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As historians, we are all to some extent concerned with 'frontiers'. Marx's *Communist Manifesto* famously opens by arguing that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'. The economic frontier – the driver of Marx's universe – is just one of those considered by historians. We find frontiers in the inter-actions between religions, ethnicities, genders, cultures and political creeds, to name just a few. We, as historians, also confront methodological frontiers. How can we reach beyond the boundaries of nation and discipline to conceive the past and discuss our reconstructions in a useful way?

It is a mark of the centrality of these issues to historical study that, though Symeon articles are not commissioned on any particular theme, 'the frontier' reoccurs throughout this edition. Andy Burn writes on power-dynamics in early modern England through the use of libels. Jack Hepworth meanwhile questions the narrative of conflict between English and Irish communities in the North West. Kathleen Reynolds provides a window onto the gender dynamics in the provision of healthcare in early modern England. Alex Jordan discusses the puns and innuendos found in serious biographies of medieval saints, and whether they are as incongruous as they first appear. Elsewhere, Jo Fox addresses both geographical and methodological frontiers, reflecting on the conceptual insights we gain through engagement with researchers from across the world. In a similar, though fundamentally distinct, vein, Victoria Eberts considers the ways in which writers from the British Isles, cut off from the continent for a generation by the wars of 1792-1815, came into contact with, and attempted to understand, Paris and the French. John-Henry Clay, an historian with a foot in the dual-worlds of 'fact' and 'fiction', considers whether the two are really as irreconcilable as they may seem at the outset. Finally, Peter Johnson, an alumnus of the Department, reflects on the often significant frontier dividing communities from their past, explaining how the National Army Museum is reorganising its collections to help the public understand, appreciate, and take possession of their own history.

Behind the scenes, Symeon has crossed frontiers of its own. Kathleen Reynolds, and longstanding editors Matt Wright and George Stevenson, have stepped down from the editorial team. The present editors – and, we're sure, Symeon's many readers – are grateful for their heroic exertions in years past. Fellow PhD candidates Jenine de Vries and Mark Bennett have stepped into the large shoes of these former editors and have already made a significant impact on Symeon.

Each of Symeon's six editions features on its cover a bookshelf. In many ways, these images sum up the magazine's aim: to remind readers of their many hours spent (fruitfully, we hope) reading, reflecting on, and discussing historical subjects. We hope the image of well-worn tomes on a cluttered shelf will encourage readers to consider how their years spent in Durham informed their understanding of the world and the ways in which they pursue their lives today. We sincerely hope that Symeon will help to build a continuing connection between the current Departmental community and its alumni.

We as editors, and many colleagues in the Department, have been very gratified in recent years to have received correspondence, reflections and articles from alumni in response to Symeon – if you so wish, please do get in touch using the contact details on the penultimate page.

In the meantime – we very much hope you enjoy this year's Symeon!

TOM RODGER, MARK BENNETT AND JENINE DE VRIES.
Symeon Editorial Team


Hardwerthe
Mortons
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Redmarsh
Staynton
Longnewton
Worsall
Ower Dunsley

CONTENTS

The poor, there is more than goes from door to door

THREATS, LIBELS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

FIRST THING ONE MORNING IN NOVEMBER 1630...

... a cleaner was sweeping the porch of Dr Richman's house in Wye, near Ashford in Kent. She picked up a scrap of paper and took it straight to her employer. It was a strange note with a disguised handwriting made up of mixed capitals and lower case, and different styles and letter forms – a classic cut-and-paste ransom note *avant la lettre*. Shocked by what he read, Richman took the 'libel' (as these documents were usually known) to the Sheriff of Kent, who in turn sent it straight to the King's Privy Council for further investigation.[1]

ANDY BURN
Postdoctoral Research Assistant (Early Modern British History)

Andy Burn is a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of History, working on a project funded by the Leverhulme Trust: 'Social relations and everyday life in England, 1500-1640'. He specializes in early modern economic and social history, particularly the history of work, and of Newcastle upon Tyne and the North East.

Die elster auf dem galgen
(the magpie on the gallows)
Pieter Brueghel the Elder (d. 1569)
Wikimedia Commons

The libel's childish look masked a seditious, menacing tone. It was intentionally shocking. 'The corne is so dear', it read, 'I dout [i.e. I'm afraid] mani will starve this yeare … if you see not to this, sum of you will speed a mis'. Find some food for us, in other words, or some of you will quickly come to harm. On its own, in a time of social calm, such threats might have been less serious. But the 1620s was a hungry time and the sheriff saw a developing pattern of food-related disorder – mobs that 'fall upon such as carry corne … in the highwais'.[2] A few weeks earlier, at Woodchurch, '20 or 30 men & woemen mett' one convoy of food and 'broke away the corne, crying out the one half was for the K[ing]s & the other for them'. The sheriff was beginning to worry that his authority was outnumbered and surrounded. This was understood and exploited by the note's authors, too, in an ominous footnote: 'the pore, there is more then goes from dore to dore' – when we 'arise', there will be far more than just the usual beggars, and you'd better watch out.

The fact that this libel survives in its original form is a happy coincidence for the historian. They were ephemeral documents, to be used and thrown away. But growing anxieties about 'damaging words' at the turn of the seventeenth century meant that a number were painstakingly transcribed as evidence in law suits.[3] They reveal a popular culture of composing, replicating and singing memorable verses, and contain a sophisticated political repertoire. The Kent libel has been used to suggest the desperation of very hungry people, but in fact it was cleverly put together.[4] It teased the authorities' biggest fears, and legitimized collective protests as a way to correct social injustices.[5] The authors felt Richman, the local Christian minister, should be on their side: 'you that are set in place see that youre profesion you doe not disgrace'. But Richman and his peers cared less about starvation than sin: 'our souls they are dear, for our bodyes have sume ceare'. The implication of callous hypocrisy was profoundly and deliberately insulting.

This sophistication does not necessarily imply that the authors were fully literate; they often weren't. They collaborated together, cooking up a libel and a course of action over a pint or a few in the alehouse. The rhyming verse was easy to remember and recite, and a passing literate person (sometimes professional scribes or musicians) could be roped in to write the libel up. [6] The Kent libel's erratic spelling and mixture of cases, combined with the almost, but not quite, alphabetic order of the signatures, suggests the authors were teasing the minister with semi-literacy as well. [7] Who are we? 'Will you knowe my name, you must be wise in the same'.

Some libels mixed written text and symbolic action, which could be just as rich with meaning. In 1612, a Somerset yeoman's mare was stolen by his neighbours. They shaved her mane, put a pair of horns on her head, and pinned an obscene libel to her tail, slandering his wife. [8] The horns implied she was 'cuckolding' him, or symbolically emasculating him by being unfaithful. [9] In Yarmouth, magistrate and merchant William Crow was treated to a cloying anonymous epitaph pinned ceremonially to his coffin cloth, which punned adoringly on his name: the 'Crowe of state … is flowne to heavenly blisse'. [10] Incensed by this undeserved praise, a group of Crow's neighbours composed an answer: 'Yarmouth come laugh come joye, come singe, and chuce yt not a

Vijf boeren aan tafel in de buitenlucht
(Five farmers at a table outdoors)
Gottlieb Friedrich Riedel, Johann Gradmann (c. 1600-1750)
Rijksmuseum, Netherlands

[1] The National Archives, State Papers SP 16/175, ff.156-7.

[2] Ibid., f. 156r.

[3] Christopher W. Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 391-6.

[4] Alan Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce, 1500-1640', in John Chartres (ed.), *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1750. Vol. 4: Agricultural Markets and Trade, 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 132.

[5] Peter Clark, 'Popular protest and disturbance in Kent, 1558-1640', *The Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. XXIX (1976), pp. 369-70.

[6] Adam Fox, 'Ballads, libels and popular ridicule in Jacobean England', *Past and Present*, 145 (1994). It is worth noting that the Star Chamber was often used to prosecute riots, so it was useful, if not always completely truthful, for the plaintiffs to demonstrate that the defendants had 'conspired' with one another.

[7] I have my 'Early modern England: a social history' seminars to thank for this observation.

[8] TNA, Court of Star Chamber, STAC 8/92/10

[9] See e.g. Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2003).

[10] TNA, STAC 8/85/15.

cross, that you within this litle whyle art purged of some drosse'. They listed his supposed moral shortcomings, from adultery to failing to care for the poor and orphans, and concluded that 'yf they walke in vertuous wayes, they need noe flatteringe men'.

Other libels were purely symbolic. 'Haveing the Consent and go[o]d likeinge' of his tenants (or so he claimed), a Dorset gent John Warham thought he could improve the productivity of common land on his estate by fencing it off. [11] An angry group of tenants waged a campaign of terror. In March 1620 they arrived at his house in the middle of the night and 'theare finding a pile of wood or blockes reddy cutt' they 'cast all the ... blockes into a fylthy dike of mudd and water', making them no use for the hearth. Later in the month, the band returned 'further to vex and disquiet' Warham by using his firewood again to make 'the forme and fashione of a gallowes'. Then in September they resurrected the gallows, adding 'certaine bundles of fetches which they had framed in resemmblance of men ... [and] did make great acclamacions and rejoycings in [Warham's] disgrace'. What was funny to the rioters seemed threatening and subversive to Warham: the gallows symbolized the repressive power of the state, but in Dorset in 1620, it was being turned on him by his social inferiors, something he found deeply unsettling.

Warham's tenants also showed a memory of past political action. They sent groups of women and children to his house, believing, he thought, 'that yf ... hedges and ditches weare ... cast downe by weomen & boyes that [he] should have noe remedy against them'. This knowledge was based on past Dorset enclosure riots, where women and children 'had escaped without any punishment or question'.[12] Memories could be much longer too. A Shropshire vicar Henry Cunde found himself at the sharp end of a 1605 libel suggesting that his wife, now dead, had been sleeping with virtually every man in the village. [13] 'Vickar when you are from home', it said, 'the parson is readye to supplye your roome. The keeper also will not bee behind'. Twenty stanzas gave ample voice to the authors' endlessly creative innuendoes, and the culprits evoked more than two centuries of rebellious tradition by signing their libel 'Jack Straw'. Straw was one of the three ringleaders of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt and had seen resurgence in interest alongside Jack Cade (of the eponymous 1450 rebellion) in Elizabethan history plays that consciously paralleled their own world with the turbulence of late medieval England. [14] The local politics of this case are not at all clear, unfortunately, but this nod to a totemic English rebel must be significant.

Court cases alleging libel are just one route into understanding how social relations worked in practice between neighbours, between rich and poor, and between the powerful and the weak. They describe a society that was far from comfortably consensual, a world of deference, charity and petitions that stressed mutual concerns. Neither do they show knee-jerk riots that arose unthinkingly to let off steam. Instead the offenders in these cases were remonstrating with local people who had transgressed acceptable moral and social norms, and they did it in considered and staged, often public, ways. They evoked old glories, or common heroes and enemies. They teased authority, poked at hypocrisy, and played up their strength in numbers. And in Dorset, they waged a protracted campaign of harassment against a landlord, treading (or so they thought) just on the right side of the law most of the time.

The signature of 'Jack Straw', State Papers Online, STAC 8/100/18
Andy Burn photo

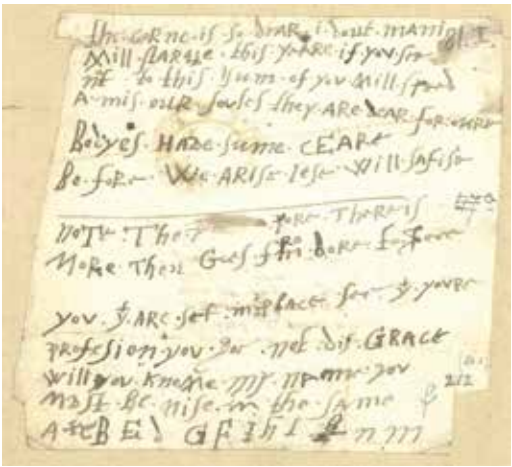
Reconstruction of the gibbet or gallows at Caxton Gibbet, Cambridgeshire, UK
Andrew Dunn photo via Wikimedia Commons

[11] TNA, STAC 8/239/12.

[12] Ibid.

[13] TNA, STAC 8/100/18.

[14] Jack Cade is in Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part II; Straw in the anonymous *The Life and Death of Jack Straw*, which shows a number of similarities, e.g. both rebels demand the death of all lawyers.



The Wye Libel, November 1630 State Papers Online, STAC 8/100/18

the coRne is so deaR, I dout mani
will staRve this yeARe, if you see
not to this, sum of you will speed
A mis ouR soules they aRe deaR foR ouRe
Bodyes HAve sume cEARe.
BefoRe We ARise lese will safise
NoTe: The pore There is
More Then Goes fRom doRe to Dore.
You yt ARe set in place see yt youRe
profesion you Doe not dis GRACE
will you Knowe my NAme
you must Be wise in the same.
A+ C B E d G F I H L K N M

CRISES IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Edited by Durham University's Alex Brown, Andy Burn and Rob Doherty, this volume was published in November 2015. It traces continuity and change in the causes, understanding, and response to crises of different types in medieval, early modern and modern history.

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

IN VICTORIAN PRESTON

Excerpt from BA dissertation (2015) entitled 'Isolation or Integration? The Irish in mid-Victorian Preston, c.1829-1867'

Scholarly depictions of the Irish as social outcasts in mid-nineteenth century England often rest upon the claim that a hostile native majority wilfully excluded migrants from the institutions of urban society.[1] Violent confrontations between English and Irish were not unheard of in Victorian Preston, the single most significant episode of Anglo-Irish conflict being the Farington Riot of May 1838.[2] When a technical fault at Bashall's mill caused the majority of the mill's English workforce to leave for the Sumpter Horse public house, a heated argument with Irish railway labourers ensued, and a fight broke out. Later in the evening, the Irish laid siege to several local English-owned properties, and in a subsequent flare-up, Patrick Smith, an Irishman, shot dead an English adversary the following night. The sheer quantity of men who mobilized quickly to engage in the mob violence is striking: the Preston railway constable Joseph Thornber was convinced that he had seen over 700 English youths gathering together in their attempts to take revenge. Still, it is worth noting that Thornber identified the crowd as comprising almost entirely youthful gangs between 'eight and eighteen years in age'; it is not clear whether support for, or engagement in, the violence of May 1838 extended to an older generation.[3]

A labour leader addressing striking textile workers in the Preston strike of 1853. *Image reproduced by permission of the Granger Collection/ Universal Images Group*

Far from the ubiquitous social hostility that the existing academic literature often suggests existed, perhaps the most prevalent English outlook towards the Irish was a more benign sense of pity. In the mid-nineteenth century the local Whig press frequently held up Ireland's economic impoverishment as a cautionary tale; far from being hated and ostracized out of hand, the Irish were to be pitied for the plight of their homeland. The *Preston Chronicle* in March 1854 warned that the continuance of the contemporary cotton strike and lock-out risked reducing the area to the status of Ireland, home to 'the most pauperized and degraded population in the empire'.[4] The temperance leader Joseph Livesey, meanwhile, commented that the dangerous prospects of economic downturn could be observed with a 'glance at these Irish labourers'.[5] During the Irish potato famine, the Anglican and nonconformist churches in the town joined in raising significant sums of money for the relief fund: in one week alone in February 1847, the nonconformist chapel on Cannon Street raised almost £50 for the cause.[6]

JACK HEPWORTH
Research MA student

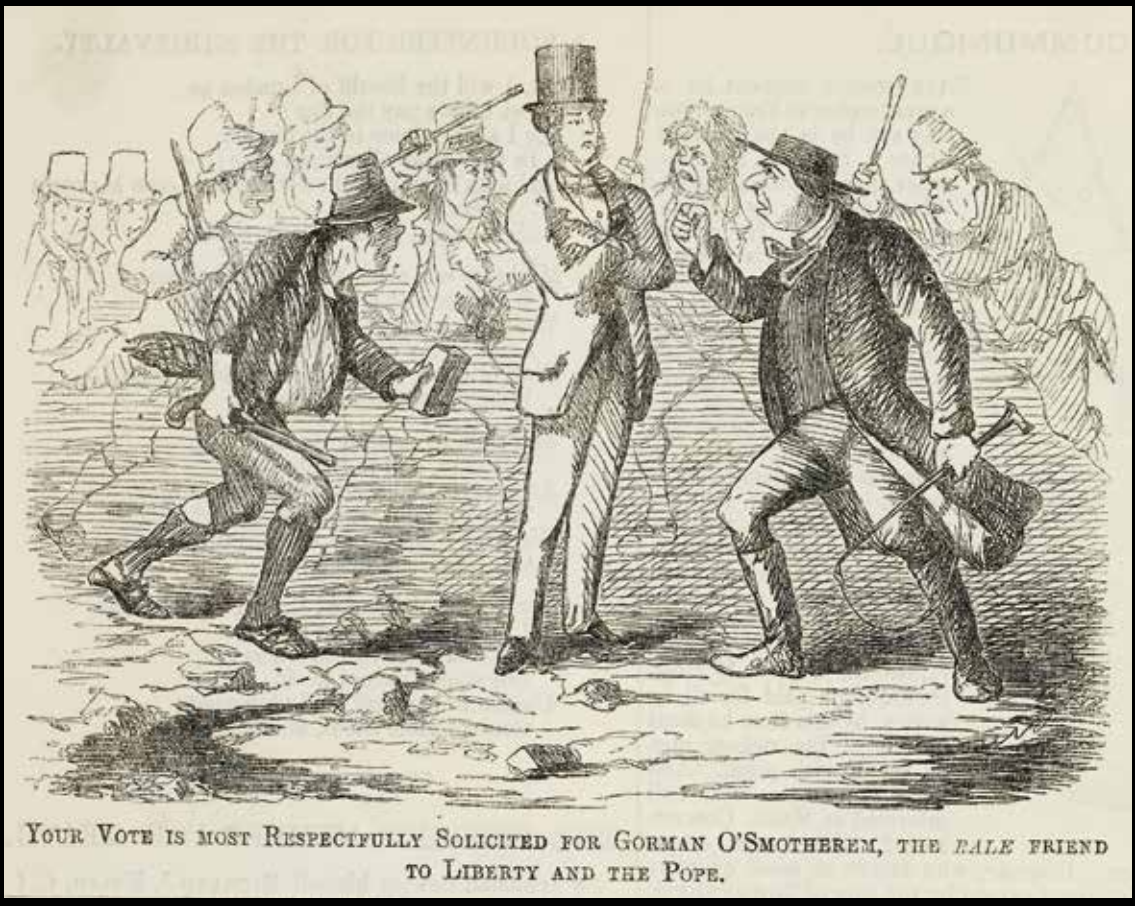
Jack completed his undergraduate degree in History in 2015. His thesis, 'Isolation or Integration? The Irish in Victorian Preston', was awarded the Gibson Prize for the best dissertation on a topic in local history. He is now reading for a Research MA in the History Department on 'Irish republicanism c.1969-c.1990'.

[1] J. K. Walton, *Lancashire: A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), pp. 165, 253.

[2] D. Hunt, *A History of Leyland and District* (Preston, 1990), pp. 99-101.

[3] *Preston Pilot* (hereafter PP), 26 May 1838.

[4] *Preston Chronicle* (hereafter PC), 4 Mar. 1854.



Contemporary anti-Irish imagery often focused on their propensity to violence: note the degenerate racial forms of their depiction. Taken from *Punch*, 14 August 1852; *reproduced by permission of Durham University Library*

Even at the height of the turbulent Preston strike, the *Preston Guardian* editorialized with sympathy for the Irish in an article entitled 'Shameful Treatment of Immigrants', expressing outrage against the ill-treatment of three Irish labourers who were left stranded at Manchester's Victoria Station, awaiting a transfer to Preston.[7] While Livesey expressed regret at the economic pressures created by mass immigration, he defended on principle the right of the Irish to settle in England: 'The Irishman has as much right to come to England as the Lancashire man has to go to Yorkshire'.[8] Although the town's Protestant hierarchy did, on occasion, attempt to foment sectarian tensions – as far back as 1837, one Preston vicar had written with outrage against 'the Papists [who] are about to build a school not far off… we must be enabled to counteract them' [9] – Prestonians did not simply acquiesce in such divisive politics. In 1844, when the hard-line Protestant vicar Owen Parr attempted to besmirch the names of the town's Catholics and Irish in his campaign to uphold the ban placed upon Catholic worship in the workhouse, correspondents to the *Preston Guardian* denounced Parr's tactics: 'A Lover of Christianity' was 'sorry to see such bigotry and narrow-minded sectarian spirit' whilst another letter criticized Parr's 'religious bigotry and intolerance'. [10]

Any discussion of Anglo-Irish relations self-evidently contains implicit

[5] Livesey Collection, University of Central Lancashire Library (LCU), *The Struggle*, Nos. 53, 94.

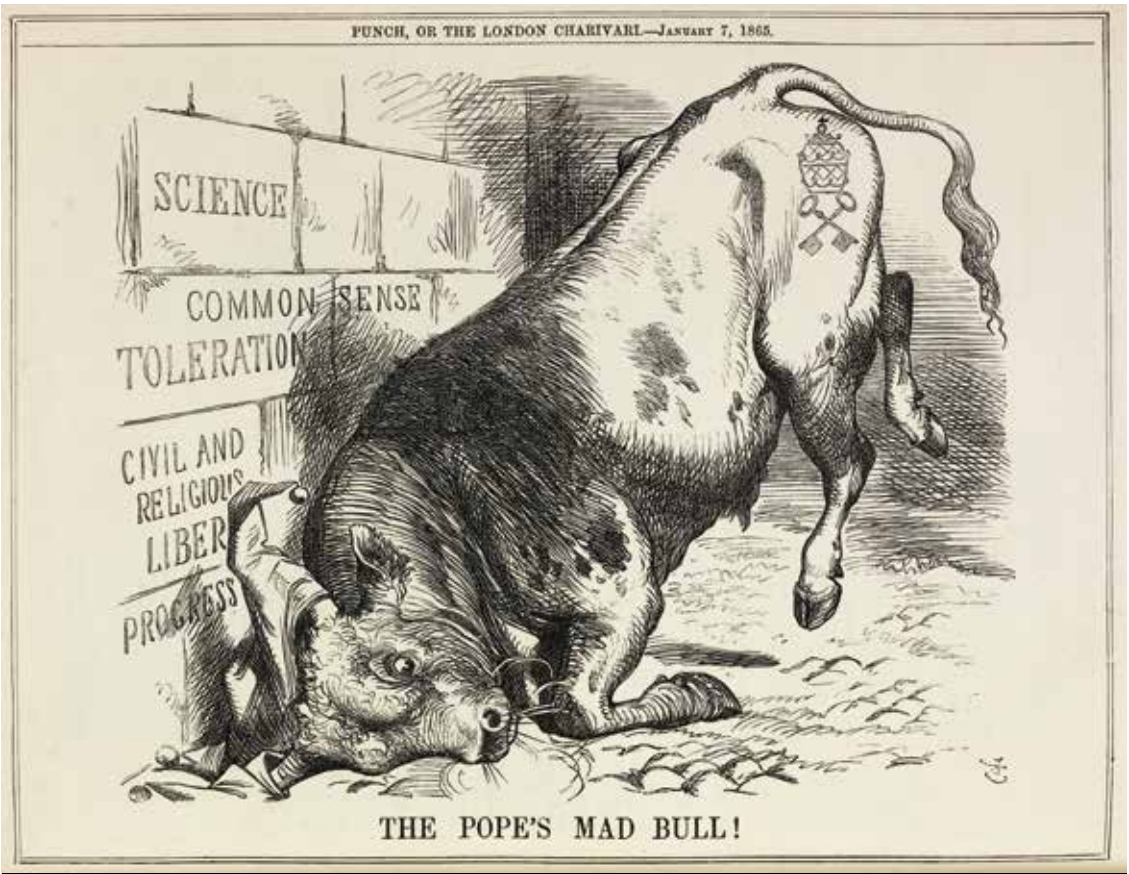
[6] PC, 13 Feb. 1847.

[7] *Preston Guardian* (hereafter PG), 8 Apr. 1854.

[8] LCU, *The Struggle*, No. 137.

[9] Lancashire Records Office, DDX 2422/acc10214/160.

[10] PG, 23 Nov. 1844; PG, 7 Dec. 1844.



For some in Victorian Britain, Catholicism was incompatible with the new modern world. Taken from *Punch,* 7 January 1865; *reproduced by permission of Durham University Library*

assumptions about the nature of the communities in question, suggesting a rigidly bifurcated populace, and exaggerating the internal cohesion and homogeneity of the English and Irish communities. The potential for feuding *within* Preston's Irish community should not be neglected. The case of Peter Daly is especially instructive. In what appears to have been the carryover from Ireland of a family feud, in 1836 Daly deliberately informed Preston police that seven other Irishmen were guilty of an arson attack in the Charnock Richard area of the town that he had, in fact, committed himself. The court heard that Daly's malicious endeavours had stemmed from the seven's 'refusal to admit Daly into their society' or 'to have any dealings with him'.[11] In the earlier part of our period, social frictions within the Irish community spilled over into violence. In a two-month spell in mid-1840, two especially bloody brawls broke out, one among Irish labourers living on Hope Street, and the other on North Road in which knives were drawn and blood was spilt. Clearly divisions existed within the Irish community.[12]

There was no unbridgeable social gap between the migrants and native Prestonians, and cases of Anglo-Irish cooperation and friendship can be identified. O'Brien's pawnbrokers on Moor Lane developed as a joint business venture between an Irishman and the local councillor George Smith.[13] Such a move required a considerable degree of mutual trust and association. A similar financial alliance existed in the mid-1850s between a Mr McGowan and a Mr Bradley,[14] and McGowan's lending money to Bradley in the latter's times of need demonstrates the possibility for friendship and a culture of cooperation between English and Irish in the town. A court case of 1854 gives further insight into this atmosphere of cross-community integration. Although the case itself illuminates an Anglo-Irish friendship turned sour amid allegations of theft, the court established that the Irishmen John Cowley and Owen

[11] PP, 29 Oct. 1836.

[12] PC, 11 Jul. 1840.

[13] PC, 25 Feb. 1854.

[14] PG, 7 Jan. 1854.

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS WERE SOMETIMES FRACTIOUS, AND THE FACT THAT PROTESTANT CLERGY SOMETIMES RESORTED TO INFLAMMATORY RACIAL AND SECTARIAN RHETORIC AGAINST THE IRISH SUGGESTS, AT THE VERY LEAST, AN UNDERLYING FEELING OF RESENTMENT TOWARDS THE MIGRANTS AMONG CERTAIN SECTIONS OF PRESTONIAN SOCIETY.

Carney had hitherto been in the habit of regularly drinking and playing cards with their friend, the lodging-house keeper Charles Duckworth, and another English neighbour.[15] The existence of such social connections between the English and Irish in the town highlights the limitations of Roger Swift's and M.A.G. Ó Tuathaigh's argument that the geographic clustering of the Irish populace in northern industrial towns prevented immigrants from integrating with broader society.[16]

The Farington Riot of May 1838 must not simply be taken as representative of Anglo-Irish social relations and politics in this period. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that the shared working environment of the railways in the late 1830s brought with it a form of camaraderie which transcended nationality, contrary to the claims of Kevin O'Connor.[17] In June 1838, just one month after the riotous episodes, the coronation of Queen Victoria was celebrated wholeheartedly by a party of almost 400 railway workers on the North Union Railway line, 'Irish, English, and Scotch' alike all 'joining in the repast with the utmost good fellowship'.[18] That such a harmonious occasion could follow in quick succession from the tumults of the previous month demonstrates that the Farington conflict was representative of just one of many complex dynamics in contemporary relations between natives and Irish immigrants in Preston and the surrounding areas.

Anglo-Irish relations were sometimes fractious, and the fact that Protestant clergy sometimes resorted to inflammatory racial and sectarian rhetoric against the Irish suggests, at the very least, an underlying feeling of resentment towards the migrants among certain sections of Prestonian society. But hostility towards the Irish was by no means a consensual attitude held by native Prestonians, and in many cases there existed positive and cooperative interaction between the migrants and their host society.

The Preston Martyrs Memorial, dedicated to workers killed in the Lune Street Riot; *By Patrick/ Geograph project.*

[15] PG, 27 May 1854.

[16] R. Swift, 'The Outcast Irish in the British Victorian City: Problems and Perspectives', *Irish Historical Studies*, 25 (1987), p. 265; M.A.G. Ó Tuathaigh, 'The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration', in R. Swift & S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939* (London, 1989), p. 18.

[17] K. O'Connor, *The Irish in Britain* (Dublin, 1974), p. 23.

[18] PC, 30 Jun. 1838.

'I wish my dear you don't overdoe it'

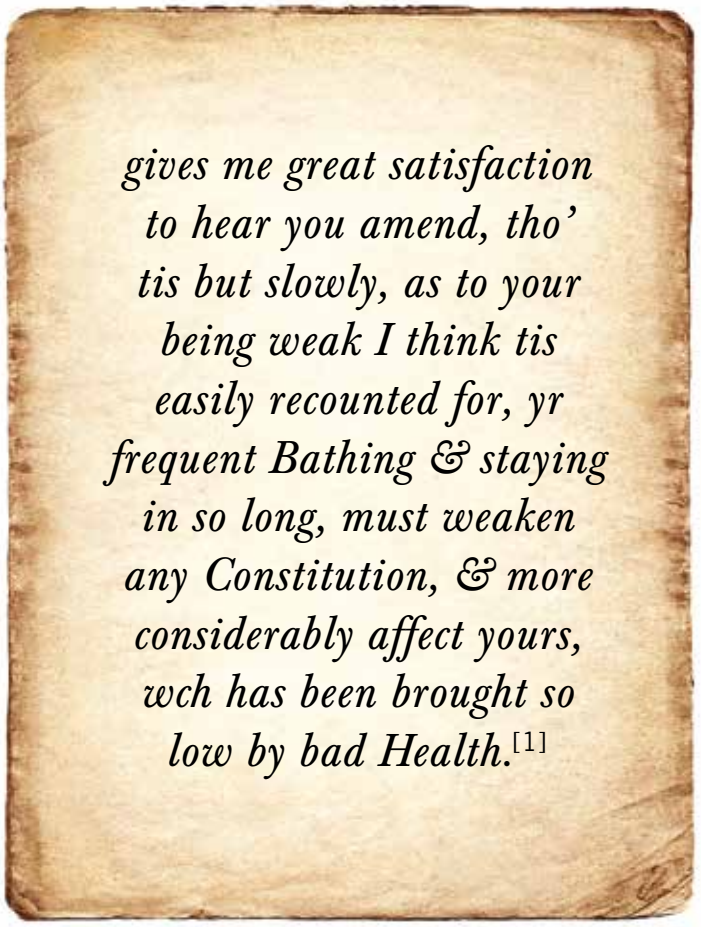
THE INFLUENCE OF WIVES AND PHYSICIANS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY HEALTHCARE

IN AUGUST OF 1757...

... months of extensive spousal correspondence peaked with a compact medical judgment. Walter Stanhope had been at the phenomenally popular health resort at Bath for three months, taking advantage of the range of medicinal water treatments in order to alleviate the pain in his knees caused by gout. However, in his most recent letter he had observed that his progress was not as thorough as hoped, and that he found himself 'not near so stiff, but very weak.' His wife Ann responded that his news:

KATHLEEN REYNOLDS
PhD student

Kathleen is a third year PhD student. Her thesis explores how household healthcare was defined, gendered, and put into practice in the North East of England in the eighteenth century. She approaches her subject from the perspective of social history, investigating both experience and the intersections and tensions between prescriptive text and practice.



I've chosen to start the story near the end, with the words of Mrs Ann Stanhope from 2 August 1757. This letter is, I think, demonstrative of the interest spouses had in each other's wellbeing, and this one moment in a months-long correspondence is so indicative of the real interest, concern, and mutual affection that pervade the letters I have researched between husbands and wives in the eighteenth century. We can see that Ann's husband was away and had been ill but was mending, although he had suffered a minor setback in late July. We can also notice that Ann perceived herself as having a deep awareness of her husband's constitution, the makeup of his bodily humours and reactions to the world around him that dictated health and wellness.[2] And we can see that, as a result of this awareness, Ann considered herself capable of making judgments about the reason for her husband's faltering progress — he was mismanaging the treatment of his bathing regime.

What makes these observations particularly interesting is that, despite Ann's confidence, she was not the only advisor on Walter's medical treatment. Instead, her advice worked with and against a series of physicians in a struggle to control Walter's illness narrative and healing process. Using this letter collection as a case study, it is possible to observe some of the important themes of my thesis: who had the knowledge, experience, and expertise to act when a family member became ill? How was external medical authority perceived, and how did personal knowledge interact with these medical practitioners? I also consider it important to study the eighteenth century context for household medical authority, as much of the historiography terminates in the early decades of the eighteenth century, at the latest. [3] By looking at similar themes in a later period, it is possible to test the benefit of chronological divides and evaluate the existence of continuity and change in medical thought. In this article, I will look at who had opinions about Walter's medical care, as well as whose opinions were heeded by Walter himself. I will use this correspondence to display the different ways husbands and wives could interact with expertise and experts during illness.

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[1] All the letters in this article can be found at the West Yorkshire Archive Service office in Bradford, under the Spencer Stanhope collection SpSt/6/1. Spelling of original sources recreated in this article.

[2] The humoural system of health and illness was still popular in the eighteenth century, and functioned through the understanding that bodies were made of four different fluids or "humours" (blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm) that had to be kept in balance in order to maintain health. This was complicated by the fact that each person's balance was slightly unique: while general treatments could be recommended, ideally each sick person required their own system to preserve or restore health.

[3] For example, Elaine Leong has done fascinating research which reconstructs the ways in which women created medical recipes in the home, see for example 'Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82:1 (2008), pp. 145-68, Daphna Oren-Magiore has recently evaluated the way in which women demonstrated gynecological expertise in seventeenth century England in 'Literate Laywomen, Male Medical Practitioners and the Treatment of Fertility Problems in Early Modern England', *Social History of Medicine* (2016), and Hannah Newton has provided a thoughtful evaluation of the different ways in which children were treated and perceived which terminates early in the eighteenth century in *The Sick Child in Early Modern England*, 1580-1720 (Oxford, 2012).


10917. - BATH. ROM BATHS

‘I WISH MY DEAR YOU DON’T OVERDOE IT, BATHING SO VERY OFTEN, & SWEATS SO PROFUSELY, AS I’M TOLD THEY DO AFTER IT, WILL I FEAR WEAKEN YOU IN THE END.’

Photochrom of the Roman Baths in Bath. *Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Photochrom Prints Collection, digital ID ppmsc-07998.*

This letter, and the other eighteen surviving letters which make up the correspondence between Walter and Ann Stanhope while he was away from their Yorkshire home to receive treatment at Bath in 1757, demonstrate the ways in which women could attempt to influence the behavior of their spouses, and the ways in which increasing practitioner involvement could structure or restrict medical decision making. Despite the multiple physicians involved in Walter's treatment, Ann Stanhope perceived herself to be a particular voice of authority on Walter's treatment, in a way that exceeds even Walter's own self-evaluation of his ill health and improvement. Neither Ann nor Walter claimed absolute medical authority. They both would have cause to do so: Ann because women were described as the caregivers of the home, and Walter as the head of the family. Instead, both brought in physicians to support their rival positions.

Walter justified the length of his stay at the advice of Dr Hartley in Bath, writing first on 16 June that:

Dr Hartley is gott better he waited on me this morning, & gave me great incouragement; he told me, he would not promise to make me sound again, but he doubted not makeing me useful sound again, & as well as most Gouty person am to take a little opening Physick to morrow, & to Bathe of Saturday & continue it 3 times a week.

And later, on 7 July that 'Dr Hartley told me of Tuesday, I should find my Knees very obstinate, but if I woud persevere in Bathing, he hoped in 5 or 6 weeks to reduce my knees a good deal & make me much better. He orders me to Bathe 4 times a week, which is more than usuall.' Ann countered with her concerns on 7 July, writing, 'I wish my dear you don't overdoe it, Bathing so very often, & sweats so profusely, as I'm told they do after it, will I fear weaken you in the end.' She expanded on this position on 13 July by supplementing her concerns about Walter's regular bathing with advice from the Yorkshire physician Dr Maeler which supported her position, writing that:

Dr Maeler was so kind as call her a few days ago, to enquire after you, I told him how you went on, & that Dr Hartley talkd of you staying 2 months there, he sd he must be ye best Judge, as he see how you went on, but he himself, thinks Drinking the Waters too long, a very bad thing, for tho' they brace ye Stomach at first yet by too long continuance, they relax afterwards. By telling you this I don't want to hasten you Home, I only mention it that you may be upon your Guard, & not undoe what you've already done.

It was this combination of her own expertise and Dr Maeler's advice which recurred in the second letter from August with which I opened this article, as Ann positioned herself as an expert on Walter's constitution with the conclusion that his action 'must weaken any Constitution, & more considerably affect yours'. Physicians were central to both narratives, functioning to argue both for continuity and for change.

So, if physicians were so involved as to be used as rival chess pieces by husband and wife, what does that say about the medical authority of the Stanhopes? It does indicate that the household did not exist in isolation, particularly not when it came to the fashionable and ever-present disease of gout. However, there is evidence that Walter and Ann reacted differently to the influence of external physicians. When these two attempts to utilize the knowledge of physicians are placed head to head, I believe that Ann is revealed to be in possession of a stronger sense of medical expertise. Walter appears completely at the mercy of Dr Hartley (or has at least chosen to place himself in this position), obediently bathing and drinking the waters and reporting the results back to his physician and to his wife. Ann, on the other hand, synthesized the medical knowledge of Dr Maeler to better muster her own argument for the care necessary to preserve Walter's health. She presented herself as having independent knowledge when she argued that bathing and sweats 'will I fear weaken you in the end,' and then found support in the medical construct provided by Maeler regarding the stomach and relaxation due to the waters. Ann was using a set of tools and knowledge in order to influence her husband's behavior to what she considered a more amenable and successful plan. This was a change from female medicine as studied by historians for earlier periods, which focused on the physicality of medical care and the individual possession of recipes and tools. However, it is still important because it shows the way that women could function as authorities over distances and in a medical landscape that was moving towards increasing professionalization.

In this correspondence, Walter appears to have heeded the advice of an external medical expert, the physician Dr Hartley. However, he never sought to discredit Ann's opinions, and Ann continued to assert her expertise in evaluating and recommending refinement on his treatment. She had a clear sense of illness, medical knowledge, and Walter's body. This is, perhaps, not the female medical authority I wanted to find in eighteenth century correspondence. It's certainly not the extensive medicinal recipe preparations we

find in the rare but exciting cases of medical women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. [4] But it is important, because it demonstrates the way that women's behaviour shifted with the changing medical landscape, using the available tools to their strengths. They continued to exchange information orally rather than relying on medical texts; when referring to bathing Ann doesn't rely on her own experience, but rather to what 'I have been told.' They continued to perceive themselves as experts.

Ann possessed a core of medical knowledge which she used to attempt to influence her husband's behavior, even at a distance. However, she was not the only expert influencing Walter's medical care. Walter's reliance on the advice of Dr Harley demonstrates the importance of physicians to medical dialogue among family. While women such as Ann perceived themselves as medical experts, they had to compete with the authority of medical institutions. As Porter & Porter have argued, however, the growing utilization of doctors did not decrease the patient's sense of autonomy.[5] Instead, increased access to physicians was folded neatly into the roster of treatment options surveyed by families seeking how to best cure their ailments. The expectation of a degree of ability to self-evaluate and to evaluate treatment options remained important in the eighteenth century.

The King's Bath, Thomas Rowlandson, plate 7 from *The Comforts of Bath*, 1798. *Wikigallery.*

ANN POSSESSED A CORE OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE WHICH SHE USED TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE HER HUSBAND'S BEHAVIOR, EVEN AT A DISTANCE. HOWEVER, SHE WAS NOT THE ONLY EXPERT INFLUENCING WALTER'S MEDICAL CARE. WALTER'S RELIANCE ON THE ADVICE OF DR HARLEY DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICIANS TO MEDICAL DIALOGUE AMONG FAMILY.

[4] For example, Grace Mildmay (1552-1620) left an extensive record of her medical knowledge and practice, in which she recorded 250 folios on disease, medicine and treatment, which have been analysed and quoted in Linda Pollock's *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552–1620* (London, 1993). An equally high level of medical skill was described by Anne Halkett (1623-1699), a prodigious biographer who has been one of the main sources for information about informal female medical work. A particular demonstration of skill can be seen in her recollection of an incident in which she surgically treated a civil war soldier whose 'head was cut so that the [blank] was very visibly seene and the water came bubling up' in her 'Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett', in John Clyde Loftis, John Cough Nichols and Samuel Rawson Gardiner (eds.), *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshaw* (Oxford, 1979), p.33.

[5] Dorothy Porter & Roy Porter, *Patient's Progress: doctors and doctoring in eighteenth-century England* (Oxford, 1989).

Intended puns

IN MEDIEVAL HAGIOGRAPHY

Humour is incredibly difficult to trace between cultures and time periods and incredibly easy to lose in translation. Like modern ones, medieval jokes might use inference, puns and word play to refer to contemporary events, often without mentioning them explicitly. Without context these jokes, if they existed, are almost impossible to trace.

ALEX JORDAN, *PhD student*

Alex is in the second year of her PhD. Her work focusses on saints' Lives and how they were manipulated in early medieval Brittany. Her thesis, 'The re-writing of hagiography on the ninth century Breton border: Brittany's neighbours as seen from Redon and St-Malo' focuses on the relationship between Brittany and the Carolingian Empire.

The incipit (or start) of the Life of St Machutus. *Hereford Cathedral Library, P.7.vi.*

Life of St Martin, another life from the St Machutus manuscript. *Hereford Cathedral Library, P.7.vi.*

Bishop On A Donkey, in *Le livre de Lancelot du Lac* & other Arthurian Romances, Northern France, 13th century. Beinecke, MS 229, fol. 104v.

But there is another, more obvious form of humour - toilet humour or sexual double entendres, which are easier to trace even if or rather because they are less subtle. And perhaps surprisingly, this form of humour in particular appears fairly regularly in the texts you might expect to be the most po-faced - hagiographies. I've begun to wonder if some of the more ambiguous passages in the sources I study really were written with a straight face.

To begin with, here is a brief introduction to a saint's Life that is almost certainly intended as irony. One of the most recent studies on the courser side of hagiography (well worth reading if you have access to the journal *Early Medieval Europe*) is Steffen Patzold's article on the medieval Life of St Gangulf.[1] Gangulf is born into a noble family, marries and later discovers that his wife is having an affair with a priest. He leaves her but is eventually murdered by her lover. Nothing in Gangulf's life seems to justify his status as saint except, Petzold suggests, a handful of posthumous miracles. The first is the death of the wife's lover while sitting on a latrine. More miracles begin to occur at the saint's tomb. Hearing this, the wife remarks, '*Sic operatur virtutes Gangulfus, quomodo anus meus!*' [2] (if this is done by Gangulf's virtues - my arse!), and suffers an even stranger punishment than her lover. She is placed under a bizarre curse - having made her remark on a Friday, she thereafter suffers uncontrollable flatulence every time she speaks on a Friday. The later part of the story is enough to make anyone doubt whether the saint's Life was written in earnest. Flatulence is not a conventional punishment even by the standards of medieval folklore!

On closer inspection, even the beginning of the story sounds rather odd. Gangulf is fond of hunting; an activity discouraged by the Church even for laymen and so a surprising pastime for a saint. The Latin phrase used is *lustra circuere*. Lustra can translate as 'forest' or 'wilderness' (though it can also mean 'debauchery'), while *circuere* means 'to circuit', 'to travel around' or 'to visit'. So while *lustra circuere* could imply travelling around forests (i.e. hunting), Patzold points out that *lustra circuere* has another meaning: 'to hang around in brothels'.[3] Is the hagiographer making fun of Gangulf?

And is there evidence for this outside of the Life itself? According to Patzold, there is. Aside from the more salacious details, a note in the margin of one manuscript suggested that the tale 'should not be read in public'! [4]

Some of the episodes in the sources I study make much more sense when interpreted as humour, although it is often hard to be confident that this is the interpretation the author intended.

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[1] Steffen Patzold, 'Laughing at a Saint? Miracle and Irony in the *Vita Gangulfi prima*', in *Early Medieval Europe* 21:2 (2013), pp. 197-220; Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Vita Gangulfi martyris Varennensis*, MGH SRM 7 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1907), pp. 142-70.

[2] Patzold, 'Laughing at a Saint?', p. 202; *Vita Gangulfi*, Ch. 13, p. 166.

[3] Ibid., p. 212.

[4] Ibid., p. 207; *Vita Gangulfi*, p. 166; Monique Goullet, 'Les vies de saint Gengoul, époux et martyr', in Michel Lauwers (ed.), *Guerriers et moines. Conversion et sainteté aristocratiques dans l'occident médiéval (IX-XIIe siecle)*, Collection d'etudes medievales 4 (Antibes, 2002), pp. 235-63, cf. pp. 256-57.

Ladyhawke Or Rat Falconer
in Pontifical of Guillaume Durand, Avignon, before 1390. Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 143, f. 76v.

One source from ninth century Brittany offers more concrete evidence for the phenomenon of light-hearted vernacular material being absorbed into hagiography. This is a *Life* of St Malo, the patron of Alet. In one rather bizarre chapter, Malo is forced to ride a horse. The saint's enemies tie Malo's servant to a cliff at low tide, forcing Malo to watch from a distance. As the tide rises, Malo's enemies invite him to free his servant before the tide rises over his head. They give the saint a horse so that he can reach the cliff before it is too late for him to save his servant. They then mock Malo with the bizarre punchline, '*Tuam equam in tuo cubiculo accipe*' (bring your horse into your bedroom).[5] This makes more sense if we understand that the Middle Breton for 'horse' was '*march*'. This sounds very similar to the word for, 'girl', '*merch*'. Oddly too, the word horse is feminine in the text, even though it is usually masculine by default... [6] Unsophisticated though it is, this may be the first known Breton pun, presumably referring to priests breaking their vows, or perhaps even to bestiality. There are four surviving copies of St Malo's *Life*, two of which removed this chapter.

A second chapter was also removed from later redactions. After Malo dies, someone attempts to take away part of his body. The word used, '*detrahere*' has several meanings (detract from, draw away from, damage). Here, it may well be a reference to relic theft - the medieval tendency to steal the bodies or body parts of dead saints to sell for profit, collect or even give away as diplomatic gifts, or it may perhaps refer to a late antique prohibition on tomb-raiding. Whatever the word's precise meaning, the would-be thief's punishment is unusual:

virtute Dei igne de celo misso, in circuitu ejus ardebant, lux velociter exiliens; aquam suplici prece postulabant, sed aqua injecta ignem divinitus missum extingui non poterat. Ardebat acriter circa nates et genitalia ejus, nec pro hoc vestimenta sua a se proicere poterat. [7]

'by virtue of God, fires came down from the sky, they burnt around him, the flames jumping quickly; he prayed for water, but the heaven-sent fire could not be extinguished by throwing water on it. It burnt hard about his buttocks and his genitals and he could not take off his clothes'.

The man goes on to die a 'fetid' death. Fetid may simply mean shameful, although it also translates as 'foul-smelling'.

How seriously should we take this passage? The chapter reads much like a straight-forward punishment, apart from the unexpected reference to the man's genital region. The moral of the story - not to steal the saint's relics - would be the

Hares, Gaston Phoebus, Le Livre de la chasse, Paris, c. 1407. New York, Morgan, MS m. 1044, f. 15v.

same without the reference to his '*nates et genitalia*'. The reference to embarrassing body parts seems entirely gratuitous, raising the possibility that it was always intended to be tongue-in-cheek. The punishment may make sense if the man's crime had been sexual, but as divine vengeance for relic theft, a burnt bottom seems positively childish. Was the passage written as a genuine threat? Or was it a more light-hearted end to a serious work?

The style of the *Vita Machutis* is fairly straight-forward. The author or authors do not, as a rule indulge in lengthy descriptions or detailed accounts of events. But in this passage, and the passage containing the pun about the horse identified by Le Duc, the writer slows the narrative's pace and seems to relish the sheer silliness of their stories. Sadly, many of the more fun passages were not transmitted in later redactions, perhaps due to the copyist's disapproval. The tale of the thief's unfortunate demise survives only in one manuscript.[8]

At the risk of imposing a very modern interpretation on a medieval work, I am tempted to suggest, in light of the author's detailed description of the thief's painful death and later scribes' unwillingness to copy the passage, that it too may have been intended as humour.

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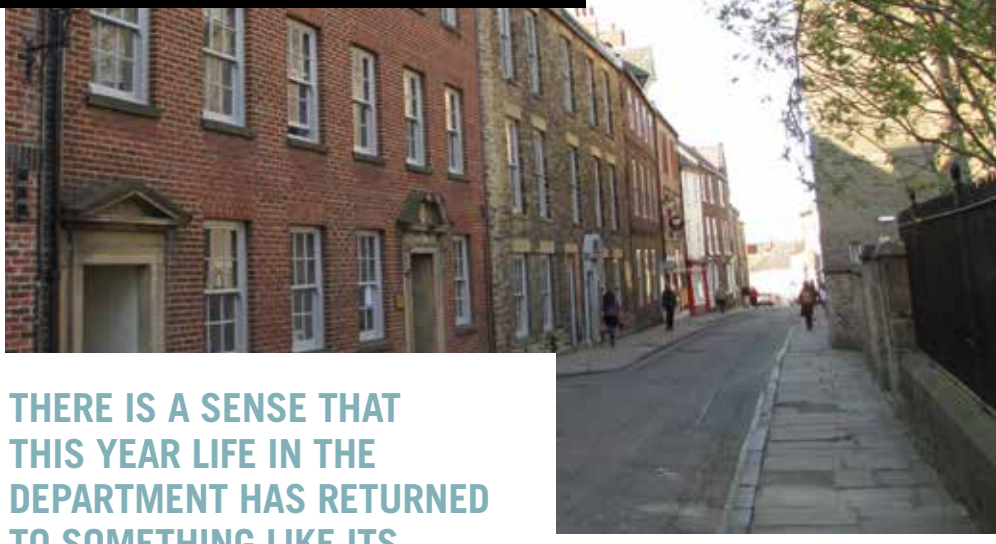
[5] F. Lot, '*Vita Machutis par Bili*', in F. Lot (ed.), *Mélanges d'Histoire Bretonne (VIe-Xe siècle)* (Paris, 1907), pp. 340-430, there pp. 380-81.

[6] G. Le Duc, (ed.), *La Vie de Saint Malo, Évêque d'Alet, Version écrite par le diacre Bili (fin du IX Siècle). Textes latin et anglo-saxon avec traductions françaises. Les dossiers du Ce.* R.A.A. No. B, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (Alet, 1979), p. 129; E.G. Whatley, 'Lost in Translation: Omission of episodes in some Old English prose saints' legends', *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997), pp. 187-208, there p. 206.

[7] Lot, '*Vita Machutis par Bili*', pp. 380-81. Translation: author's own.

[8] Ibid., pp. 408-9.

DEPARTMENT NEWS



THERE IS A SENSE THAT THIS YEAR LIFE IN THE DEPARTMENT HAS RETURNED TO SOMETHING LIKE ITS NORMAL ROUTINE AFTER THE EXCITEMENT OF OUR SUMMER AT USHAW COLLEGE AND THEN OUR RETURN LAST YEAR TO OUR REFURBISHED BUILDINGS ON THE BAILEY.

But the days when academic life consisted of a perennial routine of research and writing, punctuated by lectures and tutorials, have long passed, if, indeed, they ever existed. Higher education is a rapidly changing world, with shifting agendas in both research and teaching accompanied by perhaps even faster and more fundamental shifts in the ways in which universities are funded. In the course of the last year the government has published a White Paper, which, with its commitment to introducing the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), has the potential to transform in unpredictable but fundamental ways the relationship between academics and students.

As I write, we are entering the final stages of the EU Referendum; a vote to leave would likewise have massive reverberations for the university sector as a whole, and perhaps for institutions like Durham in particular. More locally, the arrival of Professor Stuart Corbridge as our new Vice Chancellor last autumn has generated intense activity as the University's academic strategy is reviewed and re-written. These are exciting times, and the only thing that is certain is that in ten years' time the Department, the University, academic life and the student experience are all going to be very different. The challenge for many of us in this context is to preserve not only the quality of the education that we offer but also the principles and values of a liberal education for the next generation.

In this context it is a pleasure to report that the Department is in very good health. In the course of the last few months we

History Department graduation 2015

have been able to make three new appointments, significantly increasing the Department's size. It is a particular pleasure that these strengthen the Department in ways that both respond to student interest and demonstrate our commitment to broadening the range of what we do as an intellectual community. Kevin Waite will be joining us as lecturer in nineteenth century US history, increasing our group of US historians to three. Kevin is just completing his PhD at the University of Pennsylvania, where he has been working on the attempts by the South in the antebellum period to build a proslavery empire in the American Far West. Our profile in the history of East Asia will be increased by the arrival of an historian of Japan to join our two historians of China. In this role we shall be welcoming Adam Bronson, who completed his PhD at Columbia University before taking up a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, where he completed his first book, *One Hundred Million Philosophers: Science of Thought and Culture of Democracy in Postwar Japan*, published earlier this year. Our third new colleague will be Richard Huzzey, whom we have lured away from Liverpool University to take up the post of senior lecturer in modern British history. Richard's book, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* was published in 2012 and was *proxime accessit* for the prestigious Whitfield Prize for the best first book on British history.

At the same time we shall be sorry to say goodbye to André Keil and Bart Lambert. André is taking up a lectureship at the University of Sunderland and Bart is returning to the University of York as postdoctoral fellow on a prestigious collaborative project funded by HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area). Both have made significant contributions to the Department over the last two years, offering modules that have been very popular with our students as well as being excellent colleagues. We shall, however, be keeping the services of Bart van Malssen, who has also provided some inspiring modules (in Chinese and Japanese history), as a part-time lecturer for a further year. In recent years postdoctoral fellows have become an increasingly important part of the intellectual community in the Department; it is important for an institution like ours to be able to support scholars through the early stages of their careers, and, in turn, young scholars bring fresh ideas and approaches to our discussions and debates. This year Alex Brown and Barbara Gribling, who have both

completed books while with us, will be moving on to pastures new, and we will be joined by three new colleagues. Nicola Polloni and Julius Morche have secured Co-Fund Junior Research Fellowships to work with Giles Gasper and Toby Osborne, while David Lowther has secured a fellowship funded by the Leverhulme Trust to pursue a project, 'Imagining India: Mughal Art and Colonial Knowledge Networks in the Creation of Modern British Zoology, 1800–1858'. His mentor will be Bennett Zon, so a further benefit will be the strengthening of the interdisciplinary links with the Department of Music.

The achievements of colleagues have again been recognized in the annual promotion round. Helen Foxhall Forbes, who is best known for her work on the relationship between theology and society in Anglo-Saxon England, and Cathy McClive, whose book, *Menstruation and Procreation in Early Modern France*, appeared earlier this year, have both been made senior lecturers. At the same time Sarah Davies, Giles Gasper and Natalie Mears have been promoted to readerships. Sarah is an historian of Soviet Russia, whose book, *Stalin's World: Dictating the Soviet Order*, written with James Harris, appeared last year. Natalie is best known as an historian of Elizabethan queenship, but much of her time in recent years has been taken up with a collaborative project on fasts, thanksgivings and national prayers in Britain since the Reformation, the second volume of which has just gone to press. Giles has recently secured funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a major project, bringing together a large team of scholars from Britain, Europe, North America and the Middle East, to edit the scientific works of Robert Grosseteste. This truly interdisciplinary project, engaging historians, theologians, literary scholars and scientists, is generating an unexpected outputs, including an installation at last year's *Lumière* festival in Durham City.

Other colleagues have also been successful in securing grants and fellowships. Philip Williamson's long years of outstanding service to the Department and the University have been rewarded with a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship. This will give him three years of research leave to work on his project on monarchy and religion in Britain since the revolution of 1688. Richard Huzzey has secured a major research grant, also from the Leverhulme Trust, for his project, 'Re-thinking Petitions, Parliament and People in the Long Nineteenth Century'; he will be working on it with Henry Miller, who will also be joining the Department. In addition,

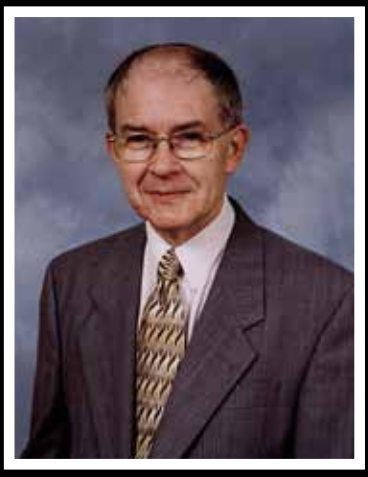
History Department graduation 2015

one of our most recent appointees, Jacob Wiebel, who recently completed his PhD on the Red Terror in Ethiopia, has been awarded a British Academy/ Leverhulme Trust Small Research Grant. Congratulations are also due to John Rogister, who taught in the Department from 1967 to 2001, on his appointment as a Commander of the order of the *Palmes academiques* by the French government.

Much as we celebrate the success of colleagues and, in so doing, reaffirm our commitment to the production of exciting and original historical research, it is perhaps the achievements of our students in which we take the greatest pleasure. I am writing this immediately after the Final Examinations Board. The results were deeply impressive, reflecting the hard work and achievement of another outstanding cohort of students. Amid a great deal of very impressive work it is always difficult to single out individuals, but particular congratulations are due to Sam Westwood, who has been awarded the Thompson Prize for the best performance in the final examination, Emma Marshall, who has been awarded the prize for the best dissertation in the final honours examinations, and Emily Duthie, who has won the Gibson Prize for the best dissertation on a topic in local history. The Alumni Prize for the best performance in the second year examinations has been awarded to Emily Cooper-Hockey. I also apologise to Hannah Davis, the winner of last year's Thomson Prize, whose name was incorrectly spelt in last year's *Symeon*.

The Department wishes all our finalists the very best in their future lives and careers, and we are looking forward to seeing them and their families at graduation. As always, it will be a pleasure to celebrate the achievements of a group of talented and able students, whom it has been a privilege to teach for the last three years. We hope that during this time they will have developed skills of critical enquiry, research and argument on which they will continue to draw throughout their careers. We also hope that they will have acquired a love of history that will inform their lives, wherever they are and whatever they are doing.

ONE OF THE GREAT PLEASURES OF LIFE IS WHEN FORMER STUDENTS GET IN TOUCH TO TELL US WHAT THEY ARE DOING; IT IS EVEN MORE OF A PLEASURE TO SEE THEM WHEN THEY VISIT DURHAM, AND I HOPE THAT ALL OF OUR ALUMNI KNOW THAT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A WELCOME FOR THEM IN THE DEPARTMENT.



REPORT OF CONFERENCES

in Honour of Richard Britnell

LEFT - Professor Richard Britnell, Emeritus Professor of History, Durham University. *British Academy image.*

Past students, colleagues, researchers and friends gathered on both sides of the Atlantic in 2015 to honour the work of Richard Britnell at the world's leading academic conferences for medieval studies. Sessions were held at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at West Michigan University, Kalamazoo, in May and at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds in July.

Richard, who died in December 2013, was one of the foremost historians of medieval economy and society. He joined the Department of Economic History at Durham University in 1966, remaining there until its closure in 1985. He moved to the Department of History where he was subsequently appointed to a Readership and then Chair. He retired in 2003 and was elected to the Fellowship of the British Academy in 2005.

Around 3,000 people travel every year from across the world to a small university town in the cornfields of the American mid-West to hear of the latest research in medieval studies. The session at Kalamazoo in honour of Richard, entitled 'Peasants, Markets and Trade', was comprised of three seminar papers. Anne DeWindt from the University of Detroit Mercy analysed peasant networks in fifteenth century Huntingdonshire, Vicky McAllister from Southeast Missouri State University explored tower house castles in late medieval Ireland, and John Lee from the University of York examined the leading clothiers of the late Middle Ages. The session was sponsored by the Medieval Association for Rural Studies and organised by Philip Slavin from the University of Kent.

The International Medieval Congress at Leeds is the largest conference of its kind in Europe, drawing over 2,000 medievalists each year. Four sessions were held over a full day in honour of Richard Britnell and John Munro, Professor of Economics at the University of Toronto and another specialist in medieval economic history. The session 'Boom or Bust?: Credit, Reputation, and Innovation in Late Medieval Towns', featured contributions from Catherine Casson, Manchester Business School, on prosperity and recession in English towns, James Davis, Queen's University Belfast, on sales credit in fifteenth century small towns, and John Lee on leading medieval clothiers. In 'The Rule of Lords in Times of Change, 1300-1500', Benjamin Dodds from the Department of History, Durham University spoke on experiencing the Black Death in Durham Priory. Peter Larson, from the University of Central Florida, spoke on lords, communities and individualism in northern England. 'Money Supply and Reform in Late Medieval Europe' featured contributions from Martin Allen, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, on money in late medieval England, Nick Mayhew, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, on quantity theory and Giles Gasper from Department of History, Durham University, on money and Church reform. 'Economic Innovation and Environmental Concerns in Late Medieval England' comprised papers from John Langdon, University of Alberta, on rivers in medieval England, Alex Sapoznik, King's College London, on peasant agriculture and Jordan Claridge, University of Cambridge, on the dairy industry in late medieval England. These sessions were organised by Peter Larson, one of Richard's former students.

Schneider Hall, the venue for the proceedings in Richard Britnell's honour at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University. *University Relations, Western Michigan University photo*

The Nathan Bodington Chamber at the University of Leeds where the International Medieval Congress session was held in Richard's honour in 2015. *International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, photo*

The sessions reflected not only Richard's wide-ranging research interests but also the lasting impact of his work on commercialisation as an explanation for change within the medieval economy and society. Richard highlighted the importance of change driven by markets, urban growth and expanding trade, challenging older interpretations that concentrated exclusively on the growth and decline of population or class conflict. His work also deepened our understanding of the complex cycles and fluctuations of growth that occurred in Britain between 1050 and 1550. The sessions at Leeds and Kalamazoo provided a tribute to one of the foremost historians of the medieval economy and society at the turn of the twenty-first century.

John Lee

John Lee is an alumnus of the Department of History, achieving a BA in History in 1996. He attained an MA in Medieval History from Durham University in 1997, supervised by Richard Britnell.

RICHARD, WHO DIED IN DECEMBER 2013, WAS ONE OF THE FOREMOST HISTORIANS OF MEDIEVAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY. HE JOINED THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC HISTORY AT DURHAM UNIVERSITY IN 1966, REMAINING THERE UNTIL ITS CLOSURE IN 1985. HE MOVED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY WHERE HE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY APPOINTED TO A READERSHIP AND THEN CHAIR. HE RETIRED IN 2003 AND WAS ELECTED TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY IN 2005.

HISTORIANS WITHOUT BORDERS

TEACHING AND RESEARCHING IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

China has become increasingly important to the History Department at Durham. An initiative to reinvigorate Chinese and Japanese studies, in collaboration with the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, led to the appointment of Paul Bailey, a specialist in the social and cultural history of modern China, Sare Aricanli, who joins the Department from Princeton with research interests in late imperial and modern Chinese medical history, and most recently Adam Bronson, an historian of modern Japanese intellectual history. These appointments have enriched our research culture, allowing for connections within and beyond the Department, and diversified the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. Our investment in this important field also allows for collaboration with Durham's remarkable Oriental Museum, with around 10,000 historic objects from China, including ceramics from all dynasties, one of the largest collections of jade in the UK, and paintings, calligraphy and wood-cut prints. These collections are now incorporated within our teaching programme, bringing textual sources into dialogue with material culture to enable students to 'feel' the past as well as to read it.

Our commitment to Chinese and Japanese Studies has also been reflected in our deepening connections with Peking University (PKU) in Beijing. Founded in 1898 as the Imperial University of Peking, changing its name after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, PKU is housed in former imperial gardens and near the historic Summer Palace. It is the foremost university in China. Its History Department was established in 1899, employing many of the Qing dynasty's most prominent scholars. Its curriculum incorporated the history of the West from 1912, and the Department developed postgraduate programmes from 1922, with research institutes in archaeology and Ming/Qing history. Today, the reach of its research is wide, building on its traditions, but with a clear eye to the modern world, much like Durham's own History Department.

Such commonalities came together in a series of exchange visits with colleagues from PKU, first in Durham and then in Beijing. A chance to explore the opportunities offered by PKU and Durham in British, European and Chinese History formed the basis of the visits. We discussed shared research interests, postgraduate training programmes, conferences and workshops, and the contents of our special collections. A series of meetings between Stephen Taylor, myself and Gao Dai, Professor of British History at PKU, in November 2014 led to a memorandum of understanding allowing for free exchange of postgraduate students as visiting junior scholars, enabling them to make use of archives and benefit from the distinctive research culture in each institution. Professor Taylor and I were invited to present papers to the postgraduate communities at PKU and at Tsinghua University.

JO FOX
Professor of Modern British and European History

Jo Fox is a specialist in the history of propaganda in twentieth century Europe. Her published work has explored the connections between film, propaganda and popular opinion. She is currently working on two main projects: on rumour and oral propaganda in the First and Second World Wars, and on the 'afterlife' of wartime propaganda narratives from 1945.

Jo Fox presenting to PKU delegates. *Jo Fox photo.*

Delegates at the 'International PhD Symposium to mark the friendship between the Departments of History at Durham University, University of Exeter, and Peking University'. Front, centre: Professor Jo Fox (Durham University), Dr Catriona Pennell (University of Exeter), Professor Gao Dai (PKU). *Catriona Pennell photo.*

Given that exchange arrangements are already in place for undergraduate students on the Chinese Studies programme, enhancing the postgraduate experience was of primary importance for both Departments. Together with colleagues and postgraduates from the University of Exeter, I travelled with three Durham postgraduates to Beijing to participate in a postgraduate forum in July 2015. Each postgraduate from Durham, PKU and Exeter presented their doctoral research, centred on the theme of globalisation and colonial encounters. From Durham, Mike Cressey discussed the meaning of globalisation in the early modern period and Tom Rodger reflected on the global reach of the Church of England in the twentieth century, while Poppy Cullen analysed Kenyan decolonisation and sustained networks in the post-colonial period. Taken together, these papers revealed the multi-faceted nature of the history of globalisation.

Postgraduate training is very different in both countries, and such differences became apparent in the discussions that followed students' research papers. UK students specialise early, settling on the doctoral subject prior to the commencement of studies, whereas in China students embark on a broad training programme, deciding on the doctoral thesis some time into their degree. The interactions between students highlighted both the benefits and limitations of both systems, but most importantly emphasised the differences in interpretative approach. Understanding how others conceptualise the past only broadens our own perspectives, forcing us to confront methodological differences and to question what constitutes History as a discipline in a global sense.

My experiences in China, and previously on a visit to Qatar, have brought home to me the extraordinary benefits of confronting our pre-existing beliefs about the past and to contextualize our Western-centric scholastic training. Questions over periodization, the

The Peking University Library. *Jo Fox photo*

often painful or politicised context in which the past is (re-)constructed, contemporary pressures and resonances in the study of History, among other matters, are exposed and, if we are sufficiently determined, confronted or incorporated into our way of thinking. These experiences have often made me wonder whether it is possible to produce a genuinely transnational or global history of any phenomenon or event, since we all bring 'intellectual baggage' to our research and teaching, simply by the way we conceive of the past, itself often conditioned by the kinds of History we were exposed to in the course of our development as historians. How do we research and write a transnational history that captures global historiographical traditions and approaches, while also reconstructing the complex networks and encounters that global History demands? This is not to say that we should not try. By opening our minds to alternative conceptual and interpretative frameworks, at the very least we are aware of other historical traditions, may respect and debate them, or discover new tools to interrogate our own preconceptions; at the very best, we embrace those traditions and seek to integrate them into our own work leading to new discoveries or interpretations.

To me, this is the real value of the postgraduate forum with our fellow historians in China. We ultimately share a concern with the past; we may share research problems and sources; and we may even share methods and approaches. But, we are also bound by those same traditions that shape – and in some senses limit – our way of thinking. To be able to explore the possibilities of such intellectual exchange is perhaps the greatest postgraduate training we might offer, and it is one we hope to exploit as we deepen our relationship with PKU.

IMAGES Clockwise from top left:

Delegates on a tour around PKU. *Jo Fox photo*

Durham delegates at the Great Wall of China. Left to right: Poppy Cullen, Tom Rodger, Mike Cressey, Jo Fox. *Catriona Pennell photo.*

Objects held by the Durham Oriental Museum which have been incorporated into the History Department's teaching programme:

A buff white nephrite carving in the form of a Zhong (bell), c.1800-1899. Carved with archaic decoration of monster design. *Durham Oriental Museum picture.*

DUROM.L.2001.A21

A stoneware lantern in the shape of a summerhouse, c.1575-1625. At the end of each of the protruding ribs are animal masks.
Durham Oriental Museum picture

DUROM 1969.399

Porcelain spittoon, decorated in green and yellow on an incised pattern design of dragons, clouds, and flaming pearls, c. 1505-1521. Made for the use of the emperor's concubine.
Durham Oriental Museum picture

DUROM.1969.145

LADY MORGAN IN PARIS

'The splendid avenue of the Boulevards Italiens, so worthy the capital of a great nation… is now lined with stately hotels, gardens, and flowery terraces… - the Chinese bath, the Turkish café, the virandas [sic] of a Hindu pavilion, and the minarets of an Easter kiosk, alternately glitter through the double rows of noble trees… as I passed for the first time under their shade.'[1]

VICTORIA EBERTS
PhD student

Victoria is a first year PhD student. Her thesis examines three female Anglo-Irish writers in the early nineteenth century and their interactions with artists on the European continent. Her work has a broad conceptual and geographic framework, involving cultural and literary history, and spanning Ireland, Britain, France and Italy.

Painting of Lady Morgan by René Théodore Berthon, c. 1818. *National Gallery of Ireland. Public domain.*

Arc du carrousel et nouveau Louvre, 1806-07. *Muséé de Louvre, Pierre Philibert. Public domain.*

This article will examine the writing of Lady Morgan about Paris in the early nineteenth century. Her writing is an example of a very specific moment in travel, travel writing, and 'cosmopolitan' culture in France.

The continent was the place to be for British and Irish writers, travellers and artists after the Battle of Waterloo. British patriotism, which had for so long motivated the public, was now being tested by the curiosity to once again be able to experience the glories of the continent. The Napoleonic Wars had inhibited travel for nearly fifteen years; so, many people who could afford it were now booking passage for France. Stuart Semmel explains that France held such interest because of the lengthy history of comparison with Britain. France was a lens through which the British could better understand their own identity. [2]

Lady Morgan, *née* Sydney Owenson, was one such traveller. Armed with impeccable French, the glittering celebrity of being a best-selling novelist and her husband, she embarked in 1816 on her first visit to France. Having been born in approximately 1775, she was too young to have visited prior to the French Revolution; the tumultuous political times that followed prevented her from seeing the art, architecture, cityscapes and social machinations she had so often discussed in her personal correspondence. Although French culture was heavily influential in Dublin society, of which she was an integral part, it was not the same as being able to stand in the Louvre or the Jardin des Tuileries.

Lady Morgan's first journey to Paris in 1816 was closely followed by the 1817 publication of her hugely popular *France*, which details a multitude of her social movements and interactions. She submerged herself in the flow of British travellers to the continent; longed to experience French culture; was intrigued by Napoleonic sentiment; and had personal motivations to gain introduction to European high society. [3] Her initial arrival into Paris caused a sensation with the literary journals and newspapers; her arrival and stay were detailed by *Le Constitutionnel* and the *Journal de Paris*. [4] Because of her highly reputable status she had access to a wide variety of social circles in Paris. Among her acquaintances and friends were: Alexander von Humboldt, François-Joseph Talma, Georges Cuvier, Madame de Vilette (Voltaire's *Belle et Bonne*), Baron Gérard, Sismunde, Lacroix, Charles-Victor Prévot, Vicomte d'Arlincourt, Benjamin Constant and Dr Portail.[5] She also was closely acquainted with General Lafayette, who fought in the American War of Independence, and his family. She often visited his château 'the Grange' and even dedicated *France 1829-30* to him. [6] She lamented having missed seeing Madame de Staël in Paris, who was a particular influence on Lady Morgan's career. [7]

France was so successful that her publisher, Henry Colburn, commissioned her to write a companion book on Italy. For this commission she was given the incredible advance of £2000. As a genre, travel writing had been previously associated with the 'Grand Tour' of the seventeenth and eighteenth century aristocrats. Although much was 'restored' after 1815 throughout Europe, Morgan's work and its overwhelming popularity illustrates the changing attitudes towards travel and a slight broadening of the kinds of people determined to travel for culture reasons. This is not to suggest that Morgan represents an egalitarian mode of travel; she was an elite figure

[1] Lady Morgan, *France* (New York, 1817), p. 298.

[2] Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven, 2004), pp. 4-5. For the British in Paris after Napoleon, see also Philip Mansel, *Paris Between Empires 1814-1852* (London, 2001), pp.141-64.

[3] William J. Fitzpatrick, *The Friends, Foes and Adventures of Lady Morgan* (Dublin, 1859), p. 76.

[4] Ibid., p. 76.

[5] Ibid., p. 95.

[6] Lady Morgan and William H. Dixon, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs; Autobiography, diaries and correspondence* (London, 1862), p. 129.

[7] Morgan, *France*, p. 349.

Lithograph of the Tuileries gardens. *Allée des Orangers et terrasse des Feuillants*, Hoffbauer, 1808. *Brown University Library. Public domain.*

with a wide social network, a great deal of money from her novels and a husband with decent social leverage. In this time the opportunities of travel for the middle classes were not yet increasing, as they would with the foundation of Thomas Cook in the 1840s.

Lady Morgan's first visit to Paris was one of great personal importance: 'My visit to the capital of France was in the spring of 1816; and whatever length of days be granted me, I shall always recur to that period as among the few delightful epochs…' [8] Although she would return many times in the intervening years before her next book about France, *France 1829-30*, she never did express the same wide-eyed excitement and enthusiasm about social situations, which she expressed in such detail in 1816. Her fervour for Paris never diminished, but her disenchantment with the restored monarchy became much more apparent, much like that of the increasingly 'Romantic' segments of the population she encountered.[9]

Morgan believed the French Revolution was a time when the people of France united to end 'the despotism of monarchs.' [10] Although she did not deny the tumultuous and violent nature of the Revolutionary Years, she equally did not discredit violent actions. Morgan instead encouraged her contemporaries, who focused on the bloodshed of the era, to remember exactly what the Revolution had once stood for: 'now the terror is used as a cautionary tale, but remember the tyranny they were fighting against.'[11] She believed that there was 'no parallel for the moral degradation that enveloped France for the whole of the eighteenth century.' [12] Although her radical views are explicitly stated early immediately in *France*, it did not bias her towards other political factions. Her ability to cooperate and form friendships with people from a variety of different political viewpoints perfectly characterized being in Paris during that period for her:

Characters belonging to different ages; opinions supported by different eras; dogmas the most skeptical; bigotry the most inveterate; opposition the most violent submission the most abject;-- all appeared mingling on the scene of daily intercourse, as if the discomfiture of some powerful enhancer had suddenly released the multifarious victims of his magical influence, who, resuming their peculiar forms, presented an assemblage at once the most singular and the most contradictory. [13]

Although there was certainly potential for discord because of such widely different groups of people living in the same

[8] Ibid., p. 83.
[9] Ibid., pp. 56-8.
[10] Ibid., p. 67.
[11] Ibid., p. 68.
[12] Ibid., p. 67.
[13] Ibid., p. 83.

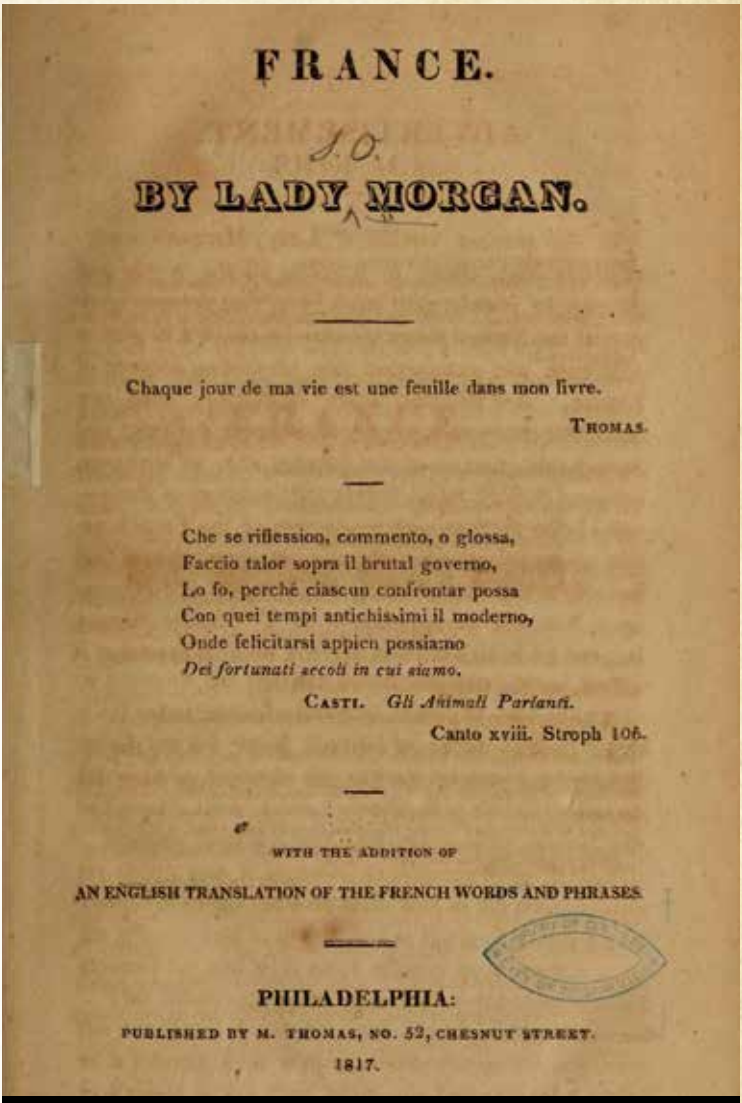
space, Morgan constantly expressed her appreciation of their ability to co-exist. She was introduced to 'moderate royalists, violent royalists, constitutionalists and imperialists,' all of whom treated her with the same amount of Parisian grace and politeness.[14] It was this cosmopolitan cooperation, in particular, which mesmerized Morgan in Paris.

Morgan observed the changing political dynamics not just in the people of Paris, but in the architecture and the spaces of the city. She noted: 'The *Château des Thuilleries* [sic], its ancient royal destination, was exchanged for that of the *Palais du Gouvernement*, and then again for the *Palais Imperial*. It is now once more the *Château des Thuilleries*, under the revived dynasty of its ancient masters and occupants, who once again inhabit and hold their courts in it.' [15] In her brief history of *Salles des Machines* of the Tuileries, she examines the complex layering of memories that comprise the palace:

[It was there that] Louis XIV celebrated his many formal revelries and danced, as chef de ballet, for the amusement of his court. It was there, also, that Voltaire was crowned, a short time before his death, at the representation of his own Irene. It was from the truly splendid chambers that the unfortunate Louis XVI was dragged to the gloomy cells of the Temple;-- there the National Convention held its assemblies;-- there Robespierre resided during his reign of terror;-- and there that Bonaparte dwelt, during the whole of his consular and imperial government. [16]

Morgan experienced the city in political, social and spatial terms, and never neglected to remind the audience how swiftly history turned into the present.

Morgan's travel books were hardly innocuous; they were ideologically charged and had explicit political messages. This did not escape the attention of the contemporary authorities; the Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich even went so far as to ban any of Morgan's work from being brought into Italy. Morgan was considered so radical that she was decried in the many literary publications,


FRANCE.

BY LADY MORGAN.

Chaque jour de ma vie est une feuille dans mon livre.

THOMAS.

Che se riflession, commento, o glossa,
Faccio talor sopra il brutal governo,
Lo fo, perché ciascun confrontar possa
Con quei tempi antichissimi il moderno,
Onde felicitarsi appien possiamo
Dei fortunati secoli in cui siamo.

CASTI. *Gli Animali Parlanti.*

Canto xviii. Stroph 106.

WITH THE ADDITION OF

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE FRENCH WORDS AND PHRASES.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY M. THOMAS, NO. 52, CHESNUT STREET.

1817.

Title page of *France*, published in 1817 by M. Thomas, Philadelphia. *Library of Congress.*

but most often in *The Quarterly Review*. Her most outspoken critics were Sir Walter Scott and John Wilson Croker who vehemently opposed her support of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland and her outspoken support of republicanism. [17]

Lady Morgan was a literary and social star in Ireland, Britain and the rest of Europe, and yet, we rarely read her name outside a literary context. Morgan wrote about a cosmopolitan world in the midst of political and cultural flux. The political arena in Europe, which until the end of the eighteenth century had appeared nearly calcified, was being simultaneously re-established and dismantled, supported and questioned. Lady Morgan was able to capture a great deal of this tension, ambivalence and change through recording her own travels in France and Italy as well as writing novels about the complex national development in Ireland.

[14] Ibid., p. 83.
[15] Ibid., p. 214.
[16] Ibid., p. 45.
[17] Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending 'The Age of Personality'* (Farnham, 2013), p. 96.

LIVING IN THE 'PAST

JOHN-HENRY CLAY
Lecturer (Early Medieval History)

John-Henry's main research interests are in Anglo-Saxon and Frankish history and archaeology. His work considers conversion and religious identity, landscape perception and the transition from the late Roman to the early medieval period both in Britain and on the European continent. John-Henry published his first novel, *The Lion and the Lamb*, in July 2013. A second novel, *At the Ruin of the World*, followed in May 2015.

Being both a historical novelist and a professional historian, I'm often asked how I manage to combine 'fictional' and 'real' history – and even whether they *can* be combined.

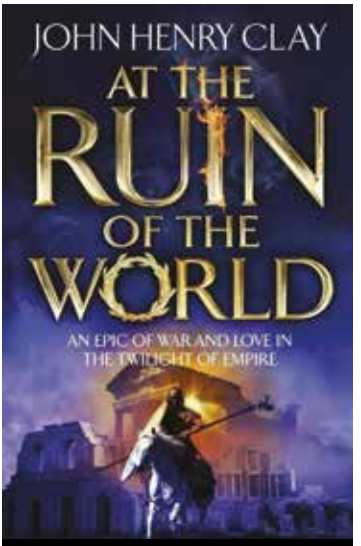
For some historians, historical fiction is at best irrelevant, and at worst threatening. During an interview on Radio 4's *Start the Week* last October, Niall Ferguson criticised the writer Jane Smiley for the negative portrayal of the Cold War CIA in her novel *Golden Age*. Novelists, Ferguson claimed, give a dangerously one-sided view of history, whereas historians 'serve truth, incomplete though it may be,' through their meticulous research.

It was strange to hear a modern historian claim to 'serve truth'. While we might agree (or not) on certain historical *facts*, there is no such thing as objective *truth* in the past. Ferguson, like any historian, adopts a certain perspective, and constructs his books to make a particular argument. Smiley pointed this out in an article she wrote for the *Guardian Online* after the interview.

Having two dogs in this fight, so to speak, I'm aware that the gap between history and historical fiction isn't as wide as we might think. To dispell the idea that novelists don't do meticulous research one need only read Colleen McCullough's novels on ancient Rome, which earned her an honorary doctorate. Similarly, Marguerite Yourcenar's classic *The Memoirs of Hadrian* was based on a decade of painstaking research. She understood that both novelists and historians start out with the same building blocks. 'Whatever one does,' she wrote about this process, 'one always rebuilds the monument in his own way. But it is already something gained to have used only the original stones.'

Her words are just as pertinent to the professional historian. The difference lies in the nature of the final artifice, and, one hopes, in the expectations of the audience.

Last year I found myself teaching an undergraduate course about the end of the western Roman empire in the fifth century. The title of the course was 'The Ruin of the World'. As I was teaching the course my second novel came out, set during the same period, entitled *At the Ruin of the World*. The titles show how I think of the two approaches as different sides of the same coin. While they are both based on a quote from an observer of the time, I added the first word of the novel's title to create a sense of immediate experience. The reader would not just be learning about what happened. They would be *there*, in the thick of things.



AT THE RUIN OF THE WORLD, Dr Clay's second novel.

Did I recreate an authentic experience of the collapsing empire? Definitely not. We don't know enough simple facts. For example, what was it like to be a student in the middle of the fifth century? We have no diaries from students at the time, no clear descriptions of the education system. We have only scraps of evidence here and there. A former student, writing a letter to a friend many years later,

The idealised view of Roman pedagogy: a teacher with three *discipuli*, from Trier. *By Shakko*

Unified under Roman rule after Caesar's defeat of Vercingetorix in 52BC, in the fifth century Gaul rapidly dissolved into a patchwork of kingdoms following the withdrawal of troops to protect Italy.

fondly recalls the stern old rhetor who used to beat lessons into his charges with a birch cane. The imperial government issues a strict law trying to control the raucous students of Rome, who are apparently infamous for their 'unseasonable carousals'.

These may be just scraps, but they are gold dust to a historical novelist. On the one hand, we learn that student life in the late Roman empire isn't completely alien to us: take a group of young men away from home, send them to the big city, give them a little money and a lot of freedom, and watch the fun begin. One might almost be walking down the Bailey on a Friday night.

On the other hand, if we were to hang around these students for any length of time, we'd soon realise that their world was not ours. The male:female ratio of their class is not so much poor as non-existent. There are no essays, no exams, nor even any distinction between year groups. There is no such thing as a 'university', much less a 'college' or 'department'. Classes are held informally, often in the house of a professor. We are horrified by the corporal punishment; they merely shrug. We find their curriculum tedious beyond belief: hours of literary recitation and superficial philosophising, an obsessive devotion to form over substance, an intellectual conservatism that has both feet stuck five hundred years in the past and treats any new idea with suspicion and scorn.

When class finishes and we step out into the city, the shocks keep coming. The students are not just young, but rich, male and privileged in a world where women and slaves are there to serve them. They drink, gamble, and use prostitutes with a disregard that we find appalling. Their attitude towards 'barbarians' looks to us like outright racism. They view the beating of slaves as not just acceptable, but morally beneficial for both parties.

And in my second novel, these are meant to be the *good guys*.

If the historian is not meant to judge the past by the standards of our own time, the historical novelist has to go one step further: she must immerse herself in the ethical universe of her characters, and yet somehow make them sympathetic, even likeable. This isn't an impossible task. Like the fan of horror movies, the fan of historical fiction is expecting a few (cultural) shocks along the way – indeed, they'll feel short-changed if they don't get any. No reader will forgive the novelist who puts a twenty-first century man in a fifth century costume, unless she adds a time machine for good measure.

In *At the Ruin of the World*, I tried to tackle this by making my protagonists outsiders in some sense. They all have different attitudes to the elite at the heart of the late Roman empire, the one percent who rule society through the privileges of birth, wealth, and influence. One protagonist is born on the outside and wants to fight his way in – and the fight costs him more than he ever imagined. The second is born on the inside and wants out. The third, an outsider by the simple virtue of being female, learns that to play the game she must use a hidden set of rules.

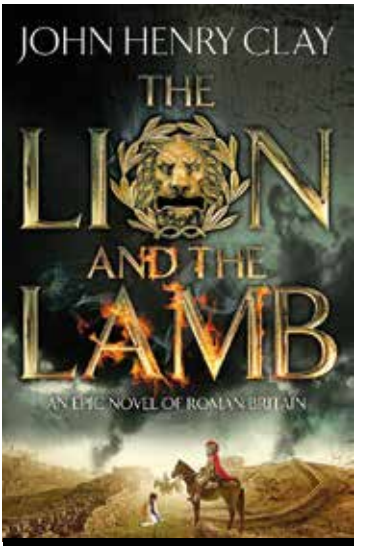
By following the misadventures of these three young characters, the reader travels through a world on the edge. Read a history textbook, and you'll learn that much of the western Roman empire by 450 had already been surrendered to various barbarian kings: Goths in Aquitaine, Vandals in North Africa, Burgundians and Alemanni and Franks along the Rhine. Across the frontier was the looming threat of Attila the Hun. The textbook will describe an imperial court plagued by factions and rivalries that slowly tore the centre apart. It will talk about the rise of Christianity, by now the official state religion, and how the Church became the cultural guardian of Roman literature and law.

But what was it like to live during this time? Nobody around in 450 knew that the western empire was in its death throes, and would be gone within a generation. They lived, like us, from one day to the next, assuming that things would carry on much as they were, planning their lives according to the pattern set by their parents and grandparents. That is, until the moment came, stark and painful, when they realised that the political world into which they had been born was passing away.

Omnia mutantur, they might have mused. All things change. But if they remembered the Ovid that had been beaten into them, they might have mused further: *omnia mutantur, nihil interit.* All things change, nothing perishes.

People didn't decide one day to stop being one Roman and start being medieval. The old needs and desires were still there; they still wanted security and prosperity for themselves and their loved ones. It proved as easy to kneel before a barbarian king as before a Roman emperor. Ambitious families who had once fought over the provincial governorship now fought over the local bishopric. The seasons still came and went, harvests were still brought in, taxes were still collected. Other changes happened more slowly – as they always have, and always will.

But these were not always easy adaptations, even if they seem so from the distance of fifteen centuries. Times change, and the landscape shifts beneath our feet; we stumble on barriers where we expected to find none, even as new paths open up. Charting this landscape is the task of the historian. But it is how we deal with such obstacles and opportunities that reveals who we are as humans, and this is where the historical novelist comes in: imagining the lived experience of the past, in all its conflict, uncertainty, and excitement.



THE LION AND THE LAMB,
Dr Clay's first novel.

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE:

THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM'S REDEVELOPMENT

PETER JOHNSTON
Collections Content Manager, National Army Museum

Peter studied for his undergraduate and Master's degree in History at Durham University. Peter completed his PhD in 2013, and now occupies a role as the Collections Content Manager at the National Army Museum in London.

Established by Royal Charter in 1960, the National Army Museum (NAM) collects, preserves, and exhibits objects and records relating to the Regular and Auxiliary forces of Britain and the Commonwealth, and encourages research into their history and traditions. Initially based in temporary accommodation at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, it formally opened on its current Chelsea site in 1971.

Over the last five years the Museum's popularity has surged, with more than a quarter of a million visitors annually. However, this growth put enormous strain on our building. Clearly no longer fit for purpose, it was clear it would need comprehensive reconfiguration to meet the needs of a modern museum visitor. In 2014, therefore, NAM closed its doors to launch an ambitious redevelopment project, Building for the Future. This £23,750,000 project will radically transform the Museum and deliver new opportunities for accessing its Collection.

After two years of volunteering at the museum, I became Collections Content Manager in March 2014. My primary responsibility is running the curatorial team working on the new galleries; though I have already overseen the object selection, the design process, and the acquisition of new objects, there is still much to do! As a national collection, our aspirations are high. We want to reach out to new partners across the UK, bringing our Collection and expertise to more audiences than ever before. This exciting transformation in the way we work aims to ensure the Museum will survive and thrive long into the future.

Our approach developed from close work with our audiences, listening to and learning from them. Over three years, we gathered qualitative and quantitative data from 24,000 engagements including focus groups, workshops, and digital surveys. We asked both users and non-users for their perceptions of the Museum and the story it tells, to help us develop displays, activities and services that meet their needs and exceed their expectations. We want to provide lifelong learning opportunities to audiences of all ages, making learning the heart of what we do.

With re-opening in sight, the redevelopment promises to revolutionise what we offer: a new experience for all visitors, whether seasoned historians or the completely uninitiated; interactive, engaging and sometimes challenging.

So how are we doing it?

The first, most radical development was carving out the inside of the building to make way for our new galleries, research facility, café and shop. This is the first major development of the building for 40 years, intended to meet the needs of audiences for the next two decades. This complete overhaul meant decanting the Collection into storage and moving the staff into temporary offices for a year. However, the revamped museum will now be lighter, more spacious and easier to navigate, with room for temporary exhibitions and events.

The proposed redesign of the NAM's entrance

It's not only a physical transformation, but an intellectual one too. Key to delivering this fresh experience is a series of five new, interconnected and innovative permanent galleries. Replacing traditional static, chronological arrangements of objects, these galleries will explore the Army's story thematically and encourage visitors to actively engage with the Collection. They will deliver the thought-provoking museum needed for a modern society used to questioning and exploring.

The new galleries are arranged around the following working titles:

Soldier

The *Soldier* gallery will explore the lives of soldiers as individuals – utterly human, capable of courage and cowardice, virtue and vice. Using personal testimonies the gallery will examine the similarities and differences of soldiering over five centuries, from enlistment through training, daily life, combat and beyond.

Battle

The *Battle* gallery will explore how our Army fights, demonstrating the many factors that have changed the face of battle over time. It will investigate the common decisions and processes of battle, and also the factors that vary: from leadership and tactics, to technology and medicine.

Army

The *Army* gallery will investigate fundamental questions: 'Why do we have an army?' and 'What is the British Army for?' The gallery will explore why the Army was formed, who controls it, how it is structured and how it has adapted to changing needs and requirements.

Society

Exploring the complex and challenging relationship between the Army and British society, the Gallery will consider how public opinion about the Army fluctuates in response to diverse sources of information.

Discovery

With a focus on visitor participation, the *Discovery* gallery is intended to explore some of the most thought-provoking questions the public has about the Army through the Collection.

Developing content and delivering the galleries

After creating a narrative for each gallery based on extensive audience research, we had to find suitable objects to carry these narratives and to provide insights into the army's story. This sounds simple, but was actually a huge undertaking. With a collection of close to a million objects, but room to display only a couple of thousand, we had to be ruthless. To make the cut, objects had to be more than curiosities: they had to speak to the wider narrative of British military history.

This is no mere rearrangement of existing displays, but transformative change in every sense. The Museum's iconic objects, from the Siborne Waterloo Model to the Light Brigade's order to charge in the Crimea, will appear alongside objects that have not been displayed before and objects being presented in a brand new way. Delving deeper into the Collection than ever before, our in-depth research has brought to light exciting objects; for instance, a fragment of blanket made by a Cambridgeshire soldier shattered mentally by his service in the Crimea. This is just one of the hundreds of stories we have used to narrate the history of those who have marched with the colours.

The tunic worn by Captain G Johnson, wounded on 1st July 1916.

Patchwork made by Mr Eggett of Littleport, who died in a lunatic asylum after returning from the Crimea; the fabric is said to be cut from old army uniforms.

A mug made from an 81mm mortar tube, used in the recent conflict in Afghanistan

As well as making the best of our existing Collection, we have sought out new objects. In particular, the *Society Gallery* is a brand new direction for the Museum and required us to expand our collecting strategy to include items such as protest material. We've also made a conscious effort to reflect the modern army, as well as showcasing its history. Recent acquisitions include objects from conflicts such as Afghanistan, and go beyond the battlefield to reflect, for instance, the information warfare work of the Psychological Operations Group.

It's not all been desk-based research and trawling through archives, though. The team has travelled extensively to visit other museums, both British and European, and learn from our colleagues. We were very kindly hosted by the Armémuseum in Stockholm, where we inspected first-hand the results of their own new redevelopment and discussed potential strategies and approaches for projects after opening. On a tour to Belgium, we took in the recently redeveloped In Flanders Fields Museum alongside the battlefields at Ypres and Waterloo.

One of the most interesting aspects of this project has been working with the design teams. After establishing the gallery narratives, we began work with Event, our designers. In fortnightly meetings we moved through each area of each gallery to formulate design solutions, discussing what we wanted to achieve with the content and the requirements of the objects that we were putting on display. By working together, we could identify new interpretative techniques that put community

responses to objects at the heart of their presentation, and transform how we told the Army's history.

The team working on the new galleries has just completed its text-writing stage, a surprisingly agonising process that has seen us develop intellectually rigorous text that remains accessible to a broad range of audiences. Though you may assume that 'accessible' is a euphemism for 'dumbed down', I can assure you this isn't the case! What we've done is make sure that the written text alongside our objects is informative and useful for all our audiences, as any public-facing organisation should. To protect our intellectual rigour and accuracy – vital for any museum – we created advisory panels representing the academic and military communities. Their task was to assess through regular consultation whether we were building accurate and representative content, and throughout the project their enthusiastic approval of our work has been most encouraging.

A major aspect of the redevelopment has seen us try and build closer relationships with the Army. In March 2015 I travelled to Sarajevo as an 'embedded collector' in the Military Stabilisation and Support Group, acquiring objects and collecting oral histories from the soldiers as they worked with Bosnian colleagues to build resilience against future flooding. We have reached out to the charities sector, journalists, retired senior military officers and reservists to collect brand new content

for the Museum. Working with community groups has not only broadened awareness of the Collection, but also opened our eyes to alternate contexts for our objects.

What's next?

The main focus for my team is completing the new galleries: there's still a lot more to do before opening, from liason with creative agencies, to showcases to install and displays to build.

However, the redevelopment is only part of a wider transformation. Despite being closed, NAM has been extremely active in its outreach and engagement work, taking the Collection on the road. We have delivered temporary and pop-up exhibitions and event across the country and regularly provide support to media outlets looking for historical perspective, comment and context.

It's an exciting, if busy, time to be working at NAM, but a tremendous opportunity to be able to work on the transformation of a national museum.

Keep up to date with our progress at http://www.nam.ac.uk/microsites/future/. For our other activities, including our public and evening lecture series, visit www.nam.ac.uk, or find us on facebook (www.facebook.com/NationalArmyMuseum) or Twitter (@NAM_London).

A photo taken by the author while on embed in Sarajevo, from a Serbian artillery observation post used during the siege.

Contact Us

We hope you have enjoyed the sixth 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. Whether you have a job related to history and the skills you learned during your study or you moved on to something entirely different, either way, we would love to hear from you! We would also be delighted to hear your thoughts on Symeon. Please let us know any subject areas you would like us to cover in future editions. Perhaps you would even like to consider contributing an article? We'd be interested to have your thoughts.

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43