social history society

Social History Society

1976-2026

50th Anniversary Conference

1-3 July 2026

Lancaster University

Contents

The Social History Society at 50

This year's conference marks a significant moment for the SHS, which was founded at Lancaster University in 1976.

The Social History Society was designed to connect people with an interest in social and cultural history. As Chair of the Society, I am delighted that the SHS has grown into an active scholarly society representing historians of all forms. Our friendly community includes postgraduate and early career researchers, senior scholars, independent researchers and those working in the heritage sector.

Our conference has always been an important part of our activity, and I am delighted that you will be joining the society as it celebrates its landmark 50th anniversary.

I'm sorry I am unable to be with you in person this year. I anticipate this will be a conference that looks forward as well as back. Social history as a discipline has come a long way since 1976, now embedded in the mainstream and producing innovative research with impact on historical practice in many domains. I very much look forward to joining you again in 2027.

With best wishes,

Lynn Abrams, Chair of the Social History Society

Welcome to Lancaster

It is fitting that the Social History Society should return to Lancaster to celebrate its 50th anniversary. The newly formed SHS held its first conference (on the theme of 'Elites in Society') here in 1976, establishing conference as the glue that binds together our membership. As the SHS's conferences grew, they moved from a focus on a single theme to a programme that incorporated different strands of social history.

The SHS conference is now one of the largest gatherings of social historians in Britain, and incorporates work that spans time, space and various historical approaches. There are few conferences that are as diverse or as open to new ideas.

We have worked hard to create a programme that is inclusive, stimulating, and enjoyable. We hope that the programme provides much to interest you, and look forward to meeting many of you during the conference.

With best wishes,

Corinna Peniston-Bird, Conference Organiser

Henry Irving, Acting Chair of the Social History Society

Jenni Hyde, Administrative Secretary

A Message from the PGR Representatives

Hi everyone,

We are Louise and Aayushi, your current PGR reps. We are so excited to get to see you all at the conference! We will be at the PGR Welcome Desk from 12pm-2:30pm on the first day of the conference, so please do come along and have a chat!

We will also be hosting the pub quiz on first night, and it would be great to see as many PGRs there as possible. We would love to get some PGR teams together, so please do let us know if you would be interested in that! There will also be a PGR meet-up to give PGRs a chance to have a chat and get to know each other better on the Thursday lunch time.

Other than that, we will be around for the whole conference, so please do approach us if you have any questions, or just want to have a chat at any point!

Louise Bell and Aayushi Gupta

2026 Conference Committee Team

Corinna Peniston-Bird	c.peniston-bird@lancaster.ac.uk
Jenni Hyde (SHS Administrator)	socialhistorysoc@gmail.com

Enquiries about specific strands should be addressed to the relevant strand co-ordinators. For general enquiries about the conference, please contact the conference committee team on socialhistorysoc@gmail.com, or visit http://socialhistory.org.uk/.

We would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work.

Strand Convenors

Bodies, Sex and Emotions

Jennifer Evans	j.evans5@herts.ac.uk
Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz	mirr@uma.es
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Claudia Soares	claudia.soares@newcastle.ac.uk
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George Gosling	gcgosling@wlv.ac.uk
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Claire Markham	claire.markham@ntu.ac.uk

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Jaina Hunt	jaina.hunt@port.ac.uk

Politics, Policy and Citizenship

Andrew Walker	andrewwalker1163@gmail.com
Henry Miller	henry.miller@northumbria.ac.uk
Samantha Shave	samantha.shave@strath.ac.uk

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage

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Timothy Cooper	t.cooper@exeter.ac.uk
Graham Moore	mooregraham@gmail.com
Alex Pomeroy	a.p.pomeroy@lancaster.ac.uk

Work, Leisure and Consumption

Joe Saunders	joe.saunders@york.ac.uk
Cheryl Roberts	cheryl.roberts@fashion.arts.ac.uk
Kathleen McIlvenna	k.mcilvenna@derby.ac.uk
Deborah Jeffries	debsjeffries@outlook.com

Postgraduate Representatives

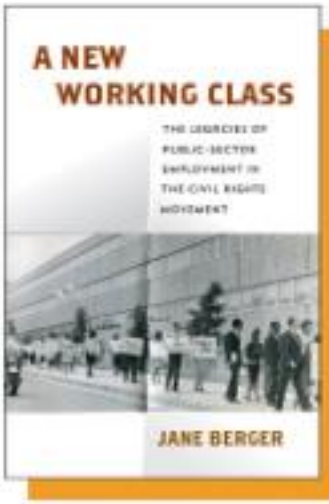
Louise Bell	hylbe@leeds.ac.uk
Aayushi Gupta	ag2152@cam.ac.uk

Outline Programme

Day 1- Wednesday 1 July 2026		
1200-1430	Registration Desk Open PGR Welcome Stall Publishers' Stalls Tea and coffee will be served	
1200-1600	Historia Normannis Medieval Reenactment	Outside George Fox
1400-1430	Exhibition Launch: Disruptive Histories – 50 Years of the Social History Society (meet at 1345 at the George Fox Foyer to be escorted to the library)	Lancaster University Library Stairwell Exhibition Space
1445-1615	Parallel Panel 1	
1615-1645	Tea, coffee and biscuits	
1645-1815	Plenary Roundtable: Social History: Its Pasts and Futures - Dave Hitchcock, Julia Laite, JC Niala, Pat Thane	George Fox Lecture Theatre 1
1830-2030	Dinner followed by bar	Barker House Farm (on site bar), Fylde Bar also open
2100-2200	Pub Quiz – PGR Reps	Barker House Farm
midnight	Bar Closes	
Day 2 - Thursday 2 July 2026		
0915-1045	Parallel Panel 2	
1045- 1115	Tea, coffee and biscuits	
1115-1245	Parallel Panel 3	
1245-1415	Lunch + PGR Meet Up	
1415-1545	Parallel Panel 4	
1545-1615	Tea, coffee and biscuits	
1615-1700	Social History Society Annual General Meeting All welcome to attend	George Fox Lecture Theatre 1
1700-1830	Keynote Lecture: Emma Griffin, 'Workers, Elites and the Making of the Modern World'	George Fox Lecture Theatre 1
1845-1915	Routledge Drinks Reception and Prize Giving	Barker House Farm
1915-2030	50th Anniversary Gala Dinner followed by Bar and 70s Disco – homage to 1970s theme encouraged.	Barker House Farm (on site bar) Fylde Bar also open
midnight	Bar closes	
Day 3 - Friday 3 July 2026		
0915-1045	Parallel Panel 5	
1045-1115	Tea, coffee and biscuits	
1115-1245	Parallel Panel 6	
1245-1345	Sandwich lunch	
1345-1515	Parallel Panel 7	

UNIVERSITY PRESSES

Social History Studies



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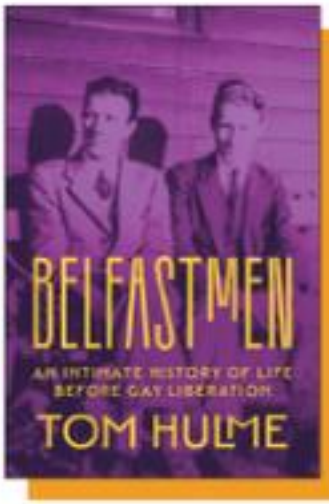

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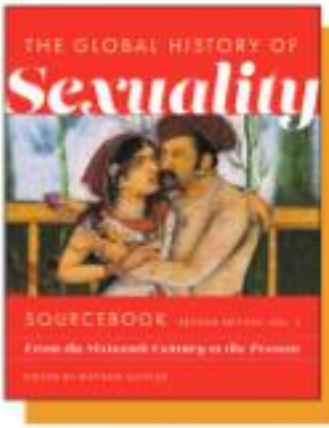

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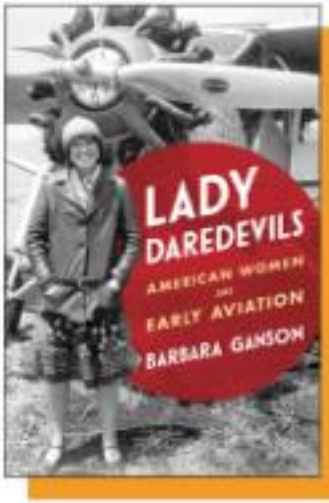

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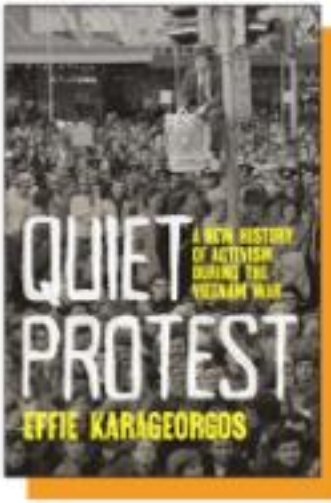
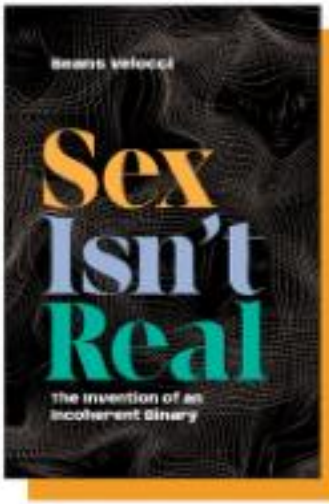


NEWSOUTH PUBLISHING



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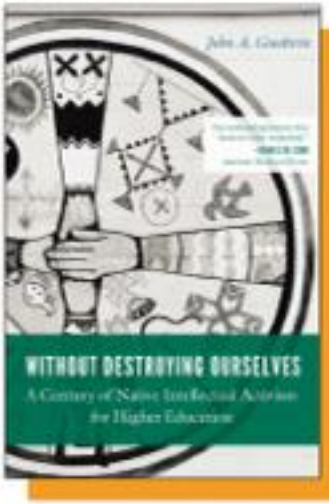

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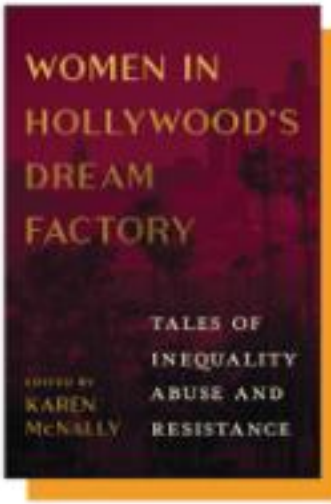

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Order online: **mngbookshop.co.uk/shs-2026**

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Our Venue

Our main hub will be the George Fox Foyer, where you will find the Registration Desk, PGR Welcome Desk and the Conference Publishers' Stalls. Teas and coffees will also be served in this area. Just off the foyer, you will find Lecture Theatre 1, where our Keynote Lecture and Roundtable will take place. Lecture Theatres 2-5/6 will be used for parallel sessions.

Across the main pathway through the university (known as the spine), you will find our other three panel rooms in the Charles Carter building.

Lunches will be served a short walk away in the Management School Breakout Space.

Dinners will be served in Barker House Farm, which is also the venue for our Drinks Reception, Prize Giving and our evening entertainment.

Room List

Code	Room	Capacity
GFX LT1	George Fox Lecture Theatre 1	350
GFX LT2	George Fox Lecture Theatre 2	45
GFX LT3	George Fox Lecture Theatre 3	45
GFX LT4	George Fox Lecture Theatre 4	45
GFX LT5/6	George Fox Lecture Theatre 5/6	80
CC A15	Charles Carter A15	35
CC A18	Charles Carter A18	28
CC A19	Charles Carter A19	30

Campus Map

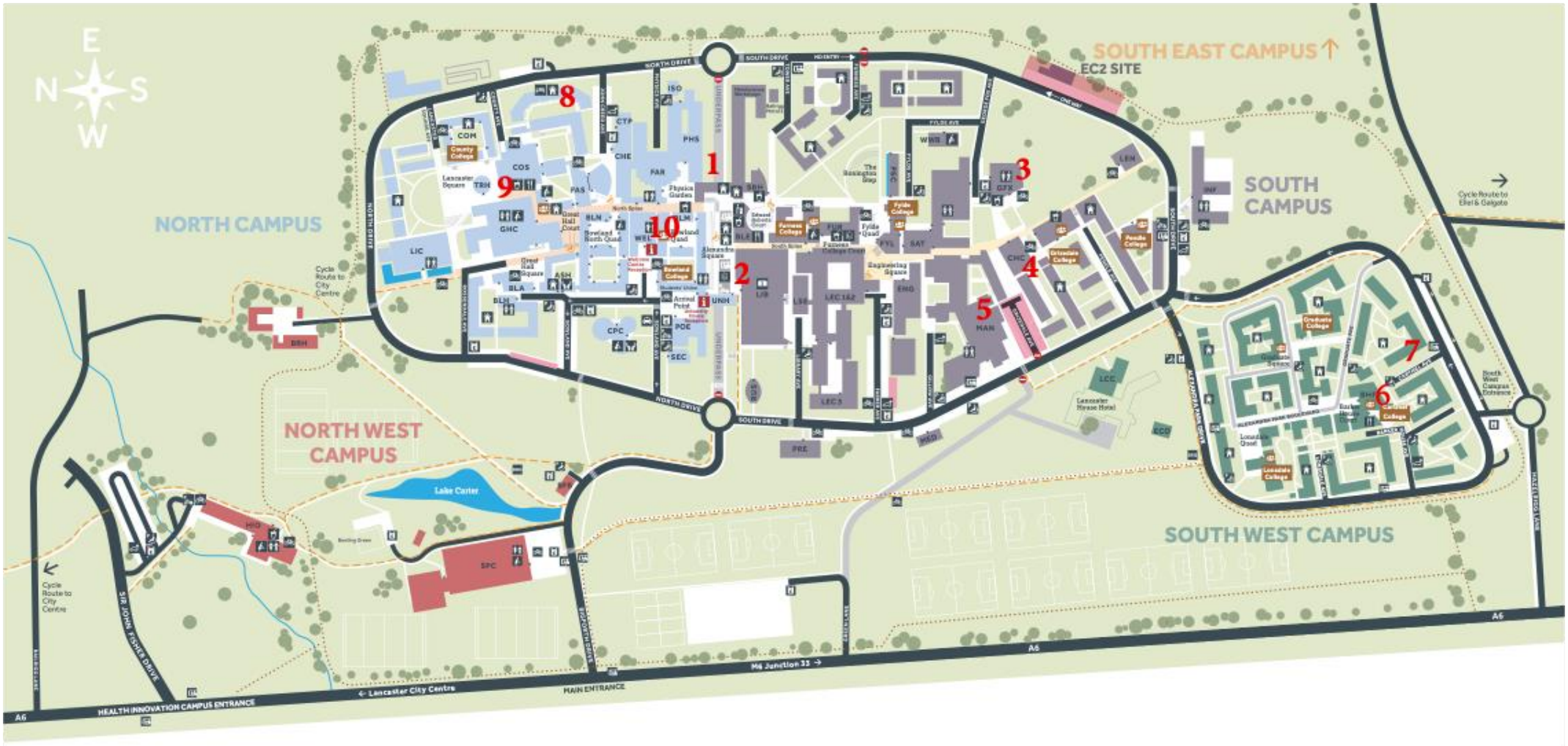
A map showing the locations of our venues can be found on the next page. Relevant venues are marked with red numbers

1. Underpass
2. Library Exhibition Stairwell
3. George Fox Building
4. Charles Carter Building
5. Management School Breakout Space
6. Barker House Farm
7. Cartmel College Accommodation
8. John Creed Guest Rooms
9. Marketplace Café
10. Guest Services

An interactive Maze Map is available on the university website: https://use.mazemap.com/#v=1&config=lancaster&campusid=341&zlevel=1&center=-2.787629,54.009646&zoom=14.

Lancaster Campus

Lancaster University



SYMBOL KEY

- Accessible Parking
- ATM
- Baby Change
- BBQ Area
- Building Entrance Point
- Bus Stops
- Colleges
- College Social Space
- Cycle Parking
- Electric Vehicle Charging Point
- Information Point
- John Creed Guest Rooms
- Library
- Lift Access
- Motor Cycle Parking
- Pay & Display Machine
- Prayer Room
- Restaurant
- Shops/Refreshments
- Student Residence
- Taxi Rank
- Toilets

WALKS & ROUTES

- Cycle Route
- Woodland Walk
- Accessible Ramp

CAMPUS ZONES

- North Campus
- North West Campus
- South Campus
- South West Campus
- South East Campus

Updated August 2025

Location Key

NORTH CAMPUS

ASH **Ash House**
Islamic Prayer Room

BLA **Bowland Annexe**
School of Arts
Bowland College

BLH **Bowland Hall**
School of Arts

BLM **Bowland Main**
Conferences & Events +
Guest Room Reception
Bowland Lecture Theatre (Cinema)
Learning Zone (Student Information Desk)
Pharmacy
Research & Enterprise Services
Student and Education Services
Students' Union

BLN **Bowland North**
Elizabeth Livingston Lecture Theatre
Marcus Merriman Lecture Theatre

CPC **Chaplaincy**

CHE **Chemistry Building**
County College

COM **County Main**
Creative Studio
UPP Residential Services

COS **County South**
County South Lecture Theatre
County Event Space
Faculty Office
Marketplace
School of Global Affairs
School of Social Sciences

CTP **cTAP Building**

FAR **Faraday Complex**
Cavendish Lecture Theatre
Colloquium Rooms
Faraday Lecture Theatre
Frankland Lecture Theatre
Mock Courtroom

FAS **FHASS Building**
Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
School of Law
Margaret Fell Lecture Theatre

GHC **Great Hall Complex**
Nuffield Theatre
Peter Scott Gallery
Lancaster Arts

POE **POE Building**
People and Organisational Effectiveness

ISO **George Pickett IsoLab**

LIC **LICA Building**
School of Arts

PHS **Physics Building**

SEC **Security Lodge**

TRH **The Roundhouse**
Confucius Institute

UNH **University House**
University House Reception
Professional Services
Careers
Student Services Hub
Counselling Service
Disabilities Service

WEL **Welcome Centre**
Welcome Centre Reception
Welcome Centre Lecture Theatres 1-4

NORTH WEST CAMPUS

BFB **Bigforth Barn**

BRH **Bailrigg House**
School of Arts

HIO **Health Innovation One**
Clinical Anatomy Learning Centre
Faculty of Health & Medicine Offices
Health Research
HIC Team
Lancaster Medical School

SPC **Sports Centre**

SOUTH CAMPUS

Bailrigg Motors

BLE **Bowland East**
Re-Store
Work in Progress

CHC **Charles Carter**
Charles Carter Lecture Theatre

ENG **School of Engineering**
Engineering One & Engineering Two

FUR **Furness Building**
Biomedical & Life Sciences
Furness Lecture Theatres 1-3
Furness College

FYL **Fylde Building**
Fylde Lecture Theatres 1-3
School of Mathematical Sciences
Psychology
Fylde College

GFX **George Fox**
INTO
George Fox Lecture Theatres 1-5
Grizedale College

INF **InfoLab21**
Computing & Communications

LEN **LENS Building**

LEC **Lancaster Environment Centre**
Biology Lecture Theatre
Biomedical & Life Sciences
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
Environmental Science
Ecology & Conservation
Geography
Gordon Manley Building (LEC3)

LSE **Life Sciences & Environment Labs**

LIB **Library**

MED **Medical Centre**

MAN **Management School**
Accounting and Finance
Economics
Entrepreneurship & Strategy
Marketing
Management School Faculty Offices
Management School Lecture Theatres 1-19
Management Science
Organisation, Work & Technology
Pendle College

PRE **Pre-School Centre**

PSC **Postgraduate Statistics Centre**

RUS **The Ruskin**

SAT **Science & Technology Building**
Faculty of Science & Technology
Faculty Offices
Hannaford Lab
Natural Sciences

SBH **Slaidburn House**

WWB **Whewell Building**
Infant & Child Studies

SOUTH WEST CAMPUS

BHF **Barker House Farm**
Cartmel College

ECO **EcoHub**
Graduate College

LCC **Lancaster Conference Centre**
Lancaster House Hotel
Lonsdale College

SOUTH EAST CAMPUS

Forrest Hills Conference & Events Centre

MazeMap
Navigate around campus using our interactive map

iLancaster
Get our iLancaster app to help and enhance your visit to the University. Available to download for Apple and Android devices or to access on the web.
Go to m.lancaster.ac.uk

Accommodation

If you have booked accommodation at Lancaster University using the booking code provided, you will be staying in one of the following buildings:

- If you are staying in Cartmel College, you will be able to collect your keys from the Registration desk from 3pm until 6pm on Day 1 and from 9am to 5pm on Day 2. Outside these hours, keys will be available for collection from the Security Lodge, next to the Chaplaincy Centre. Cartmel College is situated in Alexandra Park in South Campus, and your breakfast will be served in Barker House Farm
- If you are staying in the Guest Rooms in John Creed House (Fairsnape, Croasdale or Beatrix), you will be sent details of how to access your accommodation by email about a week before the conference. You will be sent a code to access the key box in the building and your breakfast will be served in the Marketplace. This accommodation is in North Campus.

Rooms will be available from 3pm on the day of arrival. Please return your key to the key drop box in your building when checking out; alternatively, they can be returned to the Guest Services office in opposite the Faraday Building on the North Campus.

Travel

By train

Lancaster train station is a five-minute walk from the city centre.

There are direct rail links between Lancaster and many of the UK's major cities and airports. For train times, visit **National Rail Enquiries**.

The **4** and **4X** bus services operate between Lancaster Railway Station (Platform 3 exit) and Lancaster University hourly. The journey time is around 25 minutes. Taxis are also available at the station. The nearest alternative bus stop at Common Garden Street is a five minute walk from the station.

By Bus

In the city

Lancaster Bus Station is situated on Damside Street in the city centre and most bus services also stop at Common Garden Street. Service **1/1A** provides a direct connection to the University every 10 minutes, Services **100, 4, 4X, 40, 41**and **42** also serve the University giving a total of 14 buses per hour from Monday to Saturday until 7pm. A less frequent service then runs daily until around midnight.

On campus

All buses (except 40 or 41) drop off and collect passengers at Lancaster University Underpass, situated underneath Alexandra Square in the centre of campus. The hourly 40 or 41 journey calls at the bus stops on the A6 outside the campus.

Additionally, services **100** and **42,** along with certain **4, 40** and **41** journeys serve the southern perimeter road and South West Campus. There are also bus stops directly outside the Sports Centre on the main drive. All the buses which serve the Lancaster University Underpass stop also stop here.

There are daily scheduled coach services from Lancaster University Underpass to destinations across the UK. These are operated by **Flixbus**.

By Car

Leave the M6 motorway at Junction 33 and take the A6 north towards Lancaster.

After Galgate village, three junctions with traffic lights on the A6 serve the University.

- For South West Campus (Alexandra Park), turn right at the first traffic lights into Hazelrigg Lane and then left at the roundabout into Alexandra Park Drive.
- For North and South Campus, turn right at the second traffic lights into the University main drive.

It takes around 20 minutes to walk the length of the campus and there are frequent buses with a 50p single fare within the campus.

If using an online route planner or satnav, the main University postcode is LA1 4YW.

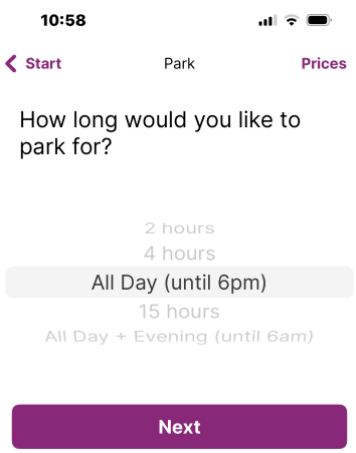
If you are travelling to campus in a plug-in electric vehicle, electric charging is available.

You can use **MazeMap** to identify the most convenient car parking facilities for your destination.

Visitor Parking Rates

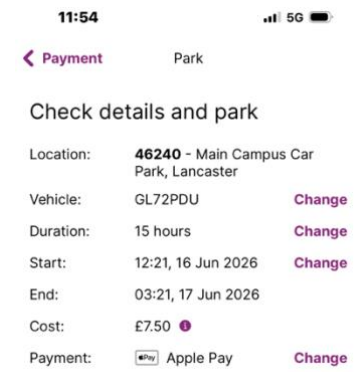
Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) fixed camera enforcement operates across Lancaster University's Bailrigg Campus ad parking charges apply 24/7. Visitors are required to pay for their parking at an on-site, card-only payment machine, or using RingGo UK. Detailed instructions on using RingGo to pay for parking are signposted at all car parks. **Please read the on-site instructions for parking carefully, as we cannot guarantee the information given here is correct.**

Visitors can park in any Main Campus parking zone. The main university campus car park is closer to the George Fox, Charles Carter and John Creed buildings, while the Alexandra Park car park is closer to Cartmel College and Barker House Farm. Please note that these count as different car parks; the location codes, charges and payments are separate.



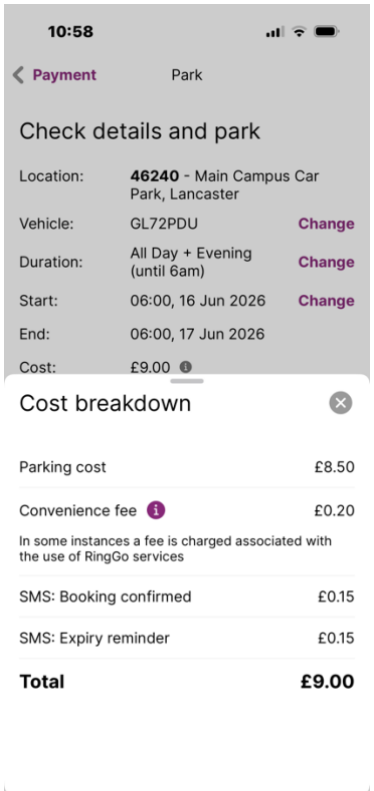
If using the app, you will be offered a number of options and you should scroll through to see which one is best for you. If you are staying throughout the conference, you will need to choose the All Day + Evening (until 6am) option which costs £8.50 plus various charges from the app (see below), and you will need to renew your parking each day. You do not need to be up at 6am to do this, as you can pay retrospectively for parking until midnight on the same day – you must change the start time accordingly to match your time of arrival or renewal.

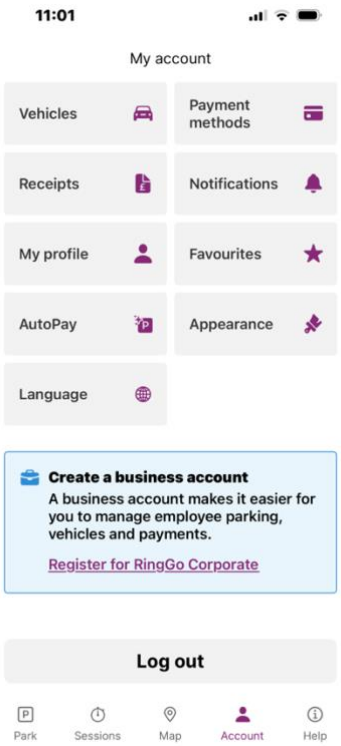
You can check what time your parking session will expire on the 'Check details and park' screen.

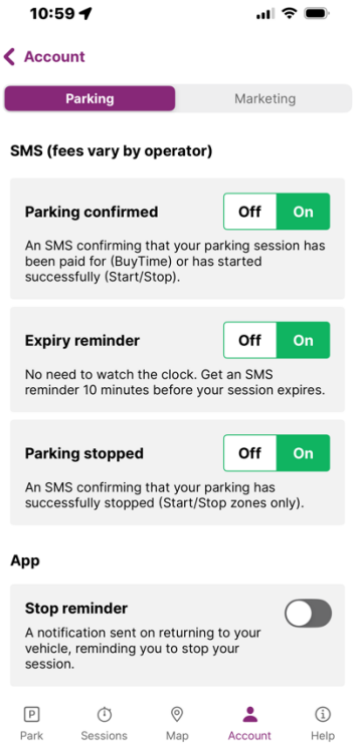


A number of charges are attached to each payment session, including an SMS confirmation of the booking and an SMS reminder of the expiry time. These can be switched off in the Notifications section of your account if you wish.

If you forget to pay for your parking, or to renew your session, then payment can be made until midnight on the same day to avoid a penalty charge notice.







Accessible Visitor Parking and Blue Badge Holders

Visitors holding Blue Badges should pay for their parking session via Ringo or the Metric payment terminal in accordance with local signage.

Please contact the Car Parking team by emailing **car-parking@lancaster.ac.uk** to discuss accessible parking with a Blue Badge.

Disruptive Histories – 50 Years of the Social History Society

As part of the Social History Society's (SHS) 2026 Conference, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the SHS, we have curated an exhibition to tell the story of an academic society determined to disrupt and reshape the status quo.

Rather than presenting a chronology of the society and its achievements, the exhibition offers multiple perspectives on the history of the SHS, its conference, and the discipline of social history.

Drawing on materials from the archives of the SHS, Lancaster University, and the Institute of Historical Research, the exhibition traces the 'becoming' of social history as an intellectual curiosity, an academic discipline, and a scholarly community. Through documents, photographs, interviews, publications, conference materials, and objects associated with a social historian's methodologies, it explores how social history has been debated, practised, and reimagined over the last five decades.

The exhibition runs from 1 – 6 July 2026, and can be viewed in the Stairwell Exhibition space within Lancaster University Library. Visitors are warmly invited to explore the exhibition and contribute their own reflections by answering a simple question: **What is social history to you?**

Şebnem Balım Çapkan and Alex Pomeroy

Lancaster University

Exhibition
01-06 July, 2026
Lancaster University Library
Stairwell Exhibition Space

DISRUPTIVE HISTORIES

50 Years of the Social History Society

social history society

Lancaster University

Our Entertainment

Historia Normannis

To welcome delegates to the 50th Anniversary Conference, Historia Normannis will be bringing a taste of 12th Century life to the lawns in front of the George Fox building with displays of fashion, justice and battle. In addition to rolling displays of combat and a medieval encampment, there will be the following events:

12:15 - Fashion Show
12:45 - Court of Justice
13:15 - Arming of the Knight

James Hyde

James Hyde is a composer and singer-songwriter from Manchester. His musical interests span across genres. While exploring a wide spectrum of styles, including funk, rock, indie, and pop, his work maintains a lyrical and narrative focus, influenced by the folk and classical music on which he was raised. James will be performing a selection of covers and self-penned songs during dinner at Barker House Farm on Wednesday evening.

PGR Quiz

Join fellow conference attendees for an evening of friendly competition at the PGR Pub Quiz! in Barker House Farm after dinner on Wednesday evening. Whether you're aiming for quiz glory or simply looking to meet other researchers in a relaxed setting, this is a great opportunity for everyone to unwind, network, and enjoy some light-hearted fun after a day of conference sessions. Come with a team or find one on the night and compete for bragging rights (and perhaps a prize or two).

Roy Ward

Presenter of the Uptight: The Sound of Motown and the Weekend Breakfast Show on Beyond Radio, Roy Ward has 50 years of experience as a DJ, is known for his passion for soul music and has hosted his own soul nights around the Lancaster and Morecambe area for decades. Roy will be DJing for our 70s Disco at our 50th Anniversary Dinner on Thursday evening.

We would love you to bring out your 70's flares and maxi skirts, beads and bangles, wide lapels and platform shoes to add a touch of fun to the evening! Get out your glad rags and join us on the dancefloor to celebrate 50 years of the Social History Society!

WiFi

Lancaster University is equipped with secure Eduroam WiFi which can be accessed by staff and students of other institutions. For further details on connecting to Eduroam, see the university website: https://portal.lancaster.ac.uk/ask/wi-fi/

There is also a Visitor WiFi network. To connect, choose LU-Visitor in your list of WiFi networks and follow the on-screen instructions on your device.

Information for Panel Chairs

Please arrive at the seminar room about 10 minutes before the advertised start time.

A conference login to access the computer will be affixed to the desk in the seminar room/lecture theatre.

Papers for 4-speaker panels are limited to 15 minutes. If there are only three speakers in a panel, they can speak for up to 20 minutes. Please keep strictly to time within the sessions.

Please hear all the papers before opening the session to questions, which you will co-ordinate from the floor. During the questions, you should position yourself and the speakers relatively close together if at all possible. The microphone should be passed between speakers as necessary. Please ensure that you repeat questions from the floor into the microphone for the benefit of those with hearing difficulties.

Finally, if you are chairing one of the first panels of the day (Wednesday– 14:45, Thursday – 9:15, Friday – 9:15), please read out the fire safety procedures that can be found in each seminar room.

Lanyards

When you arrive at the conference, you will be given a lanyard with a name badge. Please wear this throughout the conference so that we know you are a registered delegate. Please return your lanyard to the SHS Registration Desk when you leave – this saves the society money, keeps the conference costs down and reduces our environmental impact.

Accessibility

All rooms are equipped with microphones. All rooms **except** Charles Carter A18 and A19 have a hearing loop.

We have several delegates who experience difficulties hearing. As such, we encourage delegates to follow the procedures below so that all delegates can enjoy the conference equally:

1. Maintain direct face-to-face contact when speaking: do not turn away or stare into a laptop when addressing someone. Seeing facial expressions and body language is very helpful and also enables lip reading. Talk normally and clearly and be prepared to repeat, especially if you have a pronounced accent.
2. Do not cover your mouth when speaking.
3. Ensure that rooms are as quiet and well-lit as possible.
4. Make sure that only one person speaks at a time, that they are visible and their voice is audible. Panel members should face the audience and speakers from the floor should stand up and, if necessary, come to the front.

Cultural and Social History – The SHS Journal

Papers presented at the conference can be expanded to pieces of 8,000-9,000 words for submission to the Society's journal, *Cultural and Social History*, to be considered for publication. The journal's articles receive more than 100,000 views/downloads each year and its impact factor is now in the top quartile worldwide. If you have questions, you can contact the journal's editors: Grace Huxford (Bristol), Isabella Jackson (Trinity College Dublin) or Brodie Waddell (Birkbeck). For submission details, see the journal website: https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rfcs20/current

Conference Programme

Day 1 – Wednesday 1 July 2025

12:00 — Registration Desk Open (space available for bags): George Fox Foyer

Publishers' Stands

Tea and coffee will be served - delegates are welcome to use campus cafes and shops to purchase their own lunch

12:00-16:00 — Historia Normannis Medieval Reenactment Group: Outside George Fox Building

12:15 - Fashion Show
12:45 - Court of Justice
13:15 - Arming of the Knight
Plus rolling combat displays and 12th-century encampment

13.45 — Guides meet at George Fox Porch to escort delegates to the library

14:00 -14:30 — SHS 50th Anniversary Exhibition Launch (Lancaster University Library Exhibition Stairwell)

Disruptive Histories: 50 Years of the Social History Society

Şebnem Balım Çapkan (Lancaster University)
Alex Pomeroy (Lancaster University)

Panel 1 – Day 1 14:45-16:15

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Embodied Knowledge, Materiality, and Sensory Landscapes	Room: GFX LT1
Chair: Anna Drury (Lancaster University)		
Jennifer Evans (University of Hertfordshire)	A 'Blew cloth' pressed on her: The 'Fabric' of Midwifery in Early Modern England.	
Lena Ferriday (Newcastle University)	Every Body, Be Normal? Embodied Encounters in Britain's Rural Realm, 1850-1900	
Lucy Faire (University of Leicester) and Denise McHugh (Open University)	Feeling the Street: Touch and Emotion in Twentieth-Century Town and City Centres	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Global Struggles for Land Rights and Agrarian Justice	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Dave Hitchcock (Canterbury Christ Church University)		
Suzana Cascao and Antoine Paccoud (Luxembourg Institute for Socio-Economic Research)	Bringing Arno J. Mayer's Legacy 'Home': The Persistence of the Ancien Régime Through Land Registers in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	
Henrice Altink (University of York)	Navigating injustice: the quest for environmental democracy in Jamaica from 1990 to 2025.	
Rhian Davies (University of Warwick)	Post-Colonial Military Diplomacy: A Social History of British Forces in Kenya since 1964	

Lifecycles, Families, and Communities	Communal Memory and Crisis	Room: CC A15
Chair: Jaina Hunt (University of Portsmouth)		
Greg Evans (St John's College, University of Oxford)	Care, Nation, and Sexuality beyond the Metropole: AIDS in Rural Wales	
Elise Unwin (Cardiff University)	'Things happen and if we come together nothing is insurmountable' - Exploring Memory and Perceptions of Community Cohesion and Togetherness during the Covid-19 Lockdown Era in Wales	
Andrew Walker (Independent Scholar)	Cremation, Technology and Local Rivalries in Twentieth-Century Britain: the Case of a City's Late-Arriving Crematorium	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	The Legacy of Italian Social History: Methods, Cases, and Perspectives	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Gianamaria Brunazzi (Università degli Studi di Milano)		
Michele Campopiano (Università degli Studi di Catania)	Social History, Religion, Rebellion: Labriola, Dolcino and the Study of Social Revolts	
Gianamaria Brunazzi (Università degli Studi di Milano)	Rural Class Relations and the Transition to Capitalism: Sereni and Della Peruta	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Aspects of Empire	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Jodi Burkett (University of Portsmouth)		
Jack Cox (University of Northampton)	The Process of Convict Transportation to the American and Australian British Penal Colonies and within British Occupied India: a Comparative Study	
Tom Trafford (University of Huddersfield)	Anti-War Majority versus the Pro-War Minority: the Manchester Liberal Union's Response to the South African War	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Written Worlds in Early Modern England: Non-Elite Writers of Labour, Leisure, Travel and Torment	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Isabelle Carter (University of York)		
Richard Ansell (Birkbeck, University of London)	Non-Elite Travel Writing and Where to Find It	
Michael Powell-Davies (Birkbeck, University of London)	'When they compose themselves to sleep': Crisis and Composition in the Nightly Accounts of a Young London Wigmaker	
Brodie Waddell (Birkbeck, University of London)	Unexpected Writers and the Possibilities of Collective Biography, 1570-1730	
Susan Wiseman (Birkbeck, University of London)	Writing the Village: Literature, Leisure and Labour in Non-Elite Provincial Writing	

16:15-16:45 Tea, Coffee and Biscuits: George Fox Foyer

PGR Welcome Stall

16:45-18:15 Conference Roundtable (George Fox LT1)

Social History: Its Pasts and Futures

Dave Hitchcock (Canterbury Christchurch University)
Julia Liate (Birkbeck, University of London)
JC Niala (History of Science Museum, University of Oxford)
Pat Thane (Birkbeck, University of London)
Chair: Corinna Peniston-Bird (Lancaster University)

18:30-20:30 Carvery Dinner: Barker House Farm
Music from James Hyde

21:00-22:00 Quiz at Barker House Farm Bar

00:00 Barker House Farm Bar Closes

Day 2 – Thursday 2 July 2025

09:00 Registration Opens

Panel 2 – Day 2 09:15-10:45

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Print Media and Communities	Room: GFX LT1
Chair: Catherine Phipps (University of Bristol)		
Philippa Fletcher (University of Oxford)	'Relieving the loneliness of the lesbian': Sappho and British Lesbian Community Building, 1972-81	
Laura Love (University of Essex)	Using Vernacular Photography to Ground an Art Historical Approach to Trans Bodies in the UK	
Angela Platt (St Mary's University, Twickenham)	A Sealed Hope: Love, Belief and a Box in a Woman's Religious Society in Interwar England	

'Deviance', Inclusion and Exclusion	Laws in Action and Reaction	Room: CC A19
Chair: Robyn Lee (Cardiff University)		
Janet Weston (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine)	Marginal Social Movements and Unsuccessful Legal Campaigns in 1980-90s Britain: the Case of CADD	
Lenka Skoupa (Charles University)	Sight Versus Sound in the Roman Times – Disability and Responses in Law/Practice to it	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Class Relations in the 20th Century	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Fearghus Roulston (University of Strathclyde)		
Konstantin Tarasov (University of Nottingham)	The Collapse of the Moral Order: Domestic Service and the Crisis of Class Relations in Revolutionary Russia	
Robert Bevan (The Cathedral School, Llandaff, Cardiff)	Tonypandy, South Wales, 1910–11: Strikes, Radicalism, and Working-Class Politics	
David Cowan (University of Manchester)	The 'Moral Economy' of Inequality and Attitudes to Progressive Taxation in Edwardian Britain	
Carlotta Maria Vaglieri (Universita' degli Studi di Firenze)	Housing Welfare, Inequality, and Social Conflict in Milan (1950–1970)	

Life Cycles, Families and Communities	Care, Welfare, and Vulnerable Lives	Room: CC A15
Chair: Conger Wang (University of Edinburgh)		
Carrie Long (Caird Fellow, Royal Museums Greenwich)	Navigating Welfare: Greenwich Hospital School and state-led childcare and welfare, 1806-1840	
Markéta Skořepová (University of South Bohemia)	Abandoned Children in Village Foster Families in 19th-Century Bohemia	
Christina de Bellaigue (University of Oxford)	Falling Families: Downward Social Mobility in the Industrial Middle Class, 1840-1930	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Popular Politics	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Samantha Shave (University of Strathclyde)		
Thomas Brown-Warr (Lincoln Bishop University)	Voting Behaviour and Electioneering Tactics during the 1721 Lincolnshire By-Election	
Dave Steele (University of Warwick)	Where People Confront Power: New Palace Yard, Westminster	
Anna Lively (University of Strathclyde)	'Women on the Right': Anti-Communist Activism and the Women's Guild of Empire in Interwar Britain'	
Iris Hauser (Princeton University)	Infrastructures of Resistance: Inequality, Activism, and Mediated Sovereignty in the Zapatista Uprising	

Subalterns, Decoloniality and the Postcolonial	Colonial Knowledge, Media, and Imperial Epistemologies	Room: CC A18
Chair: Anamika Bhattacharjee (University of East Anglia)		
Purba Hossain (University of York)	Decentring Colonial Expertise: Indian Translators in the Linguistic Survey of India	
Jodi Burkett (University of Portsmouth)	International Students Navigating UK Border Control, c. 1966-2026	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	Spatial Histories, Heritage Practice and Institutional Memory in Northern Ireland's Museums	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Carys Tyson-Taylor (University of Leicester and National Museums NI)		
Carys Tyson-Taylor (University of Leicester and National Museums NI)	Scaling Space and Heritage at the Ulster Folk Museum: Rethinking Domestic, Rural and Regional Place-Making	
Caoimhe McGonigle (Queen's University and National Museums NI)	Beyond the Frontier: Ulster-American Urban Life in the Nineteenth-Century American North	
Oak Lawrenson (Ulster University and National Museums NI)	Control and Resistance of Carceral Space as Represented by Museum Objects	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Early Modern Women, Work and Agency	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Joe Saunders (University of York)		
Hannah Robb (University of Manchester)	Working Women and the Guilds in Early Modern Shrewsbury	
Abby Hammond (Northumbria University)	Advertising Women: Credit, Reputation, and the *Newcastle Courant*, 1711–1760	
Alasdair McNeill (Birkbeck, University of London)	Women in Cheese: Female Cheesemongers and their Business in Eighteenth-Century London	

10:45-11:15 Tea and Coffee: George Fox Foyer

Panel 3 – Day 2 11:15-12:45

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Emotions, Subjectivity and Power in Scottish Modernity	Room: GFX LT1
Chair: Jennifer Evans (University of Hertfordshire)		
Rosi Carr (University of Edinburgh)	Scottishness, Coloniality, and the Misrepresentation of Indigenous Emotions	
Tanya Cheadle (University of Glasgow)	'There is so much "caution" about in the air, I begin to feel in chains': Emotions, Gender, and Patriarchal Power in Scotland's Fin de Siècle Occult Revival	
Rochelle Rowe (University of Edinburgh)	The 'West African Village', Emotions and Romancing Scottishness at the National Exhibition of 1911	
Rebecca Williamson (University of Glasgow)	'Wilfully, Wickedly, Feloniously': Scots Law and Abortion, 1858	

'Deviance', Inclusion and Exclusion	Making and Breaking Marriages in Britain and Ireland	Room: CC A19
Chair: Daniel Grey (University of Hertfordshire)		
Robyn Lee (Cardiff University)	Beyond Deviance: Respectability and Interracial Marriage in Early Twentieth-Century Wales	
Máire Hussey (Trinity College Dublin)	Reading the 1970s Contraception Debates and the 'Permissive' Girl in Ireland through Letters Written to the Taoiseach, 1970-1979	
Siana Bryan (University of Wolverhampton)	Sex … It's a Dirty Word	

Life Cycles, Families and Communities	Women's Networks and Mobility	Room: CC A15
Chair: Angela Platt (St Mary's University, Twickenham)		
Kit Barton (University of Exeter)	Retention, Transition, Release: Child Bed Linen and the Construction of Individual and Familial Gendered Identity in the 17th Century	
Conger Wang (University of Edinburgh)	Negotiating Feminism within the Family: Women's Mobility, Education, and Rhetorical Strategy in the Writings of Shan Shili (1858–1945)	
Colin Pooley (Lancaster University)	Letters from Toronto: Representing Mid-Twentieth Century Ontario Life to an English Pen Friend.	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Childhood, Care, and the Home in Britain	Room: CC A18
Chair: Anna Muggeridge (University of Worcester)		
Heather Ellis (University of Sheffield)	'Who's got the free meal, then?': Oral Histories of Shame, Dignity and Citizenship in the UK School Meals Service	
Fearghus Roulston (University of Strathclyde)	Social Histories of Mould and the 1981 National Anti-Dampness Campaign	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Experiencing Institutional Lives in Modern Britain	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Andrew Walker (Independent Scholar)		
Samantha Shave (University of Strathclyde)	'I broke the windows': Responding to Workhouse Policies in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales	
Nicola Edwards (University of Wolverhampton)	'I hated the lessons … what good's Latin? Who's gonna speak Latin?': The Eleven Plus and Experiences of Working-Class Girls in Grammar Schools in the West Midlands'	
Jude Rowley (University of Exeter)	Espionage and Exile at Lancaster University, 1966-1977	

Strands of Social History	Pleasure, Leisure, War and Accessibility	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Henry Irving (Leeds Beckett University)		
Michael Reeve (Open University)	'Cigarette Miracles': Smoking, Endurance and Resilience in Wartime Visual Culture	
Amy Thorpe (Northumbria University)	Sites of Feeling: Joy, War and the Creation of the 'Common Cause' Huts	
Francesca Vine (Ware Museum)	The Great Bed of Ware: Myth, Money-Maker, Marvel	
Megan Schlanker (University of Lincoln)	'Too Often Regarded as an Optional Extra': Museum Education and Children with Special Educational Needs (1952-1999)	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	Heritage Spaces	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Carys Tyson-Taylor (University of Leicester and National Museums NI)		
Şebnem Balım Çapkan (Lancaster University)	'Hidden, Unknown, Unnamed': Imperial Visions and the Displacement of Antiquities along the Smyrna–Aidin Railway	
jungid Hassan (Central University of Kashmir)	Revisiting the Past: Exploring the Urban Heritage in Srinagar City through Heritage Walks	
Alex Pomeroy (Lancaster University)	'How can we remember those we did not know?': Memorialising the Second World War in Ireland, 1945 – 1965	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Work and Workplace Identities from the Early Modern to the Twentieth Century	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Deborah Jeffries (Independent Scholar)		
Oliver Betts (National Railway Museum)	'Enginorum Times': Workplace Identity in the Railway Office 1890-1948	
Kathleen McIlvenna (University of Derby)	Examining Family, Community and Work through Retirement Gift Giving in Britain 1860-1901	
Joe Saunders (University of York)	Places of the English Print Trade c.1600-45	

12:45-14:15 Lunch: Management School Breakout Foyer

13:00-14:00 PGR Meet Up: Management School Hub Cafe

Panel 4 – Day 2 14:15-15:45

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Regulating Desire: Law, Morality and the State	Room: GFX LT1
Chair: Anna Cusack (Greenwich, Lincoln Bishop, University of Oxford)		
Giada Pizzoni (European University Institute)	Can Early Modern Women Teach Us How to Defy Sexual Harassment?	
Anna Drury (Lancaster University)	'The fruits of these poor creatures': Prostitution, Abolitionism, and Violence in Late Imperial Rio de Janeiro	
Catherine Phipps (University of Bristol)	'The evil immigrants who live on vice': Race and Empire in Christian Missions to Marine Sex Workers in 19th and 20th-Century Britain	

'Deviance', Inclusion and Exclusion	'Deviance' in Medicine and Culture	Room: CC A19
Chair: Janet Weston (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)		
Dylan Neill Andres (University of Bristol)	The Outlaw Hero? Violence and Legitimacy in the Case of Henry Avery, c. 1695-1720	
Sophia Cohen Galvao (McMaster University)	A Question of Representation? Starving Workmen, Seditious Socialists, and the West End Riots, 1886	
Daniel Grey (University of Hertfordshire)	Out of Touch? Life and Death in the Hands of Midwives in England, 1871-1914	
Cecilia Molesini (University of Bologna)	Gender, Deviance and the Psychiatric Reform in Feltre (Italy)	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Social Activism, Welfare, and Unemployment	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Dave Hitchcock (Canterbury Christ Church University		
Don Watson (Independent Scholar)	'An unusual and welcome development': Amateur Drama in the Unemployed Clubs of 1930s Britain	
Charlotte Taylor (London South Bank University)	Student Life in Modern English Universities since the 1960s: Experience, Activism, and Identity	

Life Cycles, Families and Communities	Youth, Generation, and Gendered Becoming	Room: CC A15
Chair: Elizabeth DeBold (University of Newcastle)		
Jasper Williams (King's College London)	Generational Revolt? Re-Evaluating the Impact of Involvement in British Youth Culture on Familial Relationships in the 1970s	
Olivia Golby-Kirk (University of Birmingham)	For Young-Men are so False-Hearted: Youthful Masculinity from the Perspective of Women	
Rebecca Ball (Manchester Metropolitan University)	'In those days it was the lot of the eldest daughter in a family where the father was bereaved to take over the responsibility of bringing up the younger brothers and sisters and to forgo her own wishes and happiness': Sibling Relationships in Autobiographical Writings 1900-1945	
Harriet Bee (King's College, London)	From 'Walking Out' to 'Going Steady': Girlhood and the Americanisation of Dating Rituals in Liverpool and Melbourne, c. 1950-1970	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Religion and Political Belief	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Samantha Shave (University of Strathclyde)		
Conner Scott (University of Reading and Theo Jung, Martin-Luther-University, Halle-Wittenberg, Germany)	'Attended divine service or anything but': Protestant Sermons, Public Speech and Everyday Rhetorical Criticism in Victorian England	
Jade Burnett (University of Birmingham)	'We were given the best because we were workers and the guests of the workers of Russia': British women, romance, and travel to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 30s	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	Heterotopias	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Henry Irving (Leeds Becket University)		
Julia Haws (University of Oxford)	Dancing on the Left: Gay Liberation and the Development of Gender Free English Country Dance	
Sinead Carter (University of Reading)	Greenham Common as Heterotopia: Women-Controlled Space and the Women's Liberation Movement	
Isabelle Carter (University of York)	Squatters in Rural England during the 17th and 18th Centuries	

Subalterns, Decoloniality and the Postcolonial	Race, Representation, and Scientific Authority	Room: CC A18
Chair: Anamika Bhattacharjee (University of East Anglia)		
Elena Ghiggino (Edge Hill University)	Scientific Racism and the Role of Human Zoos during the Nineteenth Century	
Jack Crangle (Queen's University, Belfast)	'I felt like I just belonged': Multicultural Britain as a Site of Refuge in Oral Histories of Black Irish Migrants	
Sikha Mohanty (Indian Institute of Technology, Patna)	To Be Deviant or Not to Be: Exploring Bar Dancers' Narratives in Indian Documentaries	
Aliyah Kerr (Liverpool John Moores University)	A Frontline in the Same War: Black Liverpool, Decolonial Resistance and the Reframing of Anti-Apartheid Activism	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Historians, Domestic Labour and the Royal Airforce: Shaping and Creating Work in the Twentieth Century	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Deborah Jeffries (Independent Scholar)		
Tabitha Lambert-Bramwell (University of Birmingham)	An Unconventional Arrangement: Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, and Domestic Labour in Twentieth-Century Britain	
Joseph Didomenico (University of York)	Planes, Places, and Posterity: The Evolution of 8th Air Force Heritage Communities	
Caroline Watkinson (City St Georges, University of London)	Radical Hope and the Making of Social Historians: Work, Leisure, and Employability for History Graduates	

15:45-16:15 Tea and Coffee: George Fox Foyer

16:15-17:00 Social History Society Annual General Meeting – all welcome: George Fox LT

17:00-18:30 Keynote Lecture (George Fox LT1):

Workers, Elites and the Making of the Modern World

Emma Griffin (Queen Mary University of London)

18:45-19:15 Routledge Drinks Reception and Prize Giving (George Fox Foyer)

19:15 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner (Barker House Farm)

20:30 1970s Themed Disco – homages to the fashion of the period warmly encouraged

00:00 Barker House Farm Bar Closes

Day 3 – Friday 3 July 2025

09:00 Registration Opens

Panel 5 – Day 3 09:15-10:45

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Radical and Activist Emotions, Communities and Sensory Networks	GFX LT1
Anna Cusack (Greenwich, Lincoln Bishop, University of Oxford)		
Ella Sbaraini (King's College London)	How Can We Historicise Suicidal Feelings? The Interiorisation of Suicidality in England, 1750-1850	
Dave Hitchcock (Canterbury Christ Church University)	Feeling Imperially Charitable in Early Modern England	
Lucy McCormick (University of Birmingham)	Sensory Experiences of International Suffrage Activism, 1902-29	
Lea Leboissetier (FWO/University of Antwerp)	Selling Difference? Emotion and Strategies in Encounters Between Migrant Pedlars and their British Customers (1850s-1950s)	

'Deviance', Inclusion and Exclusion	Suspect Places and People	Room: CC A19
Chair: Daniel Grey (University of Hertfordshire)		
Assia Alami (Independent Scholar)	Household Religion, Gender, and the Policing of Dissent in Late Medieval London.	
Thomas McGrath (Independent Scholar)	The Miser: Hoarding, Homes and Identity in Britain, c.1750-1930	
Ria Smith (University of Wolverhampton)	They Should Lock Up the Parents Too!	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Politics of Disability, Health, and Pensions	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Fearghus Roulston (University of Strathclyde)		
Beck Heslop (University of Manchester)	Giving a Bleep: How Blind Women Transformed Pedestrian Crossings in Britain, c.1962-1990.	
Vicky Long (Newcastle University)	Throwing the Baby Out with the Bathwater: Disabled Children's Rights and the Disability Rights Movement in Late Twentieth-Century Britain	
Michele Santoro (University of Catania)	The Sharecropper and Farmers' Welfare State: Health and Pension Politics in the Rural Italian Province, 1954-1968	

Life Cycles, Families and Communities	Mobility, Travel, and Emotional Communities	Room: CC A15
Chair: Elizabeth DeBold (University of Newcastle)		
Tianxin Li (University of St Andrews)	Making Home on the Move: Portable Domesticity and Emotional Experience in Dorothy Wordsworth's Travels	
Yaiza Guerrero Fernández (University of Oviedo)	Living with the Herd: Transhumant Families and Pastoral Life in Cabrales, Picos de Europa.	
Jana Carpenter (Birkbeck, University of London)	'Nowe drowned in the sea': John Stow and the Lost City of Dunwich	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Big Data, Digital Humanities, and the Political Past	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Henry Miller (Northumbria University)		
Daniel Meldon (University of Warwick)	Problematising Warwickshire: Early Modern Spatial Perspectives	
Roberto Zanola (University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy)	'The Italian Cinema under the Shadow of Censorship: an Empirical Investigation of the Post-Fascism Period'	
Charlotte Clare (Keele University)	Using Digital Tools to Explore Nationality, Identity and Place in Applications for Re-Naturalisation of 'British' Women, 1915-1923	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	Communities	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Alex Pomeroy (Lancaster University)		
Tegwen Hammersley (Keele University)	'All graft and no stock': Heritagisation and Gentrification in a New Town	
Sian Broadhurst (University of York)	'Only one cannabis farm in 125 years': Social Control, Myth-Making, and Community in Joseph Rowntree's Garden Village	
William Plant (University of York)	A Parish Church of Steam: Complexity in the Country Railway Station	
Corinna Peniston-Bird (Lancaster University)	Prangs, Pubs and Pups: The Cultural Memory of the Battle of Britain, 1943 to 2026	

Subalterns, Decoloniality and the Postcolonial	Religion, Ritual, and Cultural Negotiation	Room: CC A18
Chair: Vicky Nagy (University of Tasmania)		
Anamika Bhattacharjee (University of East Anglia)	Pain, Penance and the Exotic: British Portrayals of Churruck Puja as 'Barbaric' Spectacle	
Julia Gillen (Lancaster University) & Samuel DeJulio (University of Texas, San Antonio)	Developing a New Posthuman Perspective on the Study of 'Writing Systems'	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Working Class Education, Work and Leisure	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Jane Harrison (University of Portsmouth)		
Tanya Hawkes (Anglia Ruskin University)	'An Oxford Education': Leisure and Learning at the Gas Works	
Jo Holmes (University of Portsmouth)	Letters to the Editor: Exploring Changing Public Opinion on Portsmouth's Public Libraries through Correspondence in the *Portsmouth Evening News*	
Nico Blackstock (University of Southampton)	'Oh, you'll be very busy these days': Work and 'Ordinariness' on Television Gameshows in Late Twentieth-Century Britain	

10:45-11:15 Tea and Coffee: George Fox Foyer

Panel 6 – Day 3 11:15-12:45

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Conflict and the Disciplined Body	Room: GFX LT1
Chair: Anita Hoffman (University of York)		
Louise Bell (Independent Scholar)	'Necessity is the Mother of Invention': Artificial Limb Design and Manufacturing in Two World Wars.	
David Cox (University of Wolverhampton)	A Social History Case Study of 'heads and knees and mangled testicles': the First World War Autograph Album of a Female Volunteer Visitor to the 1st Southern Military Hospital, Stourbridge	
Susan Barton (De Montford University)	Wounded Prisoners of War Interned in Switzerland: Rehabilitation and Reintegration after Injury, Illness and Imprisonment during World War One.	
Lucy Delap (University of Cambridge)	The 'War with Deformity' and the Disability Estate in Twentieth-Century Britain.	

'Deviance', Inclusion and Exclusion	Policing and Punishment	Room: CC 19
Chair: Janet Weston (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)		
Louise Bonvalet (Italian-German Historical Institute, Trento)	Gender and Religious Deviance: Witchcraft in the Prince-Bishopric of Trento (Italy, 17th century)	
Eddie Baker (Ulster University)	Attitudes Towards Paramilitary 'Policing' During the Troubles in Northern Ireland	
Mary Fraser (University of Glasgow)	Developing a Comprehensive Database of Police History	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Feminist Politics	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Charlotte Taylor (London South Bank University)		
Laura Kelly (University of Strathclyde)	Women's Information Network and Abortion Information Activism in 1980s and 1990s Ireland	
Maisie Jepson (University of Exeter)	Motherhood and Banner-Making at Greenham Women's Peace Camp	
Emily Jane Cowan (University of Liverpool)	'Only Four Days for Manslaughter': Gender, Moral Worth, and Sentencing in Victorian Lancashire	

Life Cycles, Families and Communities	Marriage, Power, and Family Negotiation	Room: CC A15
Chair: Jaina Hunt (University of Portsmouth)		
Maria Cannon (University of Portsmouth)	Second Wives and the Disruption of Inheritance in the Early Modern English Aristocracy	
Jane Malafaia Francioni de Abreu (University of Salamanca)	Comparing Historicist and Presentist Views of Forgiveness and Honour in *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623)	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Nations, States and Identities	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Henry Miller (Northumbria University)		
Luka Pejić (Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia)	Enemies of the State and their Revolutionary Practices: Anarchism in Late Nineteenth-Century Croatia	
Pippa Catterall (University of Westminster)	'Patriotism is not enough': Cosmopolitanism and the 'Merchants of Death' in Interwar Britain and America	
Jennifer Redmond (Maynooth University, Republic of Ireland)	The (Irish) 'People's War'? Identifying Irish People in the Second World War Home Front	
Micaela Panes (Cardiff University)	A Changing World: Women and the Labour Party in Wales, c.1945-1970s	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	Social Spaces	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Tegwen Hammersley (Keele University)		
Chris Day (Nottingham Trent/The National Archives)	Miasmatical Modernity? Public Health and Pollution as a 'Distance-Demolishing Technology', of Public Health in England and Wales, 1846-1875	
Lan Mi (University of York)	Manifesting the Social Architecture of Liverpool's Chinatown: Analysing the Socio-Spatial Characteristics of the Chinese Freemasons' Building (1890s-Present)	
Vicky Holmes (Notre Dame, London)	Invisible People in the Most Visible of Spaces: Reconstructing Spaces of Homelessness in the Victorian City for the Classroom	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Social Spaces, Leisure and Consumption	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Kathleen McIlvenna (University of Derby)		
Jane Harrison (University of Portsmouth)	'On a princely and magnificent scale': Mid-Nineteenth Century Society seen through the Conspicuous Consumption of the 1859 'Historical Ball' at Sudeley Castle	
Deborah Jeffries (Independent Scholar)	To Drink or Not to Drink? An Important Question for Theatre Goers in the Nineteenth Century	

12:45-13:45 Lunch: Management School Breakout Foyer

Panel 7 – Day 3 13:45-15:15

Bodies, Sex and Emotions	Defining the Body: Medicine, Beauty, and Identity	Room: GFX LT1
Chair: Maria Cannon (University of Portsmouth)		
Jaina Hunt (University of Portsmouth)	Policing Beauty: Reactions to Elite Never-Married Women's Bodies in Tudor England.	
Anita Hoffmann (University of York)	Breaking Gender Rules: How One Woman Shaped Venereal Advertising and Sexual Knowledge in Early 18C England	
Alison Pedley (University of Roehampton)	Careful, Considerate and Attentive Manner: Female Attendants at Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum 1863 to 1920	

'Deviance', Inclusion and Exclusion	People and Movement: Drawing and Crossing Boundaries	Room: CC A19
Chair: Janet Weston (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)		
Jeanne Dufresne (University of Warwick)	Women's Mobility and Mechanisms of Belonging in Seventeenth-Century England and France	
Vicky Nagy (University of Tasmania)	Blurred Lines between Free Migrants and Convicts in Colonial Australia	

Inequality, Welfare and Justice	Voices of Motherhood: Agency and (In)Equality in Lived Experiences of Motherhood in Late Twentieth Century Britain	Room: GFX LT4
Chair: Maisie Jepson (University of Exeter)		
Eve Pennington (University of Worcester)	Gingerbread Women: Single Motherhood, Self-Help Groups, and Grassroots Activism in England, 1970s-1990s	
Anna Muggeridge (University of Worcester)	The Invention of the 'Stay at Home Mother' in Late Twentieth Century Britain	
Beckie Rutherford (University of Worcester)	Voices of Disabled Motherhood in Modern Britain	

Life Cycles, Families and Communities	Communities Observed	Room: CC A15
Chair: Angela Platt (St Mary's University, Twickenham)		
Paul Mersh (University of Greenwich)	Social Network Analysis and Forgetting	
Anna Reynolds (Bangor University)	Community and Conflict in the Eastern Carneddau, 1700-1950	
Andrew Walmsley (Lancaster University)	We Don't Need Another Hero - The Everyday Heroism of the Long Nineteenth Century: Does It Endure and How Well Does It Serve Us?	

Politics, Policy and Citizenship	Environmentalism, Climate Change and Homelessness: Past Reflections on Contemporary Issues	Room: GFX LT5/6
Chair: Andrew Walker (Independent Scholar)		
James Dean (Sheffield Hallam University)	William Cobbett and the Anthropocene: an Environmentalist for our Times	
Timothy Cooper (Pusan National University, South Korea)	Floods, Fuel Protests and Climate Change: Mass Observers on a warming planet	
Peter Wood (Birkbeck, University of London)	Queue Jumping or Need? Homeless Families, Council Housing and the Housing Waiting List in Postwar Britain'	

Spaces and Places of History and Heritage	Public Spaces	Room: GFX LT2
Chair: Alex Pomeroy (Lancaster University)		
Ornat Turin (Gordon College for Education)	The Meaning of Display: Media History in Museums	
Zuzubee Huidrom (University of Edinburgh)	Gender, Memory, and the Politics of War Commemoration in Manipur	

Subalterns, Decoloniality and the Postcolonial	Mermaids and Were-Tigers: The Uncertain Imperial Boundaries of the Human	Room: CC A18
Chair: Louise Bell (Independent Scholar)		
Omni Gust (University of Nottingham)	'Hydrocolonialism' and the 'Monsters' of the Deep: the Process and Limits of Knowing the Oceans in Eighteenth-Century Britain	
Kristy Warren (University of Lincoln)	Of Mermaids, Maps and Sea Monsters	
Jonathan Saha (University of Durham)	Were-Tigers in Colonial Myanmar: Of Peasants and Predators	

Work, Leisure, and Consumption	Food Through Leisure, Consumerism and Riots	Room: GFX LT3
Chair: Kathleen McIlvenna (University of Derby)		
Zuzanna Rog (University of York)	Holidays, Foodways, and Domestic Goods: Exploring Britons' Encounters with Continental Europe, 1950-1990	
Anna Cusack (Greenwich, Lincoln Bishop, University of Oxford)	The Maldon Riots of 1629	
Ana Rajković Pejić (Croatia Institute of History)	'Pack your bags, let us go': Rest and Recreation as Integral Parts of Yugoslav Self-Management (1945-1989)	

15:15 End of Conference

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Panel Abstracts

(In alphabetical order by panel title)

Emotions, Subjectivity and Power in Scottish Modernity

This panel presents three historical moments which throw the role played by emotions in Scottish modernity into sharp relief. More particularly, the papers delineate the ways in which emotions – both (mis)represented and felt - have been implicated in upholding and upending social hegemonies and hierarchies in Scotland and the British Empire between the 1850s and the 1910s. At play in each case study is a diverse range of historical processes, including coloniality, romanticism, Celticism and the occult revival, which together and in diverse ways informed the intersectional operation of power at a local level. This includes the consolidation of colonial Gaels' whiteness in 1850s Australia, through a contrast with indigenous anger; the disciplining of unruly women esotericists in fin de siècle Edinburgh, through the assertion of occultism's masculine rationality; and the nationalist feeling evoked at a 1911 imperial exhibition in Glasgow, through a massively popular 'West African Colonies' human exhibit.

Rosi Carr (University of Edinburgh) - Scottishness, Coloniality, and the Misrepresentation of Indigenous Emotions

In the 1850s, in Waywurru country, Virginius Murray rode a donkey while wearing a kilt and 'amused the natives'. Born in London, the son of an enslaver in the Bahamas, and grandson of the earl of Dunmore, Murray embodied a colonial Scottish identity. In this instance, he uses the kilt to perform a drag-ish Scottishness. To understand what this means in terms of Scottish coloniality we need to foreground his Indigenous audience. Adapting to rapid occupation, following two decades of genocidal settler violence, the idea of their amusement hides a far more complex history of resistance and survival.

The Gaelic identity that Murray comedically appropriated sat uneasily within intellectual racial hierarchies, with Gaels possessing a liminal whiteness. In the case of colonial Gaels, racist ideas of Indigenous anger and violent savagery facilitated a secure White Scottish identity. To explore this, I will consider how a Gaelic woman came to embody White femininity in the imagination of colonists whose belief that she had been kidnapped by the GunaiKurnai in the 1840s reinforced their ideas of Indigenous revenge and violence. Indigenous oral histories suggest that she was rescued.

These moments and these myths of Scottish coloniality are also part of Indigenous histories of early, still ongoing, colonisation. In this paper I use these two brief sketches to discuss how we move beyond an acknowledgement of racism and violence to fully integrate Indigenous subjectivities into our understanding of Scottishness and empire.

Tanya Cheadle (University of Glasgow) - ‘There is so much “Caution” about in the air, I begin to feel in Chains’: Emotions, Gender, and Patriarchal Power in Scotland’s Fin de Siècle Occult Revival

The preeminent organization of Scotland’s occult revival was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. It offered its initiates privileged access to hidden knowledge on alchemy, astrology, tarot and the Kabbalah, and with it, the chance to ‘purify and exalt’ their spiritual natures and achieve ‘Great Power’. While women were admitted on an equal basis to men, its ‘Amen Ra’ temple in Edinburgh constituted a masculinized space for rational argument, distinct from the effeminizing passivity of spiritualism. Yet this claim to masculine rationality was repeatedly threatened by displays of other emotions during the Golden Dawn’s numerous schisms and scandals, including anger, jealousy and frustration.

This paper examines how emotion and gender were mutually implicated in the exercise of patriarchal power during one of these incidents, precipitated by the tea heiress and New Woman, Annie Horniman (1860-1937). Horniman was a persistent ‘thorn in the flesh’ of the Golden Dawn’s male leadership, in part because of her outspoken condemnation of fellow occultist, Edmund Berridge, whom she accused of sexually assaulting younger female members. Her expulsion from the order, the subsequent fallout, and her eventual readmission reveals much about the use of male claims to rationality in upholding the privileges of hegemonic masculinity, and in pathologizing and disciplining women occultists. However, listening carefully to archival traces and silences also suggests the subversive potential of female networks of care and solidarity, and their ability to delimit and frustrate the enforcement of patriarchal power.

Rochelle Rowe (University of Glasgow) - The ‘West African Village’, Emotions and Romancing Scottishness at the National Exhibition of 1911

On the morning of Wednesday 10th May 1911, a baby was born to a family housed in the West African Colonies, a temporary model village staged within the Scottish National Exhibition at Glasgow. The manager of the exhibit hastily organised a competition in the press, inviting readers to suggest ‘the most appropriate Scottish name for the Black Baby’ for the chance to win a guinea. A public naming ceremony, attended by over 1000 paying spectators, took place in the following week.

The baby was duly named Waverley, intended as an acrostic to stand for: West African Village Exhibition’s Remarkable Little Ebony Youngster. The name Waverley also invoked Sir Walter Scott’s romantic literary hero Edward Waverley, immortalised in his first novel and thereafter in the name of Edinburgh’s principal railway station.

The 1911 Scottish National Exhibition at Glasgow was the third imperial fair to be held in the city; a further three had already taken place in Edinburgh. As with previous exhibitions, Glasgow 1911 was both a trade fair designed to wrest wealth from Empire and an exercise in imagining and inventing Scottishness.

What role was the ‘human zoo’ intended to play in this mass public orchestration of a Scottish national romance? Which emotions drew over one million visitors to gawk at, touch and even name the villagers? How did white visitors’ experiences of viewing African bodies up close register alongside the many other representations of blackness - so vibrantly alive in Scotland - that featured in their cultural diet?

The Legacy of Italian Social History: Methods, Cases, and Perspectives

The panel examines key contributions of the Italian social history tradition by bringing into focus strands of Italian historiography that have remained only partially visible internationally, often overshadowed by microhistory or Gramscian political theory. In dialogue with British social history and current historiographical debates, it highlights Italian social historians’ engagement with poverty and marginality, social conflict and rebellion, and the transformation of class relations under capitalism through integrated social, cultural, economic, and political analysis.

The three papers develop this perspective through complementary case studies - Piero Camporesi on poverty and marginality; Antonio Labriola on religion and rebellion; and Emilio Sereni and Franco Della Peruta on rural class relations and capitalist transformation.

Alongside its comparative aims, the panel addresses the long-standing fragmentation of Italian social history—linked to the absence of stable journals, societies, and forums—by repositioning its contributions within an international context and fostering new networks of discussion around the work of the panelists, recently involved in launching the first Italian book series devoted to social history.

Michele Campopiano (Università degli Studi di Catania) - Social History, Religion, Rebellion: Labriola, Dolcino and the Study of Social Revolts

A largely forgotten voice in the formation of Italian historiography is Antonio Labriola (1843–1904), a southern Italian and the first Italian Marxist philosopher, a correspondent of Engels, and a perhaps underestimated influence on Gramsci. Labriola devoted the final phase of his career largely to reflecting on how historical processes might be understood through Marxist categories. Opposing the fragmented search for a series of “factors” of historical development, he envisaged a form of historical research that would engage “with forces that effectively operate; in other words, human beings in their various and circumstantial social situations, which are proper to them.”

A concrete example of such an approach would have been a study – never published, though documented by numerous notes – of the millenarian rebellion of Dolcino (d. 1307), which Labriola analyzed in relation both to the capitalist-oriented transformations of the countryside and to the spread of religious motifs of Franciscan inspiration. The paper will examine Labriola’s historiographical method, placing it in relation both to his models (Engels, Kautsky) and to Marxist scholarship on rebellion and religion, such as the work of Rodney Hilton and Christopher Hill.

Gianmaria Brunazzi (Università degli Studi di Milano) - Rural Class Relations and the Transition to Capitalism: Sereni and Della Peruta

The debate on the transition to capitalism – emerging from the Dobb-Sweezy controversy and later reformulated by Robert Brenner – located the key mechanism of long-term social change in the transformation of class relations in the early modern English countryside. Italian historians engaged only marginally with this framework, in part because debates on latecomer societies were dominated by a structural dualism between state-led industrial development – at most attentive to the role of financial intermediaries – and a supposedly residual or 'feudal' countryside, an interpretation legitimised in Italy by Gramscian readings.

Focusing on the Italian countryside in the second half of the nineteenth century, Emilio Sereni and Franco Della Peruta foregrounded the formal subsumption of rural social relations, challenging industrial-centred narratives and rigid dualisms by locating a key driver of Italy's socio-political trajectory within the countryside itself.

In 'Il capitalismo nelle campagne', Sereni reconstructed capitalist development through long-term agrarian change and the city-countryside nexus, showing how markets, state policies, rent, and landscape transformation reshaped land ownership and labour relations. Della Peruta complemented this structural perspective by analysing how these transformations were experienced, contested, and politicised by rural classes through conflict, mobilisation, and uneven integration into the liberal state.

By bringing Sereni and Della Peruta into dialogue with each other and with the transition debate, this paper both circulates their historiographical legacy beyond its original context and demonstrates how Italian social history can contribute to longstanding discussions on capitalist development, by placing the social dynamics of class relations at the centre of analysis.

Mermaids and Were-Tigers: The Uncertain Imperial Boundaries of the Human

Imperial formations rested on the differentiation of humans. Postcolonial scholars have shown—through myriad empirical examples—how notions of bodily difference were deployed to justify empires' political and social exclusions and hierarchies. In this panel, we push these insights further. How did imperial actors even define what constituted a human? Looking at the cryptozoological, human-ish, hybrid figures, the mermaid and the were-tiger, we explore how imperialism attempted to delineate humans from other animals. The panel is particularly attentive to the sexual, gender and racialised politics of these delineations.

Omni Gust (University of Nottingham - ‘Hydrocolonialism’ and the ‘Monsters’ of the Deep: the Process and Limits of Knowing the Oceans in Eighteenth-Century Britain

In the eighteenth century, the coastal regions of Britain and the wider seas that joined metropoles to colonies were populated with beings that were deemed variously 'monstrous', mythical, useful, and sometimes quotidian. As part of an 'oceanic' turn, historians have begun to focus on these waters, including the changing reactions to, and representations of their inhabitants. Drawing on Elizabeth Hofmeyer's concept of 'hydrocolonialism', this paper examines the role of knowledge in the process of claiming and colonising the waters. It uses newspaper articles, letters, and natural history writing to consider the ways that different peoples, including sailors, fishermen, as well as natural historians, reported their sightings of the inhabitants of the seas. Looking at the circulation of news about sightings of merfolk, octopus, and giant squid, the paper explores what it means to witness and the different modes and responses to claims of knowledge during a period of colonialism.

Kirsty Warren (University of Lincoln) - Of Mermaids, Maps and Sea Monsters

This presentation is based on a digital art piece entitled *Mer-Life* created with artist Ami Zanders. This piece draws on our research and conversations about colonial mapping, 'sea monsters' and mermaids in Caribbean colonial and postcolonial societies. Considering existing mythos and imperial constructs, we have deconstructed and played with images, objects and words. This process has provided a means through which to engage imaginations (ours and potentially viewers/listeners) in ways that counter colonial binaries about humanity's place within the natural world. With input from Ami, I will discuss sources which include maps and sketches created between the 17th and 19th centuries alongside 20th and 21st century visual art, fiction, poetry and theory. I will also comment on our process of working collaboratively.

Jonathan Saha (Durham University) - Were-Tigers in Colonial Myanmar: Of Peasants and Predators

Although skeptical and often sneering in their accounts, British imperial writers in colonial Myanmar were frequently drawn to stories about Burmese people who could apparently transform into tigers at night. Tales of these so-called 'were-tigers' appeared in a range of genres, from sensationalist novels to ethnographic studies. Through a critical reading of these texts, set within in the changing ecological context of peasant communities' encounters with big cats, the subaltern affinities between Homo sapiens and Panthera Tigris can be teased out. As well as conflict and fear, tigers could represent strength, bravery and even religious devotion. In the 1930s, peasant rebels even attempted to channel the attributes of these charismatic animals in their struggle against the colonial state. Whilst under British rule tiger populations were decimated due to habitat destruction and hunting, they retained cultural power in rural Burmese society.

Spatial Histories, Heritage Practice and Institutional Memory in Northern Ireland's Museums

Carys Tyson-Taylor (University of Leicester and National Museums NI) - Scaling Space and Heritage at the Ulster Folk Museum: Rethinking Domestic, Rural and Regional Place-Making

My paper examines the Ulster Folk Museum through a spatial and heritage-focused lens, emerging from my PhD research undertaken with National Museums NI and the University of Leicester. My project aims to produce a critical and nuanced analysis of the museum's establishment and early development, exploring how its founding ethos and key motivators behind its conception can inform its current and future transformation, particularly in the context of the Reawakening project, which aims to expand the museum's role as a heritage and environmental resource for present and future generations.

Central to my paper is the work of Henri Lefebvre and the spatial theory he articulated in the 1970s. Lefebvre's multi-scaled understanding of spatial production highlights how different levels of analysis can be applied to the Ulster Folk Museum. At the micro scale, reconstructed exhibit buildings represent everyday spatial practices, illustrating how families lived, worked and interacted, while shaping visitors' perceptions of Ulster life from 1900-1914. At the meso scale, spatial arrangements such as clustered homesteads evoke rural community life and everyday traditions, supported by photographic and sound archives illustrating concepts of regional diversity and intangible heritage central to the museum's founding ethos. At the macro scale, the intent to represent all nine counties of Ulster gestures towards broader narratives of regional identity, unity and nationalism, linking physical spaces to broader ideological narratives. By examining the museum's operation across interconnected spatial scales, I reposition it as a complex spatial assemblage and explore how this perspective can inform its ongoing transformation.

Caoimhe McGonigle (Queen's University Belfast and National Museums NI) - Beyond the Frontier: Ulster-American Urban Life in the Nineteenth-Century American North

The Ulster American Folk Park is an open-air museum dedicated to the experience of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Ulster emigrants who crossed the Atlantic and created new lives for themselves on the American frontier. The museum's focus is one which runs parallel to the historiography of the 'Scotch-Irish' in the United States which privileges stories of rugged, individualistic eighteenth-century Presbyterian frontiersmen, their survival in the rural backcountry, and their contributions to the formation of the American Republic and national identity. This body of work has been traditionally set apart from the historiography of the Irish diaspora, that of post-Great Famine Catholic immigrants in the bustling urban centres of the rapidly industrialising north. My work seeks to take a spatial approach to help understand the experiences of those lost somewhere between these two competing dominant narratives; the 'Ulster-Americans' who made New York, Boston and Philadelphia their home in the mid-

nineteenth-century. By focusing on the tenement apartments in which many of these migrants lived, it seeks to recover an experience that is largely absent from both scholarship and museum interpretation, whilst offering opportunities for diversification and additional interpretation of urban immigrant life at the UAFP. This work builds upon and takes inspiration from the Tenement Museum, in which the apartment of an Irish family, the Moores, who lived in New York City in 1869 has been recreated, and the Museum of the Home, London, which features a reconstructed 1950s living space of an Irish immigrant couple.

Oak Lawrenson (Ulster University and National Museums NI) - Control and Resistance of Carceral Space as Represented by Museum Objects

The prison and internment camp, HMP Maze, also known as Long Kesh, was a key space of control and resistance during the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. As of 2016, 90% of the prison has been demolished, and there is currently a lengthy stalemate amongst stakeholders about how to proceed with the potential heritagisation of this space. My PHD research with National Museums NI and Ulster University aims to explore the history, significance and interpretative value of a selection of objects that were retained from this site as part of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection. Drawing from this research, this paper specifically will explore how some of these objects, such as murals, maps, restraints or contraband, provide us with an avenue to understand the intricate negotiations of how space was controlled and resisted within Maze/Long Kesh. As the intersecting literature on carceral histories, geographies and archaeologies demonstrates, space sits at the heart of prison heritage, raising interesting questions about how these public histories develop when that carceral space is now primarily accessed and embodied through the physical representations that remain in the form of museum artefacts. The paper responds to this by speaking to how space exists within the collection, and the ways in which it has been delineated and navigated, enforced and challenged, both historically and contemporarily, through the use, collection and interpretation of these objects.

Voices of Motherhood: Agency and (In)Equality in Lived Experiences of Motherhood in Late Twentieth-Century Britain

These papers are drawn from our research on the project ‘Voices of Motherhood: a history of maternal activism from the Women’s Co-Operative Guild to Pregnant Then Screwed’. They examine a variety of lived experiences of motherhood in the late twentieth century, which have generally been underexplored within the vast historiography of motherhood in modern Britain. We are interested in how women experienced and articulated specific identities within the category of ‘mother’: disabled mothers, lone mothers, and stay-at-home mothers. Our papers investigate these groups’ relationships to and with the welfare state, exploring the ways in which these women were supported by the state, but also how their specific identities and lived experiences, as well as wider structural factors, meant that they at times ‘fell through the gaps’ of welfare provision. We collectively consider these groups’ experiences of inequality, and ask how, when and why they were (not) able to respond to these inequalities and other challenges.

Beckie Rutherford (University of Worcester) - Voices of Disabled Motherhood in Modern Britain

This paper explores the everyday lives of disabled mothers in modern Britain. Much has been written about the changing experience of motherhood and how it was shaped by an expanding welfare state, strengthening feminist movement, and growth in women's economic agency during the twentieth century. But where do disabled women fit within these familiar narratives? And how do their experiences challenge the dominant frameworks currently used to make sense of the history of motherhood?

In this paper, I highlight three examples of disabled women navigating routine experiences of motherhood between the early 1970s and the late 1990s. They demonstrate how frequently disabled women encountered medical, social and cultural stigma throughout pregnancy, birth and parenting, as well as the range of positive and negative emotions inherent to each of these stages. My focus on the everyday deliberately counteracts the assumption that disabled mothers were somehow extraordinary or unusual. As the examples make clear, disabled women were not just resilient in the face of widespread prejudice, they were also incisive in critiquing the structures and attitudes which called into questions their right to be mothers. Their stories are thus crucial to understanding the role of self-advocacy within the broader history of motherhood.

Eve Pennington (University of Worcester) - Gingerbread Women: Single Motherhood, Self-Help Groups, and Grassroots Activism in England, 1970s-1990s

This paper examines the activism of single mothers within Gingerbread, a self-help organisation established in 1970 to support lone parents experiencing social isolation and financial hardship. Gingerbread consisted of a national network of local groups distributed throughout the United Kingdom, each run by and for single parents living in the local area. By 1986, there were 300 such groups in England and Wales providing a wide range of services, from social activities intended to reduce isolation and offer emotional support, to more formal and professionalised initiatives such as advice centres, childcare facilities, and housing schemes. Through an analysis of Gingerbread's archival records of the local groups and their activities, this paper explores the ways that single mothers were politicised by their experiences of raising children alone. It investigates how their needs and circumstances were shaped by their gender, their class, their race, and their locality, and it examines the strategies they used to navigate the issues and challenges they faced at a grassroots level. The experiences of lone mothers were not uniform and Gingerbread groups could be sites of inclusion and exclusion, so the paper also dissects the power structures that operated within them and explores their limited attempts to address racial inequalities and discrimination, building on recent historical research into women's grassroots activism and race. It reshapes our understanding of motherhood during the late-twentieth century by drawing out the diverse experiences and identities of lone mothers, the complexity of which have not been fully recognised by historians.

Anna Muggeridge (University of Worcester) - The Invention of the 'Stay at Home Mother' in Late Twentieth-Century Britain

This paper seeks to engage with ongoing debates over the history of working motherhood in Britain by examining the experiences of a previously overlooked 'stay-at-home mothers', women who did not undertake paid employment after their children were born, either permanently or in the medium-long term. This paper draws upon archival research into media representations of the SAHM, and oral histories with women who identified as stay-at-home mothers prior to the year 2000 (to be undertaken spring 2026). It asks when the stay-at-home mother was 'invented' (and how her identity differed from earlier conceptions such as the housewife); what agency women had in becoming and remaining stay-at-home mothers; and how women thought and felt about their experiences of stay-at-home motherhood from c. 1970 to c. 2000.

For some women, being a stay-at-home mother was an active, positive choice, a fulfilment of their specific desires around motherhood. Others perhaps 'fell into' stay-at-home motherhood as inflexible working arrangements prevented them from continuing in a career alongside their domestic responsibilities. This paper explores how, why and when different groups chose to embrace or reject the 'stay-at-home mother' label (in conjunction with related labels such as 'housewife' or 'unemployed') and how these decisions were influenced by factors such as an individual's race, class or level of education. Finally, the paper also considers some of the economic risks and challenges stay-at-home mothers faced, how women sought to mitigate these, and the ways in which these impacted women well beyond the years of mothering young children.

Written Worlds in Early Modern England: Non-Elite Writers of Labour, Leisure, Travel and Torment

Who wrote in early modern England? What did they write and why did they write it? How did their writing fit into the wider worlds that they inhabited? This panel tackles these questions through four papers emerging from an ongoing Leverhulme-funded collaborative project on non-elite writers in England from c.1570 to 1730. Our research explores the writing practices of people below the level of the gentry and clergy, considering their biographical contexts, their motivations and their contributions to written culture. Two speakers will take a broad view, thinking about attributes that many shared as well as their diversity. It also considers how narrow definitions of 'writing' and 'author' can exclude people who contributed to written texts without necessarily holding the pen themselves. Two speakers will zoom in to look closely at particular texts, including the notebooks of a midland villager and the spiritual diary a London wigmaker, showing how these illuminate their authors' social relationships and psychological states. Together these papers combine the tools of social history with those of literary analysis to show that the written worlds of non-elite writers were more diverse and sophisticated than previously acknowledged.

Brodie Waddell (Birkbeck, University of London) - Unexpected Writers and the Possibilities of Collective Biography, 1570-1730

The early modern period produced some of the most famous writers in the English language, but hundreds of substantial texts also survive from less famous – and less elite – individuals. This paper is an attempt to present some early findings from a Leverhulme-funded project on the 'written worlds' non-elite writers in England from 1570 to 1730. The project team have gathered preliminary biographical information about more than 500 men and women who wrote significant amounts despite lacking the levels of status, wealth and education which benefited most of the canonical authors of this era. By analysing this initial evidence using the tools of prosopography, it is possible to detect some possible patterns that would allow us to begin to construct a set of 'collective biographies' of early modern non-elite writers. Although they are, of course, a very diverse range of individuals, some clusters of commonalities seem to emerge. For example, many of them shared a tendency towards religious 'enthusiasm' or outright dissent. There is also a strong bias towards an urban, specifically metropolitan, background. Certain occupational groups were overrepresented, as were unmarried men, though a sizeable minority were women. Further investigation of key biographical features will help us understand not only who wrote in this period, but why they wrote and how their writing related to their wider social networks.

Susan Wiseman (Birkbeck, University of London) - Writing the Village: Literature, Leisure and Labour in Non-Elite Provincial Writing

What does non-elite writing tell us about the interplay of leisure and labour? Responding to this question, the proposed paper focuses on leisure landscape of the mid- to late seventeenth-century village as expressed in non-elite writing. Working outwards from the writing of a north midlands village, the paper aims to consider relationships amongst work, participation and spectatorship as they register and shape social and gender relationships. Aiming to better understand the social, aesthetic and politicised strands of this writing it will consider texts noting elite leisure (e.g. gardens, orchards, houses) and participatory leisure (e.g. races, ringings, fishings, wakes). In considering what texts of the village disclose about the separation and intwining of work and leisure for those above and below gentry the paper will revisit the formative work of Wrightson and Levine on the complexity of village relationships and Peter Borsay's investigation of urban renewal in the later seventeenth-century. In doing so it hopes to make some suggestions for deepening understanding of the ideas and aims of the literate non-elite of the village in writing leisure. Primary texts considered will include notebooks, the elite texts of the Dover games, collective and rewritten leisure texts from two counties and the literary forms of commemoration and praise poems by non-elite writers. Do the games played in the village stay in the village, or contribute to wider social ideas?

Richard Ansell (Birkbeck, University of London) - Non-Elite Travel Writing and Where to Find It

My work on the Written Worlds project focuses on non-elite writing about travel and encounter from seventeenth-century England. Unfortunately, 'non-elite travel writing' is something of an oxymoron in existing scholarship, much of which deals overwhelmingly

with first-person, narrative writing by grammar-school- or university-educated white men of independent means. This paper begins by introducing a handful of similar texts by humbler writers, including servants, seafarers and migrants. Such writing was still predominantly the work of white men, however. To get a fuller sense of early modern mobility, we need to set aside the equation of travel writing with single-authored, discursive, first-person narrative. The paper suggests 'travel accounts' as an option that describes reflections on a real journey, while leaving room for hybrid texts produced by collaborative authorship or coercion. The paper surveys this broader range of material with examples including the mediated impressions of a West African page in Paris, letters by an enslaved South Asian missionary and traces of petitions by formerly enslaved women resisting transportation out of England. These examples help us to think about what 'travel' was and who was a 'traveller', as well as what we mean by 'travel writing'. With the wider Written Worlds project in mind, they also allow reflections on the usefulness of 'non-elite' as a category.

Michael Powell-Davies (Birkbeck, University of London) - 'When they Compose Themselves to Sleep': Crisis and Composition in the Nightly Accounts of a Young London Wigmaker

'O that Christians would summ up their accounts at the foot of every page, I mean that they would call themselves to scrutiny every evening when they compose themselves to sleep.' This advice, penned here by W. Taylor but proffered in many forms in the spiritual guides of seventeenth-century England, seems to have been taken quite literally by one young London wigmaker. At the end of each day, William Woodman wrote himself to sleep. Whether at home or abroad, alone or in company, Woodman closed each day by setting his spiritual affairs in order, reaching for his diary and accounting for his waking hours. The impression given by these daily accounts is of an individual far from composed. Repositories of spiritual failure and personal inadequacy, Woodman's extant diaries offer evening views of a daily life seemingly defined by anguish and crisis. Yet, among the diarist's pained accounts, a richly complex life emerges, and the writer's close attention to time and place result in a fascinating subjective history of cultural life and urban space in early eighteenth-century London. Delving into Woodman's nightly compositions, this paper reframes the diarist not just as an individual in torment, but as a practical and pious writer, a knowledge gathering reader, and a conscious compiler of subjective urban history.

Individual Paper Abstracts

(In alphabetical order by presenter surname)

Assia Alami (Independent Scholar) - Household Religion, Gender, and the Policing of Dissent in Late Medieval London.

This paper examines the gendered social dynamics of religious dissent in late medieval London through the experiences of women associated with Lollard belief and practice. Rather than approaching Lollardy as a doctrinal movement, it situates women's religious engagement within the everyday social worlds of the late medieval city, focusing on households, neighbourhoods, and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

Drawing on ecclesiastical court records and witness testimony, the paper explores how women appeared in the sources as listeners, readers, hosts, and speakers within informal religious networks embedded in domestic and communal spaces. It argues that women's religious activities became visible to ecclesiastical authorities through the ordinary processes of neighbourly observation, reputation, and denunciation that structured urban life. Domestic spaces, in particular, emerge as socially ambiguous sites in which private devotion intersected with public scrutiny.

By foregrounding practices of surveillance and social control, the paper demonstrates how religious 'deviance' was identified and policed at the level of the local community, and how gender shaped both exposure to accusation and the interpretation of behaviour. Women's experiences illuminate the porous boundaries between private and public space in late medieval London and the ways in which religious identity was negotiated within households and neighbourhoods.

The paper contributes to social histories of heresy, gender, and urban society by shifting attention from institutional definitions of dissent to its lived, relational, and spatial dimensions.

Henrice Altink (University of York) - Navigating injustice: the quest for environmental democracy in Jamaica from 1990 to 2025.

Environmental democracy centres around three pillars: transparency – access to relevant information on environmental matters; participation – the ability of the public, and especially the most affected by climate change and environmental degradation, to voice their concerns and influence policy making; and justice - mechanisms for challenging the (in)action of government in acting as environmental stewards for current and future generations. This paper examines the extent to which environmental policymaking in Jamaica since the formation of the National Environmental Protection Agency in 1990 has centred around the three pillars. It does this by reviewing the environmental framework (legislation, plans and programmes) and explores how much citizens – directly or via environmental NGOs – were consulted in drafting this framework and had access to all the information to do so, were involved in implementing policy and legislation, and were able to hold government to account when policy and legislation was not properly implemented or worse violated. By

zooming in on several development projects in mining and tourism, the paper exemplifies that environmental policymaking in Jamaica since 1990 has fallen short of the three pillars of environmental democracy and explains this largely in terms of a political culture marked by political patronage and high levels of public debt that have forced the Jamaican government to make environmental trade-offs.

Eddie Baker (Ulster University) - Attitudes Towards Paramilitary 'Policing' During the Troubles in Northern Ireland

As the legacy of the 'Troubles' continues to influence everyday life, politics and debates in Northern Ireland, a key point of contention persists: to what extent were the actions of paramilitary groups supported during the conflict, and why? Considered by the majority to be dangerous and harmful to society, paramilitary groups nevertheless received sufficient support to operate for three decades. As different types of paramilitary activity were viewed more positively or negatively by the public, this paper focuses on attitudes towards the informal 'policing' roles adopted by the Provisional IRA and Ulster Defence Association in areas where traditional law enforcement was often no longer effective. There was a significant amount of support for paramilitaries exerting warnings and punishments to those accused of criminal or anti-social behaviour in an attempt to reduce crime. However, others were opposed to this form of vigilantism, due either to the severity of the beatings and shootings, or because they felt the paramilitaries had no right to be administering illegitimate forms of justice. Many of those in opposition vocalised that paramilitary 'policing' was merely a form of social control, reinforced by other exploitative actions such as racketeering. As part of a wider study into public opinion of paramilitaries during the Troubles, this paper draws on personal accounts, newspaper reports, news broadcasts, documentaries, surveys, and government records to bring a range of nuanced perspectives to the fore and highlight that people could often hold conflicting beliefs about paramilitary groups depending on the type of activity in question.

Şebnem Balım Çapkan (Lancaster University) – 'Hidden, Unknown, Unnamed': Imperial Visions and the Displacement of Antiquities along the Smyrna–Aidin Railway

This paper examines the relationship between the British-built Smyrna–Aidin Railway and archaeological exploration in western Anatolia during the late nineteenth century. In addition to the railway's material role in facilitating the circulation of antiquities, it explores how this close relationship was produced through a mutually reinforcing set of linguistic, visual, technical, and political practices. Drawing on railway reports, maps, paintings, and archaeological accounts of the railway architect John Turtle Wood, the paper investigates how western Anatolia was increasingly represented as a terrain of ancient ruins awaiting discovery. Through these textual and visual sources, the railway emerges not merely as a transportation network that boosted agricultural and mineral exports in this fertile geography, but as a cultural project that connected modern infrastructure, imperial curiosity, and the exploitation of the region's classical past. Thus, the paper argues that the Smyrna-Aidin Railway transformed western Anatolia not only into a productive landscape but also into an archaeological one, in which

antiquities increasingly appeared available for discovery, excavation, and displacement.

Rebecca Ball (Manchester Metropolitan University) - 'In those days it was the lot of the eldest daughter in a family where the father was bereaved to take over the responsibility of bringing up the younger brothers and sisters and to forgo her own wishes and happiness' – Sibling Relationships in Autobiographical Writings 1900-1945

As Leonore Davidoff notes, siblings 'remain an inextricable part of existence from our earliest world … brothers and sisters are life's longest relationship'. Yet the importance of sibling relationships within family units has received little academic attention, as parent-child relationships and spousal relationships have tended to dominate studies of family history.

This talk aims to address this gap by exploring the role that siblings played within working-class families between 1900 and 1945. It will draw upon the autobiographical accounts of self-identified working-class individuals and analyse their recollections of, and relationships with, their siblings. It will begin with an exploration of the importance and responsibilities placed upon siblings who become pseudo-parents and substitute breadwinners (such as in the quote that entitles this paper), in situations where parental loss or absence has occurred. Attention will then turn to affection and absence, with a discussion on how the autobiographers described their relationships with their siblings and how these bonds may have changed throughout the life course. It will conclude with a discussion on sibling mortality, to offer a different insight into the history of death and the working-class, particularly that of infant mortality and loss in the First World War.

Susan Barton (De Montfort University) - Wounded Prisoners of War Interned in Switzerland: Rehabilitation and Reintegration after Injury, Illness and Imprisonment during World War One.

This paper will focus on humanitarianism and the experiences of wounded and sick soldiers transferred from prison camps in Germany, France and Britain to be interned in Switzerland between 1916 and 1918. Medical care was available and rehabilitation in the form of vocational training, education and work were compulsory for those capable. During free time there were social and cultural activities, such as orchestras, theatricals and sports of all kinds, including winter sports. Priests of various faiths catered for spiritual needs. For men with life-changing injuries, internment gave them time to heal and adjust to their new bodies, in preparation for returning home to new kinds of employment suitable for people with disabilities and to recreate their sense of masculinity. Unlike men in POW camps, internees did not live in an entirely male environment. There were female helpers, carers and teachers. Officers' wives, who could afford to do so, could stay with their husbands in rented accommodation. Poorer women had holidays with their sons, husbands or fiancés, many of whom married

during their visits. There were also opportunities to meet Swiss women, with some men marrying local girls.

The paper will also look at the diplomacy and negotiations involved in arranging the exchange of wounded prisoners and their care in Swiss hotels left empty by tourists, and the welcome given by the Swiss, as well as how the British, German, French and Belgian wounded prisoners interned in Switzerland occupied their time.

Kit Barton (University of Exeter) - Retention, Transition, Release: Child Bed Linen and the Construction of Individual and Familial Gendered Identity in the 17th Century

Linen as a material in the seventeenth century straddles the line between material types, social contexts, and consumption. It is a household good, a clothing material and, in the case of childbed linen, a medical device. I aim to explore how the retention and curation of material culture associated with childbirth, in particular the sheets and bedding as seen through seventeenth century wills from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, demonstrates the value placed on childbirth as socio-cultural rite of passage which created a network of relationship bonds between women. Childbirth in the early modern period was considered a uniquely female experience. Older women would've been expected to provide emotional and medical support throughout pregnancy, connecting women between generations, reinforcing both social and family identities. Bequests of child bed linen gave women the agency to intentionally construct these bonds of care and instruction even after death.

Yet, patterns of bequests of childbed linen do not exclusively conform to ideas of a maternal rite of passage. This can take the form of peer-to-peer bequests, those between women in an extended family, as well as the appearance of bequests of childbed linen in men's wills. This presentation will explore the many complexities of a material object that is so strongly associated with a dividing moment in gendered experiences of the early modern world, and the broad range of emotional relationships to child bed linen; revealing its power as an anchor to memory, the construction of a sense of gendered self, and a familial identity.

Harriet Bee (King's College London) - From 'walking out' to 'going steady': Girlhood and the Americanisation of Dating Rituals in Liverpool and Melbourne, c. 1950-1970

The end of the Second World War marked a significant shift in courtship practices. From the spaces teenagers frequented to the commodities they consumed to express affection and desirability, American media and consumer culture increasingly shaped post-war courtship and leisure. This project examines how local socioeconomic conditions in Liverpool and Melbourne influenced the adoption and negotiation of American cultural influences in the consumption and courtship activities of teenage girls. While American music, advertising, and consumerism acted as the ideal in both cities, their impact varied according to local economies, personal incomes and the availability of recreational spaces.

This project critically intervenes in the historiographical discourses on girlhood, courtship and Americanisation. Traditional narratives often place Americanisation as a top-down phenomenon, whilst teenage girls are often presented without personal agency and as passive recipients in cultural change. Through the investigation of these distinct historical strains in tandem, it illuminates how teenage girls in Liverpool and Melbourne actively negotiated, accepted and rejected forms of American media and consumption through their dating rituals - directly shaping the cultural fabric and future of both cities.

Methodologically, this project aims to prioritise personal experience often absent from traditional historiography through the use of oral history, advertisements, song lyrics, and personal reflections within women's magazines. By highlighting teenage girls as independent cultural actors, the study shows how everyday practices of courtship, leisure and romantic consumption contributed to broader post-war cultural change, demonstrating the importance of integrating lived experience into analyses of cultural history.

Louise Bell (Independent Scholar) – 'Necessity is the mother of invention': Artificial Limb Design and Manufacturing in Two World Wars

Around 41,000 men returned to Britain after the First World War missing one or more limbs. The figure for the Second World War, however, was significantly lower at 12,000. This was something that the British State had to attempt to deal with and limb fitting centres were set up nationally in order to help these men with the fitting of new artificial limbs and the rehabilitation involved with life as an amputee.

One of the major roles that these centres played was the provision of artificial limbs to these ex-servicemen. Manufacturers were housed on site and ranged from local shipbuilders to firms from America. Initially made primarily from wood, more experimentation with materials began to be undertaken as the interwar period began, and makers started to move towards limbs made from light metals instead.

This paper will explore the changes in materials and design in the period from 1914-1945. Using a range of sources, it will borrow from material culture to show a timeline of sorts of the progress made in artificial limb production. It will also explore who some of these manufacturers were and explore how lived experience was an important facet of this production of, and ultimately the use of, these artificial limbs.

Oliver Betts (National Railway Museum) – 'Enginorum Times': Workplace Identity in the Railway Office 1890-1948

At their peak in the 1910s, Britain's railways encompassed thousands of miles of track and millions of workers. A heavy industry associated with risk and hard work by both the travelling public and its own staff its cultural and social impact was both profound and profoundly visible from major cities and ports to small village stations and workshops. It was also, however, an industry dominated by paperwork. An army of railway clerks worked behind the scenes in offices across the country.

This paper draws upon archival and material collections at the National Railway Museum, and beyond, to explore the working lives of these clerks. Covering everything from uniforms and magazines to scrapbooks and mechanical tabulators, it will show how the working lives of these men and women were shaped by, and in turn influenced, their office cultures and identities.

Caught between the very visible physical labour of drivers and crew out on the track and the financial titans of upper management, male railway clerks struggled to define their own identity as skilled masculine workers, especially as a new century brought the twin changes of mechanisation and gender diversity in the workplace. This paper will explore how this moment of change affected the social and cultural identities of those who came to work 'behind the scenes' in railway offices across Britain, and how that change can inform our understandings of the interplay between gender and class in early twentieth century Britain.

Robert Bevan (The Cathedral School, Llandaff, Cardiff) - Tonypandy, South Wales, 1910–11: Strikes, Radicalism, and Working-Class Politics

The Cambrian Combine dispute and the Tonypandy riots of 1910–11 exposed the limits of democracy and political representation for working-class communities in South Wales. Miners resisting wage reductions imposed by D. A. Thomas – coal magnate, Liberal MP, and emblem of Anglicised industrial capital – faced prolonged lockouts alongside coercive state intervention, including police and troops deployed under Home Secretary Winston Churchill. Efforts by William Abraham ('Mabon') – the Liberal-Labour MP for the Rhondda – to resolve the conflict through parliamentary channels revealed the inadequacy of moderate reformist politics in addressing miners' material and political grievances. Out of this confrontation emerged The Miners' Next Step (1912), a syndicalist manifesto advocating workers' control, collective action, and industrial democracy that challenged both coal owners' authority and Westminster governance. This paper argues that the experience of industrial conflict at Tonypandy, together with the manifesto, shaped working-class political consciousness, organisation, and strategies of collective action in South Wales. By situating labour radicalism in its social, industrial, and political context, the paper demonstrates how workers' activism advanced demands for fair wages, workplace justice, democratic participation, and community solidarity. Focusing on the practical realities of industrial struggle, local organisation, and the limits of parliamentary mediation, it shows how ordinary miners negotiated power, asserted agency, and built networks of solidarity. This provides a rich case study of labour mobilisation in early twentieth-century Britain and offers insights into broader patterns of social and industrial change during this period.

Anamika Bhattacharjee (University of East Anglia) - Pain, Penance and the Exotic: British Portrayals of Churruck Puja as 'Barbaric' Spectacle

This essay will look into British representations of Churruck Puja during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century India with specific attention to one aspect

namely the spectacle of hook-swinging and self-inflicted body pain. Colonial authorities, missionaries and travellers often wrote sensationalised accounts of the ritual, explaining it to be a hideous exhibition of superstition, bloodshed and irrational devotion. These reports were spread by the newspapers, administrative reports and ethnography writings and slowly created Churruck as a figure of Hindu barbarity. On the basis of the Orientalism of Edward Said, the paper calls on the argument that the repeated focus on suffering and repentance was not merely descriptive, but was a wider range of epistemology that characterized the Hindu religion in terms of deviance. British authors contextualised bodily torment as an indicator of moral decay and civilisation vis-a-vis barbarism, making the colonial nation a reformer and a civiliser.

Through the study of a few of the main texts and responses and petitions of indigenous people, the paper examines how the rhetoric of cruelty and excess helped to influence legislative intervention, such as the eventual ban on the hook-swinging practice. By so doing, it emphasizes the discriminatory tolerance of the colonial state towards the Indian religiosity, which made some festivals picturesque and colourful and pathologised the ones related to corporeal intensity. After all, it is shown in the study how rituals of pains were transfigured into a form of governance legitimacy and how discrimination and moral values became the primary source of British knowledge-making with the Hindu festivals.

Nico Blackstock (University of Southampton) - ‘Oh, you’ll be very busy these days’: Work and ‘Ordinariness’ on Television Gameshows in Late Twentieth-Century Britain.

This paper focuses on a widely consumed, yet under-utilised source for social historians: the television gameshow. Gameshows were one of the only spaces in which ‘ordinary’ people appeared on television regularly, yet these programmes have only received limited scholarly attention. Focusing on two gameshows, *Bullseye* (ATV/Central, 1981-1995) and *Busman’s Holiday* (Granada, 1985-1993), this paper explores how ideas of work, employment and ‘ordinariness’ were constructed through popular leisure in the British late twentieth century. Building upon Su Holmes’s assertion that ‘the everyday mundane world of labour and production’ was invoked explicitly on gameshows in order to create tension and drama, this paper argues that the social meanings attached to work were also vital in the affective and discursive framing of contestants as ‘ordinary’. Occupation functioned as a key marker through which class, consumption and even intelligence were negotiated on screen, reflecting wider assumptions about work in British society. Through an analysis of presenter commentary and contestant interaction, such as Jim Bowen’s quip to a contestant working for the Social Security Department in 1981, ‘you’ll be very busy these days’, this paper investigates how work, proximity to production, and consumption were discursively constructed on two different formats, one in which occupation structured the gameplay itself, and one which attracted a predominantly working-class demographic of contestants. In doing so, this paper demonstrates how gameshows offer a valuable insight into everyday understandings of labour and ‘ordinariness’ in late twentieth century Britain.

Louise Bonvalet (Italian-German Historical Institute, Trento) - Gender and Religious Deviance: Witchcraft in the Prince-Bishopric of Trento (Italy, 17th century)

In the early modern Prince-Bishopric of Trento, as in other European territories, episodes of witch-hunting reveal how witchcraft accusations operated as key mechanisms for identifying religious deviance and regulating processes of social inclusion and exclusion within local communities. Governed under the authority of the Holy Roman Empire, the prosecution of witchcraft fell under local secular jurisdictions. These trials targeted both women and men, revealing witchcraft as a gendered though not exclusively female form of deviance perceived as a threat to religious orthodoxy and territorial stability.

This paper examines how notions of gender shaped the emergence of accusations, the conduct of judicial proceedings, and the social consequences of being labelled deviant. Drawing on trial records, it first explores how accusations originated and the extent to which these processes were gendered. It then analyses the defensive strategies articulated by the accused, showing how individuals mobilised different resources in response to charges of witchcraft. Finally, it investigates the social effects of accusation within the community itself and beyond the village level, highlighting the tension between judicial authorities and local communities in their perceptions of witchcraft.

In doing so, this paper highlights the central role of gender in shaping how witchcraft as a religious deviance was perceived, judged, and lived at the level of the community, by moving beyond the assumption that deviance necessarily resulted in social exclusion.

Sian Broadhurst (University of York) – 'Only one cannabis farm in 125 years': Social Control, Myth-Making, and Community in Joseph Rowntree's Garden Village

This paper argues that New Earswick's celebrated, but increasingly contested, reputation as a harmonious "garden village" is not simply a benign legacy of its philanthropic origins but the product of sustained practices of social control and community myth-making. Founded in 1902 as an experiment in garden city principles, New Earswick has been positioned outside popular narratives of stigmatised municipal housing and has, instead, been celebrated as picturesque, respectable, and cohesive. Using archive material and oral history interviews, this paper examines how this idealised identity was constructed, enforced, and repeatedly defended.

From the village's inception, residents were subject to close scrutiny: prospective tenants were interviewed, gardens inspected weekly, and Village Council minutes reveal a culture in which conformity was expected and minor infractions quickly dealt with. These practices functioned as forms of respectability politics, encouraging residents to demonstrate moral worthiness and differentiate themselves from 'rough' estates. Yet this vigilant respectability coexisted with persistent low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.

The paper contends that New Earswick's garden village status has enabled residents and institutions to downplay such incidents, sustaining a nostalgic narrative that distinguishes the community from 'problem' estates even as that narrative has become harder to maintain. By analysing this tension, the paper contributes to wider debates on how 'good' neighbourhoods are historically constructed, showing how cohesion, surveillance, and memory work together to preserve a morally charged sense of place.

Thomas Brown-Warr (Lincoln Bishop University) - Voting Behaviour and Electioneering Tactics during the 1721 Lincolnshire By-Election

The 1721 Lincolnshire county by-election remains one of the very few county elections for which a surviving poll book exists. This invaluable document records the names, freeholds, and place of abode of over 4,000 voters, as well as their electoral choices. The two candidates contesting the county seat were the Whig Albemarle Bertie, a relation of the first Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven, and the Tory Sir William Massingberd, third baronet, from a prominent Lincolnshire gentry family. The significance of this by-election becomes clear when situated within its contemporary political context. Taking place at the tail-end of the period known as the 'rage of party', the 1721 contest represented one of the final instances of Tory success in county politics, shortly before the consolidation of Whig oligarchic dominance.

This paper focuses on the electioneering tactics employed by the successful Tory candidate. Surviving election correspondence between Massingberd and local gentry figures, preserved in the family manuscript collection at the Lincolnshire archives, reveals the strategies used to secure the support of county freeholders. By combining this correspondence with evidence from the poll book, the paper offers new insights into patterns of voting behaviour and political mobilisation in early eighteenth-century Lincolnshire.

Overall, the paper demonstrates the value of surviving poll books and illustrates how they can be used to reconstruct local political culture in the early eighteenth century."

Siana Bryan (University of Wolverhampton) - Sex ... It's a Dirty Word.

This paper examines the development of divorce law with particular focus on adultery, consummation, and the legal definition of sexual intercourse, arguing that these concepts remain rooted in patriarchal and heteronormative assumptions that no longer reflect contemporary society. Tracing divorce law from its ecclesiastical origins through the Matrimonial Causes Act 1857, the paper demonstrates how early legal frameworks privileged male sexual conduct while regulating female sexuality and reproductive capacity. The Act's grounds for divorce, which permitted husbands to rely solely on their wife's adultery while denying wives equitable access to divorce, exemplify the law's role in reinforcing gendered power dynamics within marriage.

The paper situates these doctrines within broader feminist critiques of marriage as a site of reproductive control and sexual entitlement, highlighting the historical coexistence of restrictive divorce laws with the non-recognition of marital rape until the late twentieth century. Analysis of commentary on adultery and consummation will

show how the narrow definition of sexual intercourse reflects assumptions about procreation, legitimacy, and male sexual dominance. These assumptions continued to shape section 1(2)(a) of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, where evidential requirements such as motive and opportunity perpetuate moralised judgments about sexual behaviour.

The paper further critiques the exclusionary impact of these definitions on same sex couples, despite the legal recognition of same sex marriage under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. It argues that although societal understandings of sexuality, consent, and intimate relationships have evolved, divorce law has failed to adapt, perpetuating outdated and discriminatory conceptions of sexual conduct.

Jodi Burkett (University of Portsmouth) - International Students Navigating UK Border Control, c. 1966-2026

The 2025 UK Immigration White Paper, 'Restoring Control over the Immigration System' includes 9 pages dedicated to controlling the flow of international students into the country. While recognising that international students are important for UK Universities, they suggest that too many of these students are staying after their studies, are taking low paid jobs, and are robbing British students of opportunities. These government concerns are not new, and have been voiced on a regular basis since the 1960s. As immigration laws were changing, with the implementation of the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts in 1962 and 1968, many potential international students had their right to enter the UK removed. This necessitated applications for visas and dealing with border officials in new ways. In the years since, these systems have become increasingly restrictive, complicated, costly and bureaucratic.

This paper examines the changes in legislation around the entry of international students between the 1960s and the present day with a particular focus on how international students responded to these changes. Many international students perceived these policies as discriminatory and unwelcoming, arguing that the history of British colonialism entitled them to access to British higher education. A focus on international students' experiences of, and attitudes towards, immigration legislation and border control sheds light on the character and practice of state racism, the development of the neoliberal university sector and the perceptions of Britain amongst those from the Global South.

Jade Burnett (University of Birmingham) - 'We were given the best because we were workers and the guests of the workers of Russia': British Women, Romance, and Travel to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 30s

This paper considers the travel of British women to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. I explore how travel to the USSR was facilitated by women's intimate relationships with each other, with romantic partners, with fellow activists, and with Soviet citizens living in Britain. I make the argument that it was through an initial engagement with the Soviet Union, mediated through contacts at home, that many

British women became interested in and developed the desire to see and experience the new workers' state. Furthermore, it was through these relationships, and through relationships and interactions with the Soviet people, that British women formed affective relationships with the Soviet Union which facilitated their activism upon their return to Britain. I utilise autobiographical sources, produced by women visitors to the USSR such as Molly Murphy, Rose Kerrigan, Marjorie Pollitt, and Violet Lansbury, to explore how lifelong or former communists came to remember and discuss their time in the Soviet Union. Using these autobiographical sources, I also aim to consider how women's autobiography offers new perspectives on affective relationships between British activists and the Soviet Union in the 20s and 30s. Utilising Barbara Caine's argument that women's autobiography in the 20th century developed a more personal and introspective focus than that of their male counterparts, I explore how sources produced by women can help us to understand the intimate networks through which the international communist movement was built and experienced.

Maria Cannon (University of Portsmouth) - Second Wives and the Disruption of Inheritance in the Early Modern English Aristocracy

The English practice of primogenital inheritance should, in theory, have been a simple transfer of power and wealth but remarriage and the broadening of family networks could complicate it. Studying stepfamilies provides a unique opportunity to understand the priorities of the early modern aristocracy in the recomposition of their dynasties and the transfer of wealth between generations. The case study of Alice Spencer, Countess of Derby and her second husband Thomas Egerton, 1st Viscount Brackley forms the central case study of this paper. It explores formal and informal mechanisms for dealing with conflict over inheritance in stepfamilies, and the extent to which second wives could further their personal ambitions. Before Egerton's death in 1617, he left a memo titled 'Some notes and Remembrances for preserving and continuing of quietness between my wife and my son, after my death', which is both an emotionally-charged account of his unhappy second marriage, and a set of instructions for his eldest son on the ways to successfully challenge the claims he expected Alice to make after his death. Personal documents from the family reveal that individuals exhibited a range of emotional responses in reaction to perceived threats to the smooth running of family life and the transfer of wealth. This paper presents a new perspective on status and hierarchy and challenges interpretations of the dominance of patriarchal ideals in early modern England by showing that women had the potential to disrupt established lineages.

Jana Carpenter (Birkbeck College, University of London) - 'Nowe drowned in the sea': John Stow and the Lost City of Dunwich

My research focusses on memory and the lost and changing landscapes of East Anglia in the early modern period. This paper emerges from my first chapter on the lost city of Dunwich on the Suffolk coast, and concentrates on a 1573 letter attributed to the London surveyor John Stow. The letter details Stow's assessment of what remained of this once prosperous medieval town and what had been lost in the ensuing years since its decline. Stow, an early modern man writing about the recent medieval past,

gathered information about the town by walking it, by speaking to locals, and by observing ancient documents that, at that time, were kept in the town. Of particular interest is his commentary on the gutting of the two hospitals for the sick and the poor by 'evyll' and 'covetus' men, highlighting the acceleration of decline when the forces of nature meet opportunism and greed (a trend that would ultimately lead to Dunwich becoming one of England's most notorious Rotten Boroughs).

Stow's letter is situated at a time of change in how history was recorded and written, and a shift from the repurposing of older chronicles to a form of antiquarianism rooted in materiality and the senses. My paper uses Stow's letter to explore broader themes of memory, remembrance, place and identity, and medieval and early modern people's understanding of the passage of time and their place within it.

Sinead Carter (University of Reading) - Greenham Common as Heterotopia: Women-Controlled Space and the Women's Liberation Movement

This paper reinterprets Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp as a heterotopic space within late twentieth-century British social movements. Greenham functioned outside of the norms of traditional social spaces and contained multiple, juxtaposing, spaces that contested existing political and social structures. Using this understanding of heterotopic space, this paper refines existing understandings of Greenham as women's space, arguing that it was woman-controlled, not woman-only, space. The paper then repositions Greenham within the context of the Women's Liberation Movement, arguing that it was not simply a physical refuge from the domestic sphere but a direct exposure of, and challenge to, the patriarchy. Through its everyday spatial practices of protest, performance, and contestation, Greenham produced a distinctive social and political environment outside of dominant structures of power, gender and activism. However, despite presenting a veritable challenge to patriarchy, Greenham's heterotopic nature focused mostly on gender, meaning the peace camp did not meaningfully address or acknowledge matters of race and class. When these issues were considered, they were understood in abstract ways, creating a symbolic space of solidarity for marginalised women that did not materially address their oppression. Finally, in analysis of 'the split' at Greenham, the paper concludes that Greenham's heterotopic openness made it vulnerable and eventually led to irreconcilable differences between Greenham women. This paper demonstrates how Greenham as a temporary, contested and improvised site of activism became central in the social history of the WLM and modern British activism in the late twentieth-century.

Isabelle Carter (University of York) - Squatters in Rural England during the 17th and 18th Centuries

Population increase, changes in attitudes towards land and its management, and developing ideas about property within England during the early modern period, produced a situation in which many people in rural areas, often poorer individuals, were without accommodation and without access to land. This pushed many individuals to

the edges – both in a social and a physical sense – resulting in individuals often establishing accommodation for themselves on common land, and, sometimes, also enclosing an accompanying area of land. Despite national attempts to prevent such activity – notably, the passing of the 1588 Erection of Cottages Act, which specified that cottages needed to be accompanied by four acres of land – such squatter activity persisted in England, throughout the early modern period.

Through an examination of relevant archival material, including textual and cartographic documents, and landscape evidence, this paper considers the spatiality and materiality of squatters in rural England during the 17th and 18th centuries. It discusses the locations of squatters' settlements, the contemporary descriptions of squatters' structures, and the buildings which continue to occupy squatters' sites within the landscape today, in two distinct geographic areas: the Forest of Knaresborough in Yorkshire, and the Vale of Pewsey in Wiltshire. As well as examining the spatiality and materiality of squatters, it also considers who squatters were, through the examination of two or three individual biographies. This paper seeks to highlight the diversity of squatters' settlements, and the people who inhabited them, in early modern rural England, whilst also highlighting common themes and trends.

Suzana Cascao (LISER - Luxembourg Institute for Socio-Economic Research) & Antoine Paccoud (LISER - Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research) - Bringing Arno J. Mayer's Legacy 'Home': The Persistence of the Ancien Régime Through Land Registers in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

In *The Persistence of the Old Regime* (1981), Arno J. Mayer argued that preindustrial elites—the nobility, landed wealth, traditional power structures—persisted well into the 20th century, adapting to industrial capitalism without surrendering economic dominance. Luxembourg represents the ideal test case for this hypothesis: it is small enough to comprehensively trace elite networks through genealogical databases and detailed property records.

This paper brings Mayer's intellectual legacy 'home' through the systematic analysis of the 1872 Luxembourg Register of Deeds—70,000 digitized property records across 130 municipalities. While previous scholarship identified that 14% of Luxembourg's surface was in noble hands during the 18th century, this study examines the crucial variable missing: taxable value. The analysis reveals how property wealth concentration follows class lines. Farmers dominate lower revenue tiers, while the bourgeoisie is over-represented in middle-to-upper brackets. Most strikingly, nobles—representing less than 6% of all elite landowners—constitute 48% of the top 25 families in terms of taxable property value, demonstrating extreme property wealth concentration.

By tracking the property holdings of these noble families until 1938, the paper confirms Mayer's thesis: families like Arenberg and Reinach maintained large and valuable property holdings throughout the 19th century and early 20th centuries, while newly wealthy bourgeois families reinforced rather than challenged existing hierarchies. This

happened through the involvement of noble families in industrial development, spurred by their significant land reserves, access to capital and political connections. This process helps shed light on the long-run persistence of extreme landownership concentration in Luxembourg and beyond.

Pippa Catterall (University of Westminster) - 'Patriotism is Not Enough': Cosmopolitanism and the 'Merchants of Death' in Interwar Britain and America

This paper examines an inter-war paradox: how to control and regulate an industry that was necessarily international whilst also fundamental to the security of individual states? How to resolve the tensions between two types of cosmopolitanism – the cause of international peace and the international arms trade – and the realist needs of states themselves for both peace and security? These were challenges addressed by the two most thorough investigations of the arms trade of the interwar years, the Nye Committee on the Munitions Industry in the US Senate and the near simultaneous Royal Commission enquiry in Britain. This paper explores the background to, pressure for and course of these mid-1930s investigations and their efforts to resolve the tensions between cosmopolitanism and patriotism posed by the international trade in arms. It ends with reflections on the extent to which these inquiries impacted on the arms industry during the Second World War.

Charlotte Clare (Keele University) - Using Digital Tools to Explore Nationality, Identity and Place in Applications for Re-Naturalisation of 'British' Women, 1915-1923

Between 1870 and 1948, any British woman who married a foreign man would lose her British nationality and, in the majority of cases, gain that of her husband. In 1915, women were for the first time allowed to apply to become 're-naturalised' as British, providing they had been widowed or obtained a divorce. As the process of denaturalisation was automatic upon marriage, and without any paperwork, these applications provide a unique opportunity to uncover the stories of this group of women who would otherwise remain largely hidden and reveal, often in their own words, how they felt about being stripped of their British nationality.

Drawing from a sample of 1,000 applications between the years 1915 and 1923, this talk will discuss what using QGIS to map the residence of women applying for re-naturalisation reveals about the relationship between identity, mobility and place. Analysing the movements of these applicants shows that women were much more mobile than existing scholarship suggests, with this dataset including a spectrum ranging from women who never left the area they grew up in, to women who emigrated across the globe. This in turn highlights the malleability of 'Britishness' as both a legal status and as an individual identity during a period of shifting attitudes and legal boundaries around citizenship.

Sophia Cohen Galvao (McMaster University) - A Question of Representation? Starving Workmen, Seditious Socialists, and the West End Riots, 1886

It was February 8th, 1886. The London United Workmen's Committee (LUWC) and the General Labourers' Amalgamated Union (GLAU) called for a mass meeting of the unemployed to take place at Trafalgar Square. They were not the only ones protesting, for the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) had caught wind of those plans. The Socialist speakers – Hyndman, Burns, Champion, and Williams – gave impassionate speeches to the crowd, which erupted in riot. This incident catapulted the Social Democratic Federation out of obscurity, as word of their participation seized the pages of the English press. In the days – and weeks – following the riot, tales of the mob's trail of destruction and its aftermath populated the pages of the mainstream press, across the political spectrum. At the same time, a burgeoning Socialist press provided a counterpoint to mainstream perspectives.

This paper is geared towards an investigation of the riot's aftermath as it was manifested in the pages of mainstream and socialist newspapers. It is a comparative study that contrasts the representation of 'Black Monday,' especially as it concerns the drawing of boundaries between and within social classes. Through an examination of articles, poems, and cartoons, this paper will demonstrate that socialist and mainstream writers were both laying a claim to the representation of the 'true,' hardworking, and industrious working-class while distancing themselves from its 'rougher' element. Despite its episodic nature, Black Monday provides a unique snapshot into the converging discourses of class, politics, morality, and property in the late Victorian period.

Timothy Cooper (Pusan National University) - Floods, Fuel Protests and Climate Change: Mass Observers on a Warming Planet

This paper explores the popular politics of climate change around the turn of the twenty-first century. In Britain, the year 2000 was a critical moment in the history of popular reception of the idea of human-caused global warming. That year saw the confluence of two critical events. The first was a 'popular' uprising against the fuel duty escalator – a scaling tax on fuel introduced by the Conservative government in the wake of the UN 'Earth Summit' of 1992 – designed to encourage transition to more fuel-efficient vehicles and address climate change. The second was the remarkably wet autumn and winter of 2000/1 in which floods swept both the south and north of the country, weather widely attributed to rising global atmospheric temperatures.

This paper examines the responses of Mass Observers to these events in a directive issued by the Mass Observation Project in Autumn 2000. It pays particular attention to the ambivalences and silences expressed by observers regarding evidence for global warming. It raises the presence of peculiar scientific obsessions with sunspots and sun cycles as evidence of the workings of 'denialist' discourses on popular ideas in the 1990s. But it also seeks to explain the appeal of some of these ideas in terms of popular or lay 'natural knowledge' of the period, and to understand the nature of popular

scepticism towards scientific or expert knowledge. We argue that the science of global warming struggled to find acceptance amongst strong folk beliefs in the cyclicity and resilience of nature.

David Cowan (University of Manchester) - The 'Moral Economy' of Inequality and Attitudes to Progressive Taxation in Edwardian Britain

Edwardian Britain was marked by deep economic inequalities. The 1909 Liberal government's 'People's Budget' was a major political effort to reduce these inequalities through new taxes on land and higher taxes on inheritances. To build public consent for these measures, Liberal politicians and activists launched campaigns explaining and justifying the new taxes. Their opponents did the same. This paper complements existing research by considering how these campaigns played out in a range of grassroots contexts: both urban and rural, and as they were articulated by different politicians. Combining the study of by-election campaigns and publications with family history sources this paper provides a fuller picture of the different individuals mobilised on either side of these campaigns about economic inequalities. Activists faced a problem: how to make accessible and relevant to an expanded electorate technical arguments about taxation and land ownership. In resolving this problem, they deployed a range of 'moral economies' that distinguished between permissible and unacceptable inequalities. Wealth understood as 'fairly' acquired through industry was distinguished from wealth that had been stolen. This paper therefore has implications for our understanding of social relations in modern Britain, as it considers the languages aired around (and by) ordinary working-class people around the richest in their society. It also helps broaden the uses of the concept of the 'moral economy' beyond its initial uses in the context of consumption and more recent considerations of industrial employment, to consider how moral languages permeated social discourses on economic inequalities.

Emily Jane Cowan (University of Liverpool) – 'Only Four Days for Manslaughter': Gender, Moral Worth, and Sentencing in Victorian Lancashire

In March 1867, Agnes Osbaldeston was tried at the Lancashire Assizes for the manslaughter of her husband, George, who she fatally stabbed during a domestic altercation. Agnes, a Preston millworker, was her family's caregiver and principal breadwinner. George was repeatedly described in court as violent, dependent, and unwilling to work. After more than four months on remand, Agnes was sentenced to just four days' imprisonment, backdated to the start of the Assizes.

This paper argues that the leniency of Agnes' sentence arose from the court's gendered evaluation of both spouses: her conformity to valued forms of femininity mitigated her violence, while George's failings diminished his standing as a husband and victim. Although the judge refused to justify her use of lethal force, punishment was largely symbolic rather than punitive.

Foregrounding sentencing rather than culpability shows how Victorian courts functioned as sites of moral arbitration, weighing labour, care, respectability, and domestic conduct. Agnes remained legible as a morally valuable woman, despite her violation of conventional feminine roles of economic dependence and restraint from violence. George's conduct positioned him as an unworthy recipient of full legal protection, shaping how his death was understood in court.

Agnes Osbaldeston's case reveals how deeply embedded gender expectations for both women and men shaped legal outcomes. The four-day sentence reflected a gendered moral logic in which women's social value and men's domestic failure were assessed together. It demonstrates that sentencing enforced normative domestic order rather than serving as a neutral response to violent crime.

David Cox (University of Wolverhampton) - A Social History Case Study of 'heads and knees and mangled testicles': the First World War Autograph Album of a Female Volunteer Visitor to the 1st Southern Military Hospital, Stourbridge

As part of the Bodies, Sex and Emotions strand of this year's Social History Society conference, this paper will study the social responses to broken bodies resulting from the carnage of the First World War. Based around the contents of an illustrated autograph album of a female volunteer hospital visitor to the 1st Southern Military Hospital, Stourbridge from 1915-1918, it will discuss how the government of the day, the public and the wounded themselves viewed their situation. The album contains over forty written and illustrated contributions from some thirty different wounded men, mainly Australian and Canadian soldiers, and offers a fascinating contemporaneous glimpse into both how they were treated and how they coped with their painful and often life-changing injuries.

Jack Cox (University of Northampton) - The Process of Convict Transportation to the American and Australian British Penal Colonies, and within British-Occupied India: A Comparative Study.

Few empires utilised convict transportation as widely, or for as long as the British did across their empire. Convicts were transported from the mother country to penal colonies in America and Australia; as well as across British-occupied India. Based on the research informing the first chapter of a PhD thesis, this paper will explore the process of convict transportation by breaking it down into sections. These sections include but are not limited to, the body of legislation informing the punishment, the shipping of the convicts, the assignment and sale of the convicts and their work. Under these headings, each of the penal colonies will be examined, compared and contrasted. Tracing the life courses of convicts is not necessarily uncommon within the historiography of this area. However, this project is set apart by its implementation of a comparative methodology and exploring the penal colonies within America, Australia and British-occupied India through this. Furthermore, the sources used which include a combination of reports and first-hand accounts. The use of this comparative

methodology will not only shed further light onto the lesser explored areas of convict transportation in America and India but also allow for the demonstration of punishment's process overtime whilst also continuously contextualising each element of the system.

Jack Crangle (Queen's University Belfast) - 'I felt like I just belonged': Multicultural Britain as a Site of Refuge in Oral Histories of Black Irish Migrants

Twentieth-century Ireland is usually framed by historians as an exclusively white society. However, a small Black Irish population of African descent lived in the country from the 1940s. Usually the children of Black African men and white Irish women, Black Irish people were heavily marginalised from mainstream society. Most grew up in institutional settings such as mother-and-baby homes and industrial schools, where they experienced appalling abuse and racism. Black people were othered and excluded from Irish national identity, routinely subjected to racial slurs and anti-Black stereotypes.

Unsurprisingly, many Black people departed Ireland, mostly heading to large English cities, an experience that often proved revelatory and radicalising. Facing exclusion from diasporic Irish spaces, and living alongside an established Black community for the first time, these migrants embraced their Black identity and became involved with anti-racist activism. Having been rejected by white Ireland, they found an alternative home in Black Britain, one where Blackness was celebrated rather than denigrated.

Utilising a series of recent oral histories, this paper explores Black Irish migration journeys. These stories reframe the historiography of Irish migrants in Britain, which tends to linger on prejudice and alienation. Far from the established narrative of exile, Black Irish migrants were enthusiastic about the diverse vibrancy of multicultural Britain, presenting it as an escape from racism and isolation in Ireland. By incorporating Black Irish perspectives, this paper also complicates our understanding of how Irish migrants fitted into multicultural Britain, focusing on the intersection of Irishness and Blackness in diverse urban communities.

Anna Cusack (Greenwich, Lincoln Bishop, University of Oxford) - The Maldon Riots of 1629

At Maldon on the coast of Essex in 1629, there were two separate but related riots protesting the scarcity of grain; one in March and another in May. The first of these riots ended with little retribution for those involved and some attempt to put new regulations in effect. The second riot in May, however, was to have far more dire consequences for those involved. Led by a woman named Ann Carter, known to her followers as 'Captain Ann', the second riot resulted in a brutal and swift response carried out by a special commission sent down from Westminster.

This paper provides a preliminary investigation into these riots and highlights the prominent role of women in the disturbances. It situates this micro history within a

broader analysis of rioting over food shortages in the early part of the seventeenth century and builds on work, namely that of John Walter, who has used this case to uncover popular attitudes to the law.

Rhian Davies (University of Warwick) - Post-Colonial Military Diplomacy: A Social History of British Forces in Kenya since 1964

Kenya's independence from Britain on the 12th of December 1963 marked a period of transition in post-colonial governance, nation-building, and the dynamics between Kenya's newly established government and old colonial systems. Under Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya sought a new relationship with Britain, exemplified by military agreements such as the 1964 Defence Cooperation Agreement and the establishment of the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK). These agreements, allowing British troops to train in Kenya, sparked social issues concerning interactions between soldiers and local communities. Although existing scholarship has examined diplomatic relations, colonial violence and the strategic dimensions of military cooperation, there is still no comprehensive study of how these agreements have shaped everyday life, particularly for local communities.

This paper will assess how colonial legacies influenced military agreements negotiated between Britain and Kenya after independence, how British use of military training camps like the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) has evolved over time, how regulations governing interactions between soldiers and civilians have changed and how these arrangements have affected gender dynamics in local communities. I therefore argue that post-colonial agreements have had greater social consequences for Kenyan communities than previously acknowledged by historians. Defence agreements presented as mutually beneficial partnerships also facilitated a sustained foreign military presence that raised tensions surrounding land rights, local economies, environmental issues and gendered violence. Understanding the long-term consequences is essential for evaluating ongoing debates around accountability, human rights and the legacy of colonial influence in Kenya's post-colonial governance through military diplomacy.

Chris Day (Nottingham Trent University/The National Archives (UK)) - Miasmatical Modernity? Public Health and Pollution as a 'Distance-Demolishing Technology', of Public Health in England and Wales, 1846-1875

The invention of public health in mid-nineteenth century England and Wales was in part spurred on by polluted rivers, yet one of its consequences was to turn many of them into sewers. 'All complain', said the Rivers Pollution Commission in 1870, 'while they whose property happens to lie on the stream, even many miles below the towns, are sufferers in a variety of ways'. Pollution was not constrained by jurisdictional boundaries. Yet, prior to the mid-1870s, public health measures meant to obviate pollution were inconsistently applied across of hundreds of heterogenous localities, even within them. In Willesden, residents were prevented throughout the late-1860s from adopting the Sanitary Act, and dealing with an open sewer, as their neighbours

from the sewered, Kilburn half of the parish adjourned the meetings repeatedly to keep rates low.

James C. Scott (2009) characterised modern states as able to economically and politically 'enclose' their hinterlands by deploying 'distance-demolishing technologies'. These are usually characterised as things like telecommunications or railways – vectors of modernity. Public health, as James Hanley (2016) says, created a perception of a right to community health. A legal, administrative and rhetorical superstructure supported it. This paper argues that this combined with haphazard sanitary infrastructure to transform pollution into a distance-demolishing technology, hastening the modernisation and uniformity of English and Welsh local government by creating a cross-jurisdictional liabilities for pollution.

Christina de Bellaigue (University of Oxford) - Falling Families: Downward Social Mobility in the Industrial Middle Class, 1840-1930

In both the historical and the sociological scholarship, the subject of downward social mobility has been neglected. The research has typically been more focused on explaining how people move up the social scale, and the formation of elites. This reflects the influence of cultural stereotypes – stories of 'rags to riches' or 'self-made men'. It also reflects the sources available to us: autobiographies are written by those have 'done well' in their lives; archives house the papers of businesses and individuals which have been successful over time, rather than those of ephemeral failures. In a way, downward mobility involves a gradual process of disappearance from the archives. Trends in the scholarship and issues of archival invisibility thus mean we know very little about what might trigger social decline and about how it was managed; new methods are needed to uncover the history of downward social mobility. This paper develops one experimental response to these challenges. It tracks the trajectory of one of the less successful branches of a family of the industrial middle class – the McKeands - through the census and other genealogical records. Doing so, I argue, reveals first that first that short-range downward social mobility was a common middle-class experience in the nineteenth century, and second that it was experienced within and through the family and family relationships.

James Dean (Sheffield Hallam University) - William Cobbett and the Anthropocene: An Environmentalist for Our Times

William Cobbett is a controversial figure. In his writing, he could be antisemitic, deny the suffering of slaves and consign women to the domestic sphere. As such, it would be easy to dismiss him as a right-wing populist, who is at best irrelevant to addressing mounting social and environmental crisis. However, to do so would be a grave error. Cobbett's approach still has much to offer us. His great strengths were twofold. First, he considered the intersection of class with the environment. He espoused a land ethic in which the social power of the landowner over the land was qualified by the rights of the agricultural labourer to it or its produce. Furthermore, he was critical of the emerging fossil economy, in the form of Scottish farms where the farmworkers were wholly subordinate to the farmers through the deployment of steam power. Second,

Cobbett saw the problems of his day in systemic terms, of which India and Ireland were part through the British Empire. In this way, Cobbett's critique implied a rejection of capitalism. Although this had a Romantic complexion overall, he unequivocally favoured the human utilisation of nature over the picturesque. Cobbett was a farmer and writer who did attempt to secure independence from elite patronage by accumulating wealth. Nevertheless, as a tribune of agricultural labourers, we can situate Cobbett's beliefs about humans and the natural world in the plebeian environmental tradition, which is our best hope of avoiding anthropogenic climate catastrophe.

Lucy Delap (University of Cambridge) - The 'war with deformity' and the Disability Estate in Twentieth Century Britain

This paper examines the work of distinctively twentieth century institutions for disabled people, and the efforts to establish 'therapeutic' regimes of labour. It probes at the different forms of carcerality visible in the militarized Chailey Schools and the 'worker owned' Papworth Village Settlement, to better understand the evolution of the voluntary sector disability estate. Philanthropic initiatives were slow to give way to state provision for disabled people in the first two thirds of the twentieth century, though they increasingly drew on state support in subsidies and the award of contracts. There was still, however, significant space for charismatic social entrepreneurs to establish businesses, residential spaces and training programmes. In this paper, I set institutional records into dialogue with oral histories and memoirs to better understand how these projects claimed status as modern and progressive, and how they were experienced by residents. This offers an opportunity to assess how such provision, often heavily gendered in its organisation, could represent both an investment and an extension of the segregation and surveillance of disabled children and adults. Archivally rich and fine-grained contextualization of provision for disabled people can rethink broad-brush accounts of the sources of disabled people's marginalization (often cast as institutionalization and capitalism by versions of 'social model' analysis). It reveals elements of democratization alongside enduring authoritarianism and intrusive visibility linked to 'therapeutic' programmes such as those established at Chailey and Papworth.

Joseph Di Domenico (University of York) - Planes, Places, and Posterity: The Evolution of 8th Air Force Heritage Communities

In 1942, Operation Bolero, the plan to station over 250,000 airmen from the 8th Army Air Force (A.A.F.) in the U.K., began in earnest. Known as the 'American Occupation,' it intertwined the social currents of both cultures, fostering bonds between American service members and East Anglian British communities. This paper examines two aspects of this bilateral community heritage.

First, it considers how American and British communities that value 8th A.A.F. heritage have developed over the past 83 years. Originally, many were formed as veterans' groups to help survivors recover from wartime trauma. Through 20th-century social movements, 21st-century geopolitical shifts, and changes in membership and

leadership, the visions and rituals of these groups evolved. Drawing on the works of Laurajane Smith, Nicholas Saunders, and Sharon Macdonald, it shows how current members—now two generations removed—are redefining their purpose and values.

Second, it explores a new interpretation of place attachment and skyscapes through the experiences of 20th-century aerial combat. Advancements in aviation technology during the 1930s made long-range, high-altitude bombing essential for striking deep economic enemy targets. Unexpectedly high losses from the 8th A.A.F.'s daylight bombing campaign increased combat trauma among crews. This led them to develop intense anthropomorphic and ritualistic relationships with their aircraft. After the war, scrapping planes for aluminium and disbanding crews left veterans feeling a sense of loss, which eventually prompted communities to form around restoring and showcasing vintage aircraft. Overall, this paper combines aspects of community and place, emphasizing their importance to the heritage industry.

Anna Drury (Lancaster University) – 'The fruits of these poor creatures': Prostitution, Abolitionism, and Violence in Late Imperial Rio de Janeiro

This paper re-examines violence and force in late imperial Rio de Janeiro through the lens of sexual slavery and female prostitution. Enslaved women 'for hire' were a common feature of urban slavery, vending commodities in the streets with an enforced quota to return to their enslavers. Often compelled to sell their bodies, the prostitution of enslaved women was deplored in contemporaneous accounts in relation to public and gendered morality. Legal records and medical literature note enslaved women prostituting themselves at the behest of their enslavers; despite the presence of force, enslaved prostitutes were scripted as agents in their moral decay. This study re-evaluates sexual exploitation, the gender and racial codes that fed precepts of late imperial honour, and the figuring of prostitution in abolitionist discourse. As antislavery commentators of the 1870s and 1880s condemned the idea of Black women's innate licentiousness, they portrayed enslaved prostitutes as innocent, passive victims of male lust. This paper adjusts narratives that neglect the conditions of violence which compelled enslaved women to sell sex, considering instead how prostitutes grappled with forced labour and engaged in feminine honour negotiation. Examining criminal cases brought against enslavers based on the depositions of enslaved women seeking manumission, it argues enslaved prostitutes appropriated the rhetoric of morality to appeal to popular imaginaries of femininity, in hopes of attaining a sympathetic judgement. This study offers a new perspective on the physical, sexual, and moral violence of slavery, abolitionist ideas about female sexuality, and their implications for Afro-Brazilian women nearing post-abolition Brazil.

Jeanne Dufresne (University of Warwick) - Women's Mobility and Mechanisms of Belonging in Seventeenth-Century England and France

Settlement within communities is often seen as the norm in early modern England and France. These communities were built on stability and pushed itinerant individuals to the margin. Figures of vagrants, peddlers and runaway servants not only appear

physically removed from any settled community but were at times actively prevented from forging communal ties. Yet the position of mobile people in general, and women in particular, has been reassessed in research on mobility, poverty and labour (Fontaine 1993, Mansell 2024). Mobility was a mean by which many – if not most – early modern women escaped poverty, found work or improved their life conditions. They might also follow partners, family and community members on the road. This paper, based on an ongoing doctoral project on itinerant women, will reframe early modern notions of belonging through the case study of two mobile women on either side of the channel. I intend to better understand the importance of female mobility and what it means for the communities they, in turn, left and joined. To which extent did women suffer and/or benefit from their own mobility and how did this mobility affect their personal relationships? It will be shown that early modern processes of inclusion and exclusion are hardly as clear-cut as they sometimes seem to be. Settlement did not equal automatic belonging to the community any more than mobility automatically implied 'deviance' and rejection. Far from being static, communities were ever-changing organisms, not only accepting its members movement but benefiting from it.

Nicola Edwards (University of Wolverhampton) 'I hated the lessons… what good's Latin? Who's gonna speak Latin?' – The Eleven Plus and Experiences of Working-Class Girls in Grammar Schools in the West Midlands

From 1948, the Eleven Plus examination ascertained whether a child embarked on secondary education at grammar, secondary modern or technical school. For working-class pupils, it supposedly gave them equal opportunity to attend grammar school, the 'route to better jobs and to higher education'. However, it has been suggested that rather than equal opportunities for all, social divisions were exacerbated, and a lack of resources for working-class children widened inequalities.

In this paper, I will use the oral testimonies of women from the West Midlands who I have interviewed during the course of my research to see how they fared in the grammar schools in the West Midlands. Despite the insistence that grammar school would give working-class children equal opportunity to continue to better jobs and higher education, the majority of the interviewees left school as soon as they were able at fifteen, and we will consider their reasons why – despite being considered 'clever', many of the women spoke about their hatred of the lessons and how it discouraged them from pursuing further education. Socialisation was rarely a problem, with many respondents speaking fondly of the friendship groups forged in grammar schools, which challenges the assertion that grammar schools were middle-class environments that working-class pupils struggled to feel comfortable in. Although a minority, those who proceeded to further and higher education talk about how they found encouragement from their parents and families, who were keen for their daughters to achieve more than they had been able to themselves.

Heather Ellis (University of Sheffield) – 'Who's Got the Free Meal, Then?': Oral Histories of Shame, Dignity and Citizenship in the UK School Meals Service

This paper draws on oral histories gathered through the ESRC-funded project The School Meals Service: Past, Present – and Future? to examine how school food provision has shaped - and been shaped by - children's and families' experiences of citizenship, belonging, and exclusion in Britain over the last century.

Focusing on firsthand accounts from former pupils, parents, teachers and catering staff, the paper explores how free school meals were lived and remembered: not simply as welfare provision, but as moments of surveillance, stigma, resistance, and care. One interviewee recalls the humiliation of holding a boldly marked 'free meal' ticket in 1950s Bradford; another, a Jamaican-born pupil in 1980s Birmingham, describes the alienation of being served bland, boiled food that "didn't taste like home." These testimonies unsettle official narratives of the School Meals Service as a neutral, benevolent institution.

Oral histories bring into view the emotional politics of school meals: how systems of classification and distribution are felt, navigated, and remembered across generations. They also reveal how children internalised - or pushed back against - messages about their own social worth.

By centring lived experience, this paper argues for a reconceptualisation of school meals not simply as policy, but as a daily civic ritual through which ideas of responsibility, inclusion, and entitlement were enacted. It contributes to ongoing conversations about food, welfare, and social justice by foregrounding the affective and embodied legacies of twentieth-century social policy.

Jennifer Evans (University of Hertfordshire) - A 'Blew cloth' pressed on her: The 'fabric' of midwifery in early modern England.

A loose receipt without a clear heading extant in the Bedford archives begins 'The Blew Cloth is to be severall times duble one the midwifes hand'. This is not the only mention in manuscript, and more rarely print, of midwives using coloured fabrics to treat reproductive problems. In her 2021 article Hannah Newton explored the material objects of the sickroom, underlining that objects could become sources of emotional and physical distress in such spaces. She emphasised that such an approach allows historians to 'recover aspects of the somatic experience' of illness and disease. And called for similar studies to investigate other health-related landscapes, including the birthing chamber. This paper begins to respond to this call and engage with these questions by thinking about some of fabrics used by midwives in this period. Examining blue cloths, scarlet shreds and purple silk, the paper will begin to disentangle their meanings and the ways in which they might have shaped the birth experience. It will consider how some early modern thinkers, like Margaret Cavendish, conceptualised colour as real and carrying material properties that could raise the passions and alter constitutions. Birth was not simply a medical issue, it was a form of 'embodied

devotion' suffused with piety, the paper will therefore also consider the religious and cultural meanings of these fabrics and colours, including the connection between the colour blue and the Virgin Mary. Focusing on a few examples of the fabric of midwifery will sharpen our understanding of the material and affective objects that accompanied birth.

Greg Evans (St John's College, University of Oxford) - Care, Nation, and Sexuality Beyond the Metropole: AIDS in Rural Wales

This paper explores the AIDS crisis in rural Wales to challenge dominant, metropolitan-centred histories of AIDS in Britain. Focusing on a case study of an AIDS respite centre in Conwy, it examines how care, nation, and sexuality were negotiated beyond the urban centres that have shaped prevailing narratives of the epidemic. Predominantly used by English men, funded by English health authorities, and staffed largely by Welsh workers, the centre operated as a rural borderland of care in which national difference was mediated in everyday practices, relationships, and emotional labour.

Drawing on oral history interviews and archival sources, the paper reconstructs how AIDS was experienced and managed in rural Wales, highlighting the uneven geographies of health provision and sexual politics that structured the crisis. It argues that rural Wales was not merely peripheral to the British AIDS response but constituted a distinctive social and national context that shaped experiences of illness, care, and belonging. By foregrounding Wales as a site of analysis, the paper challenges British historiography that frames AIDS as a singular, urban phenomenon and marginalises national difference within Britain itself. More broadly, it demonstrates how attention to nation and rurality complicates wider social theories of sexuality, neoliberal health governance, and homonormativity, offering a re-scaled understanding of the AIDS crisis beyond the British metropole.

Lucy Faire (University of Leicester) & Denise McHugh (Open University) - Feeling the Street: Touch and Emotion in Twentieth-Century Town and City Centres

We research people's everyday experience of the central streetscapes of provincial England, Wales and Scotland between the 1930s and the 1970s. At the heart lies the perspective of street-users, their interactions with each other and their engagement with the built environment. Our research uses varied forms of testimony which give access to personal and collective perspectives revealing people's urban experiences and their emotional responses. We use archaeological and bricolage methods, scavenging extant materials such as film, photography, social media testimonies and newspapers.

This paper explores the embodied interactions of street users with the streetscape and shows how these constructed a geographical and emotional relationship with place. We move from hands that pressed buttons, caught buses and opened shop doors, to tired feet tripping over cobbles or kerbstones. We look at torsos which sat, leaned, or shouldered on crowded streets, and consider heads which smoked and kissed. The

final part of this paper examines the range and impact of emotions generated by these tactile spatial experiences.

Touch is a neglected historical topic, and mainly concerns hands. This paper establishes how street users' whole-body urban experiences developed actual and emotional knowledge of place (place attachment). In the context of the current discussion of the declining high street, the construction of the user relationship with the street space is vitally important.

Lena Ferriday (Newcastle University) - Every Body, Be Normal? Embodied Encounters in Britain's Rural Realm, 1850-1900

All societies hold a set of implied rules for how their inhabitants should act and interact. These historical preoccupations with the appropriate ways in which individuals should present and move their bodies have received sustained attention by social and cultural historians, who have produced narratives surrounding how these 'norms' came to be identified, transmitted and accepted. Medical research and literature have often been identified as a key constituent of this process in the nineteenth century, and sometimes, as in the case of 'guides' such as etiquette manuals and travel books, these accepted behaviours are denoted explicitly and can be much revealing about the society in question.

In this paper, I draw on written guidance – to rural practice in South-West England – to traverse the phenomenological boundaries of these ideas. I take an intimate eye to moments of tactile encounters between people, and with the physical environment, to argue that these micro-contexts disrupt many of the narratives historians have produced about the bodily behaviours that were deemed acceptable, or indeed preferable, by Victorian society. Social historians have already begun to problematise the very idea of a particular 'bodily norm' being designated in nineteenth-century Britain, drawing attention to the visibility of disablement in industrial communities and in the commercialisation of 'freakshows', as examples of normalised 'abnormality'. Extending this work with conceptual frameworks from sensory and environmental history, I offer a more embodied reading of nineteenth-century 'bodily norm'.

Philippa Fletcher (University of Oxford) 'Relieving the loneliness of the lesbian': Sappho and British Lesbian Community Building, 1972-81

Sappho (1972-81) was a British lesbian-feminist magazine that ran a network of social clubs across the UK, with its main social club and magazine headquarters in London. One of *Sappho*'s key aims was to 'relieve the loneliness of the lesbian', which my paper takes as its central line of inquiry. Through a close reading of the letter-pages and reader-contributed writings in *Sappho*, I demonstrate the experience and expression of lesbian loneliness within the magazine. On a secondary level, I argue that to combat this loneliness, *Sappho* built both in-person and imagined communities. The in-person communities functioned mainly through its social clubs, and the imagined community was constructed through, inter alia, the magazine's letter pages, poems, and short-story competitions. While *Sappho* has previously been understood through its role in facilitating lesbian motherhood, my paper provides new insights to the emotional

dimensions of the magazine. In doing so, I further recent shifts within the historiography that emphasize the emotional side of lesbian and feminist lives, activism, and print culture in 1970s Britain. Moreover, many of the contributions to *Sappho* came from women outside of London, and my paper therefore expands our understanding of the experience of lesbians outside of London. By bringing together the magazine itself, *Sappho*'s institutional archives, and archived oral histories with women involved in the production of *Sappho*, I bring new insights to the history of lesbian-feminist emotions and community building efforts in late twentieth century Britain.

Mary Fraser (University of Glasgow) - Developing a Comprehensive Database of Police History

Organisational memory requires the recovery, sharing, storage and access to institutional memories. In this project we are making a first step towards a comprehensive database of published police history, both accessible and self-published. This paper reports on the problems and achievements of developing this database to date, its potential use and the further work required.

Elena Ghiggino (Edge Hill University) - Scientific Racism and the Role of Human Zoos during the Nineteenth Century

During the nineteenth century, there was an effort to classify human beings into specific 'races', including: 'Caucasian', 'Negroid' and 'Mongoloid'. The scientific community studied individuals adopted pseudo-scientific techniques in a bid to justify the hierarchy of man. This paper considers the phenomenon of human zoos, which were promoted as educational experiences while fostering harmful stereotypes that would have a long-lasting impact. It will focus upon several case studies, including the diary of Abraham Ulrikab, an Inuk Indigenous Canadian whose family were exhibited in the late 1800s; the case of Ota Benga, a Black disabled man exhibited in America, who was purported to be a 'missing link'; and the event of the Crystal Palace Africa exhibition, which took place in 1895. The intention of this paper is to focus upon the way that ethnically diverse bodies were manipulated and utilised in the name of science, as a justification for the mistreatment and subjugation of those belonging to these so-called 'primitive' nations. Additionally, my research explores the manner in which science has been viewed as a discipline that seeks an impartial and absolute 'truth', based purely upon 'factual' evidence. Yet, the perception, held largely in the nineteenth century, that the field of science has always been unbiased and objective, leads to the erasure or sidelining of the lived experiences of the individuals explored within these case studies.

Julia Gillen (Lancaster University) & Samuel DeJulio - Developing a New Posthuman Perspective on the Study of 'Writing Systems'

The study of what have historically been termed "writing systems" through which human beings communicate through means other than oral voice, has been trammelled by a hegemonic discourse. Despite some attention to writing outside the mainstream a single narrative continues to prevail which ignores some of the ingenious

and highly creative means of communication developed in Indigenous, decolonial and otherwise marginalised historical contexts.

We contend that posthumanism offers an opportunity for developing new ways of thinking, decentring from Enlightenment views of a Western individual postulated at the centre of all progress. In this exploratory paper we introduce our framework and apply it to four examples, demonstrating how social historical understandings may expand traditional approaches to 'writing systems.'

- Recent reinterpretations of Palaeolithic 'Cave Art' question characterisations of 'proto-writing'.
- Talking Drums, in West and Central Africa, can be analysed as an effective means of semiotic communication.
- Nsibidi, an ideographic system of Sub-Saharan Africa has been wrongly dismissed, contributing to a myth of illiteracy.
- A recent Tik-Tok series, by the linguist Lizzie Hanks is rich in its deployment of modes.

Taking these together, we interrogate traditional conceptualisations of writing systems and propose that a posthumanist reinterpretation may lead to a transformed understanding of writing and hence literacy in hitherto marginalised contexts.

Olivia Golby-Kirk (University of Birmingham) - For Young-men are so false-hearted: Youthful Masculinity from the Perspective of Women

The historiographical consensus on masculinity in seventeenth-century England is that it was based on the patriarchal control of women. The female experience of patriarchal control exerted by their fathers and their husbands has been explored by historians. But what has not been studied extensively in the seventeenth century is how women perceived and understood men themselves. Which qualities did women value in men, and which did they despise? To what extent were women's ideals of men understood by these men themselves, and how did they respond to them?

The seventeenth century was considered the 'heyday' of ballads. They were extremely widespread during this century, and can help to answer some of these questions. For example, numerous ballads aimed at young women present young men as inherently untrustworthy, and reveal traits that young women found desirable in their ideal husbands. Similarly, ballads directed towards young men demonstrated an understanding of women's ideals of men, but present numerous pathways that young men could take: either they could conform to young women's ideals of men, or they could subvert them, potentially enhancing their own sense of masculinity in the process. Ballads, as a genre, tended to be naturally dialogic, and thus an exploration of these conversations can suggest the attitudes of young women towards men during this time period, and how those men reacted to women's views. In this way, this paper will explore depictions of young men in ballads in order to assess women's agency in enforcing masculinity during seventeenth-century England.

Daniel Grey (University of Hertfordshire) - Out of Touch? Life and Death in the Hands of Midwives in England, 1871-1914

For much of the nineteenth century, midwifery as a profession was in very real danger of annihilation, even though the overwhelming majority of working-class English mothers relied on midwives during childbirth. Florence Nightingale wrote in 1871 of the importance of good training for midwives and their intrinsic professional value. Yet despite campaigns to improve training from within as well as outside the profession since the 1880s, and national registration of midwifery through the Midwives Act 1902 and formation of the Central Midwives' Board, the role remained controversial in many respects. Repeatedly, this focused on the idea the Victorian midwife's hands might kill as well as heal – either through ignorance, or deliberately. Rumours persisted that unscrupulous midwives might offer abortion or even outright infanticide for hire, despite the evidence for this being limited at best. Even more widespread was a belief that 'unqualified' midwives were a lethal source of puerperal fever, liable to kill mothers and babies with a touch through unwittingly spreading contagion. This paper focuses on these competing representations of an ill-defined subset of 'deviant' midwives hiding in plain sight amongst their peers during a period of rapid professional changes, especially debates over gender roles and skill.

Yaiza Guerrero Fernández (University of Oviedo) - Living with the Herd: Transhumant Families and Pastoral Life in Cabrales, Picos de Europa.

Pastoralism has historically been one of the main ways of life in the Picos de Europa National Park (Spain), largely due to the steep terrain, which limited the development of agriculture-based subsistence economies. As a result, local populations specialized early in livestock farming —particularly goats and sheep— leading to the adoption of a semi-nomadic lifestyle shaped by seasonal herd movements.

During the summer months, families and their livestock moved to the high-mountain pastures known as 'mayadas', taking advantage of better grazing conditions. This seasonal mobility structured daily life and labour relations within the household, generating a clear division of tasks according to gender and age. Such organization allows for an analysis of the central role played by women in pastoral economies, the participation of children in productive activities, and the responsibilities assumed by male heads of household.

Drawing on anthropological studies by Adolfo García Martínez and field research related to the production of Cabrales cheese (Ventura Alvarado, Casado Cimiano, among others), this paper approaches a way of life that has often remained at the margins of social-historical research. By focusing on short-stance transhumance in the municipality of Cabrales and surrounding areas, the study contributes to a better understanding of family strategies, labour organization, and social adaptation in a mountainous environment characterized by severe subsistence constraints.

Tegwen Hammersley (Keele University) – 'All graft and no stock': Heritagisation and Gentrification in a New Town

In the 1960s the area of the Ironbridge Gorge was struggling financially, with a large proportion of older residents in homes lacking modern amenities. By the 21st century, it was a World Heritage Site and one of the most expensive areas to live in Telford. This was a purposeful change brought about through processes of heritagisation and gentrification pursued by Telford Development Corporation and other groups in the 1970s. There is an ongoing impact on life in the Gorge, with Trelka (2018) identifying distinct 'incomer' and 'original' resident identities.

This paper will explore the claims to space and the changing places of the Gorge: a leading industrial heritage site; a collection of long-standing settlements; and a developing residential area for the new town of Telford. Studies of deindustrialisation in more recent periods have shown that the processes of heritagisation and gentrification in former industrial areas are often linked. I will argue that in the Ironbridge Gorge in the 1970s, the process of heritagisation enabled and encouraged gentrification, and that these processes were contested and criticised with arguments that foreshadowed critiques of redevelopment in the 21st century.

Abby Hammond (Northumbria University) - Advertising Women: Credit, Reputation, and the *Newcastle Courant*, 1711–1760

This paper examines how women used newspaper advertising as a public forum to manage commercial activity, reputations, and legal disputes. Focusing on the eighteenth century, the paper systematically samples the *Newcastle Courant* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne's second oldest newspaper), which was circulated extensively through Newcastle, North and South Shields, Sunderland, and Durham. The back pages of the Newcastle Courant were designated to advertisements, which ranged in nature but included announcements such as dates for events, business notices, and house sales or rental advertisements. Though advertisements by women made up approximately 15% of the total advertisements for each year, this small sample highlights considerable diversity in women's business lives. This paper explores the changing nature of female advertising across the eighteenth century, using case studies to illuminate the results from the broader data. Further, the paper reveals that the newspaper advertisement section could act as a 'battleground' between husbands and wives. Public denunciations of 'runaway women', where husbands sought to cut off their deserted wives' lines of credit were cut off, can be seen across the period. Significantly, the paper analyses women's responses to accusations against them, a fact that challenges assumptions of women's passivity under coverture. By analysing both quantitative and qualitative narratives in the Newcastle Courant, this paper argues that women were active participants in the North East's public commercial sphere, and that they used print media to construct identities and reputations, advertise businesses, and claim both economic and legal authority.

Jane Harrison (University of Portsmouth) - ‘On a princely and magnificent scale’: Mid-Nineteenth Century Society seen through the Conspicuous Consumption of the 1859 ‘Historical Ball’ at Sudeley Castle

In January 1859, Mr and Mrs Dent hosted a ‘Historical Ball’ at Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire. The event celebrated the recent restoration of the castle and the rebuilding of the chapel containing the tomb of Catherine Parr, both financed through the Dent family’s glove-manufacturing fortune. Guests attended in elaborate Tudor-style costumes, commissioned exclusively from a London supplier, participated in ‘the correct dances of the time’, and feasted on peacock and an ‘inundation of wines’. The occasion received extensive coverage in both the local press and the Court Circular. This paper argues that the ball offers a valuable lens through which to examine mid-Victorian social history. Different publications framed the ball as a vehicle for celebrating new wealth; as a valuable history lesson for the present; as a source of local pride or even as a cautionary commentary against excessive nostalgia. The ball also had an economic impact: it is commended for providing jobs and is used to advertise businesses. For some of the approximately 150 guests, historical costume perhaps provided a means of self-fashioning, while for the Dents - recently established as owners of Sudeley – the event served to assert their social legitimacy, even as it brought personal tragedy to one of them. Drawing on newspaper accounts, Mrs Dent’s diary, and a bound velvet album of colourised photographs, this paper seeks to illuminate and explore this moment of conspicuous consumption of the new landlord class.

Khalid Wasim Hassan (Central University of Kashmir, India) - Revisiting the Past: Exploring the Urban Heritage in Srinagar City through Heritage Walks

What started as an individual endeavour, to know my own city by visiting the cultural, religious and historical sites around Srinagar city turned into a Heritage Walk when students, researchers and faculty members from different colleges joined me. It became a bi-monthly feature, in which we identify multiple historical sites across different districts, take a walk from one site to another, and listen to oral narratives about the sites from elderly people living in the vicinity. Our walk usually ends with a discussion where participants share knowledge about the place/site based on readings from archival sources, observations made during the walk, and folk narratives they have heard from their grandparents. Many arts and crafts in the Srinagar City of Kashmir valley are associated with particular urban spaces, so the aim of our heritage walks was also to engage with the intangible heritage. The artisans at these spaces shared the knowledge and skills of their craft, passed down from generation to generation. What was realised during these walks that the oral history from different communities varies, ascribing varied cultural meanings to these sites. Using the autoethnography, this paper explores how the cultural meaning is associated with the urban heritage sites in Srinagar and how heritage walks foster participants' cultural connections to the diverse tangible and intangible heritage. In this paper, I argue that the heritage walk is not

merely a leisure activity but a ‘research method’ to understand the historical transition of public spaces and architecture across different periods.

Iris Hauser (Princeton University) - Infrastructures of Resistance: Inequality, Activism, and Mediated Sovereignty in the Zapatista Uprising

The 1994 Zapatista uprising marked not only a military and political confrontation with the Mexican state, but a disruption of Mexico’s tightly managed information order shaped by longstanding inequalities in Indigenous representation and political voice, as well as a struggle over how Indigenous actors could be recognized and understood within a national media environment. Early government and mainstream media coverage frequently framed the EZLN as Indians, peasants, or even foreign agitators, narratives that worked to delegitimize Indigenous political agency and position the movement outside the bounds of national belonging. Against interpretations that cast the rebellion as an early case of ‘Netwar,’ this article argues that the EZLN’s communicative effectiveness did not depend on digital novelty but on a materially assembled, three-node infrastructural bypass that functioned as a form of communicative resistance.

This bypass consisted of: (1) an analog node, most notably La Jornada, which functioned as a physical point of record and legitimacy; (2) a labor node of journalists, activists, and volunteers who collectively sustained the movement’s communicative intervention by manually typing, digitizing, translating, and circulating communiqués; and (3) a jurisdictional node rooted in U.S.-based university servers and NGO networks that placed EZLN communications beyond the regulatory reach of the Mexican state.

Drawing on contemporaneous wire reporting, domestic and regional Mexican press, FBIS broadcast transcripts, NGO archives, and movement documents, this article reconstructs how this hybrid infrastructure enabled international circulation despite state control of domestic broadcast media. Rather than treating visibility as a digital effect, it shows how communicative authority was assembled through material infrastructure, coordinated labor, and legal geography under conditions of political constraint. In doing so, the study reframes the Zapatista uprising as a case of infrastructural improvisation and offers a transferable framework for analysing how mediated sovereignty is assembled, contested, and repurposed in struggles over inequality and social justice across contemporary Global South media regimes.

Tanya Hawkes (Anglia Ruskin University) - ‘An Oxford Education’: Leisure and Learning at the Gas Works.

Charles Hansford, a gasworks ‘brickie,’ wryly named his employment at the Oxford Gas Works, as his ‘Oxford Education.’ During late-night socialising, his workmate Len gave him left classics, such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb’s The History of Trade Unionism. Hansford’s memoirs, Brick Bonds: A Life in Britain's Building Trade, illustrate a work life of travel, camaraderie and hardship. Will Thorne, gas worker, union leader and Labour MP, wrote My Life’s Battles in 1925, offering similar memories of leisure and politics.

Spanning the period from 1857 to 1987, these personal histories provide rich detail of leisure activities, like cycling, reading, writing and sport, alongside education, organising and political allegiances.

Lighting from coal gas flattened social hierarchies, by 'appropriating the old aristocratic privilege of an overabundance of light,' according to Martin Bressani in Paris: Light into Darkness, opening up new worlds of entertainment, lighting, cooking, heating, education, semi-skilled work and labour organising for working-class people. For Thorne and Hansford the social hierarchies were also softened through their politics and autodidact education, as they mingled and organised with their new, middle-class peers.

This paper explores how coal gas work influenced consumption, leisure, education and politics for Thorne and Hansford in their own words and how the often-invisible labour of women who supported them emerges through their narratives. Their experiences are framed within the wider material history of coal gas as a product, which transformed working-class access to urban space, education, and entertainment.

Julia Haws (University of Oxford) - Dancing on the Left: Gay Liberation and the Development of Gender Free English Country Dance

This paper explores how English Country Dance (ECD), an 18th century dance form associated in both its original and 20th century revival contexts with heterosexual courtship, became a space for imagining and enacting gender fluidity and queerness. I focus on communities of queer American dancers in the 1970s and 1980s who used ECD to link their political ideals to an imagined pre-homophobic history. A central figure is dancer and activist Carl Wittman, who explicitly connected dance to his politics: men's and women's circles enacted separatist practices; the three-person reel was 'a celebration of lovemaking among three.' After publishing an influential Gay Liberation manifesto calling gay men to 'define for ourselves a new pluralistic, role free social structure,' Wittman joined a wave of queer people leaving what he had termed the "gay ghetto" of San Francisco, moving to rural Oregon to teach ECD in increasingly role-free and non-gendered ways. While Wittman is generally noted in histories of Gay Liberation, queer anti-urbanism, and the emerging history of ECD, the clear connections he and fellow dancers made between the three has not been previously explored. My research draws on Wittman's newly available papers to illuminate the dual meaning of ECD as a performable symbol of an imagined 'folk' past and as a space for imagining new social relations outside the bounds of heterosexual power. Ultimately, I argue for understanding the development of gender-free ECD as a sort of historic play, a way in which queer dancers used their bodies to rewrite historic paths in their own image.

Beck Heslop (University of Manchester, Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine) - Giving a Bleep: How Blind Women Transformed Pedestrian Crossings in Britain, c. 1962-1990.

In 1978, a group of blind women took to the streets in Leamington Spa to block traffic at a pedestrian crossing that did not bleep. Over the course of two hours, they collected some 1,000 signatures petitioning the Department of Transport to install an audible signal at the target crossing. After three years of fruitless correspondence, the protest finally forced the government to capitulate to the women's demands.

Audible pedestrian signals had been around at least since the advent of push-button controlled crossings, pre-dating the Leamington protest by sixteen years. These early signals emerged from a paternalistic impulse towards blind pedestrians as a special class of road users and were provided at a limited number of sites. This was to change in the late 1970s, when blind pedestrians re-appraised the technology in response to changing environmental and political contexts. As traffic infrastructure became more complex, integration discourse spread, and the New Social movements took hold, grass-roots efforts transformed bleepers into an activist demand. Blind women, like those at Leamington Spa, mobilised their own neighbourhood networks to pressure local authorities (and, ultimately, the national government) to permit the wider installation of bleepers.

While not wholly detached from the national disability movement, such bleeper campaigns were more immediately rooted in contemporary community action. They were informal, highly targeted, and made claims to spatial belonging that transcended disability. Here, we find contributions by people largely neglected in extant histories of disability rights. Namely, those of blind women.

Dave Hitchcock (Canterbury Christ Church University) - Feeling Imperially Charitable in Early Modern England

In his book *The Pursuit of Civility*, Keith Thomas explores 'civilizing by force' as, for contemporaries, a morally justified exercise. But a word he barely uses is 'charity', which arguably describes how early modern colonialists felt about their activities, or perhaps how they wanted to feel. In this paper I sketch out an emotional orientation called 'imperial charitability'; where one feels distantly charitable to those that one dominates. To do so I draw on protestant sermonising, material philanthropy, self-satisfied colonial justifications, and the rhetorics of the poor law, and in turn I examine the extensive terrain of practices, powers, and prejudices that feeling this way enabled for 'civilising' and 'improving' elites. I ask if charity, when filtered through empire, was simply another form of domination. Was it a 'poisoned chalice' to be given to reluctant or unwilling recipients? Samuel Purchas wrote in 1625 that the English had a duty 'by the law of nature and humanity', to colonise and 'replenish' other countries and to re-form their inhabitants. Francis Bacon asserted that where the English found only 'nations in name' but not 'nations in right', the superior empire he served had its own right, and perhaps a moral duty, to invade, subdue, and govern. These same men understood their Christian duties at home being charitable to 'their' unfortunates in

very similar terms. The good imperial Protestant might, in Defoe's words, 'Give alms no charity', but he might instead give very charitably to colonial projects of reformation, transformation, and domination, establishing yet another hierarchy between him and the colonised.

Anita Hoffmann (University of York) - Breaking Gender Rules: How One Woman Shaped Venereal Advertising and Sexual Knowledge in Early 18C England

Historical studies frequently mention the abundance of medical advertisements in later eighteenth-century newspapers, particularly of venereal disease cures. Two factors spurred this growth. The first was a 1712 tax loophole that gave birth to a plethora of new newspapers. The second was the actions of an enterprising woman, who, against all gender norms, launched a new, wildly successful venereal disease cure, setting off an advertising war in the newspaper columns. This paper discusses how the hitherto understudied Mrs Garway's innovations changed the face of medical advertising and significantly contributed to widened access to sexual knowledge in the early eighteenth century.

Jo Holmes (University of Portsmouth) - Letters to the Editor: Exploring Changing Public Opinion on Portsmouth's Public Libraries through Correspondence in the Portsmouth Evening News

Today, public libraries are often thought of as positive places with access to reading, resources, and support, but this was not always the case. Themes of control and influence are present throughout contemporary discourse on the development of early public libraries, with those present at meetings even referring to their intended role as one of reducing crime and drinking in communities, with 'appropriate' books being carefully selected for readers to 'better' themselves.

Public libraries have gone on to play a number of roles within their communities throughout the twentieth century. Despite detailed minutes recorded by the Libraries and Museum Committee for Portsmouth offering insight into both the intended roles of Portsmouth's Public Library service and the opinions of the stakeholders involved in delivering this service, it is much harder to discover what the people of Portsmouth felt about the development of the service, and what they understood – or desired – its role to be.

This paper will make use of correspondence in editions of Portsmouth Evening News throughout the long twentieth century to explore the relatively unknown history of public opinion on Portsmouth's Public Library Service. It will consider whether the service has been perceived as a place of leisure, work, education, or control throughout this period, and reflect on the ways in which the public have chosen to publicly engage in debates on the service through the local newspaper.

Vicky Holmes (Notre Dame London, University of Notre Dame (USA) in England) - Invisible People in the Most Visible of Spaces: Reconstructing Spaces of Homelessness in the Victorian City for the Classroom

In the modern West End, the 'hustle and bustle' of London often obscures a landscape of historical restlessness. This paper explores my pedagogical (and current research) approach that reframes contemporary centres of pleasure —from the boutiques of Seven Dials to the colonnades of His Majesty's Theatre—as historical sites of nocturnal survival. By tracing the route of my own commute to the classroom to teach the history of sleep, I demonstrate how the landmarks I pass along my daily route serve as entry points for students to map Victorian exclusion. Through a spatial methodology involving walking seminars, mapping and archival overlays, this paper discusses how I transform the city into a classroom. In doing so, students on study abroad programs are challenged to look beneath the 'trendy' veneer of the West End through an interrogation of sleep not as a biological universal, but as a precarious luxury structured by Victorian hierarchies of morality, legality and worthiness.

Purba Hossain (University of York) - Decentring Colonial Expertise: Indian Translators in the Linguistic Survey of India

In 1894, the Linguistic Survey of India (LSI) was established by George Abraham Grierson to document and classify languages across British India. By 1928, the LSI had published 19 volumes that covered 179 languages and 544 dialects – the languages of 290 million people. Widely remembered as the magnum opus of Grierson's career, the LSI is rarely studied as the triumph of a range of Indian translators, transcribers, transliterators and specimen-collectors. This paper aims to decentre Grierson and argues for seeing Grierson's Indian collaborators and assistants as crucial actors in creating a linguistic understanding of colonial India. It shows that Indian language workers were not passive go-betweens but actively involved in the processes of the state. It reads into the history of colonial knowledge production a history of subaltern, un-acknowledged labour, and explores how colonial command in British India was mediated by Indian translators.

Recognising these hidden and emotional labours reshapes our understanding of the country house as an 'emotional economy' as well as an architectural and economic one. It also opens new interpretive possibilities for heritage: richer, more inclusive narratives that bring women's endurance and their position within the family into view.

Zuzubee Huidrom (University of Edinburgh) - Gender, Memory, and the Politics of War Commemoration in Manipur

This paper theorises the Imphal War Cemetery managed by the Commonwealth War Graves as political and cultural landscapes that shaped and normalised imperial memory of the Second World War. Rather than serving as neutral sites of mourning, these commemorative spaces work as technologies of public history by

commemorating the fallen soldiers from the Imphal campaign. They privilege military sacrifice and masculine heroism while marginalising or erasing civilian suffering. Focusing on the Battle of Imphal, which transformed Manipur into a defensive buffer against Japanese advances, this study highlights the overlooked impact on civilian women whose livelihoods depended on market trade. The paper interrogates how official commemorative practices reinforced hierarchies of value between soldiers and civilians, and between imperial and colonised lives. Drawing on colonial archives and wartime records, the study foregrounds the economic lives of Manipuri women, who sustained households through agriculture and trade before the war. Wartime requisitioning of houses, displacement, and inflation disrupted their livelihoods. Yet, these losses remained excluded from dominant narratives of sacrifice embedded in commemorative landscapes. Situated at the intersection of social and public history, the paper argues that war graves act as spatial regimes of memory that organise what is remembered and what is silenced. Through their architecture, location, and symbolism, they institutionalise gendered and imperial hierarchies of suffering. Commonwealth War Graves do not simply commemorate the war. They actively construct selective historical knowledge, producing enduring silences around women's labour, civilian loss, and colonial experience in the global memory of the Second World War.

Jaina Hunt (University of Portsmouth) - Policing Beauty: Reactions to Elite Never-Married Women's Bodies in Tudor England

This paper explores reactions to elite never-married women's constructions of their physical self, through beauty, fashion, status and identity in Tudor England. It utilises written responses to these constructions, revealing the frequency and significance with which women's physical appearance was scrutinised. Comparative analysis of correspondence and poetry demonstrates the political significance and societal importance of conforming to patriarchal beauty standards within elite networks. It also shows how the never-married women who conformed to these ideals were accorded increased social value, which could translate into personal advantage.

Methodologically, this paper draws primarily on letter correspondence, particularly from foreign ambassadors, with close attention to language and expression. This material reveals the political significance of women's physical appearance, especially at royal court, and the dissection of their looks. The analysis of poetry written about these women, often to gain advantage with them, offer a markedly different perspective being far more complimentary. It focuses on the use of literary techniques which draw parallels between women's beauty and their morality and virtues.

Overall, this paper offers a nuanced perspective on beauty and elite never-married women. This paper contributes to expanding scholarship on early modern beauty by using never-married women as a case study, exploring the unique role of beauty in their social positioning and value. It contributes to ongoing debates on agency, emphasising the paradoxical relationship between patriarchy and female agency. It challenges the traditional view that conforming to patriarchal standards merely restricts agency, revealing instances where conformity could enhance female agency.

Máire Hussey (Trinity College Dublin) - Reading the 1970s Contraception Debates and the 'Permissive' Girl in Ireland through Letters Written to the Taoiseach, 1970-1979

Contraception was one of the key issues which dominated public discourse in the Republic of Ireland throughout the 1970s, as demonstrated by the large volume of letters written to the Taoiseach on the topic within this decade. The debate culminated in the introduction of the 1979 Health (Family Planning) Act by the then Minister for Health Charles Haughey, who famously described it as an 'Irish solution to an Irish problem'. This Act made contraception available on prescription for 'bona fide' family planning purposes, implicitly restricting access to married couples. This paper focuses on the image of the 'permissive girl', namely the young, unmarried woman who is excluded by this legislation. It explores when she emerges or is alluded to, particularly in the letters written by members of the public to the Taoiseach regarding contraception. Although the writers of these letters style themselves as 'ordinary' members of the public, both historians and contemporary politicians identified patterns and templates indicative of lobby groups and orchestrated campaigns. In spite of this, this paper will argue that the letters can offer a sense of the rhetoric used in Irish public discourse, as well as some of the anxieties present in the public sphere during this period. Furthermore, this paper will also demonstrate the ways in which these anxieties centred on the imagined figure of the 'permissive girl' who personified fears around youth, promiscuity, sexual liberation and state control.

Deborah Jeffries (Independent scholar/University of East London) - To Drink or Not to Drink? An Important Question for Theatre Goers in the Nineteenth Century

The sale of alcohol on the premises has always been a pivotal issue for the success of entertainment venues. In 1843 the Theatres Act was passed to create equality between so-called illegitimate theatres and their legitimate counterparts – that is, those with royal patents/licenses from the Lord Chamberlain. It has long been claimed that all theatres licensed under this new Act were prohibited from selling alcohol in the auditorium during a performance. However, this was not the case. There is no mention of alcohol in the Act whatsoever. It is likely that there was an understanding that theatres would continue to be prohibited from selling alcohol in the auditorium and that music halls, still operating under the 1752 Disorderly Houses Act, would continue to be licensed to sell alcohol in the auditorium. It was where in the building and when alcohol was sold, that was the issue, not whether it was sold at all.

London's saloon theatres, which had been operating - some illegally - as a hybrid between theatres and music halls - chose to be licensed as theatres under the 1843 Act but continued their practice of selling alcohol during the performance. After petitioning, this was sanctioned by the Lord Chamberlin, and so - once again - there became a divide between types of theatres. This paper will present an analysis of the similarities and differences of the audience experience at the types of theatres in question, and how the Act was applied to support contrasting business models.

Maisie Jepson (Independent Scholar) - Motherhood and Banner-Making at Greenham Women's Peace Camp

This presentation will examine how banner-making became a dominant factor in women forming bonds and supporting one another at Greenham Women's Peace Camp. It asks how banners made at the camp used particular symbols, motifs and imagery to express particular views. Through visual and oral histories of women banner-makers, I consider the importance of creativity in the lives of women activists, to help us understand how it felt to be part of an art collective campaigning for peace. This talk will focus specifically on the theme of motherhood, which influenced a large number of banner designs.

Re-evaluating the history of women's groups through the lens of creative protest helps to highlight creativity and protest as central components, and we gain a new perspective on the art produced at Greenham Common. Retrospectively termed 'craftivism', this activity concerns the practice of engaged creativity, especially regarding political or social causes. In this instance, Greenham women created banners to reveal their feelings of fear and distrust over nuclear weapons.

Banners were the primary medium for the Greenham women to spread their anti-nuclear message and were a common backdrop across the fences. As the women remained non-violent at the camp, the banners became both a pivotal creative practice for the women and a key attribute in the history of the Common. I argue that the banners were the main focus point in protest at Greenham.

Theo Jung (Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg) - 'Attended divine service, or anything but': Protestant Sermons, Public Speech, and Everyday Rhetorical Criticism in Victorian England

The public sphere of Victorian England was predicated on speech-making, discussion, and a general penchant for talk (McWilliam, 2007). Divine service, especially the preaching of sermons, was central to this burgeoning oral culture. Hitherto, historians have presented a largely top-down view of religious oratory, focusing on influential celebrity preachers sermonising to rapt national audiences (Ellison, 2010; Meisel, 2003; Randall, 2003). Contrasting this was the satirical archetype of the ineffectual preacher, prominent in Victorian fiction from Charles Dickens to Oscar Wilde (Coleman, 2008).

However, it was not nationally famed preachers and writers alone who provided religious oratory and critique. This paper suggests it was an everyday, relatively widespread practice within local Protestant communities. In their diaries, 'ordinary' men and women of diverse ages, classes, and denominations recorded forthright opinions upon the sermons they heard. Based on 50 nineteenth-century diaries, gathered as part of a Leverhulme-funded project exploring communicative norms between c.1840-c.1990, this paper determines what those sat in the pews thought about what they heard from the pulpit, and how this changed across the period. Churchgoing, then, was a key practice in the cultural politics of Victorian public speaking, as actively listening to sermons and recording one's thoughts allowed

congregation members to exercise and hone their skills of rhetorical criticism. Moreover, this paper suggests that for preachers and congregations, divine service was frequently precarious, contentious, and lacklustre in terms of oratory. The stereotype of the inarticulate parson faced with a critical audience was arguably where art imitated life in Victorian England.

Laura Kelly (University of Strathclyde) - Women's Information Network and Abortion Information Activism in 1980s and 1990s Ireland

This paper explores the activism of Women's Information Network (WIN), a Dublin-centred activist group which provided a telephone non-directive counselling service to Irish women experiencing unplanned pregnancies. WIN was established in 1987 against a wider backdrop of repression of reproductive rights in Ireland. This wider context included the introduction of the eighth amendment of the Irish constitution in 1983 by public referendum which protected the rights of the unborn child, and the shutting down of abortion referral services provided by Open Door/Open Line Counselling and the Well Woman Centre in the late 1980s. Activists such as WIN and diaspora groups based in England such as the Irish Women's Abortion Support Group (London) and ESCORT (Liverpool) supported women travelling to England for abortions with advice, information, and practical support in navigating services in the UK. With the recent wave of scholarship on pro-choice activism relating to the 'repeal the 8th campaign', the activism of campaigners in this period has been largely neglected.

This paper draws on recently digitised archival sources relating to WIN through the Digital Repository of Ireland, as well as recent oral history interviews with former WIN members. It seeks to explore the following key questions - what were the motivations and backgrounds of WIN activists? To what extent were they connected to transnational abortion rights groups? What were the challenges they faced, particularly in terms of responses from anti-abortion groups in Ireland? And finally, what was the role of the telephone in making abortion information accessible to women across the country? Ultimately, I seek to highlight the important role that WIN played in providing practical information and advice to Irish women seeking abortion in the 1980s and 1990s and illuminate the experiences and emotional labour of the WIN activists. In addition, inspired by Cait McKinney's work on information activism, this paper highlights the power of the telephone as an instrument of activism.

Aliyah Kerr (Liverpool John Moores University) - A Frontline in the Same War: Black Liverpool, Decolonial Resistance and the Reframing of Anti-Apartheid Activism

This paper examines how Liverpool's black community reconstituted anti-apartheid activism in the 1980s through a distinctly decolonial and subaltern mode of political engagement. It argues that the city's anti-apartheid movement cannot be understood solely as a local extension of British solidarity with South Africa, but as a form of world making forged in the lived experiences of racialised oppression in Liverpool 8. Drawing on oral histories, community generated archives and grassroots campaign materials, the paper demonstrates how black activists reframed apartheid, not as a distant moral

concern but as a structure that mirrored British institutional racism, from discriminatory policing and housing segregation to economic exclusion. In doing so, they repositioned the township and the inner city as interconnected sites of racial governance and resistance. The paper further explores how groups such as Liverpool 8 Against Apartheid transformed the epistemic terrain of the city's activism, embedding global solidarity within local struggles for visibility, dignity and political agency. Their work challenged the white lead anti-apartheid movement's earlier detachment from British racism and articulated a relational understanding of liberation that traversed borders, generations and spatial imaginaries. By foregrounding testimony, cultural production and community memory as legitimate historical sources, this research enacts the methodological commitments of decolonial social history and recovers political subjectivities often marginalised in traditional historiography. Ultimately, this paper argues that Liverpool's black activists were not peripheral participants but critical theorists of solidarity, whose practises compel a rethinking of activism, space and resistance in late twentieth century Britain.

Tabitha Lambert-Bramwell (University of Birmingham) - An Unconventional Arrangement: Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, and Domestic Labour in Twentieth Century Britain

In 1921, Vera Brittain wrote to Winifred Holtby extolling the value of a Bolshevik approach to housekeeping, commenting that the shared division of domestic labour 'sounds so nice, especially when one returns from a day's work ... to the momentarily alien and overwhelming domesticity of one's home!' Brittain and Holtby, having met during their time at Somerville College Oxford, before both working as authors and feminist activists, entered a shared living arrangement shortly afterwards, which they maintained, despite Brittain's marriage and the birth of her children, until Holtby's death in 1935.

This paper will argue that communal living was an integral way through which middle-class working women dealt with the difficulty of balancing professional work with domestic labour and childcare. I consider how Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby's working, feminist, platonic and queer partnership simultaneously constituted a practical, domestic partnership born out of necessity, becoming an essential tool in allowing them to establish their professional careers. Drawing from a range of primary sources – including Brittain and Holtby's letters, and the memoirs of Brittain and their servant, Amy Burnett – I consider how Brittain and Holtby's unusual living arrangement was a way through which they navigated this domestic conundrum. I additionally consider the conflicts emerging within these often exploitative relationships. Ultimately, this paper examines the interpersonal and labour dynamics at place in feminist and professional households, considering the ways through which middle-class women's professional work and feminist activism was facilitated both by strategic partnerships and the labour of working-class women.

Lea Leboissetier (FWO/University of Antwerp) - Selling Difference? Emotion and Strategies in Encounters Between Migrant Pedlars and their British Customers (1850s-1950s)

Britain's commercial landscape changed profoundly in the nineteenth century. In particular, the early-modern networks of migrant pedlars coming from the Alps had largely disappeared from Britain by the 1850s. Nevertheless, migrants continued to engage in mobile trading well into the twentieth century. Eastern European Jews, Italians, and later colonial subjects used itinerant selling as an entry-level occupation, selling a variety of commodities. From the 1900s onwards – and especially after 1914 – authorities grew increasingly hostile towards migrant traders, depicting them as spies, unfair competitors to British labourers, or as individuals bound to become dependent on public relief. Indian pedlars, in particular, were routinely suspected of being Lascar deserters and accused of 'miscegenation' by the Home Office. In contrast, historians such as Laura Tabili and David Holland have recently argued that encounters between ordinary Britons and migrants were generally more positive than conflictual sources might have led us to believe. Drawing on more than 200 working-class autobiographies and traders' ego-documents, this paper contributes to this discussion by investigating the attitudes of British customers towards migrant mobile traders. It explores how fear, curiosity, attraction, or familiarity could coexist in doorstep encounters, and how migrant traders strategically anticipated and played with such emotions through an 'ethnification' (and, often, 'gendering') of their products and doorstep/street performances.

Robyn Lee (Cardiff and Bristol Universities) - Beyond Deviance: Respectability and Interracial Marriage in Early Twentieth-Century Wales

Cardiff was the world's leading port for exporting coal at the turn of the twentieth century due to the expansion of the South Wales coalfield. The port's growing coal trade attracted seamen from Somalia, Yemen, India, Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, Greece, Spain, Portugal, the Caribbean, Africa, and Eastern Europe, many of whom settled in Butetown (Tiger Bay), marrying English and Welsh women and forming families. Newspapers foregrounded conflict, scandal, and moral panic in their framing of interracial relationships, portraying women who married outside their nationality and ethnicity as deviant. Historians' reliance on newspapers has led to assumptions rather than investigations of whether women who crossed racial boundaries were excluded from respectability.

This paper examines how respectability shaped the inclusion and exclusion of English and Welsh women who married men of different nationalities in early twentieth-century Wales. It argues that respectability was flexible and varied according to geographic location, and that women could maintain social legitimacy while crossing racial boundaries through negotiating respectability. Using census data from Cardiff between 1911 and 1937, alongside oral histories from the 1989 Women's Lives in Butetown Project, this paper demonstrates that many interracial marriages were stable, long-

term, and embedded within working-class communities. Women sustained respectability through marriage, domestic order, and ordinary family life, challenging binary distinctions between deviance and respectability. Situating interracial marriage within a multicultural Welsh port city, the paper shows how inclusion and exclusion were contingent processes shaped by gender, race, class, and place, contributing to broader debates about how respectability regulated belonging while allowing space for negotiation and everyday resistance.

Tianxin Li (University of St Andrews) - Making Home on the Move: Portable Domesticity and Emotional Experience in Dorothy Wordsworth's Travels

This paper examines how the notion of home became portable for early-nineteenth-century women travellers through the case of Dorothy Wordsworth's travels in Scotland (1803) and the European continent (1820). By exploring Wordsworth's interactions with domestic objects, daily routines, and family members, it argues that home was not only framed by the fixed domestic interior but was constituted through material and emotional experience. Travel functioned as an extension of domesticity instead of a disruption.

Based on Wordsworth's travel writing and Grasmere journals, the paper explores her attention to domestic objects and spaces on her journeys. These familiar things of home travelled as personalized cultural images that shaped her perceptions of the environments she encountered. Central to these images is the garden in Grasmere, communally designed and tended with her brother William, which symbolised familial bonds and home-making. Wordsworth interpreted gardens encountered during travel through the lens of her own, creating a materialised standard of domestic space and reinforcing emotional attachment to home. The paper further foregrounds the emotional dimension of portable domesticity by extending Wordsworth's interaction with cultivated nature into the wilderness. It argues that her solitude in wild landscapes consistently led her back towards human habitation, companionship, and familial connection, thus reconsidering the understanding of domestic comfort as part of middle-class family construction.

Engaging with emotional history and material culture, this research situates Wordsworth's experience within broader early nineteenth-century concerns about family and emotions, investigating how portable domesticity enabled a consistent negotiation between women's family roles and their own selfhood.

Anna Lively (University of Strathclyde) - Women on the Right: Anti-Communist Activism and the Women's Guild of Empire in Interwar Britain

In the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution, 'red scare' politics gathered momentum in British political life. As is increasingly recognised in the historiography, this mobilisation emerged from grassroots levels as well as from political parties, the press and intelligence services. However, the role of women's organisations within

British interwar anti-communism remains underexplored, despite the growth of studies of women in right-wing and anti-communist politics in other contexts. This paper addresses this lacuna through the case study of the Women's Guild of Empire, which was established during the 'first red scare' in 1920 by suffrage activists Elsie Bowerman and Flora Drummond. Drawing on correspondence, reports and publications from the Women's Library at LSE, Conservative Party Archives, National Archives and elsewhere, this paper explores the activities and reception of this little-studied organisation, which had an estimated 40,000 members in branches across England, Scotland and Wales. The Women's Guild of Empire saw combatting communism and labour activity as central to its mission, prompting a mass demonstration against the 1926 General Strike. It campaigned on an eclectic range of other issues, ranging from animal rights to buying 'empire goods' and anti-fascism. As well as considering the organisation's class and regional dynamics, this paper examines the role of transnational connections in the Women's Guild of Empire's work, including through its Australian branch. Addressing the 'Politics, Policy and Citizenship' strand, it offers a fresh perspective on the complex legacies of the British suffrage movement and the role of women on the political right.

Vicky Long (Newcastle University) - Throwing the Baby Out with the Bathwater: Disabled Children's Rights and the Disability Rights Movement in Late Twentieth-Century Britain

Interest in children's rights and disability rights developed in close proximity, demonstrated by the United Nations' decision to designate 1979 and 1981 respectively as International Years of the Child and Disabled Persons. Yet this focus on childhood and disability did not automatically advance disabled children's rights. Closer examination of the UN's objectives reveals potential conflicts. International Year of the Child aimed to advocate 'on behalf of children' and raise awareness of their 'special needs'. International Year of Disabled Persons was framed more in the language of rights and agency, aiming to foster 'full participation and equality' for disabled people.

Drawing on materials from disability rights organisations and charities for children and disabled people, this paper argues that disabled children's needs were an obstacle for Britain's emerging disability rights movement. Disability-led organisations, like the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, viewed traditional disability charities' paternalistic approach as infantilising. Charities' willingness to mobilise images of helpless, vulnerable disabled children to elicit pity and donations was a particular grievance for disability rights activists. My paper focuses on age and impairment to explore how and why attitudes towards, and experiences of, disabled children varied. Disability rights could be combined readily with the child liberation movement that sought to erase boundaries between adults and children and enable children to exert agency. This facilitated the incorporation of older disabled children within disability rights. The rights of younger children, those who had more care needs, or children with a learning disability, were more likely to be overlooked.

Carrie Long (Caird Fellow, Royal Museums Greenwich) - Navigating Welfare: Greenwich Hospital School and State-Led Childcare and Welfare, 1806-1840

This paper investigates the role of Greenwich Hospital School in providing welfare and childcare for maritime families in the nineteenth-century, focusing on parental needs and expectations, institutional policy, and child agency.

Greenwich Hospital School (GHS) was one of the earliest institutions in Britain to provide state-led welfare and education opportunities for children of both genders, from 1806-1840. It continuously housed, educated, clothed, and apprenticed 1,000 children aged 9-12. GHS originated as a form of welfare intended to entice recruits to the navy through its unique benefit to support their families. However, charity was not guaranteed and required individuals to petition GHS for support. It is through these petitions that this paper will recover the voices and experiences of naval families, revealing the role of naval charity within the wider social history of the origins of state welfare, as well as the strategies and claims of the petitioners.

This paper considers the familial attitudes and expectations of the school, considering both their personal need in terms of disability and popular demand for childcare at challenging points in their lifecycle to support families at home or to enable fathers to go to sea. It will also consider how institutional responsibility and expectations, influenced by ideas on gender, class and deservingness, changed over time and shaped welfare policy and care. Utilising drawings and letters contained in official administrative records it will also consider the agency of children, their emotions and experiences at Greenwich Hospital School.

Laura Love (Essex University) - Using Vernacular Photography to Ground an Art Historical Approach to Trans Bodies in the UK

My doctoral research is a methodologically art-historical study of the visual representation of transgender individuals in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century. Drawing on newly accessible archival material, it centres on the visual culture produced by and within the Beaumont Society, a controversial British social organisation for self-identified ‘transvestite’ men and predominantly closeted transgender women, inspired by organisations in the US.

My paper will examine domestic-style photography circulated among members and printed in their monthly publication (1960-1980), alongside letters and written discussions concerning the aesthetics and material qualities of what were described by one member as the ‘accoutrements of femininity’, and by another as a ‘pearls and teacup’ aesthetic. I argue that these sources reveal a highly curated visual regime that distinguished the Beaumont Society from other contemporary trans communities and functioned as a strategy for negotiating hostile social, medical, and legal frameworks. Particular attention is paid to practices of self-policing, respectability, and the fear of medical pathologisation or accusations of paraphilia, as well as the implications of these strategies for later debates around acceptable forms of trans visibility.

Situating the Beaumont Society within broader visual and print cultures of the period, my research compares their internally produced imagery with representations in non-member publications, exploring differences in intended audience, purpose, and sensory emphasis. In dialogue with Susan Stryker's assertion of the political centrality of images in transgender history, my presentation argues that these visual practices both enabled forms of survival and contributed to enduring tensions around identity, medical gatekeeping, and the visual legibility of modern transgender lives.

Jane Malafaia Francioni de Abreu (University of Salamanca) - Comparing Historicist and Presentist Views of Forgiveness and Honour in *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623)

Can society forget the affronts to personal trauma over social order or do we remember the traumas of long ago collectively as a society? This paper explores *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623) by John Ford, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, and William Rowley, through the dual critical frameworks of Historicism and Presentism focusing on the play's treatment of gender, class, and forgiveness. Adapted from Cervantes' *Novelas Ejemplares,* 'La Fuerza de la Sangre' and 'La Gitanilla', the work fuses Spanish stories with English moral frameworks.

From a Historicist perspective, the text reveals the early seventeenth-century beliefs surrounding forgiveness, honour, and traditional gender roles. The play's resolution reinforces early modern values of justice, in which marriage restores social order rather than honouring Clara's personal trauma.

A Presentist reading, by contrast, challenges the ethical cost of such reconciliation through a modern critical lens. The play's romanticized violence, implausible plots, and forced happy ending invite questions about complicity in structures where the silence and control of women are more valued than the women themselves. While some scholars caution applying contemporary values to early modern texts, in this case it allows for reflection on the (d)evolution of gendered power dynamics and familial expectations.

The Spanish Gypsy offers a compelling case to examine how this work negotiates violence, forgiveness, and social restoration as well as how these negotiations unsettle contemporary audiences. By examining *The Spanish Gypsy* through both frameworks, the uncomfortable and continuing struggle between social order and personal justice is exposed.

Lucy McCormick (University of Birmingham) - Sensory Experiences of International Suffrage Activism, 1902-29

The International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) organised national suffrage campaigns into a global movement. Although its membership was comprised of belligerent nations, the IWSA remarkably survived the First World War. My paper focuses on sensory experiences to understand why the IWSA remained intact when

global conflict, interpersonal tensions, and ideological polarities gave it every reason to disband.

My paper offers two key points: firstly, sensory experiences of international suffrage activism were intense and politically galvanising. Sensations – the sound of a suffrage speech in a foreign language, the spectacle of an international pageant, the feel of the IWSA's monthly paper in their hands – were profoundly felt and emboldened their commitment to the cause. Secondly, international suffragists articulated those sensory experiences in vivid detail in order to bolster empathetic connections with distant members. Sensation is an immediately individual experience, but it also bonded women from different continents insofar as they too could imagine the sensory experience of an IWSA congress. Rich sensory language allowed distant suffragists to emulate the emotional experiences (and concomitant political loyalties) to which activism gave rise.

The historiography of the international women's suffrage movement can be enriched by attending to embodied, emotional, and sensory experiences. Whilst political and discursive scholarship has proved productive, it cannot fully explain why international suffragists' devotion to an organisation which, at times, compromised national loyalties. As the Finnish IWSA officer Annie Furuhjelm put it: 'The true spirit of internationalism which pervades the meetings of the Alliance cannot be described; it must be felt.'

Caoimhe McGonigle (Queen's University Belfast and National Museums NI) - Beyond the Frontier: Ulster-American Urban Life in the Nineteenth-Century American North

The Ulster American Folk Park is an open-air museum dedicated to the experience of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Ulster emigrants who crossed the Atlantic and created new lives for themselves on the American frontier. The museum's focus is one which runs parallel to the historiography of the 'Scotch-Irish' in the United States which privileges stories of rugged, individualistic eighteenth-century Presbyterian frontiersmen, their survival in the rural backcountry, and their contributions to the formation of the American Republic and national identity. This body of work has been traditionally set apart from the historiography of the Irish diaspora, that of post-Great Famine Catholic immigrants in the bustling urban centres of the rapidly industrialising north. My work seeks to take a spatial approach to help understand the experiences of those lost somewhere between these two competing dominant narratives; the 'Ulster-Americans' who made New York, Boston and Philadelphia their home in the mid-nineteenth-century. By focusing on the tenement apartments in which many of these migrants lived, it seeks to recover an experience that is largely absent from both scholarship and museum interpretation, whilst offering opportunities for diversification and additional interpretation of urban immigrant life at the UAFP. This work builds upon and takes inspiration from the Tenement Museum, in which the apartment of an Irish family, the Moores, who lived in New York City in 1869 has been recreated, and the Museum of the Home, London, which features a reconstructed 1950s living space of an Irish immigrant couple.

Thomas McGrath (Independent researcher) - The Miser: Hoarding, Homes and Identity in Britain, c.1750-1930

The miser was immortalised in print by authors and satirical artists, long before Charles Dickens even conjured up the character of Ebeneezer Scrooge. The tight-fisted, penny-pinching misanthropic personality in well-known, but who were the real misers who inspired Dickens, Molière, Ainsworth and others? This paper identifies real-life examples drawn from British history across the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It delves beyond the sensational press stories around these individuals, using archival documents to uncover more about their backgrounds and families. As well as offering interpretations about how age, circumstances or mental health manifested itself in their unusual behaviour, this paper explores how the miser lived at the extremities of domesticity; often in abject poverty whilst surrounded by hidden fortunes or hoards of unusual items.

Kathleen McIlvenna (University of Derby) - Examining family, Community and Work through Retirement Gift Giving in Britain 1860-1901

On 28 August 1890, Mr Rogers, the police superintendent in Darlington was presented with an illuminated address, gold watch and purse of money from the local community marking their appreciation for his twenty-six service. In addition, Mrs Rogers, the superintendent's wife, was also presented with a gold bracelet as part of the event.

Between 1861 and 1901 over 450 occasions of retirement gift giving were recorded in the British local newspapers. During this time period the type of people receiving gifts included, clergymen and military men, but also policemen, railways workers and workhouse masters. In approximately 30 of the 484 presentations of retirement gifts, gifts were given to another person in addition to the retiree. This paper will explore the moments when family was also acknowledged alongside a person's service to their role and the community.

Using the newly constructed database of retirement gifts, this paper will examine the people, gifts and moments of giving tracing how and why family relationships were acknowledged in these moments of celebration. Building on the work of Prof Simon Morgan, this paper will examine how the practice of gift giving in retirement changed during the second half of the nineteenth century. As Morgan argues these moments of gift giving are reflections of masculine respectability, but also opportunities for lower social orders and women to exert influence and power. I'll argue that by examining these moments that spouses and other family members were acknowledged we can gain greater insight into the relationship between family and work and how the community viewed and acknowledged that.

Alasdair McNeill (Birkbeck, University of London) - Women in Cheese: Female Cheesemongers and their Business in Eighteenth-Century London

In the eighteenth century the English cheese trade was booming. Rural production had been expanding for decades to meet increasing demand from urban areas, and in London a group of around 25 cheesemongers controlled the wholesale trade in the capital through a monopoly on transport routes between country and city. Alongside this influential group there were at least another 300 retailers of cheese in London, amongst whom existed a meaningful number of female cheesemongers.

These women are neglected in the scholarship yet were neither marginal to the trade nor inconsequential figures in their families and communities. They can be seen trading from fixed premises registered in their own names, insuring businesses, utensils and stock; some supplied regular orders to institutions like workhouses while also selling to everyday customers, showing shrewd and resourceful business sense alongside their roles in family and household.

Using sources that include wills, trade records and apprenticeship documents, my paper opens a window into the life of these women, offering an insight into the contribution of female cheesemongers as retailers, employers, mistresses to apprentices, and to their social and economic importance in families and wider community. Case studies place these women at the forefront of the picture, outlining where they fitted in to London's thriving cheese trade; personal stories of wives, widows, mothers and traders that can help us understand more about women's work, families and retailing in eighteenth-century London.

Daniel Meldon (University of Warwick) - Problematising Warwickshire: Early Modern Spatial Perspectives

This paper reassesses the traditional 'county history' model of historical scholarship through a case study of early modern Warwickshire. In the past, England's counties have often been treated as static settings of human existence, or containers in which processes and events occur. Most of England's counties, however, have borders inherited from medieval arrangements, with little regard for geography, social interactions or popular identities. Recent theoretical advances argue that we should instead consider such spaces as results of relational constitution involving physical sites, objects and human agents. Using early modern Warwickshire as an example, this paper examines how such a conceptually informed approach might enhance our understanding of historical regions.

Drawing on models from history, geography and anthropology, and mobilising an archival partnership with the Warwickshire County Record Office, the presentation uses literary sources alongside visual and cartographic materials, twinned with an analysis of placenames and local topography to examine Warwickshire between c.1550-1750. Additionally, it explores the value of GIS tools for the study of historical counties, which facilitate the processing and comparison between datasets such as

toponyms and physical geography. It will be argued that both boundaries and interactions evolved in dynamic processes which require historians to work with much more flexible tools than traditional county models.

By adopting such perspectives, this paper contributes to broader considerations of space, place, heritage, and regional identities in the early modern period. The Social History Conference would form an ideal platform for the presentation of early results from a related doctoral project.

Paul Mersh (University of Greenwich) Social Network Analysis and Forgetting

Paul Ricoeur analysed how society remembers and, more importantly for him, forgets. He suggests that people and events enter social memory and others leave it, as if a social memory is 'edited' by the members of the social group. Is it possible to chart this process of 'forgetting' and to explain who is remembered and who is forgotten and, more importantly why they are forgotten? In this paper, egocentric social network analysis has been used to reconstruct the social networks of historical figures so that who is remembered and who is forgotten in the present time can be understood.

Charles Gordon, a senior British Army officer who lived in the mid nineteenth century, has been used as a case study; he is remembered by the residents of Gravesend in Kent each year in a commemorative service in a park that is named after him. He is remembered for his philanthropic work in the town, not for his considerable military exploits. However, archival research has revealed that he worked with many other people in town, this included people of many different religious, ethnic and social backgrounds. Most of these people are now largely forgotten in the town; these include religious and political leaders.

The paper concludes with an exploration of why these people might have been forgotten, these involve complex religious and political forces.

Lan Mi (York School of Architecture, University of York) - Manifesting the Social Architecture of Liverpool's Chinatown: Analysing the Socio-Spatial Characteristics of the Chinese Freemasons' Building (1890s-Present)

Background: Despite its status as Europe's first Chinese immigrant association, the Chinese Freemasons U.K. has been studied primarily through sociological lenses. There is a need for further research into the architecture of the Chinese Freemasons U.K. and its associated urban spaces.

Objectives: This article explores the development of the Chinese Freemasons' building with the urban spatial patterns of Liverpool's Chinatown. From an 'urban-to-building' perspective, it examines the location evolution of architecture, facade characteristics, and internal spatial configurations of the Chinese Freemasons U.K. from its establishment in the 1890s to the present. Furthermore, it analyzes the intricate

relationship between Chinese immigrant association buildings and the Chinese diaspora society.

Methods: A multi-dimensional approach was adopted: (1) Literature Analysis: Primary sources, including records and historical photographs from the Liverpool Record Office, were analyzed to trace architectural transformations; (2) Field Survey: On-site investigations and photographic documentation of the Chinese Freemasons U.K. building provided first-hand empirical data on its spatial context; (3) Comparative Study: The building was compared with domestic and global counterparts to identify the retention of traditional Chinese architectural attributes within the diaspora.

Results: Closely intertwined with the historical shifting of Chinatown, the Chinese Freemasons U.K. in Liverpool has undergone at least three relocations, each characterized by the adaptive reuse of existing British architectural structures. From an extrinsic perspective, the current Chinese Freemasons U.K. building functions as a visual landmark. Its façade, adorned with traditional Chinese decorative elements, serves as a deliberate projection of 'Chineseness' within the urban streetscape. Intrinsically, the interior is a multifunctional space designed for social interaction, rest, and ritual. The spatial organization follows a vertical hierarchy—transitioning from public to private zones—which resonates with the layout logic of traditional Chinese association buildings.

Contributions: By serving as a representative case study of Chinese immigrant association buildings, this research offers new insights into the architectural study of the Chinese diaspora, specifically regarding how ethnic identity is and maintained within a Western urban context.

Sikha Mohanty (Indian Institute of Technology Patna) - To be Deviant or Not to Be: Exploring Bar Dancers' Narratives in Indian Documentaries

The ban on dance bars in Maharashtra (India) in 2005 was intended to curb the alleged spread of prostitution/sex work within these establishments, linking their operation with criminality. It predominantly targeted bar dancers, framing them as an embodiment of deviant woman sexuality. The narrative of the ban disregarded the nuanced regulatory framework governing dance bars and perpetuated societal misconceptions surrounding the profession of bar dancing. Despite opposition from bar dancers seeking acceptance of their work within licensed establishments, this resistance inadvertently reinforced existing societal hierarchies, further marginalising sex workers. Media representations often sensationalise bar dancers as morally dubious individuals profiting from the public display of their sexuality. Documentaries such as Mira Nair's India Cabaret (1985), Saba Dewan's Delhi-Mumbai-Delhi (2006), and Anish Patel's The Fight to Dance (2006) sought to challenge these perceptions by portraying dancers as active agents shaping their own narratives. However, these documentaries encountered obstacles in dismantling stereotypes surrounding deviant woman sexuality. In establishing their own right to perform bodily labour, bar dancers are motivated and even at times encouraged to other the sex worker, excluding them from discussions on their right to labour, creating a hierarchy between women practising any form of bodily labour in India. This paper critically examines these

documentaries, exploring how they negotiate agency and contest societal norms while shedding light on the persistent marginalisation of sex workers within these narratives.

Cecilia Molesini (University of Bologna) - Gender, Deviance and the Psychiatric Reform in Feltre (Italy)

The closure of the psychiatric hospital of Feltre, a town near Venice in northeastern Italy, in 1996 marked the outcome of a long process of institutional and cultural transformation that, as in many other parts of the country, began in the late 1960s. After 1968, new professional figures – often women, such as psychologists, social workers and educators – entered psychiatric institutions, challenging established hierarchies and long-standing approaches to mental distress. While recent historiography has increasingly addressed gender through the experiences of female inmates and practices of confinement, less attention has been paid to the women who worked within psychiatric hospitals as professionals of care. This paper addresses this gap by examining the experiences of several women who held different professional roles at the psychiatric hospital of Feltre and who actively participated in the transformations that eventually led to its closure. The analysis draws on a selection of oral history interviews with women from different generations and professional backgrounds, whose trajectories illuminate the gradual reconfiguration of psychiatric care over time. Some of these women also came into contact with the psychiatrist Franco Basaglia, who during those years was advancing a political struggle that culminated in the Law 180 in 1978, a landmark reform that mandated the closure of psychiatric hospitals in Italy. By foregrounding these professional biographies, the paper sheds light on a locally grounded yet nationally significant process that unfolded at the intersection of changing definitions of deviance, evolving practices of care, and shifting regimes of social inclusion and exclusion.

Vicky Nagy (University of Tasmania) - Blurred Lines between Free Migrants and Convicts in Colonial Australia

Contrary to popular thought, the Australian convict system included free migrants and locally born peoples as well as transportees from around the British Empire. However, until now it has been unclear how permeable the boundaries were of this system and how easily one could move from being a few migrant to being branded a convict within the Australian colonies.

Bringing together research on over 600 men and women who mostly migrated from the UK or were descended of migrants from there, this paper will discuss how the promised life of adventure for soldiers or wealth, health and happiness for migrants in the Australian colonies could sour. Boredom, inequalities, and injustices could see the rapid shift from respectability to deviance. In turn, colonial administrators and justices would recommend transportation to increasingly remote penal locations further isolating free migrants from their homes.

Dylan Neill Andres (University of Bristol) - The Outlaw Hero? Violence and Legitimacy in the Case of Henry Avery, c. 1695-1720

In 1694, a sailor named Henry Avery led a mutiny aboard an English warship. Not even two years later, he commanded his newly pirate crew to pillage a ship belonging to the Indian Mughal, won a fortune, and disappeared – never to be seen again. Short-lived as it was, Avery's piratical career captured the public's imagination immediately after his disappearance, resulting in a literary myth that portrayed him as both a rogue hero and a dangerous outlaw worthy of admiration, fear, and legend. At the heart of this paradoxical representation were complex and often competing understandings of outlaw violence, which became the central axis of a legend built upon ideas of dangerous but legitimate resistance to perceived injustice.

As the most notorious literary phenomenon of the Golden Age of piracy, the case of Henry Avery demonstrates how early eighteenth-century English print culture imagined piracy as a community grounded in violent practice. This paper reveals two areas of ambivalence in sociocultural understandings of violent deviance. First, it exposes the rhetorical paradoxes created by positioning violence as instrumental in the construction of heroic identities, transforming criminals into folk heroes by framing outlaw violence within the legitimised bounds of male honour, justice and power. Secondly, it reveals anxieties in contemporary understandings of maritime criminal violence, conducted beyond the boundaries of national sovereignty and maritime law, but projected against those regarded as national or racial 'others'. By painting sea robbers as both heroes and outlaws, violence constructed piracy as a stage for complex ideas of deviance, legitimacy, and maritime sovereignty.

Micaela Panes (Cardiff University) - A Changing World: Women and the Labour Party in Wales, c.1945-1970s

This paper examines the experiences and political activism of working-class women within the Welsh Labour Party in the postwar period, challenging narratives that characterise women's Labour organisation after 1945 as one of decline. While women were crucial to Labour's electoral success and constituted a significant proportion of party membership, their postwar activism has received limited scholarly attention, often overshadowed by studies of the interwar period or exceptional women. Drawing on material from local Labour Party Women's Sections, constituency federations, advisory councils, and the local press, this paper centres grassroots activism to reassess women's political engagement during a period of significant social, economic, and political change.

The paper situates women's activism within the broader transformation of postwar Wales, including deindustrialisation, the expansion of the welfare state, and women's increased participation in paid employment. It argues that women adapted their political activity in response to these changes, using their lived experiences as consumers, workers, wives, and mothers to shape political priorities. Despite persistent frustration with women's marginalisation within party structures, Labour women did not disengage. Instead, they continued to view the party as a vehicle for

advancing issues such as consumer protection, equal pay, workplace discrimination, and childcare provision.

By focusing on everyday political activism, this paper challenges interpretations that frame the period as a retreat from political engagement and highlights the importance of local histories for understanding continuity and change in women's political lives. In doing so, it contributes to broader efforts to recover women's everyday activism in British political history.

Alison Pedley (University of Roehampton) - Careful, Considerate and Attentive Manner: Female Attendants at Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum 1863 to 1920

Contemporary views of asylum attendants in nineteenth-century England were often negative, and it has been suggested that they were 'recruited from the dregs of society' and that asylum work was 'an occupation of last resort.' As an occupation its status was belittled and viewed negatively, however it was one which the attendant staff felt worth defending and one which became more professionalised with the turn of the twentieth century. For many, a career in attending the insane became their life's work and all-encompassing part of their families' lives. The attendants employed in Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum were drawn from ordinary working backgrounds, not always with the necessary skills and experience to care for the sick, often attracted to the role by associated benefits, such as a pension, civil service employment and housing. At Broadmoor in particular, all were removed and isolated from general society whilst in the process of isolating and caring for what were seen as some of society's most problematic people, 'criminal lunatics'. Taking the female attendant staff of Broadmoor as a case study, this paper investigates who the attendants were, why they chose to do asylum work and the impact that working in an institution had on their personal and social lives.

Luka Pejić (Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia) - Enemies of the state and their revolutionary practices: Anarchism in late nineteenth-century Croatia

The paper aims to explain the social and political circumstances that led to the emergence of anarchism in Croatia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The paper will focus on the transfer of activist practices and theoretical concepts across Southeastern Europe, with an emphasis on anarchist activities in Croatia. It will also examine the revolutionary tactics of Croatian anarchists and the authorities' repressive measures to suppress the spread of subversive ideas. Despite the labour movement in this area lagging behind that of other European countries, revolutionary concepts such as anarchism emerged in Croatia during the 1880s. The first strikes in this area occurred in the late 1860s, the first trade unions were established during the 1870s, and the anarchist and communist press spread throughout Croatia during the 1880s. Finally, in 1894, the important Social Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia entered the political scene. With the development of the labour movement, conditioned by the migration of the workforce that disseminated

revolutionary ideas, the activities of anarchists in Croatia also intensified. Between 1900 and 1914, anarchists participated in general strikes, distributed printed materials, founded sports collectives, and initiated the establishment of (short-lived) anarchist communes, among other activities. This paper presents a case study focusing on a distinctly rural country on the periphery of industrial Europe in the late nineteenth century. As such, the paper contributes to the understanding of the history of radical movements in Southeast Europe and their connections to similar developments across the continent.

Corinna Peniston-Bird (Lancaster University) - Prangs, Pubs and Pups: the Cultural Memory of the Battle of Britain, 1943 to 2026.

In August 1940, Winston Churchill memorably praised the pilots defending Britain against the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain with the words: 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few'. That debt of recognition weaving together the British Home and Battle Fronts has been acknowledged from the first acts of remembrance in 1943 to the present day. This paper explores the cultural memory of the Battle of Britain over place and over time and the significance of multiplicity and narrative. Despite the gradual loss of those who remembered the war first hand, the transition between communicative memory to cultural memory (Jan Assmann, 2008) is not necessarily the transition from the fluid to the fixed.

The cultural memory of the Battle of Britain can be read through its invocations: not only in prose but also in the rituals of remembrance such as Battle of Britain Day (15 September), memorial services and flights and in the emphases and omissions of a wide range of genres of material culture. The source base of this paper therefore includes such objects as postage stamps, locomotives, cartoons, tv and cinema, lace panels, jigsaw puzzles, video games, airfields, pubs, aircraft hangars, as well as purpose-built memorials such as Harry Gray's in Capel-Le-Ferne, Kent (1993) and Paul Day's on the Embankment, London (2005). These underline how narrative and remembrance intertwine, the implications of both persistent and of evolving tropes, and their regional, national and international inflections. The paper concludes by exploring how the meaning ascribed to the Battle can also be read in its invocation in contexts far removed from the specific commemoration of the war.

Catherine Phipps (University of Bristol) - 'The Evil Immigrants Who Live on Vice': Race and Empire in Christian Missions to Marine Sex Workers in 19th and 20th-century Britain

This paper addresses the history of British port cities through one building: 3 Wellclose Square in Whitechapel. In 1829, the first reform home for marine sex workers was founded here, the Maritime Penitent Female Refuge, and in 1958 the building that had previously been the Seamen's Mission hall was converted to a reform home for sex workers, Church House. Hundreds of women stayed here throughout the 19th and 20th century. Their experiences reflected contemporary attitudes towards race, gender and empire.

In 19th and 20th-century British port cities, Christian mission efforts to seafarers tried to 'rescue' women who sold sex. Concerned for the wellbeing of women in port communities, they often using the fear of 'vice' to voice changing concerns about Empire, migration, and racial boundaries. For example, the Maritime Penitent Female Refuge was established by Reverend 'Boatswain' Smith to improve the welfare of seafarers. One of the first 'reform homes' for sex workers in London, these efforts to save fallen' women were part of campaigns to improve the moral welfare of British sailors so as to avoid drawing white racial prestige into question if they were to be seen bringing 'vice' to ports in the British Empire. Over a hundred years later, Father Joseph Williamson, who founded Church House, blamed the rise of sex work and 'vice' around East London ports on growing immigration at the end of the British Empire. Examining this reform home sheds light on changing attitudes towards sex and race in 19th and 20th-century London.

Giada Pizzoni (European University Institute) - Can Early Modern Women Teach Us How to Defy Sexual Harassment?

The European Institute for Gender Equality defines sexual harassment as follows: 'any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'. Harassment feeds from power; it has the purpose to offend, intimidate, and control either psychologically or sexually. In both instances, victims often feel confused, alone, and uncertain whether they caused the abuse. They are often younger, with less power and can be threatened to comply. As relevant as it feels today, it is exactly what Catholic women experienced during Confession in seventeenth-century Italy. Women approached the sacrament to share their doubts and hopes, ranging from reproduction to menstruation, but at times were met with patronising remarks that unsettled them. The men dismissed these comments as sheer camaraderie, boasting or curiosity, belittling women who remained upset or resentful, as they had merely provided them with advice and support. Yet, the Vatican Archives show us how some women deemed these exchanges inappropriate and stood up to such abuse.

William Plant (University of York) - A Parish Church of Steam: Complexity in the Country Railway Station

Sitting on the edge of the North York Moors, Grosmont is in many ways an early railway town, grown out of the late Georgian interest in this burgeoning technology. The settlement, and its station, have much to tell us about the significance of the country railway to the people and communities that relied on it for numerous generations between the 1830s and 1960s.

However, like all country stations, Grosmont has been overlooked by historical research of all forms, leaving its true potential as a historical and heritage asset untapped. Unlike the urban 'cathedrals of steam' that are more well known, this research looks to champion the hundreds of 'parish churches of steam' to be found throughout the country.

Using a multidisciplinary approach centred around Buildings Archaeology and Social History, this paper will demonstrate the untapped complexity and nuance of Grosmont's station. It looks to understand not just the building's own story, but also its significance to the people of the area that it was built to serve. This is done through the combination of a detailed analysis of the fabric of the building with a range of archival and photographic material to present a truly unique insight into the constantly developing life of an academically marginalised building type. This also feeds into our ongoing strategic management of stations as heritage assets.

Through these methods, an appreciation is gained for the wide-ranging historical impact of the country railway station, touching all aspects of life - work, leisure, trade, tourism, and more.

Angela Platt (St Mary's University, Twickenham) - A Sealed Hope: Love, Belief and a Box in a Woman's Religious Society in Inter-War England

An advertisement in *The Evening News* in April 1939 read 'Crime and Banditry, Distress and Perplexity will increase in England until the Bishops Open Joanna Southcott's Box'. Such messages proliferated in the interwar era as the Panacea Society, formed in 1916, believed that opening this century-old Box of prophecies would inaugurate the next dispensation of God's heavenly kingdom on earth. Joanna Southcott, an eighteenth-century prophetess, had curated a list of prophecies and locked them in a trunk which could only be opened per her instructions (by 24 Church of England Bishops, when England reached a state of national emergency). This society, mainly led and operated by women, sought to open the Box so they could continue Southcott's legacy and bring in a new era of English religious life. These women engaged in a range of creative activities to try to persuade the bishops to open the Box, including the inauguration of a Healing Ministry which reached global audiences. This paper reframes the Society's relationship with the sealed Box, and all of its mysteries, as a religious and gendered practice of love which was devotional, national, and eschatological, drawing upon Reddy's emotives and Rosenwein's emotional communities. I argue that the Panacea Society transformed the silence of the sealed Box into a framework for religious action and a sense of belonging. Through their ardent belief, women converted post-war anxiety, and uncertainty into a labour of love and community, rather than despair or rupture. The Box was never opened, despite the global attention it received through the Panacea Society. For the Panaceans, despite their unsuccess in opening the Box, the Box itself offered hope and purpose for a different future. The silence of the Box, therefore, spoke volumes whose echoes had a global reach and impact.

Alex Pomeroy (Lancaster University) - 'How can we remember those we did not know?': Memorialising the Second World War in Ireland, 1945 – 1965

Despite the service of some 70,000 'neutral' Irish citizens with the British military, on Remembrance Sunday 1955, the Reverend W.D. Norman lamented to a small crowd in Sligo that Ireland had already forgotten those who helped to defeat the Axis Powers. Moreover, the 'neutral' Irish experience of war (such as service in the Irish Defence

Forces or Mercantile Marine) and tragic events like the bombing of Dublin in 1941 were unrepresented in public commemorative spaces for decades. Given that thousands of Irish citizens were killed and many thousands of Irish families grieved their losses, it may seem strange that the Second World War has not formed an important part of Irish public heritage.

However, the memorialisation of Irish people insultingly viewed as 'West Brits' was a marginal practice in an isolationist Ireland dominated by the attainment of republic status in 1949 and separation from Britain. This paper analyses patterns of Second World War memorialisation at public sites across Ireland between 1945 and 1965, covering national memorials under government care in Dublin and regional ones managed by local councils or charitable groups in Bray, Drogheda, Sligo, Cork, and Limerick. Scandals ranged from the state's refusal to commemorate Second World War casualties at pre-existing national memorials to republican groups bombing regional memorials for honouring a dissonant Irish heritage of service in British uniform. Ireland appears unique in the first decades of peace in its stunted commemoration of the Second World War, the results of which are visible in Irish commemorative culture today.

Colin Pooley (Lancaster University) - Letters from Toronto: Representing Mid-Twentieth Century Ontario Life to an English Pen Friend.

In this paper I examine the ways in which a female Toronto resident (Jean) wrote about her life in the city, and reflect on the impacts this may have had on her English pen pal (Betty). The pen-pal correspondence began in 1946 when both women were 18 years old, and continued regularly until shortly before Jean's death in 2013. I don't have the letters written by Betty from England, but I do have all her personal diaries so am able to link the two lives quite precisely. Both women remained unmarried, and although they had some interests in common, their education and experiences were very different. For instance, while Jean stayed in education until she was 18, enjoyed all the amenities of a big city, and travelled widely, Betty left school at 13, lived in rural north Lancashire, and rarely travelled more than 30 miles from her home. Certain key themes occur repeatedly in the letters written by Jean, including the extremes of Toronto weather, her access to high-quality entertainment, and her travel for holidays elsewhere in the Americas. These were all very different from Betty's experiences. Common themes, which they discussed regularly, included an avid interest in the British Royal family, involvement in their local churches, films they had seen, and gossip about their friends and relatives. At one time Jean was writing to more than 40 different pen friends with contacts all over the world. This pen-pal correspondence would have widened the horizons of all correspondents.

Ana Rajković Pejić (Croatia Institute of History) – 'Pack your bags, let us go': Rest and Recreation as Integral Parts of Yugoslav Self-Management (1945-1989)

After the establishment of socialist power in Yugoslavia following World War II, a new socio-political order emerged in the early 1950s. This system, known as self-management, led to the development of new social practices, including the organization of excursions, cultural events, annual vacations, winter holidays, and various forms of leisure activities. These initiatives were collectively referred to as 'rest and recreation' by socialist theorists, a concept that has its roots in the 19th century. Factories became crucial centres for implementing these initiatives, taking on roles that extended beyond their basic economic functions. Some historians argue that factories served as hubs for social redistribution, allowing workers across the country to access educational training, cultural associations, and social welfare services such as canteens and healthcare. This perspective highlights factories as places where certain rights related to social and political participation were guaranteed. Additionally, factories established internal organizations known as Osnovne samoupravne interesne zajednice za odmor i rekreaciju (Self-governing Communities for Rest and Recreation). These organizations were responsible for organizing sports competitions and trips during annual vacations and winter holidays. This presentation will analyse the social practices integral to the Yugoslav self-governing society and their contributions to improving workers' living standards and overall social security. It is important to note that many workers were initially hesitant to participate in these initiatives; therefore, the presentation will also explore how these practices were gradually adopted and eventually perceived as workers' rights by the late 1950s.

Jennifer Redmond (Maynooth University) - The (Irish) 'People's War'?: Identifying Irish people in the Second World War Home Front

Although the concept of the 'people's war' was originally a military strategy first developed by Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China, the book by John Willis, *The People's War: Unheard Voices: Life on the Battlefront and at Home in World War II* drawing on BBC archival material reflecting on personal experiences in Britain has popularised an understanding of the conflict as being all encompassing for the British population. While Wendy Webster's work has problematised the image of a homogenous British population as the bulwark of the Home Front, (e.g. in *Mixing It: Diversity in World War Two Britain,* Oxford, 2018), specific social histories of the communities that contributed are still emerging. In the context of workers and volunteers from Ireland, this history is imbricated with narratives of neutrality that have shaped the ways this history has been told on both sides of the Irish Sea. Using unique archival material, travel permit applications, this paper will detail and critically examine the roles that Irish men and women played in Britain during the Second World War. These ranged from canteen workers to ambulance drivers, 'land girls' to firefighters and included many Irish citizens directly recruited from Éire to assist. In doing so, this paper uses the approach of social history, focusing on ordinary people and their experiences, to ask the question: who were the 'people' that fought the 'people's war'?

Michael Reeve (The Open University) - ‘Cigarette Miracles’: Smoking, Endurance and Resilience in Wartime Visual Culture

This paper will explore an aspect of my current monograph project, which focuses on tobacco consumption and modern war in Britain, covering the period c. 1850 to c. 1950. My focus here is on the wartime visual culture of tobacco and smoking in Britain, primarily during the First and Second World Wars (with some insights from earlier conflicts, including the Second Anglo-Boer War). Tobacco consumption was key to lay medical perspectives that circulated among civilians and service personnel during these conflicts, particularly narratives related to endurance and stress relief in the often chaotic and changeable environments engendered by modern warfare (on the home front, battlefront and behind the lines). This included the widely held view that smoking tobacco could help soldiers sleep, steel resolve during periods of inclement weather and arduous physical work and improve morale when under fire. Such ideas were reinforced by medical writers and physicians who witnessed tobacco’s practical usefulness in wartime, evidenced by the ‘embodied knowledge’ that smokers reported: in short, smoking worked for those seeking to cope with living, working and fighting in war environments.

This paper will use a range of visual sources from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to explore these lay medical and embodied knowledges, including photography, advertisements, paintings and articles from the illustrated press. Such sources provide fascinating insights into contemporary understandings – often taken-from-granted as ‘common-sense’ owing to the widespread use of tobacco – of wartime endurance and resilience, and the use of intoxicants to combat war-related anxiety, stress and trauma.

Anna Reynolds (Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates, Bangor University) - Community and Conflict in the Eastern Carneddau, 1700-1950

Archival evidence for community in the eastern Carneddau in North Wales from the 1700s onwards shows upland valleys of close-knit groups, usually related by blood or marriage. Upland folk were born, married, and died in upland valleys, clinging to Welsh culture more strongly than their lowland counterparts. Although there are examples of upland dwellers moving to the lowlands, England, or even emigrating overseas, often marriages and movements happened within the scale of a few miles. Extended families can be seen living in mixed households, and family support is evident for vulnerable stages like birthing and old age.

However, the introduction of outsiders from other areas of Wales, England, and Scotland introduced tensions, and upland life was gradually eroded from the mid-1800s by changes in land use and farming practice. A movement from Anglican to Nonconformist worship tracks alongside these changes, showing upland populations creating a community and culture very much their own, and intensely local.

Largely using the evidence of parish records and newspaper archives, this paper will examine the family networks of upland communities, and detail some of the ways in which these communities were disrupted by the development of reservoirs and large-scale sheep farming by lowland and non-Welsh farmers. It will use parish record evidence to show the connections between families and households, and newspaper records for more personal evidence regarding conflict and change. It will demonstrate a cohesive community eventually dissolved by the changes in the ways in which we live on and farm the land.

Hannah Robb (Manchester University) - Working Women and the Guilds in Early Modern Shrewsbury

New approaches to the history of women's work have pioneered a 'verb oriented' methodology and championed depositions as true accounts of working behaviours. These studies have significantly challenged long held assumptions around the gender division of labour in early modern society. This paper presents a case study of women's craft work in early modern Shrewsbury using quarter session depositions alongside petitions, presentments and guild records, compiling incidental accounts of work alongside records of apprenticeship and company accounts. The records illuminate women's work on the fringes of the craft companies of Shrewsbury in particular, ale selling, brewing, candle making, metal work, spinning, weaving and sewing. Whilst incidental evidence in the depositions shows women were involved in the low-skilled and low-paid preparatory tasks of craft work, particularly around the wool trade, petitions and guild records show women exerted agency to hold onto their trade as a mistress challenging the established craft companies. At a time when guilds clung to their medieval monopolies and redrafted ordinances to protect against foreigners and interlopers, women's work was seen as a challenge to the brotherhood of the guild. Women may have broken into some of the craft companies in Shrewsbury, notably the smiths, but this came as the guilds declined and their influence waned in the later seventeenth century. Taking a wider view of the records available to reconstruct women's work the paper captures the full range of women's craft work and the attempts by women to challenge the ordinances of the companies that barred them from their ranks.

Zuzanna Rog (University of York) - Holidays, Foodways, and Domestic Goods: Exploring Britons' Encounters with Continental Europe, 1950-1990

Scholarship on Britain's relationship with continental Europe has received great scholarly interest, but studies tend to focus on the political and economic developments. This has resulted in comparatively little attention given to ordinary Britons' relationships with Europe, which can be rectified by exploring how ordinary individuals encountered Europe throughout everyday life. Focusing on leisure travel, food and drink consumption, and domestic goods, this paper argues that these forms of encountering Europe provide valuable insights into ordinary individuals' relations with, and attitudes towards Europe. Beyond this, a focus on leisure and consumer

goods also unearths the wider significance of European influence on twentieth-century British society and culture.

Using testimonies from the Mass Observation Project, and materials from the Habitat Archive, this paper examines how individuals encountered Europe both as tourists abroad and as consumers at home, and the meanings of such interactions. Accounts of holidays to continental destinations reveal the significance of leisure travel in this period, such as through imparting new habits and tastes. At the same time, the longer term impacts of travel, together with other European influences, emerge clearly in individuals' accounts of their eating and drinking habits, and of the domestic goods which they purchased and owned. By prioritising individual voices and experiences, this approach reveals insights which traditional political narratives are unable to. Altogether, this paper highlights the value of studying leisure and consumer goods, especially in developing more complex understandings of wider issues such as Britain's relationship with Europe.

Fearghus Roulston (University of Strathclyde) - Social Histories of Mould and the 1981 National Anti-Dampness Campaign

After the post-WW2 settlement's expansion of UK public housing, tenants' groups emerged to organise sociopolitical life within these new spaces. From the 1970s onwards, one focal point of this organisation was disrepair, with the deleterious effects of damp and mould a particularly prevalent and particularly fraught area of contestation. Across the UK, tenants campaigned for the improvement of – or the demolition and replacement of – public housing rendered dangerous by excess moisture.

This paper draws on political ephemera, newspaper archives and the recently digitised Community Action periodical to consider one aspect of this struggle, the National Anti-Dampness Campaign. This group cohered in the early 1980s as an attempt to draw local campaigns together into a pressure group encouraging the government to renovate or demolish existing housing and to develop more housing stock.

It argues that a particular structure of feeling and a particular form of political subjectivity is evident in this campaign, one that was already being rendered residual by 1980, with the emergence of right to buy as a core Conservative policy and the increasing financialisation and privatisation of British housing.

In conclusion, it suggests that a conjunctural analysis of the current housing crisis via the effects of damp and mould – epitomised by the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020 as a direct result of his exposure to black mould in social housing in Rochdale – can help to understand the historical politics of residential space in the UK.

Jude Rowley (University of Exeter) - Espionage and Exile at Lancaster University, 1966-77

In 1971, the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior identified Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzeziński as two of the 'three most dangerous western ideological enemies of Czechoslovakia'. The third was a Lancaster University professor: Sir Cecil Parrott.

This paper will explore the circumstances that led to Parrott being named as a threat to Czechoslovak communism from his office on the then newly built Bailrigg campus against an interconnected backdrop of local student unrest, new institutional aspirations, and global Cold War tensions. Though other Lancaster episodes, such as the two David Craig affairs, made national headlines in the same period, the history of the new university's hidden spy scandal has gone largely untold.

This paper will revisit the overlooked histories of those, beyond Parrott, who became entangled with events that brought agents of the Czechoslovak StB to Lancashire, connected Lancaster with the Prague Spring, and left behind a small but vibrant community of academic and political exiles from Eastern Europe in the local area.

By connecting elements of a place-based history of the University with the surrounding context of global political events, it will explore the entanglements between local and global histories. By turning scholarly attention to this period in Lancaster University's history for the first time, this paper hopes not only to address these entanglements but to make a fitting and topical contribution to the Social History Society's anniversary conference in Lancaster.

Michele Santoro (University of Catania) - The Sharecropper and Farmers' Welfare State: Health and Pension Politics in the Rural Italian Province, 1954-1968.

Historical scholarship on the development and evolution of the welfare state has produced a wide range of interpretations, addressing both its conceptual foundations and its practical implementation. More recently, historians have advocated methodological innovations, including shifts in analytical scale and bottom-up perspectives, in order to reassess established narratives and expand knowledge. In the Italian case, research has examined the post-war transition and the establishment of the Republic, as well as the expansion and contradictions of social policies between the 1950s and 1970s and the crises of subsequent decades. Nevertheless, this literature has largely privileged political and institutional analyses, devoting limited attention to peripheral contexts, policy reception, and the experiences of social groups beyond industrial workers and the middle classes. This research proposal seeks to address these limitations by offering a historical analysis of health care and social security in a rural setting, focusing on the National Federation of Mutual Funds of Farmers of the Province of Perugia from its foundation in 1954 to the health assistance reform in 1968. Rather than tracing welfare development at the national level, the study foregrounds provincial dynamics and the rural area, which remains underexplored in welfare state historiography. Drawing on archival and published sources produced by

the provincial Federation, the research adopts a micro-historical approach to investigate how social policies were received, implemented, and negotiated locally. It asks whether local analysis can illuminate the lived experiences of farmers and sharecroppers under Republican social policy, and how health care provision and pension schemes were administered within a rural province. The proposal aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of welfare state formation, as well as the experiences in accessing social benefits.

Joe Saunders (University of York) - Places of the English Print Trade c.1600-45

The early modern English print trade must be understood within its spatial context; place being more than just location but meaning society and community also. The trade is well-known to have been a London-centric business. While this is certainly true, the detail of what this actually looked like within the metropolis, as well as the wider trade activities and connections, invites further exploration. Indeed, the early seventeenth century print trade is particularly underserved in an, already small, scholarship on historic print trade geographies which have mostly focused on the late seventeenth century onwards. The decades up to the civil wars held quite a different social, topographical and economic picture for England, London and the print trade.

This paper explores the physical and mental topographies of the English print trade across nearly half a century, drawing from research on the wills of print trade actors. These documents provide detail on habitation, property ownership and occupation as well as more abstract social links of places and spaces by booksellers, printers and bookbinders. While mostly considering the London trade geography the wider English picture will also be explored. Additionally, some consideration will be given to the broader social and economic connections between print trade people and other places in Britain and the wider world. Altogether, will be revealed a much more expansive and rich physical and mental world of the print trade in this period than has been previously understood.

Ella Sbaraini (King's College London) - How Can We Historicise Suicidal Feelings? The Interiorisation of Suicidality in England, 1750-1850

How can we historicise suicidal feelings? While suicide has been treated to extensive historical examination over the last fifty years – with historians tracing the so-called medicalization, secularization and liberalization of suicide over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – much less has been written on how the experience of suicidality has been subject to change over time. And yet suicidality must be historicised in order to be understood in its fullness and complexity. In particular, a historical perspective enables us to question contemporary discourses that often construe it as inherently rooted in individual psychological illness regardless of place and time. To do this, this paper explores changing experiences of suicidality in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England. Drawing upon over 200 suicide letters and 2000 coroners' inquests, it identifies a shift in the experience of suicide between 1750

and 1850. While, in the eighteenth century, people often understood their suicidal feelings to be rooted in others' misconduct, by the first decades of the nineteenth century, individuals increasingly situated their suicidality within internal and personal experiences of suffering and failure. This growing 'interiorisation' of suicidality sheds new light on changing ideas of selfhood in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, while also revealing the historical fluidity of experiences that are often seen through a singular lens. As such, this is a study of a particular experience in a particular place and time, as well as a wider reflection upon the historically situated nature of the personal and the social.

Megan Schlanker (University of Lincoln) - 'Too Often Regarded as an Optional Extra': Museum Education and Children with Special Educational Needs (1952-1999)

As early as 1952, 'museum teachers' and educational professionals in museum spaces were discussing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These conversations were sometimes one-size-fits-all to their approach, and do not seem to have been broadly adopted in the early years of the emerging Museum Education profession. By the 1990s, priorities shifted, the new National Curriculum in England and Wales prompted education professionals in and outside of schools to think about teaching differently, within a structure that was applied nationally. In the museum sphere, the focus had shifted to attracting 'new audiences', and highlighting new ways that they could serve their communities in an increasingly competitive leisure industry.

This paper explores approaches to children with SEND in museum education spaces, from these early 1950 discussions into the 1990s. It highlights both the often-cyclical nature of these discussions, and the shift in approaches throughout the second half of the twentieth century, seeking to explore the interplay between professional discourse, societal expectations, and lived experiences of children with varied physical and educational needs in museum settings. Historical analysis of SEND museum education has been limited. This paper addresses a gap in museum education research by examining the historical foundations of SEND provision and their influence, or lack thereof, on contemporary inclusion practices.

Conner Scott (University of Reading) - 'Attended Divine Service, or Anything But': Protestant Sermons, Public Speech, and Everyday Rhetorical Criticism in Victorian England

The public sphere of Victorian England was predicated on speech-making, discussion, and a general penchant for talk (McWilliam, 2007). Divine service, especially the preaching of sermons, was central to this burgeoning oral culture. Hitherto, historians have presented a largely top-down view of religious oratory, focusing on influential celebrity preachers sermonising to rapt national audiences (Ellison, 2010; Meisel, 2003; Randall, 2003). Contrasting this was the satirical archetype of the ineffectual preacher, prominent in Victorian fiction from Charles Dickens to Oscar Wilde (Coleman, 2008).

However, it was not nationally famed preachers and writers alone who provided religious oratory and critique. This paper suggests it was an everyday, relatively widespread practice within local Protestant communities. In their diaries, 'ordinary' men and women of diverse ages, classes, and denominations recorded forthright opinions upon the sermons they heard. Based on 50 nineteenth-century diaries, gathered as part of a Leverhulme-funded project exploring communicative norms between c.1840-c.1990, this paper determines what those sat in the pews thought about what they heard from the pulpit, and how this changed across the period. Churchgoing, then, was a key practice in the cultural politics of Victorian public speaking, as actively listening to sermons and recording one's thoughts allowed congregation members to exercise and hone their skills of rhetorical criticism. Moreover, this paper suggests that for preachers and congregations, divine service was frequently precarious, contentious, and lacklustre in terms of oratory. The stereotype of the inarticulate parson faced with a critical audience was arguably where art imitated life in Victorian England.

Samantha Shave (University of Strathclyde) - 'I broke the windows': Responding to Workhouse Policies in 19th-Century England and Wales

Workhouse windows, to policy-makers and implementers of the New Poor Laws in England and Wales, prevented illness and enabled the effective surveillance of inmates within the institution. But for those living inside the workhouse, windows were utilised in other ways. We know from literature that window breaking was a frequent occurrence in nineteenth-century workhouses. Not only were window panes readily available and easy to break, inmates who smashed then knew this caused disruption to the workhouse system and inconvenienced workhouse staff. By examining a range of documents, including correspondence and reports sent and received by the Poor Law authorities and newspapers, this paper demonstrates the range of ways workhouse windows were utilised by the labouring poor. Breaking windows was a response to restrictive and objectionable policies and practices, and enabled individuals to gain immediate attention and, therefore, acknowledgement in a welfare system that sought to remove it. In addition to this, windows were places of communication, enabling inmates to continue family and community relationships at a time when separation policies were at their zenith. By examining the dynamics between inmates and windows, we can see how this everyday architectural feature was used to challenge and undermine the punitive restrictions that confined the labouring poor.

Markéta Skořepová (University of South Bohemia) - Abandoned Children in Village Foster Families in 19th-Century Bohemia

At the end of the 18th century, the Habsburg monarchy established a network of maternity and foundling hospitals, where single mothers could leave their newborns. Abandoned babies were immediately placed in foster care in the countryside. Foster parents were paid for this service, which became a popular means of subsistence in some regions.

For several years, the children became part of the rural community, and their presence posed specific challenges. They carried a stigma due to their illegitimate birth, and foster parents were frequently blamed for providing inadequate care or for exploiting the system.

Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic) played a significant role in the phenomenon of fostering, as children from the two most important foundling hospitals in the monarchy – Vienna and Prague – were placed there.

This paper will present the characteristics of the regions most involved in foundling care and examine the foster families, especially their social and economic position. Emphasis will be placed on several points: the number of fostered children in a family, their mortality, and the possibility that some of them remained with their foster families after the contract had expired, i.e., without further payment.

These questions aim to reveal the everyday life of abandoned children within the families and communities in which they were raised, thereby completing the general picture of the abandoned child and the foster parent as it was presented in contemporary professional literature and literary works.

Lenka Skoupa (Charles University in Prague; University of Cambridge) - Sight Versus Sound in the Roman Times

It has been a popular theory that blindness was preferred in ancient Rome to deafness. As a part of my PhD, I am in the process of analysing all of Corpus Iuris Civilis, the 6th c. A.D. corpus of legal texts collected by the emperor Justinian, for instances of disability. I have achieved this by collecting data through the method of content analysis and therefore I have available data for what was thought of at the time as the full volume of valid law. The data can be used to compare attitudes of Roman lawmakers to these two types of impairment.

In approaching the question of what was looked at as a lesser loss, both quantitative and qualitative method needs to be used to assess the approach of Romans to these impairments. In the first instance, it is possible to compare the frequency of appearance of each of these impairments in the text. Secondly, the impact of the individual mentions of impairment needs to be assessed. We are never going to be able to measure the impact of Justinianic law-making in reality, but we can get an answer on how these two impairments were looked at individually and in comparison with one another. In particular, based on the quantitative and qualitative data, it is possible to get closer to an answer of whether preferential treatment was given to those with a visual or with auditory impairments in the legal sources.

Ria Smith (University of Wolverhampton) - They Should Lock Up the Parents Too!

This paper examines the development of parental vicarious liability for the criminal acts of children in England following the passing of the Children Act 1908. The research was inspired by the brief encounters of my great great uncles with the criminal justice

system in 1912. They were summoned to court at the ages of eight and thirteen for larceny, and their father was fined for failing to provide adequate supervision and control, which was deemed to have contributed to their offending. This early example illustrates the emerging expectation that parents should bear responsibility for the criminality of their children.

The Children Act 1908 was the first to articulate the principle that parents could be held vicariously liable for their children's actions, granting courts the authority to impose fines on parents of delinquent minors. Subsequent legislation, including the Criminal Justice Acts of 1982 and 1991 (amended in 1993 and 2003) and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, continued this trajectory by enabling financial penalties to be levied on parents when their children committed criminal offences. The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 further extended these powers through the introduction of parenting orders alongside monetary sanctions.

Recent parliamentary and judicial responses to the widespread disorder following the murders of three young girls in Southport in 2024 indicate a renewed appetite for strengthening parental responsibility measures. This paper seeks to identify the social, political, and legal trends that first gave rise to parental vicarious liability and to consider the implications of these developments for future policy.

Dave Steele (University of Warwick) - Where People Confront Power: New Palace Yard, Westminster

This paper will consider physical spaces in and around Parliament including the Lobby, Ventilator/Public Gallery, Parliament Square and College Green but focussing mainly on New Palace Yard which was the site of political meetings until access was restricted after 1866. Before then the space was used by reform campaigners. On 17 September 1838 the newly emerging Chartists used the space for the London launch of the People's Charter. The London Chronicle reported the meeting in limerick form:

> In famed Palace-yard which the MP oft passes,
> There late was a meeting got up of the masses,
> And so many masses we think on the whole,
> Were never yet gathered to save a man's soul.

By bearding legislators in their den, orators and participants of the mass platform spoke truth to power. While this power often proved to be illusory, as governments of all parties usually turned a blind eye, I will argue that the physical proximity to the seat of government amplified the feeling of power within the crowd and this liminal space was perfect for venting emotion on the threshold of power. Meetings were often rowdy and drew the attention of the newspapers who reported the, often controversial, proceedings via their columns around the country thereby amplifying the meetings' effectiveness. Finally, I will consider recent the mass arrests of protesters objecting to the proscription of Palestine Action in the adjacent Parliament Square.

Konstantin Tarasov (University of Nottingham) - The Collapse of the Moral Order: Domestic Service and the Crisis of Class Relations in Revolutionary Russia

This paper examines the transformation of domestic service during the Russian Revolution of 1917, framing the household as a microcosm of the era's broader social and political collapse.

Historically, the relationship between masters and servants in the Russian Empire was governed not by legal contracts, but by a paternalistic relationship rooted in the legacies of Russian serfdom. This system relied on a specific moral technology of hierarchy: an exchange of care and protection for loyalty, gratitude, and emotional labour.

Drawing on diaries, memoirs, and records of emerging trade unions, this study argues that the Revolution of 1917 did not merely intensify labour conflicts but fundamentally disrupted the 'grammar' of social inequality. As servants began to adopt the language of citizenship and universal rights, their demands for dignity and autonomy were perceived by the educated classes not as standard labour negotiations, but as profound moral betrayals.

The paper explores the dual role of servants as vital mediators between the private domestic sphere and the turbulent revolutionary street. By analysing the shift from paternalistic devotion to class hostility, I demonstrate how the erosion of traditional emotional labour led to a 'sociophobia' among the elites. Ultimately, the paper argues that the crisis of 1917 was as much a crisis of everyday legitimacy and intimacy as it was of political authority, marking the moment when social roles lost their moral sanctity and became sites of open political contestation.

Charlotte Taylor (London South Bank University) - Student Life in Modern English Universities since the 1960s: Experience, Activism, and Identity.

This thesis examines student life and activism within post-1992 English universities, focusing on the experience of students at London South Bank University (LSBU) from the 1960s to the present. It seeks to address a significant gap in the research field by focusing on modern universities and their students. Despite their close association with widening participation, social mobility, and contesting educational inequality, these institutions have historically been underrepresented in studies of student activism. Through utilising oral history interviews with alumni alongside extensive archival research, the thesis explores how students perceive and negotiate university structures in relation to inequality and social justice. By foregrounding student perspectives, the research offers insight into how students articulate their identities, experiences, and political engagements in response to institutional policies and broader socio-political change. The research also examines the intersectional and contested nature of student identities. It considers how factors such as gender, race, class and personal history shape access to higher education, experiences of

marginalisation and engagement in activism. Moreover, the research aims to assess LSBU's historical role in shaping student lives, tracing the evolving forms of student activism in response to changing welfare regimes, marketisation of higher education and shifts in national policy frameworks. Overall, this thesis highlights the importance of prioritising student voices in both historical and contemporary discussions of student experience, activism and identity within higher education.

Amy Thorpe (Northumbria University) - Sites of Feeling: Joy, War and the Creation of the 'Common Cause' Huts

Between 1916 and 1918, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies' periodical, the Common Cause (1909-1920), was responsible for the formation of three named recreation huts that were created as leisure spaces for female war workers. In collaboration with the Young Women's Christian Association, the Common Cause mobilised its readership to generate thousands of pounds to facilitate the building and maintenance of huts situated in Coventry, Calais, and Salisbury Plain respectively. While the First World War interrupted the work of British suffragism, the Common Cause adapted, providing a platform through which new and challenging ideas could be circulated and critiqued. The paper became an essential site at which women's contributions to the war, the place of suffragism during times of conflict, and women's organisational power could be debated. From the beginning of the Common Cause's fundraising campaign, emotion played an essential role in sparking and strengthening connections between the paper, its readership, and the munition workers and members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for whom the huts were created. The Common Cause organised its three separate campaigns for the huts around the joy, happiness and welfare of the women who would use them, emphasising the status of the huts as gendered spaces created by women and for women. This paper offers the first sustained scholarly analysis of the Common Cause huts as self-governed leisure spaces for women, and in doing so develops new approaches to understanding the affective and spatial politics of suffrage activism during the First World War.

Tom Trafford (University of Huddersfield) - Anti-War Majority Versus the Pro-War Minority: The Manchester Liberal Union's Response to the South African War.

Between 11 October 1899 and 31 May 1902, the British Empire fought its last expansionist war against the Boers in South Africa. The South African War divided members of the Liberal Party, with Liberals' response to the conflict ranging from outright opposition to the war to full blown support. Despite a growing body of academic literature that considers the Liberal Party's response to the South African War, the majority focuses on the national Liberal Party. To counter this growing trend in the historiography, this paper provides a detailed study of the Manchester Liberal Union's response to the South African War. This paper argues that the Manchester Liberal Union's ability to position itself as anti-war even when the South African War divided the six Manchester Liberal Associations and national Liberal Party was due to individual leaders' personal anti-war convictions and the influence, they had over the Liberal organisations in the city. There is a clear class divide within the six Manchester

constituencies, with those representatives on the Manchester Liberal Union who spoke for more affluent areas of the city the most vocal in their opposition to the South African War, while representatives who spoke for working-class Liberals were more reticent to take a position on the British Government's South African policy. However, when working-class representatives did take a position on the South African War, they were likely to echo their middle-class counterparts' opposition to the conflict. Despite these class divisions pro-Boers outnumbered their pro-war counterparts on the Manchester Liberal Union enabling them to dictate the Manchester Liberal Party's position on the conflict.

Ornat Turin (Gordon College for Education) - The Meaning of Display: Media History in Museums

Exhibits showcasing the progression of communication, starting with hieroglyphs and extending to satellites, can be found in various museums. Like any display, they function as textbooks containing ideological messages about media and technology. This study examines the 'History of Communication'; narrative by analysing visual documentation and catalogues from seven exhibitions across Europe, the USA, and Israel. Analysis reveals that communication exhibitions are agile and adaptable materials that can be traced in different museums. Film museums frame communication as parts of visual art, science museums focus on technological foundations, and telecommunication museums pose artifacts within the nation-building story. Nations highlight their unique technological contributions, fostering pride within the global communication narrative. Communication exhibitions typically present a linear, optimistic view of technological progress, celebrating collective achievements that connect cultures into one universe. However, they often reflect Eurocentrism, portraying the West as the leader in human progress and marginalizing the Global South.

Elise Unwin (Cardiff University; University of Exeter; Amgueddfa Cymru (Museum Wales)) - 'Things happen and if we come together nothing is insurmountable': Exploring Memory and Perceptions of Community Cohesion and Togetherness during the Covid-19 Lockdown Era in Wales.

On 23rd March 2020 Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that the UK would be going into its first national lockdown, emphasising the need to stay at home to protect the wider community and the most vulnerable in society. In May 2020, the first Collecting Covid archive at Amgueddfa Cymru was launched as a rapid response to the unfolding pandemic to record this moment in history as it was happening. The archive asked Welsh residents to reflect on their daily lives during this period and share how they were responding to the pandemic. The Collecting Covid archive covered a range of topics, including relationships and methods of connecting with others, the emotional toll of the pandemic and people's hopes for the future.

This paper will draw on some of the original 2020 and 2021 responses to the Amgueddfa Cymru Collecting Covid archive, as well as recent oral history interviews with original archive participants. I will examine how respondents to the archive actually talked about their sense of community and engagement during this time of isolation and separation. I will also explore how some of these participants remember their experiences more than five years later and whether their views on community and memories of the period have already changed in this time.

I will also touch upon how public rhetoric from politicians and mainstream media in Wales and the UK may have influenced perceptions of community during the lockdown era.

Carlotta Maria Vaglieri (Universita' Degli Studi Di Firenze) - Housing Welfare, Inequality, and Social Conflict in Milan (1950–1970)

In twentieth-century Italian industrial cities like Milan, housing welfare – policies aimed at providing housing to citizens, especially to workers – was used by companies and the State as a means through which to stabilize workers and to make them productive by improving their living conditions. These policies were, however, selective, addressing skilled workers considered crucial to the economic development, while leaving other groups –migrants, the unemployed and politicized workers – unprotected. Starting from an analysis of inequalities embedded in housing welfare policies, this contribution investigates how housing welfare in Milan during the economic boom (1950–1970) contributed to the inclusion or exclusion of specific groups, and how those excluded responded. Beyond reconstructing the history of housing assistance in Milan from 1950 to 1970, the contribution focuses on bottom-up responses developed by marginalized groups, like Coree – self-built housing settlements created by migrants in Milan – and housing occupations. From a methodological perspective, the contribution draws on the distinction between a welfare provided by institutions and a welfare conquered through struggles. Housing welfare is analysed as a field of conflict that produces inequality and generates collective mobilization. The paper reconstructs and analyses, on the one hand, the forms of housing assistance granted to segments of the working-class; on the other, the autonomous practices through which groups claimed access to housing. Different sources will be used, including documents on the Ina-Casa plan; the inquiry conducted by Franco Alasia and Danilo Montaldi (1960) on Coree; audiovisual materials; the journal *Lotta Continua* on housing occupations; protest songs addressing housing evictions.

Francesca Vine (Ware Museum) - The Great Bed of Ware: Myth, Money-Maker, Marvel

The town of Ware's role as a resting point on pilgrimage to Walsingham led to an influx of money and a thriving local economy. However, when Edward VI banned pilgrimage in the 16th century, as part of the reformation started by his father Henry VIII, this lucrative source of income dried up and the town became impoverished.

This paper will examine the Elizabethan Great Bed of Ware (now at the V&A) and its function as an income-generating tourist attraction: an ingenious and innovative

response to this local economic crisis. Using archival records, literary references (including by Shakespeare) and innkeeper accounts, it will trace how the self-conscious creation of folk myth was used by the town, especially the proprietors of the inn where it was displayed, to create an enticing (and lucrative) visitor draw.

By examining this early example of place-based tourism, the paper illuminates how post-Reformation communities repurposed physical artefacts to forge new economic and cultural identities, contributing to broader discussions on heritage creation in transitional spaces.

Andrew Walker (Independent Scholar) - Cremation, Technology and Local Rivalries in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Case of a City's Late-Arriving Crematorium

Following a Lincoln woman's death notice appearing in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which details of her funeral and cremation in Grimsby were included, Charles Brook of 'London SE9' wrote to the *Lincolnshire Echo* in January 1963 declaring that 'If there is still no crematorium at Lincoln, as a former citizen, I am shocked.'

According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, in 1963 in Great Britain some 41% of those who died were now cremated, in 177 crematoria situated across the country. The earliest modern crematorium had been opened in 1885 in Woking, Surrey, and, following the Cremation Acts of 1900 and 1902, the first municipal crematorium was opened in Hull in 1904. Lincoln's crematorium, however, was not opened until 1968.

This paper will explore the reasons for the late arrival of Lincoln's crematorium. In the process, it will consider the increasing appetite for this type of send-off in Britain during the twentieth century, the civic pride and local rivalries that were played out in the construction and opening of crematoria; and how, in the 'white heat' of 1960s Britain, the prospect of cremations on their doorstep was received by the residents of Lincoln nearly 2000 years after the practice had been regularly employed by the city's Roman inhabitants.

Andrew Walmsley (Lancaster University) - 'We Don't Need Another Hero' - The Everyday Heroism of the Long Nineteenth Century: Does It Endure and How Well Does It Serve Us?

Focussing particularly on the anointment of 'everyday heroes' in the long nineteenth century this paper analyses the essential qualities of such heroes, the deeds which brought them renown, and the ways in which they were celebrated and memorialized. Referencing a variety of primary sources including newspaper reports, postcards, photographs, porcelain souvenirs, and tourist guides, I will focus on the reception and promotion of heroes and heroic acts in this period. Whilst taking in several events and narratives I will concentrate particularly on the heroes of the *Mexico* lifeboat disaster of 1886.* I will use this disaster as a touchstone to argue that the creation of such paragons, whilst widening the pool from which heroes were taken, often created

exemplars who lacked complexity and nuance. Moreover, these processes generated over-simplified narratives which endure but overshadow other significant personal, social, and cultural frameworks. My paper will go on to examine whether such narratives persist in the present day and how well they serve us.

*This disaster occurred on the night of 9/10 December 1886 when all the 13-man crew of the St Anne's lifeboat *Laura Janet* and 14 of the 16-man crew of the Southport lifeboat, *Eliza Fernley,* lost their lives attempting to rescue the crew of the German Barque, *Mexico*, in the Ribble Estuary, Lancashire England.

Conger Wang (University of Edinburgh) - Negotiating Feminism within the Family: Women's Mobility, Education, and Rhetorical Strategy in the Writings of Shan Shili (1858–1945)

This paper examines travel and education as intertwined social practices through which early twentieth-century Chinese women negotiated gendered constraints within family and community life. Focusing on the writings of Shan Shili (1858–1945), an elite woman traveller and writer, it argues that feminist ideas were articulated not through open rupture with familial norms but through careful rhetorical and embodied negotiation.

Drawing on a close comparison between Shan's private writings—poems and correspondence circulated among female kin and friends—and her published travel accounts, the paper explores how women's mobility and education were framed differently across social contexts. In her private texts, travel appears as an embodied practice that affirmed women's physical strength, curiosity, and pleasure, challenging dominant assumptions that confined female bodies to domestic interiors. Education, especially literary cultivation, is presented as a lifelong source of emotional sustenance, intellectual ambition, and social authority, valued not only for maternal utility but also for women's own fulfilment.

By contrast, in her published works Shan strategically recast travel as exceptional, purposeful, and morally contained, while presenting women's education primarily through the acceptable languages of family responsibility and national benefit. These shifts were not signs of ideological inconsistency but responses to the constraints of audience, reputation, and elite respectability.

Situating travel and education within the everyday workings of kinship, age, and emotional self-management, this paper reframes early Chinese feminism as a social practice embedded in life cycles and family structures. It contributes to social histories of gender by showing how women expanded the boundaries of acceptable mobility and learning from within, rather than outside, their communities.

Caroline Watkinson (City St Georges University of London) - Radical Hope and the Making of Social Historians: Work, Leisure, and Employability for History Graduates

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Social History Society, this paper re-engages with the work of its founder Harold Perkin to reconsider employability for history graduates in the age of Industry 4.0 (the Fourth Revolution). Perkin's analysis of the relationship between HE and the rise of professional society in the third revolution (1989; 1996) alongside his personal reflections in *The Making of a Social Historian* (2002), offer a powerful lens through which to frame current discussions on employability for UK history graduates. This paper begins by situating current concerns around employability metrics, graduate outcomes, and the future of UK history departments within broader debates on professionalism, 'elites', expertise, and the purpose of the University. It then utilises data from interviews, surveys, and focus groups with 100+ employers from across public, private, and third-sector organisations to ask 'what do employers want from future history graduates in the age of Industry 4.0?' Finally, it draws on this data, alongside 100+ student reflections responding to employability-centred learning, to present some case studies of new approaches to history teaching in the age of Industry 4.0. The paper concludes by advancing the concept of 'radical hope' in history pedagogy, arguing that we need to expand peer-to-peer collaboration, learning for adaptability, and real-world problem-based approaches to reimagine the future of history as a socially vital discipline for the future.

Don Watson (Independent Historian) - 'An unusual and welcome development': Amateur Drama in the Unemployed Clubs of 1930s Britain

One consequence of cultural inequality is that working-class people are under-represented in artistic activity relative to their numbers. In this context the paper examines an initiative by the British Drama League during the 1930s to establish play-making in the clubs for unemployed people funded by the government. This became an extensive activity within amateur theatre with 25 drama groups of unemployed people in the Rhondda Valley of Wales for example. Encouraging self-expression and 'leading many lives in the imagination' through drama was intended to counter the demoralisation it was feared came with long-term unemployment.

This paper argues that these drama groups were efforts to address cultural inequality. It will use primary sources to examine how impoverished communities were encouraged to make theatre; use examples of unemployed drama from around the country including tours; discuss performances by the wives of unemployed miners, and how the pioneering use of improvisation in this field contributed to British actor training. It also discusses issues around unemployed men and women developing their own plays, and relationships with the amateur theatre sector as a whole.

These unemployed clubs were critiqued at the time (and by some historians since) as essentially designed to distract the workless from their situation and diffuse unrest. The

paper responds to this and argues that as regards drama a democratization of culture took place in them - through promoting a sense of entitlement to participate.

Janet Weston (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) - Marginal Social Movements and Unsuccessful Legal Campaigns in 1980-90s Britain: the Case of CADD

In 1985, two recently bereaved fathers in England formed the Campaign against Drinking and Driving (CADD). Disturbed by what they perceived as structural inequalities between the victims of drink-driving and perpetrators and grave injustices when it came to prosecutions and sentencing of offenders, CADD sought to transform British criminal law and thus to drive social change. Their goals were a series of specific legal reforms which would turn all drink-driving into a serious crime that was investigated thoroughly and punished severely.

CADD enjoyed mixed results: the introduction of new powers to appeal unduly lenient sentences in 1988 and the creation of a new offence of causing death by dangerous driving in 1991 meant that some of their goals were achieved fairly quickly. On the other hand, their calls for new police powers to allow random breathalyser testing and a revised blood alcohol limit of zero were consistently rejected (and remain unfulfilled today). Furthermore, and in striking contrast with their American counterpart Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), CADD remained a small group with very little political or social influence.

Drawing on histories of alcohol, social movements, and the idea of 'elective affinity,' this paper will consider why some of CADD's campaigns succeeded while others failed. It will also show why, more broadly, CADD (and perhaps other, similar campaign groups too) did not achieve the status and power necessary to shape ideas of deviance in late 20th century Britain.

Jasper Williams (King's College London) - Generational Revolt? Re-Evaluating the Impact of Involvement in British Youth Culture on Familial Relationships in the 1970s

Traditional histories of youth subcultures suggest that teenage involvement formed part of a revolt against their parents' generation, straining the relationship within the family. However recent scholarship from academics such as Selina Todd and Hilary Young has instead suggested that, rather than viewing the acts of the teenager as a form of rebellion in the 1950s and 1960s, working-class parents in fact used their new economic security to encourage their children to live more adventurously than they had been able to (Todd & Young, 2012).

This paper aims to examine this idea further into the 1970s. It will briefly discuss early subcultures such as mods, rockers, and teds, before then focusing on the punk subculture. This furthers the recent scholarship by examining how worsening economic conditions in the 1970s impacted the attitude of parents towards their children's involvement in youth subcultures. Drawing divisions between familial relationships and

wider society, it will also argue there was a marked difference between abstract societal generational conflict, and the lived experience of individual stories.

Utilising sources such as fanzines and contemporary news (both in print and broadcast) from the 1970s, and later interviews, this paper examines the viewpoint of both the parent and the child to form a coherent idea of the overall relationship, then drawing comparisons to wider societal perceptions. It will ultimately argue that these relationships were naturally much more complex than mainstream coverage suggested.

Peter Wood (Birkbeck, University of London) - Queue Jumping or Need? Homeless Families, Council Housing, and the Housing Waiting List in Postwar Britain

In 2003 David Feldman described 'the slow and incomplete shift from local to state boundaries in determining entitlements to welfare' in England in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The abolition of the Poor Law in 1948 completed this process. For Michael Walzer, distributive justice necessarily required hard lines to be drawn between insiders and strangers, those inside the boundary and those outside.

In 1970s Britain, homelessness – homeless families with a new entitlement to permanent council housing – was a challenge on both grounds. From 1948 the boundary for the provision of, and entitlement to, housing lay with local authorities, while welfare was a central government function. The campaign to create an entitlement to permanent housing for homeless families during the 1970s involved reframing the issue as one of housing rather than welfare. But for local authorities this came up against Walzer's line between insiders and strangers in the form of the local authority housing waiting list. To join the waiting list it was necessary to meet locally decided criteria, generally including length of residence. Often homeless families were not able to meet these criteria. For some, housing 'need' was more important than the boundary between insiders and strangers; for others, homelessness was often little more than 'queue-jumping' as strangers gained an entitlement formerly reserved for local residents.

This paper will explore the shifting role of the local authority housing waiting list as a tool for deciding who was an insider and who was a stranger as the issue of homelessness became a major concern in 1970s Britain.

Roberto Zanola (University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy) - The Italian Cinema Under the Shadow of Censorship: An Empirical Investigation of Post-Fascism Period

Censorship is often approached as a legal or moral issue and commonly associated with authoritarian regimes. This paper instead conceptualizes censorship as a discretionary policy instrument through which political actors shape the informational and moral environment. From this perspective, censorship reflects strategic behaviour by governing coalitions seeking to advance ideological priorities, manage political risk,

and preserve institutional support. The paper examines film censorship in Italy between 1947 and 1974, a period marked by strong institutional continuity alongside significant political change. Although the legal framework regulating cinema remained largely stable, control over censorship commissions shifted between parties with distinct moral orientations, most notably the Christian Democratic Party and the Italian Socialist Party. The central question is whether these political transitions translated into systematic differences in censorship standards, severity, and enforcement practices. Empirically, the study relies on an original dataset of more than 13,000 censorship decisions drawn from official archival records. The data document not only whether films were censored, but also the form of intervention, cuts, age restrictions, or bans, the stated motivations, and the use of appeals. The analysis employs interrupted time-series methods to identify structural breaks in censorship outcomes at moments of political transition and explores heterogeneity across content categories, film genres, and national origin. The paper shows that censorship enforcement varied with political control even in the absence of legal reform, reflecting shifts in ideological standards and enforcement capacity. Overall, the findings highlight censorship as a politically mediated regulatory practice within a democratic system, shaped by incentives and institutional discretion rather than formal rules alone.