Welcome to the fourth annual newsletter about History at Keele. *History Matters* is designed as a window into the department for prospective students, and as a means of keeping in touch with alumni.

Keele’s Historians continue to make an impact on the national and international scene. Professor Charles Townshend is now completing his research on ‘The republican counter-state in Ireland, 1919-1923’, looking at conflicts around the attempted establishment of the Irish Republic after January 1919; the book arising from this project is due to be published by Allen Lane/ Penguin Press later this year. Dr Anthony Kauders holds a German Research Council grant to spend two years at the University of Munich, investigating the reception of Freudian psychoanalysis between 1900 and 1985. Anthony will be in Munich until summer 2012, but he keeps in touch via email.

As research-active disciplines in British Universities gear up for their next major review, the Research Excellence Framework or REF of 2014, History at Keele will stay well-informed. Professor Ann Hughes has been appointed to the History panel, and so will help with reviewing and evaluating historical research from around the country. As Ann is also the head of the Humanities Research Institute at Keele, we will continue to benefit from her wealth of experience and high-level public engagement. This is important to us, because we are hoping to build on our success in the last national research review, the Research Assessment Exercise or RAE of 2008. In 2008, 25% of our research ‘outputs’ (the books, articles and essays that we write and publish) was judged in the highest band, 4*, meaning that it is ‘world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour’. That placed us 8th out of 82 History departments in the UK judged by research outputs, just one place behind Oxford University and ahead of much larger institutions such as Birmingham, Durham, and Exeter. That was an enormous achievement for Keele, one of the smaller universities. It was also of great significance for our undergraduates. Since what we teach is closely based on what we research, it means that our students are taught by some of the leading historians in the UK, and much of what undergraduates learn comes directly from the coal face of historical research.

In staffing news 2010 was a year of goodbyes for us, as two Historians have left to take up posts elsewhere. After four years at Keele Dr Emma Waterton has moved internationally to work at the University of Western Sydney, while Dr Claire Eldridge has travelled to Southampton University, which will provide an ideal base for her research trips to France. We wish them both very well in their new jobs. Fortunately it was not ‘goodbye’ to Professor Malcolm Crook, who took partial retirement in summer 2010 only to return immediately and work as hard as ever, both in
and Culture. We don’t know what we would do without him.

We are delighted that, in the last two years, we have maintained an enthusiastic uptake of places by people applying to read History. We are even more pleased by the endorsement of the National Student Survey, a poll conducted among third-year students across academic disciplines throughout the country. In 2010, 89% of our outgoing students were satisfied or better with the teaching they received during their degree. At the time I am writing higher education in England is about to enter a very testing period for undergraduates, postgraduates and staff. Since we have to confront turbulent times, though, I am glad to be doing so in the company of such keen students and such committed colleagues.

Dr Alannah Tomkins
Head of History

Malcolm Crook’s position as one of Britain’s leading historians of revolutionary France was confirmed by a gesture of the Society for the Study of French History and La Maison Française d’Oxford in January 2011, when an international workshop was held in his honour. Speakers from France and England, including the research director of the prestigious French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Centre for Scientific Research) explored issues of political legacies in France.

David Maxwell, Keele’s leading Africanist and specialist in Zimbabwean church history has been appointed as Dixie Professor of Church History at the University of Cambridge from July 2011. David was responsible for the establishment of African history in the department and we will be sorry to lose him. The Dixie chair is one of Cambridge’s leading professorships and confirms that we continue to attract and grow colleagues who get ‘poached’ by what the Press call ‘Britain’s leading Universities’. African history remains rooted at Keele, and there is news of current work elsewhere in this newsletter.

Philip Morgan was one of a small number of British scholars presenting papers at the Unesco sponsored water history conference held at the Technical University, Delft in the Summer. The multi-disciplinary conference drew hydrologists, engineers, political scientists and historians from all four continents, with interests in the history of water use and management from the ancient world to contemporary disputes. Philip’s research has developed from a special subject offered to final-year students on water history, and could be described as teaching-led research. His paper dealt with the ways in which a watery landscape could generate a range of social and cultural responses from ritual worship of wells to medicalised water and pleasurable vistas.

Alannah Tomkins secured a grant of 2K from the History Subject Centre to support the development of creative-writing assessments within History modules. The project involves working with Keele’s creative writing team, poet Jim Sheard and novelist Joe Stretch, to devise an assessment format for written work that comprises both a creative and an empirical history element. It also required her to become a practitioner in creative writing, to provide ‘model’ answers for her History students. So far she has written a short story, a poem, a short play, a monologue and a fictitious example of nineteenth-century journalism. She is working on a negative model of how not to approach assessment, in the form of a ghost story based on the life and death of murderer William Burke. Alannah teaches aspects of the social history of medicine, so all of her creative output thus far has been geared around the experience of illness or of practising medicine (or both). Her short story, which deals with an imagined encounter between a pauper and his wife’s physician in 1750, has been submitted for consideration to the journal Ars Medica, a periodical that carries poems, stories and first-person narratives on medical subjects.
Alannah’s research into medical history also runs to doctors who experienced difficult, traumatic or tragic careers in the period 1780-1890. She has participated twice in events organised by Mental Health in Higher Education, speaking about doctors who suffered such poor mental health that they were admitted as patients to one of the mammoth, nineteenth-century lunatic asylums of England or Wales. She has also spoken to medical students and practising psychiatrists in north Staffordshire about doctors who committed suicide during the same period. Two of her Master’s students are currently exploring additional aspects of this project, including doctors who killed in Victorian England (either intentionally, usually with poison, or mistakenly, often as a result of a problematic abortion) or doctors charged with the neglect of their patients (with a focus on maternity cases) The prosecution of Harold Shipman and the subsequent government and enquiry was directly contributory to changes for the medical profession, particularly the introduction of statutory revalidation from 2012; therefore it seems timely to consider the impact of disappointed and disappointing doctors, in all their varieties, during the period when the medical profession was being defined.

Kate Cushing is secretary of CLASMA, an AHRC funded research network which focuses on canon law, and continues as president of the International Society of Medieval Canon Law. Canon law touched the life of every inhabitant of Western Europe in the Middle Ages: it could protect the murderer, it allowed for the speedy resolution of conflicts over debt, it developed an anthropology of human sexuality in its attempts to guarantee that marriage lived up to its high Christian ideals, and in many ways salvation itself was a matter of law. The later medieval papacy functioned increasingly as a source of this law. Between 1200 and 1300, the majority of cardinals and popes were not graduates in theology, but canon law. The personnel of embassies in international diplomacy were selected from university law graduates, such that the very language of inter-state discourse became a legal language, and one of its principal components was canon law. Historians routinely encounter this language and equally routinely avoid it for lack of grammar. CLASMA has two aims: to make medieval canon law more accessible to historians and to create an environment of research and instruction to remove obstacles for scholars wishing to approach canon law as an opportunity for enhancing their understanding of the past.


Recent Books

Our historians continue to research, write and sometimes to publish. Amongst this year’s highlights are the following.

Several colleagues have collaborated on the Historical Atlas of Staffordshire which has just appeared. Within its ancient boundaries, Staffordshire is a county of diverse and contrasting historic landscapes. The two major conurbations of the Black Country and the Potteries that now dominate the county co-exist with smaller towns that in their day had similar standing as centres of the Mercian state. The county’s world-renowned industrial complexes based on ceramics and the metalware trades, products of the industrial revolution and before, sit alongside agricultural systems embracing both arable and grassland specialisms. In the built environment, castles rub shoulders with the meanest of urban-industrial housing, and religious expressions range from the cathedral of a vast diocese to humble and widespread well-dressing ceremonies. The overtly planned landscapes of Needwood Forest and the gardens of Alton Towers mingle with the seemingly natural appearances of the uplands of the Moorlands and the heathlands of Cannock Chase.

These many and varied landscapes are both products and reflections of a multiplicity of histories. Students of the county have been keen to explore and relate these pasts.
However, no systematic attempt has been made to express these accounts in spatial form. For the first time, this book seeks to demonstrate by maps the various histories that contribute to the diversity of Staffordshire. With its succinct discussions and detailed map presentations of these themes, incorporating new thinking and recent research, the atlas provides an innovative and major contribution to the study of the history of Staffordshire.

Nigel Tringham contributed accounts of Staffordshire’s administrative areas, the boundaries which often shape our lives but are invisible on the ground. Robin Studd, a fellow of the University, reviews medieval agricultural landscapes and early settlements. Ian Atherton maps religious observance and attendance, church-building and affiliation from the Reformation to 2001. Philip Morgan follows land and power among the medieval nobility, the landscapes of castles and moated sites, the patterns of conflict and civil disturbance from the English settlements to the Royal Observer Corps posts of the cold war, and the cultural landscapes of water. The atlas is edited by Tony Phillips, a fellow of the University.

Charles Townshend’s studies of the middle east during the twentieth century continue. His 2010 book When God Made Hell: The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq, 1914-1921 richly illustrates the ways in which historians can inform the present through their study of the past. Since 2003, Iraq has rarely left the headlines. But less discussed is the fact that Iraq as we know it was created by the British, in one of the most dramatic interventions in recent history. A cautious strategic invasion by British forces led - within seven years - to imperial expansion on a dizzying scale, with fateful consequences for the Middle East and the world. Charles charts Britain’s path from one of its worst military disasters to extraordinary success with largely unintended consequences, through overconfidence, incompetence and dangerously vague policy. With monumental research and exceptionally vivid accounts of on-the-ground warfare, this a truly gripping account of the Mesopotamia campaign, and its place in the wider political and international context. For anyone seeking to understand the roots of British involvement in Iraq, it is essential reading.

Christopher Harrison’s retirement was noted in last year’s History Matters. His parting shot was a 129-page memoir of his time at Keele as a student, postgraduate and lecturer. In the Company of Friends is an affectionate and richly amusing story of Keele, Keele history and students. One reviewer wrote, 'Sometimes one smells a Pepys-like aroma wafting over the memoirs of this resident tutor at Hawthorns, spilling the beans on students and staff alike. Chris Harrison lived on both sides of the Keele campus, as undergraduate and faculty staff. He is the soul of discretion and yet opens up that special closed world of an entirely campus university where the peccadilloes of professors, lecturers and students were grist to a gossip mill and where he had a role of more than special significance. Here he is first hand witness (he writes in the spirit of Ladurie and Montaillou, not Pepys) providing material about a changing world from that of the early 1960s when male and female students were forbidden to be in each other’s rooms between 10.00pm and midday (and subject to early morning searches by the warden) and the 1990s when drugs and knife
crime are given sections of their own. He is suspect only when he suggests (I hope with tongue in cheek) that one of his sections is a 'local history of poofery'. His frankness is typical of the man; his witness invaluable. Characteristically, there is a section of the book with pungent comments to make on tutorials, seminars, leturing, the syllabus, semesterisation, computerisation and the changing face of history. There are quotes here for examination questions aplenty – all with the direction Discuss.

Emma Waterton left for Australia during the year just as she published Politics, Policy and the Discourses of Heritage in Britain. The book examines a wide range of issues pertinent to contemporary cultural policy, and takes as its focus the intersection of heritage with recent calls for social inclusion. Although Emma has left us our interests in cultural policy, heritage and public history remain. First-year students can now take a module History, Media, Memory: The Presentation of the Past in Contemporary Culture aimed at anyone who reads historical novels, watches historical films, or visits museums and stately homes. Our understanding of 'history' comes not simply from school or university study but from the versions of the past that are all around us. This module focuses on 'public history' rather than academic history, exploring the forms, purposes and impact of these broader, 'popular' representations of history. It explores how visions of the past are central to individual and collective memory, and to the constructions of individual and community identities. Accounts of the past are always constructed and debated, and play a crucial role in most modern political and international conflicts. Weekly lectures explore these general issues through analysis of the presentation of historical accounts in newspapers, film and television programmes, historical novels, and of the versions of the past displayed in museums, historic buildings and sites, in re-enactments (such as the Sealed Knot), through anniversaries and memorials. One detailed case study focuses on the commemorations in 2007 that marked the anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in Britain.

David Horovitz, a long-time member of the Keele Anglo-Saxon course, an adult-education programme which started life as ‘Brush up your Beowulf,’ has just published his own startling reinterpretation of the events which surround the battle of Tettenhall in 910, Notes and Materials on the Battle of Tettenhall 910 A.D., and other researches. In that year the English king Edward the Elder began a punitive campaign against Viking Northumbria. In retaliation the Vikings sought to ravage the English Midlands. Their army was caught at Tettenhall, or as David argues, in the land to the east near modern Wednesfield, and three Viking kings slaughtered. Northumbria retained its own king until 954 but the unification of England was perhaps inevitable after Tettenhall. Historians at Keele have form in the moving of battlefields - in 1980 Ian Rowney suggested a different site for the Battle of Blore Heath in 1459, and in 1985 Colin Richmond suggested a new site for the Battle of Bosworth of 1485.
Some of our students produce work which reaches print without much further research or polishing.

**Shula P. Moreland** completed an M.A. in Local History in 2003. The subject of her thesis was the history of the now small but once much larger Jewish presence in north Staffordshire. The history department at Keele has had a long connection with the congregation through the Synagogue President, Sydney Morris MBE. An article based on Shula’s thesis, ‘Jewish Settlement in Staffordshire: the early years, 1811-1901’ appears in the academic journal *Jewish Historical Studies*, 42 (2009), 97-120.

**David Salmon** first completed a Certificate in Local History in 2009, with a thesis on nineteenth and early twentieth-century cricket clubs, and then went on to do an MRes with a dissertation on Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). As a young man he had worked in the Overseas Civil Service in Africa and has now published his correspondence of that period as *Letters from Africa*. He is currently applying to study for a PhD in African history.

**James Moir** (History in the late 1970s is as close to dating as he will get) is currently director of the Association of Preservation Trusts, the body which assists building preservation trusts to save historic buildings for future generations. [http://www.ukapt.org.uk/](http://www.ukapt.org.uk/) The conservation of historic buildings is one of those professions in which historians do well. In a recent issue of the professional magazine *Context* he was asked about his greatest inspirations, and replied that ‘Colin Richmond [one of our emeritus Professors] who taught me that dung was as valid a topic of history as great deeds.’ Colin’s lecture on the subject was a feature of first-year undergraduate teaching which has achieved legendary status. It began with addition of the vulgar word for dung written on the screen and, after suitable laughter and shock, the addition of ‘hay = sh*t = porridge,’ the introduction to a discussion of the realities of peasant agrarian life in the European middle ages.

**Amy Sell** (*History and English 2007*) describes her search for jobs after graduation and her current post as a Marketing Executive for findmypast.co.uk. My first role was as an Administrator and Advertising Production Assistant with the publishing company TRMG, helping to produce showguides for events such as the Formula One Grand Prix. The organisational skills I gained while at Keele were key here as I was required to juggle many tasks at once. I was responsible for ensuring that the office was running smoothly while also liaising with advertisers and designers to finalise adverts before the showguides’ press deadlines.

I moved to findmypast.co.uk, a family history website. I joined as an Office Administrator, brought in initially to coordinate an office move, but was moved into the Marketing department to make use of my enthusiasm for and experience with historical records. I am now their Marketing Executive and it is my responsibility to promote the records available on the website.

My daily tasks are very varied. I work with designers to produce adverts for family history magazines, provide journalists with information for stories and write articles for magazines and books about
findmypast.co.uk’s records, flexing the muscles I gained while writing essays and dissertations at university. It is thanks to my degree that I am able to write persuasively, within word limits and to deadlines.

Another key part of my job is research-based as I am constantly looking for interesting hooks and angles to promote the site to a wider audience. The research I did into David Beckham's family tree is a prime example of this as the revelation that his great-great-great-grandfather was a scavenger in the 1911 census achieved national newspaper coverage. Finding and analysing sources to back up arguments in the History essays I wrote while at Keele has stood me in good stead for this part of my job.

In addition, if the points of interest I find are successful in attracting journalists’ attention, I can be called upon for press and radio interviews. I have also given talks at family history fairs, explaining how to use the website for family history research. The presentations I gave while studying History at university have given me the ability to conduct these interviews and talks with confidence and ease.

Andrew Sargent applied for an AHRC collaborative studentship here in 2008 and is about to submit his doctoral thesis on Lichfield and the Lands of St Chad. Keele History and Lichfield Cathedral share responsibility for his study, and Andrew has had to make regular trips to address the cathedral community on the progress of his work on the ways in which the cult of St Chad created landscapes and structures in Anglo-Saxon Mercia. Andrews’ academic career has been diverse. He graduated first in physics before doing an MSc in archaeology at Sheffield, and working as an archaeologist. The discovery of part of St Chad’s original shrine during excavations at the cathedral, as well as the internationally news-worthy find of the Staffordshire Hoard have given his research a particular currency and he has played an active role in its popularisation. He currently sits as our representative on a working group which is exploring the education uses of the Hoard when it is displayed in Museums.

Zoe Groves spent a year undertaking archival and oral history research in Malawi and Zimbabwe during 2007 and 2008, and recently submitted her PhD thesis, ‘Malawians in colonial Salisbury: A history of migration in central Africa, c.1920s-1960s’. In April last she and other postgraduate students founded African Studies at Keele (ASK) as an inter-disciplinary research network. The aims of the group are to bring together academics and students across the disciplines who share Africa-related research interests and ideas. The group promotes ‘African Studies’ and collaborative inter-disciplinary research. Collectively our interests explore: the social history of religion in Africa and African Christianity; colonial knowledge production; the cultural, political, and social history of labour migration in central and southern Africa; land reform, education and socio-legal status in East Africa; West African witchcraft; gender and HIV in southern Africa; water and poverty in developing countries; postcolonial and world literatures; and other aspects of class, ethnicity and race across the continent in the colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Since its foundation ASK has held four research events and seminars involving high profile international guests from New York, Nigeria and Uganda and interesting speakers
from Keele. Participants from Staffordshire, Manchester, London and Sussex universities, have attended ASK seminars and meetings.

ASK provides a supportive and stimulating forum to discuss works in progress and current affairs relevant to Africa. ASK has showcased work by Keele postgraduate researchers in the humanities and social sciences and hopes to build on this by forging stronger connections with academics and postgraduate students with Africa related research interests, based at universities within the region.

What can you do with a History degree? That question is often in the forefront of parents’ minds at open and visit days. We asked Amy Sell, one of our recent graduates (see above), this question. By chance we met another graduate at a public history lecture. Their responses bear a striking similarity to each other. Gordon McKeown (History and Sociology, 1976) now manages an international software development company in Cheshire. This is what he said ‘When I graduated no one would have predicted that I would have career as a software developer and end up as co-founder and Managing Director of a software product company. I believe that studying history as an undergraduate is an excellent preparation for earning a living in an fast changing world. Researching and analysing complex topics, the marshalling of facts and arguing a case in writing are all immensely valuable skills. However I don’t recommend a narrowly vocational approach to choosing degree subjects. To me the study of History was and is immensely satisfying and enjoyable. Students should pursue the subjects that interest them. Ironically this attitude can increase their employability as they are more likely to succeed academically. Many graduates end up in careers far removed from their degrees and studying History is a good foundation for those who do not envisage a career directly linked to the subject as well as those that do.’

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Edward II Conference. We expect our students to take their studies seriously, which we means that we give them the chance to make the most of them. Final-year students traditionally meet before the summer vacation to get early advice on their special subjects. Those studying the reign of Edward II were this year invited to a special summer conference at the National Archives in London. Three: Amy Knychala, Justyna Fenrych, and Rhiannon Watkins had the chance to hear Seymour Phillips of Trinity College Dublin lecture on his newly-published biography of the King and meet other scholars from Britain and the United States. ‘It isn’t often,’ said one of them, ‘that you get the chance to meet and chat to half of the authors on your bibliography!’ Students on the same special-subject got the chance to examine original records at the Staffordshire Record Office and will spend two days visiting historic sites in Wales and the border associated with Edward II and The Despensers.

Jennifer Adlem (2006) went on to do an MA at UCL, gaining a distinction and the Friends’ Prize for best dissertation. This used her work in the special subject ‘Health Illness and Medicine’ as a springboard into research on a medical-history theme. She worked on psychopathology in animals, focussing on separation anxiety in dogs and the role of the big pharmaceutical companies in exploiting a growing market for anti-depressants for animals.

MRes Bursaries For students who stay with us to do research the University currently offers bursaries of £1000 towards course fees. In addition we have been very fortunate to secure a gift from an alumnus for an endowed award which will provide full fees, research expenses and some support towards maintenance.

http://www.keele.ac.uk/pgresearch/choosingaresearchdegree/studentships/

History Matters is edited by Dr Philip Morgan