruta related to the Venetian senate that 'those are not lacking who attribute all this to human [that is, temporal] considerations and to an utmost desire of the pontiff to present himself to the world in a great image of goodness and most exemplary life; he is clearly displeased when he learns that things are being said about his person that convey a different impression to the image that he would like to portray of himself.' Paruta believed that 'To this end also serve the considerations that he often introduces, saying that in his doings he takes only into consideration the common service of Christendom and the Catholic religion, and not the splendour of his nephews or other of his private interests. He does this too often and with everyone so that it seems that it actually produces an effect contrary to his intention; for with this unsought apology

⁵ Volker Reinhardt, 'Der päpstliche Hof um 1600', in August Buck et al. (eds.), *Europäische Hofkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Vorträge und Referate gehalten anlässlich des Kongresses des Wolfenbütteler Arbeitskreises für Renaissanceforschung und des Internationalen Arbeitskreises für Barockliteratur in der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel* vom 4. bis 8. September 1979 (Hamburg, 1981), pp. 709-715, here pp. 711-713.

⁶ Albèri, *Le relazioni*, p. 455: 'ch' è celebrata da Sua Santità quotidianamente con tanta devozione ed effusione di lacrime che è cosa di stupore'.

⁷ Mansour, 'Prince and pontiff', p. 223.

he almost ends up condemning his own conscience, it almost becomes known that [his actions] need justification.⁸ Apparently, Clement VIII was too preoccupied with his image and the role he had to play in the eye of public scrutiny. Ironically, this excessive concern for his prestige sometimes led to counter-productive results.⁹

In general, Clement VIII's political actions were, if not guided, they were certainly informed by considerations for his and the papacy's glory and reputation. An ambassador-extraordinary of Venice, Marco Venier, related in 1601 that Clement VIII 'dedicates himself to grave matters with all his mind, and persists in them without showing any flaccidness; and when he happens to see them concluded, he enjoys and savours extraordinarily the satisfaction that he receives thereof. Nor does anything gratify him more than to be estimated, and if his reputation, over which he watches jealously, is respected.' Venier continued that 'His Holiness directs his thoughts towards glory' and that 'The Pontiff is generally esteemed to be a person of great virtue, goodness and religion, and he takes pleasure in ensuring that signs and important effects thereof can be seen constantly.'¹⁰

His success as peacemaker between France and Spain at Vervins in 1598 and between France and Savoy at Lyons in 1601, gave Clement VIII an excellent occasion to fully enjoy the fruits of his labours and to indulge in the prestige he had won for the papacy. For example, news of the Peace of Vervins, and of the Pope's involvement in it, spread quickly after its conclusion. The papal representative in Venice, Nuncio Antonio Maria Gratiani, related how the Venetian Senate commended the labour of the Pope in the peace negotiations and the nuncio in Spain wrote that 'With the favour of God and the happy auspices of His Holiness the war will be no more, and the people of these exhausted kingdoms [...] will celebrate eternally the glorious name of His Holiness'.¹¹ Conversely, the Pope closely observed whether the papacy received its due respect for this achievement.

The nuncio in Spain informed the papal court on 3 June 1601 that the Spanish king, Philip III, had finally taken the oath to observe the Peace of Vervins of 1598 in the Cathedral of Valladolid, relating that the king of Spain and the ambassador of France had approached the Cathedral on horseback, where the nuncio had been awaiting them. This moved Clement VIII to write on the margin of the nuncio's letter: 'Ask him [the nuncio] why he did not accompany the king; possibly he did this in order to cede the whole festivity to the ambassador of France'.¹² This underlines how a jealous Clement VIII watched whether the Holy See received its share and place of representation in public processions in recognition of its political achievement as a peacemaking force.

⁸ Albèri (ed.), *Le relazioni*, pp. 441-442 (my translation).

⁹ See also Mansour, 'Prince and pontiff', p. 223.

¹⁰ Nicolò Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet (eds.), *Le relazioni della corte di Roma lette al senato dagli ambasciatori veneti nel secolo decimosettimo*, series 3, vol. 1 (Venice, 1877), p. 32 (my translation).

¹¹ Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), Segr. Stato, Venezia, 33, 60r, Gratiani to Aldobrandini, 16 May 1598; ASV, Segr. Stato, Spagna, 49, 143v, Caetano to Aldobrandini, 25 May 1598 (my translation).

¹² ASV, Segr. Stato, Spagna, 54, 151v, Ginnasio to Aldobrandini, 3 June 1601 (my translation).

Clearly, after the Council of Trent, the papacy felt that the Reform of the Catholic Church alone was not enough to preserve or improve the good opinion of the Holy See. Thus, although not always equal in success, piety and peace served as two key means for the promotion of the good public opinion of the pope, as the spiritual leader and common father of Christendom during the pontificate of Clement VIII.



*Clement VIII Makes Peace between Philip II of Spain and Henri IV of France.
Relief by Ippolito Buzio, 'Tomb of Clement VIII'. Cappella Paolina, Santa Maria
Maggiore, Rome.*

Please get in touch!

We hope you have enjoyed the second issue of *Symeon*. We would like to include more about you, as alumni, in subsequent issues, so please do get in touch and let us know what you are doing now. Perhaps you are in a job in which you use on a daily basis the skills you learned studying history? Perhaps you are doing something entirely different? Either way, we'd love to hear from you.

Please write to:
43 North Bailey
Durham
DH1 3EX

or email:
history.alumni@durham.ac.uk

or join our Facebook group: 'Durham University History Alumni'.



Durham University, Sudan Archive.

Learning to vote: practice ballot in Omdurman, Sudan, 1953.