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The School Blackboard site is now up! This will eventually substitute the School website for document and information sharing. The School webpages will be more outward facing for publicity and student recruitment.

Head of School report

It is Spring in Woodland Road

The corridors have been bustling with prospective new students and their parents attending one or other in the sequence of post-offer visit days. Overall it seems that humanities at Bristol is still a popular choice but we are now experiencing a much more volatile higher education environment than in the recent past. This means we will need to work harder to remind students what a great place Bristol is to study Classics and Ancient History, English, History, History of Art, Religion and Theology and, of course, the new Liberal Arts programme.

Research incentive scheme

As the teaching year winds down, so thoughts turn to research. This month the School has announced a new incentive scheme to encourage researchers to aspire to bigger and more ambitious projects by providing a cash consolation prize to those who work hard to put in applications but who just miss out. More details from Beth Williamson on this one.

Social events

We have also had a series of informal social events. It has been enjoyable to meet departmental staff in a series of 'drop-in teas' in the Staff Common Room organised by Rosanne Jacks. Gatherings for Historical Studies and Classics, Ancient History, Religion and Theology were held on 2 and 3 April respectively. I knew these were a good idea when two members of the conjoined Classics and Ancient History department shook hands and told me they had just met each other for the first time across the strawberries and pastries. Our growing number of post-doctoral research assistants (PDRAs) are another very important group who, while highly valued in their own subject areas, have not had a chance to get to know each other. A drop-in tea to help bring them together was held for them on Thursday 10 April. Staff who wanted to meet some of our outstanding cohort of PDRAs were also welcome to come along. English has not been forgotten and will have a gathering early next term.

Finance and budget

On a more sombre note there have been continuing negotiations for next year's budget. Overall the news looks promising for the School with some additional contract teaching fellows in the pipeline - though there will also be strenuous targets for us to meet in regard to research funding and more challenges if we hope to consolidate our growth into ongoing permanent staff positions in the next academic year.

Arts and Social Sciences Library

Finally, SPARC was honoured by the visit of the visit of Dr Jessica Gardner, Director of Library Services, on 24 March. Jess told us about the response she was making to the issues raised on many occasions by students and staff about conditions in the Arts and Social Sci-

ences Library. The good news is that there are plans for 100 new places for student users in Tyndall Avenue. The other news is that we need to continue working in partnership with Jess and the library staff to improve library conditions even more over the next few years.

Hilary Carey
April 2014

Meet Humanities’ Post-Doctoral Research Assistants! (PDRAs)

History

Marianna Dudley

A new project, funded by the AHRC’s ‘Care for the Future’ research theme, is up and running in the Histori- cal Studies Department.

“The Power and the Water: Connecting Past and Futures” is a three-year project with Peter Coates leading a team of re- searchers at Bristol, Nottingham and East Anglia Universities. They are taking an innovative approach to environmental his- tory by investigating the environmental ‘connectivities’ that have emerged in Britain since the industrial revolution. The project recognizes that energies such as water and electricity have multiple, dynamic and interconnected ‘flows’ that connect bio-physical, energetic, commercial, and recreational histories and, that these lega-
Meet Humanities’ PDRAs! (continued)

Humanities’ Post-Doctoral Research Assistants (PDRAs):

- Marianna Dudley (HSTY)
- Nate Eisenstadt (HSTY)
- Mike Gulliver (RETH)
- Grégory Kourilsky (HSTY)
- Adam Lecznar (CLAS)
- Nick Nourse (HSTY)
- Leona Skelton (HSTY)
- Louise Wilson (HSTY)

Project: The Power and the Water (Marianna Dudley) (Leona Skelton)

Project: Know your Bristol on the Move (Nate Eisenstadt) (Nick Nourse)

Project: The Figure of the Witch (Louise Wilson)

History

Nate Eisenstadt

Know Your Bristol On the Move,

which started in December 2013, follows on from the award-winning AHRC Connected Communities Project, Know Your Bristol. A collaborative project between the University, Bristol City Council and several Bristol community groups, On the Move aims to enable people to explore, research and co-create Bristol history, heritage and culture using digital tools and through a series of participatory workshops and events. Building on the success of working with communities to enrich the city Council’s Know Your Place map in 2012-13, On the Move sets out to achieve a wider ‘impact’ to connect with more Bristol residents, but especially those whose stories have tended to be absent from official histories and maps of the city. This is being achieved in variety of ways: by making specific links to particular groups through existing organisations such as Knowle West Media Centre, Easton-based Single Parents Action Network and local schools, through the co-production of a more accessible user-generated mapping tool, ‘Map Your Bristol’ and a series of mobile apps to interface with it, and by going physically mobile with an AV-equipped bus that can act as a workshop space and digital archiving facility that travels to community venues. For more information, or to get involved check the blog and/or follow us on twitter.

History

Nick Nourse

Know your Bristol On the Move is funded by the AHRC under its Connected Communities programme and led by Robert Bickers.

The project builds on previous University of Bristol successes in working with local communities. A principal aim of the Know your Bristol projects has been to enable communities to tell their histories via the community layer of the Know Your Place web map. Nick’s involvement with Know your Bristol began in 2013 on the second phase of the project, Know Your Bristol Stories where his previous work experience as a surveyor-cartographer was deployed in community cartography activities. His current role as Research Assistant to Know your Bristol On The Move builds on that experience.

Nick’s principal role in the current On The Move project is in coordinating community volunteers who are helping to build a new historic layer in the Know Your Place map. The new layer is based on the Vaughan Collection of Bristol postcards held by the Bristol Record Office.

The project is especially fulfilling in that it builds on Nick’s experience of mapping, and also on his knowledge of Bristol’s local history gained through researching his PhD, ‘The Transformation of the Music of the Poor, 1789 – 1864’ (Bristol, 2012). The difficulties of examining a problem community such as the nineteenth century poor resonates particularly well with the aims of Know your Bristol On The Move, where the Team are seeking to engage with groups whose stories have so far not been told in official histories or plotted on official maps of the city.
Meet Humanities’ PDRAs! (continued)

History
Leona Skelton

As a postdoctoral researcher on the Peter Coates’ AHRC-funded environmental history project, The Power and the Water: Reconnecting Past with Futures’, Marianna is researching degeneration and regeneration on the River Tyne, past, present and future. By re-integrating the various separate aspects of the river – the unimproved river; the navigable river; the polluted river; the industrial river; the post-industrial river; the salmon river; the mercantile river; the recreational river; and the literary and artistic river – her aim is to create the first total history of a British river. She has split the task of interpreting the ‘black box’ of how the River Tyne has been polluted, protected, altered, abused and undermined, from 1500 onwards, into four chronological periods: The Pre-Modern River, 1500-1800; The Industrial River, 1800-1975; The Kielder Scheme and Regeneration, 1975-present; and the Tyne’s Future.

The archives which Marianna is consulting are based at Tyne and Wear Archives and the Literary and Philosophical Society, both in Newcastle, Northumberland Archives, near Ashington, and the National Archives, in London. They range from the seventeenth-century manuscript records of Newcastle’s River Court, to the eighteenth-century minutes of Newcastle Corporation’s River Committee, to the nineteenth-century minutes of the Tyne Improvement Commission, to the twentieth-century records of the Tyneside Joint Sewerage Committee and the Kielder Scheme. She is also looking at the reports of early efforts, from 1912, to test the river water scientifically; various physical means. My work will focus on the involvement of physicians and medical practitioners in the formulation, promotion and prosecution of ideas about harmful magic. She will examine the attitudes of medical authors and practitioners to hostile magic, drawing from academic sources, based on Graeco-Arabic medical traditions, and also on more popular practical medical compilations, such as herbs, charms and lapidaries, to assess the broader cultural impact of ideas about magic beyond the cloisters and corridors of monastic schools and universities. Physicians and medical practitioners played another significant role in the history of witchcraft and magic, as either expert witnesses in medieval court proceedings or as malefactors prosecuted for practising either hostile or healing magic. Louise will explore the significance of the involvement of medical practitioners in medieval witchcraft prosecutions, elucidating the under-researched relationship between medicine, magic and the law and, in the process, providing a more detailed context for the early modern witchcraft prosecutions.

History
Louise Wilson

Louise is a Research Assistant employed on Ronald Hutton’s Leverhulme funded project The Figure of the Witch.

This three-year project aims to provide a better context for the early modern European witch trials, positioning them more firmly in global, ancient and medieval perspectives, with particular attention to differing regional traditions of magic in Europe and the Near East. In addition to supporting these broader aims of the project, Louise will be conducting research for a monograph investigating the relationship between witchcraft, harmful magic and medicine in medieval England.

Hostile magic is of significant relevance to the early modern witchcraft prosecutions in England, the vast majority of which dealt with maleficia - acts of bodily harm caused by non-

Religion and Theology
Mike Gulliver

The Scripture, Dissent and Deaf Space project is a three-year project, funded by the Leverhulme and based in the Department of Religion and Theology. Mike will be working alongside the PI, John Lyons, as a full-time researcher. The project also includes a PhD Student that will be co-supervising.

The project has been shaping up for a couple of years, and emerged in its final form to answer a series of questions that intrigued the Team. We know that, from about 1850 to about 1950, the church largely governed the lives of signing deaf people within the UK, legislating on everything from their participation in religious worship, to who
Meet Humanities’ PDRAs! (continued)

(and whether) they might marry. And yet, despite an influence that shaped the lives of generations of Deaf people in the UK, we know very little about where the church’s thinking about Deaf people originally came from. Nor do we know very much about how Deaf people responded to that thinking, and how they saw themselves within that church-defined system of control.

The Team want to find out what the church thought about Deaf people, where their knowledge came from, how it was established as authoritative, and how it became embedded in practice. They also want to find out what Deaf people thought about the church, and how they lived out their lives within the structures that the church set up.

Initially Mike’s job will be to locate and collect as much relevant information as possible. They’re focusing on a particular church, (St Saviour’s: Oxford Street, which was the first church in the UK to be built specifically for signing Deaf people) so they can start with the archives of the mission that set it up, the records of the estate that provided the land and some copies of internal church communications and branch out from there as they uncover interesting connections.

When they have a better idea of the evidence, Mike will be working to analyse the data, and to apply theoretical work from historical geography, utopian and Deaf studies to frame the spaces of the church and the Deaf community, and working with John tobridge that to Biblical studies work to trace the emergence of authoritative knowledges.

Practically, most of Mike’s time will be spent writing. By the end of the project, the Team will have co-authored a book, and independently written a number of articles. Mike is also using the project time to write up and publish material from his PhD, and get some more experience by co-supervising the PhD student, and doing a limited amount of teaching.

Religion and Theology
Grégory Kourilsky joins...

Project: Children of Antaeus: appropriations of Greece and Rome in black nationalist thought (Adam Lecznar)

Adam Lecznar has come to Bristol on a three-year fellowship, generously funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation, in conjunction with the Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition and the University’s Department of Classics and Ancient History. Adam arrives from University College London, where he completed his doctorate on the Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka and his adaptation of ancient Greek tragedy over the summer and where previously he had undertaken his undergraduate degree in Classics; in between these spells he studied for his Masters at Cambridge. He also spent three months as a Visiting Assistant of Research at Yale University. The project that he is planning to work on at Bristol is entitled ‘Children of Antaeus: appropriations of Greece and Rome in black nationalist thought’; it aims to explore different geographical contexts of black cultural and political nationalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the way that these movements used metaphors and ideas drawn from ancient Greece and Rome to advance their cause. He is interested in the tension between the way that these references are used to fashion movements that are supposed to depart from the structures of white imperial hegemony, and the fact that ancient Greece and Rome have so often been viewed as the birthplaces of those very same structures. During his time in Bristol, he will also be in charge of the Institute’s pioneering outreach programme in local secondary schools, which sends out students from the Classics department to deliver ten-week taster courses in the ancient world to KS3 pupils who have had no prior engagement with classical languages or culture.
DHR report (continued)

Application Process and Conditions

- Only grant applications made within this academic session will be eligible.
- For near-miss funding, applicants must advise the DHR of grant outcome, ranking and funder feedback.
- Funds will be made available for any research-related purpose including top-up of conference funding, travel to archives, payment for marking relief.
- Grants will be managed by Billie Woolfenden.
- All funds must be expended this academic year and cannot be rolled over.

Contact Beth Williamson for more information.

Research leave

Expressions of interest for research leave for 2015/16 will be considered at the next SPARC(RC) on 19 May. We are starting to look at these earlier so as not to miss any opportunities for funding, as cut-off dates vary. In this regard, staff are encouraged to look at the HUMS’ Blackboard site, where funding opportunities will be posted, as well as guidelines for applying for research leave and leave funding in our current financial environment. Your HSU/SLead will have been in contact if you are up for leave in 2015/16. Everyone who is going on leave will need to apply for funding so please contact Valerie Aspin and/or Jean Pretlove who will advise you about suitable schemes for your research.

Beth Williamson
Deputy Head Research
April 2014

SM report

As reported in the last Digest, Lauren Needs has now joined us on secondment to cover the SAM post in Ann Clarke’s absence. Lauren joins us from the Timetabling Team where she is the Faculty Timetabling and Education Officer for Science, and is working in both roles part time for the secondment period.

Tom Begbie
School Manager
April 2014

Staff news

Many congratulations to Madhu Krishnan (English) who was awarded a British Academy/Leverhulme Foundation Small Research Grant worth over £8,000 pounds for the project ‘Postcolonial Space in/and West African Literature: From Empire to Independence’. Madhu’s book, Contemporary African Literature in English: Global Locations, Postcolonial Identities, was published by Palgrave Macmillan on 19 March 2014. More information can be found at: http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=710618. Well done, Madhu!

Laurence Publicover (English) and Madhu Krishnan were named finalists for the AHRC/BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinkers 2014 competition. They were two of 52 finalists out of nearly 600 applicants and spent a day at the BBC offices in Salford, working with producers on translating their research into programme ideas for Radio 3. Congratulations to both!

Many congratulations to Rita Langer (Religion and Theology) who has just been awarded a British Academy research grant for her project entitled Feeding humans and non-humans in Theravada Buddhism.

David Punter’s (English) most recent monograph, The Literature of Pity, has just been published by Edinburgh University Press in the UK and Oxford University Press in the US. It is the first book to trace the meanings and inflections of the term ‘pity’ as it has run through Western culture to the present day. Major writers addressed in the book include Aristotle, Shakespeare, Fielding, Blake, Austen, Chekhov, Brecht, Wilfred Owen, David Jones, Primo Levi, Jean Rhys, Stevie Smith, Derek Walcott and Bob Dylan; there are also considerations of various visual representations of pity. ‘I conceived of this book because it seemed - and still seems - to me that pity is a matter of real public urgency; always, perhaps, but at the present moment particularly, when we are witnessing unprecedented economic and cultural divides, both within the western world and between that which would and its so-called “other”.’ Well done, David!

Louise Wilson (History) has been awarded an AHRC International Placement Scheme award to conduct research at the Huntington Library in California for three months this summer. This is a very prestigious award which is granted to six early career researchers/docoral students per year. More information can be found at: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/International-Placement-Scheme-Short-term-Fellowships-at-the-Huntington-Library.aspx. Many congratulations, Louise!
And finally...

Madhu Krishnan reports:

From autumn 2014, Bristol University will join a select group of universities across the United States and United Kingdom working in partnership with the Booker Prize Foundation to put on The Big Read. Five thousand copies of Stephen Kelman’s Man Booker Prize nominated novel, *Pigeon English*, will be distributed to every incoming first year across the university in their halls of residence, and a series of events will run throughout the first eight weeks of Autumn Term where students will be able to share their reading experiences, learn more about the author and debate issues raised by the novel. The event will culminate with a visit from the author himself on 13 November 2014, which will feature a reading and question and answer session free and open to all Bristol University students and staff. The Booker Prize Foundation Universities Initiative seeks to encourage first year university students to read, engage with and appreciate the very best of contemporary fiction, turning the university into a community of readers of a shared text.

*Pigeon English* is Kelman’s debut novel and follows the life of Harrison Okupu, an eleven year old Ghanaian immigrant living on a council estate in London, as he attempts to solve the murder of a young boy on the estate. The novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2011.

Newsflash!

It’s now been confirmed: this year’s graduation teas will be taking place in-house, on July 18. No Estates works will be affecting us on that day, so we are going ahead with the plan, which includes opening all the doors to the gardens (each of which will have a marquee) which will link the Staff Common Room with the Student Common Room. We will also have Link Rooms 1 and 2 and the garden of the Graduate School. There will be student prize-giving events (details to follow), a cash bar and the catering by the same people who did our last year’s Christmas party. Planning has already started (you may have noticed the new garden furniture). Thank you to Evan Jones (History) for the initial idea, and to the Graduate School for lending us their garden on that day.

From the editor

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of the HUMS Digest. The next issue will be coming out in May to coincide with the end of TB2. Please let me have your feedback and stories: r.jacks@bristol.ac.uk by Friday 2 May.