Welcome to the 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.

2011-12 is going to be a year of change. Two of our most senior professors, Peter Jackson and Charles Townshend, have just retired, though they will keep offices in the department and continue to be part of our research community; David Maxwell left to take up a chair at Cambridge. But, we have made new appointments in early modern, African and modern European history so that Keele History will continue to develop as younger historians make their mark in the twin worlds of scholarship and teaching.

Our commitment to teaching has been recognised by the newly released results of the National Student Survey which ranked Keele in the top ten of British Universities with a rate of student satisfaction of 90%. Keele History scored 92%. The result is satisfying because we have long known, and our students tell us, that a distinctive feature of the Keele experience in history is that we have managed to retain a continuing and meaningful link between our academic staff and their students. None of us is just a name on a door. As bigger institutions struggle to guarantee a personal experience delivered on an industrial scale, we have managed to know all of our students.

In research we continue to thrive and look forward to the next major national review, the Research Excellence Framework or REF of 2014. In the last national research review 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. 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. Later this year, for example, our German historian, Christoph Dieckmann, will publish his long-awaited and monumental study of German Occupation policy in Lithuania between 1941 and 1944 in Germany. Students at Keele have been getting previews for two years.
New Appointments. The recent retirements of Professors Charles Townshend and Peter Jackson have meant that we have made a number of new permanent and temporary appointments to the department.

Dr Cathryn Spence will lecture in early-modern history. She completed her PhD in 2010 at the University of Edinburgh and has since taught at the University of Edinburgh and at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Her research explores early modern British gender history and used debt litigation, wills and a tax roll to draw out the roles of women in a variety of economic endeavours in Scottish towns.

Dr. Rachel Bright is a specialist in modern British imperial and African history and will continue the development of African studies at Keele initiated by Professor David Maxwell. She has a particular interest in Chinese migration, indentured labour, colonial government, violence, colonial nationalism, white settler cultures, and race. Also more generally imperialism and popular culture, globalisation, and colonial identity.

Malcolm Crook was recently elected as vice-president of the Paris-based Sociétés des Études Robespierristes which brings together historians of the French Revolution. The word clearly travelled quickly and on 1 July he was elected for three years as president of the Society for the Study of French History, which is an organisation for French historians in Britain and Ireland. Both societies run a related journal, and they also encourage and financially support students who work in these fields.

Keele and the Staffordshire Hoard. The discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard in July 2009 has created a huge interest in Anglo-Saxon studies in middle England, the historic kingdom of Mercia. Parts of the hoard will ultimately be displayed in Stoke on Trent, and in advance some objects have been touring the region. To accompany the visit to Stafford in July 2011, the county Archive Service mounted an exhibition of its remarkable collection of original Anglo-Saxon charters, and Nigel Tringham was invited to speak on their significance for the county's history at a private
view for county councillors and other guests. At Lichfield in June the Department hosted a day school in collaboration with the cathedral which was so popular that the waiting list had to be closed. Here three of the speakers, Andrew Sargent, Dr Alex Rumble and Dr David Horowitz examine the newly displayed Lichfield angel, perhaps part of the shrine of St Chad. The hoard itself was discovered almost exactly on the boundary of the Cathedral’s estate.

Most members of staff take part in the international conference and paper-giving circuit, the traditional way for historians to share and try out new research and ideas. Amongst this year’s crop:

**Anthony Kauders** gave one of the lectures in the European Leo Baeck Lecture Series London 2011: New perspectives on Jewish-non-Jewish relations on 28 July 2011 on the subject of *A Strange Kind of Love: Philosemitism in German-Jewish History*. Anthony is currently undertaking research on the German reception of psychoanalysis as part of a two-year grant by the DFG (German Research Council) at the University of Munich which means long hours in libraries throughout Germany, but he has also given research papers in Oxford, London, Göttingen, Bielefeld, Bochum, and Frankfurt.

**Charles Townshend**, who retired this year, but is still to be found in his book-stuffed rooms in the department, spoke in a symposium on “9/11: Ten Years On” at the British Academy in London, reviewing the Limits of Western Counter-Terrorism Policy. A number of Keele historians have long been associated with contemporary policy through their historical research.

**Peter Jackson**, also newly retired and also very much still around joined the editorial board on a project with Adam Mathew digital to publish online *Medieval Travel Writing* from travellers like Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville. The project will provides direct access to a widely scattered collection of original medieval manuscripts that describe travel - real and imaginary - in the Middle Ages. These sources tell us much about the attitudes and preconceptions of people across Europe in the medieval period, shedding light on issues of race, economics, trade, militarism, politics, literature and science. They will be welcomed by scholars in both literature and history as well as by French and German studies departments.

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

**Ann Hughes** examines how the experience of civil war in seventeenth-century England affected the roles of women and men in politics and society; and how conventional concepts of masculinity and femininity were called into question by the war and the trial and execution of an anointed King. Her book combines...
Discussion of the activities of women in the religious and political upheavals of the revolution, with a pioneering analysis of how male political identities were fractured by civil war. Traditional parallels and analogies between marriage, the family and the state were shaken, and rival understandings of sexuality, manliness, effeminacy and womanliness were deployed in political debate.

**Kate Cushing’s** work on medieval canon law translates into courses for students which consider the context of radical changes in the early middle ages in family structure, such as the institution of primogeniture, new concepts of masculinity and the enforcement of incest taboos. She gave a paper ‘Omnimodis monachum fugere debere mulieres et episcopos’: The Monk-Bishop in the “Gregorian” Reform at a session sponsored by the research group EPISCOPUS the 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, in May 2011. She will present a paper ‘Crime and Sin in the Medieval West: Busse oder Strafe’ at the Fourth AHRC-funded colloquium for Church, Law and Society in the Middle Ages in Cambridge in September 2011.

**Zoe Groves** completed her PhD at Keele in 2011. She has just been appointed to an AW Mellon Foundation Post-doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities, funded for two years, at the University of Witwatersrand in WISER (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research) in South Africa. Her project will explore the historical dimensions of migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa using several case studies, including migration from South Africa to Southern Rhodesia during the early colonial period (1890s-1910s), and migration during the liberation struggles of southern Africa. This will involve working in the archives in Johannesburg and Harare, looking at official government and church collections, and using oral histories.

**Christoph Dieckmann’s** new book deals with German occupation policy in Lithuania between 1941 and 1944. A leading member of Germany’s new generation of historians, Christoph has studied in detail the German crimes of the war in Lithuania in which some 420,000 people were murdered. He considers all of the relevant groups, the Lithuanian Jewish population, German and Lithuanian perpetrators and diverse resistance groups. The book will appear first in German but we hope that an English translation will follow.

**Ian Atherton and Philip Morgan** have been collaborating in a research project which considers the ways in which battlefield have been memorialised in the centuries between the Roman withdrawal and the first world war, and several articles are just appearing in advance, they hope, of the longer book which will develop their ideas.
‘The Battlefield War Memorial: Commemoration and the Battlefield Site from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era’ and ‘The Medieval Battlefield Memorial’ both appeared in academic journals this year. Ian and Philip have followed how battlefields were abandoned, given memorials, reoccupied as sites of political memory, subject to pilgrimage and tourism, and given their own monuments. In the sixteenth century map makers began to use special symbols to denote battlefields, usually a pavilion rather than the modern crossed swords.

STUDENT OF THE YEAR 2011 Keele has recognised four undergraduate students who have excelled academically as well as making an outstanding contribution to the wider community. Craig Doughty, an English and History student from Stoke was runner-up and one of the four. He graduated with an excellent first-class degree and will be returning to start and MRes this year.

Alison Leese, a second-year student in history, also received a Bright StAR award as one of the student academic representatives in the University, acting as a link between students, the Students Union and Academic departments. Aaron Webster and Holly Beaumont-Wilkes were also both recognised for their long-term contributions to student life at Keele.

Edward II field trip Students studying the reign of Edward II as their final-year special subject enjoyed a residential field course following the events which led to the king’s deposition and murder in 1327 in the West country and south Wales. Here Colin Harris notes surviving moulding patterns at the great hall of Caerfili

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history to as wide a part of the population as possible. Sometimes this is to audiences which we never meet, but also in schools. A number of entries on the BBC History pages, a favourite quarry for those studying for GCSEs, A levels the Intl. Bac., and just for class reports, were written by Keele historians. Ann Hughes, for example, wrote the account of the execution of Charles I. In April she lectured on ‘women and the English civil war’ at The Thomas Hardye School in Dorchester.

But, schools also come to visit us in a regular series of widening participation events throughout the year. Here Karen Hunt is pondering the answer to a difficult question from students from Solihull Sixth Form College invited to a ‘Why study History’ session in the department. Alannah Tomkins had visited the college earlier in the year and twenty-eight students came to taster sessions.

What can you do with a History degree? That question is often in the forefront of parents’ minds at open and visit days. The statistics for graduate employment continue to be encouraging as far as Keele historians are concerned, and early employment in graduate jobs remains high. But, it is certainly true that many students are also beginning to see masters’ qualifications as a normal part of the business of going to University. We also offer an excellent programme in postgraduate taught courses which lead to the degree of MRes. Students here value the research-skill training which their dissertations afford, and which allow them to stand out a little more in the employment market. The cohort just completing have been involved in research projects as diverse as ‘Regional Identity on the Isle of Man, 900-1300’ and ‘The introduction of computing into the NHS.’ Further details are available on our web site

http://www.keele.ac.uk/history/

But, in answering the initial question perhaps it as honest to say what we as historians think about what we do? Innovation is about different thinking: the single greatest reservoir of different thinking is the experience of past societies. To think that the past, the cumulative experience of that different thinking, is not a resource in which value is to be found seems to us incredible. And what better training in different thinking is to be found than in the challenging task of reconstructing and comprehending the past.

Open Days. If you are reading this newsletter at one of the University’s open days you might be interested to know that History is one of the top four departments at Keele in terms of the numbers of students we attract to come and have a look at us. If you don’t get the chance to ask the question you wanted, or think of something afterwards then don’t hesitate to email the admissions tutor at p.j.morgan@keele.ac.uk

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