

School of Humanities Newsletter

October 2014



Reimagining the University: New Approaches to Teaching and Learning

On 17 and 18 October 2014, the School of Humanities hosted this conference, which was a joint initiative between the University of Gloucestershire, Alanus University in Germany and Crossfields Institute. The conference was organised by Dr Arran Stibbe, Reader in Ecological Linguistics in the School of Humanities and Fergus Anderson, Education and Research Co-ordinator at Crossfields Institute.



After welcome addresses from all three organisations, Dr Ken Gibson of Crossfields Institute opened the conference by looking back at the origins of university education, exploring the different forms it took in Ancient China, Iran and the European Medieval Guilds. This served as a backdrop to the broad spectrum of new approaches to teaching and learning that were presented throughout the event.

Joss Wynn, University of Lincoln, spoke about cooperative higher education, outlining his work with the Social Science Centre, which offers free or donation-based higher education. Dr Colin Anderson, Dr Michel Pimbert, Dr Julia Wright and Dr Tom

Wakeford of Coventry University led a joint session on epistemic justice and discussed ways of crossing the divide between those working within a university context and those working without, such as farmers, indigenous people or other partners. Professor Marcelo da Veiga, Rector of Alanus University, spoke about the importance of philosophy and art in higher education, and why they are so crucial in contemporary society.

In his welcome address, Stephen Marston, Vice Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire, highlighted some of the successful approaches to teaching and learning taking place at the university. This was reflected in Dr Anne Goodenough's presentation on student/staff publications and how working with external partners such as nature reserves and the RSPB can engage students in real world situations. On the second day, Head of Humanities Professor Shelley Saguaro, welcomed again the wide range of colleagues, and set out some of the current challenges in the HE sector and the need for some 'paradigm shifts'.

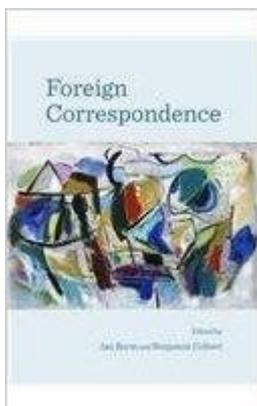
Professor Shelley Saguaro and Dr Rowan Middleton discussed some of the links that can be made between science and poetry through Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants* and the use of Goethean methods of observation.

The presentations were complemented by discussion sessions and a series of interactive workshops that ranged from 'Mindfulness in Leadership', led by Nadine Andrews of Lancaster University, to 'Lighting Fires in the University' (involving real fire in the Park grounds!) led by Jonathan Code of Crossfields Institute.

There were 80 conference guests in total, from universities and educational institutions across the UK and beyond. Feedback from the event was very positive with one of the delegates commenting, "I can genuinely say that it was one of the most stimulating events I've been to for a long time, with an incredibly nice group of people. It certainly got me thinking about a number of things I'd never really considered before - the tyranny of the chair for example."

Dr Hilary Weeks publishes new chapter

Dr Hilary Weeks, Course Leader and Senior Lecturer for English Literature, has contributed a chapter on the nineteenth-century traveller, linguist and translator



George Borrow in [Foreign Correspondence](#), edited by Jan Borm and Benjamin Colbert, published in September by Cambridge Scholars Press. 'Acts of Translation: George Borrow's Letters to the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1833-1840' investigates Borrow as a multiple presence and actor in his own translation performances.

Foreign Correspondence investigates writing across languages and cultures, taking any kind of writing 'home' as its starting point. With contributors from Spain, France, Lithuania, Poland and Bulgaria, this truly international collection of scholarly essays opens up the notion of travel writing as a 'series of complex [cultural, political and linguistic] negotiations between travellers and their hosts', and between public and private realms.

Laurie Lee celebrated at the Cheltenham Literature Festival

The University of Gloucestershire sponsored lots of Festival events this year, and one event in particular represents a long-established link. The School of Humanities

continues to publish the annual lecture in a [pamphlet series](#). The annual Laurie Lee Memorial Lecture in the past has been given by [Paula Byrne](#) and Robert Macfarlane, among other notables. This year, instead of a formal lecture, three poets gathered for a special celebration of Laurie Lee's life and work, introduced by Professor Shelley Saguaro. The poets P.J.Kavanagh and Brian Patten knew Lee personally and shared their memories of the poet, Patten reading out part of a moving memoir. Nature writer Tim Dee talked about Lee's influence on his work as a writer, photographer, birdwatcher and, in a sense, memorialist of landscape.



Laurie Lee is a writer we claim as our own, and we've celebrated the centenary of his birth in many ways. Poet and Creative Writing Lecturer Angela France, who [knew Laurie Lee in his final years](#), hosted an evening of Lee's poetry at the prestigious [Cheltenham Poetry Festival](#) in March. Angela was also on the panel of judges for the Literature Festival's [Schools' Creative Writing Competition](#), in which *Cider with Rosie* made an appearance.

Staff and Students at the Cheltenham Literature Festival

This year's Cheltenham Literature Festival, which ran from Friday 2 – Sunday 12 October, was full of opportunities for both staff and students in the School of Humanities. The Opening night party was attended by two students, one from each Subject group in the School. At the Laurie Lee-themed party, complete with cider press, Melody Grace and Thomas Rees were able to speak to, among others, Cheltenham's mayor, Councillor Simon Wheeler, and Robbie Millen, Literary Editor of The Times.

During the week, our first Enhanced week, students were able to attend the Festival, thanks to over 1000 free tickets. Staff



provided workshops supporting Festival events: Dr Roy Jackson, Reader, did a session on Islamic Spain for Belief Day and Dr Hilary Weeks, Course Leader and Senior Lecturer for English Literature, provided a session on dystopias following Nicholas Murray's session on Aldous Huxley. Both of these



workshops were supported by the Outreach Team and there were opportunities to talk to staff and students from a range of schools, including GlosCol and Taunton College.

Professor Shelley Saguaro, Head of School, introduced a number of events that were sponsored by the University, and Shelley and Dr Debby Thacker, Subject Group Leader for Literary and Critical Studies, were part of a team at the Festival Book Quiz, coming third out of twenty-one teams.

Students were also 'embedded' in the Festival: two groups of English Language students recorded festival-goers' memories for the [Memory Bank](#) project; English Literature students conducted professional interviews: Bethan Norris interviewed Madeline Toy, a freelance publicist and Lizzy Manning interviewed Sarah Savitt, Crime and Non-Fiction editor at Faber, for the Festival's AHRC project about careers in the Creative Industries. Of the Memory Bank project, Marco Pavone, English Language student, said, "(My role was) to walk around and ask people at random if I could record (their) past experience and opinions regarding the Literature Festival. It was an insightful experience to interview mostly older festival goers and come to realise what approach to inquisitive conversation works and what does not."

Students across all Humanities courses and at all levels, including MA and PhD, spent their afternoons at the Festival, doing pop-up poetry readings, and handing out flyers with creative pieces. Despite some wet weather, it was exciting to experience the vibe of the Festival from our base, the Montpellier Gardens bandstand.



Tyler Keevil shortlisted for writing prize

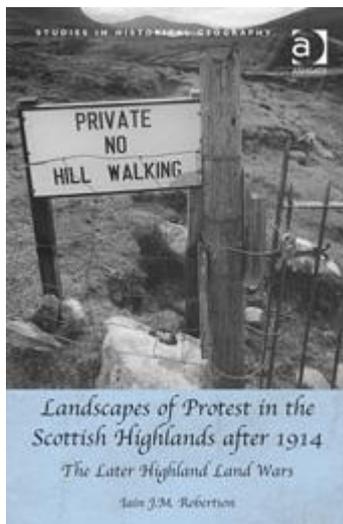


Last month we announced that Senior Lecturer and Creative Writing BA Course Leader Tyler Keevil had been nominated for The Journey Prize 2014. His story 'Sealskin,' first published in *New Orphic Review*, had made the longlist. It has since been revealed that the story has made the Journey Prize shortlist, which means Tyler is one of three finalists alongside Lori McNulty and Clea Young. Tyler will be flying out to Toronto for the Rogers Writers' Trust awards ceremony at the Glenn Gould Studio on 4 November 2014, when the overall winner of the \$10,000 prize will be revealed.

Saltire Society Literary Awards: nomination for Dr Iain Robertson



Landscapes of Protest in the Scottish Highlands, written by Dr Iain Robertson, Course Leader for History, has been nominated for the research book prize in this year's Saltire Society Literary Awards which are being held in November. The Saltire Society exists to celebrate the Scottish Imagination and places culture at the heart of Scottish life and nationhood. The Society is an international supporter and patron of the arts and cultural heritage of Scotland and looks to encourage new developments which can strengthen and enrich the country's cultural life. This includes architecture, arts and crafts, civil engineering, history, literature, music, and science. One key way in which it does this is through its annual awards.

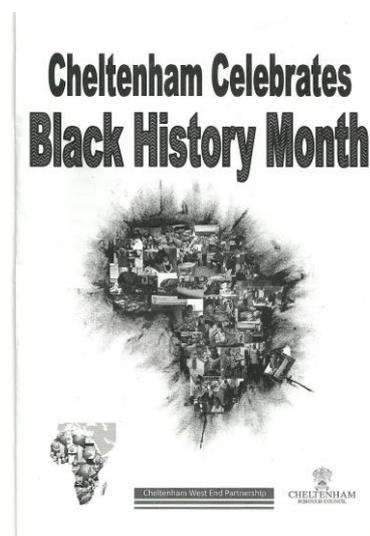


Iain's book has been shortlisted in the Research book category of the Literary Awards. The winner will be announced at a ceremony in Edinburgh in November and the winning book from each category will then go forward to compete for the coveted Saltire Scottish Book of the Year Award. If Iain's book, should win in its category, he would then be up against the likes of John Burnside, Kirsty Wark, A.L. Kennedy and Ali Smith!

An update from Dr Lucy Tyler, Course Leader for the MA in Creative and Critical Writing

Lucy Tyler has been successful in an application for a grant from the Janet Trotter Trust Fund. A grant of £2000 has been awarded to create a play with MA students about the Dymock Poets, using the material found in the special collection. We have been working in the archive – box listing artefacts about the poets and working with the collection as raw material for a play. The play will be performed for the first time at a conference, hosted by the School of Humanities, to celebrate the Dymock Poets and the importance of the archive collection that we hold in the University, to be held in June 2015. The conference will offer a combination of papers, presentations and creative responses to the work of the Dymock poets, such as Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Eleanor Farjeon and Lascelles Abercrombie.

Professor Neil Wynn: activities in Black History Month



October was a busy month for Neil Wynn, Professor of 20th Century American History, as he was called upon to speak about Black History Month (October in Britain - February in the USA). He gave two interviews on BBC Radio Gloucestershire, with Claire Carter on 30 September, and Kevin Philemon on 5 October. Neil also gave a public lecture on "Forgotten Black Divas: Black American Female Performers in Britain from Jazz Age to Post-war" at the Bath American Museum on 18 October.

There were several BHM activities taking place in the first ever BHM celebrations in Cheltenham organized by the Gloucestershire African Community Foundation, Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham West End Partnership. A former Humanities student, Florence Thomas, and a present postgraduate student, Bernice Thomson, were among the main organisers of these many different events, and Neil contributed to and chaired the discussion on "Cheltenham Together" at the Municipal Offices on 16 October.

On 13 October, Neil also gave an extended film interview as part of the contribution to "A Village at War: Dilton Marsh and World War II", a Heritage Lottery-funded documentary being made by the Dilton Marsh Historical Society. Finally, Neil spoke on 'Race War: Black American GIs and West Indians in Bristol & Gloucestershire', as part of BHM in the series on "Vice and Virtue: Uncovering the History of Old Market" for Trinity Community Arts at the Trinity Centre, Bristol, on 28 October.

Professor Andrew Lincoln: publications and activities update

Professor Andrew Lincoln reports publications and activities arising from two aspects of his recent research. His essay "A Life of Jesus as Testimony: The Divine Courtroom and the Gospel of John" has now been published in eds. A. Mermelstein and S. E. Holtz, *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2014) 145-66. Andrew gave a paper related to this essay to the Johannine Literature seminar at the British New Testament Conference held at the University of Manchester from September 4-6.

Andrew's recent book, *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition and Theology* (London: SPCK, 2013) is generating discussion. As a result of this he was

invited to Chester Theological Society on October 16 to give a lecture entitled "Conceiving Jesus: Re-examining Jesus' Conception in Canon, Christology and Creed." He was also invited to write an article for the magazine, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, which seeks to relate academic archaeological and biblical scholarship to a broad general audience. This article has just appeared in the November/ December issue - "How Babies Were Made in Jesus' Time" BAR 40 no.6 (2014) 42-49.

Forthcoming Guest Lecture: Christianity and Art: Finding God in the Unexpected

David Brown, Professor of Theology, Aesthetics and Culture at the University of St Andrews, will deliver the first in this year's series of Guest Lectures on Wednesday 12 November at 6.00pm, on the topic of 'Christianity and Art: Finding God in the Unexpected'.

A common misconception about how Christianity relates to art is to suppose that artists simply create the visual equivalent of biblical scenes. But that has seldom been the case. Various strategies have also been employed to engage the viewer's imagination, and so draw them more closely into the Christian story. David will illustrate how some famous artists of the past sought to encourage an encounter with God through these now neglected features. While most of his examples will come from biblical art he will also note how the same strategy can also occur in apparently 'secular' paintings such as landscape and abstract art.

David Brown has written widely on connections between religion and the various arts, including a five volume series published by Oxford University Press. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2002.

Tickets are £5.00 each (free to staff and students) from the University of Gloucestershire's [online shop](#).

ICBI Research Seminars

On 10 December 2014, Dr Theodore Gabriel will give a seminar on titled 'Resurrection in Islam and Christianity - a comparative approach'. This lecture will take place at 4.15pm in HC204, Francis Close Hall Campus.

See you all again in the November Newsletter!