

UWE Regional History Centre and M Shed Seminar Programme

2015-16

Venue: M Shed

Princes Wharf
Wapping Road
Bristol BS1 4RN

18:00 - 19:30

Admission: Free



Thursday 17 September 2015

Marie Mulvey-Roberts (UWE)

Gothic Writing, Slavery and Radical Women in late Eighteenth-Century Bristol

Bristol has been recognised as a centre of radicalism, yet its association with three of the most important female radicals of the 1790s, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Robinson and Mary Hays remains obscure. The city's links between Gothic buildings, slavery and women writers of the revolutionary and Romantic period also extend to the more conservative Jane Austen. This talk marks the publication of *Literary Bristol: Writers and the City* (with chapters on Gothic and Romantic Bristol) and is the first book to encompass Bristol's rich literary heritage.

Dr Marie Mulvey-Roberts is Associate Professor of English at UWE, Bristol.

Thursday 15 October 2015

Di Parkin and Roger Ball, (Bristol Radical History Group and Eastville Workhouse Memorial Group)

Pauper deaths and burials in Victorian England

Funeral ceremonies were very important to middle class Victorians, with detailed and often elaborate rituals to mark the passing of cherished family members and those deemed 'important'. But for paupers who died in the workhouses, things were very different. Building on continuing research into the unmarked graves behind Eastville workhouse, Bristol, this talk exposes the contrast in treatment between rich and poor in death.

Dr Di Parkin and Dr Roger Ball are members of Bristol Radical History Group.

Thursday 19 November 2015

Mary-Ann Constantine (University of Wales)

'Experiments in imagined history' : from Thomas Chatterton's Bristol to Iolo Morganwg's Glamorgan

An exploration of the connections between two of Britain's most intriguing poets, the Welsh stonemason bard Edward Williams (aka 'Iolo Morganwg'), and the Bristolian Thomas Chatterton – both passionate local historians who created, on either side of the Severn estuary, vivid and influential medieval pasts.

This talk is organised in association with the Thomas Chatterton Society.

Dr Mary-Ann Constantine is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, University of Wales

Thursday 10 December 2015

Mike Mantin (University of Swansea)

'A Great Army of Suffering Ones': The Bristol Guild of the Brave Poor Things in the early 20th century

The Guild of the Brave Poor Things was a philanthropic organisation, founded in 1894, which brought together disabled people across Bristol for meetings, games, lectures and eventually apprenticeships and holidays. This presentation looks at the origins of the group, its use of Dickensian and militaristic portrayals of disability, and asks whether we can uncover the lives of its participants.

Dr Mike Mantin is a Research Fellow in the Welcome Trust project, 'Disability and Industrial Society'.

Thursday 21 January 2016

Eugene Byrne (Regional History Centre)

John Latimer and Joseph Leech: the Roundhead and the Cavalier of Victorian Bristol.

John Latimer, as editor of the *Bristol Mercury*, and Joseph Leech, editor and owner of

the Bristol Times were probably Victorian Bristol's most influential newspapermen. Latimer, a fastidious man with a dry sense of humour was a convinced Liberal, while Leech, a flamboyant and impulsive Irishman was an equally passionate Tory. Both also greatly influenced Bristolians' view of their city's history, the former through his still-read 'Annals' and the latter through his 'Romances', extravagant fictions of Bristol history. Eugene Byrne looks at their lives and careers and their relevance to present-day historians.

Eugene Byrne is editor of the Bristol Post's weekly 'Bristol Times' local history supplement and a UWE Visiting Research Fellow.

Thursday 18 February 2016

Tom Sharpe (University of Cardiff)

Mr Smith's Remarkable Maps.

William Smith's great geological map of Britain, published 200 years ago, was fourteen years in the making and the first of its kind in the world. In the course of making it, Smith developed the fundamental principles of rock sequences - stratigraphy - and recognised the value of fossils in identifying strata.

The groundwork for these discoveries took place in the area around Bath in the 1790s while Smith was surveying the route of the Somerset Coal Canal, but it was not until 1815 that a publisher was finally secured for his mould-breaking map and its accompanying Memoir. Smith's success was to be short-lived however, for within five years, his pioneering geological map was eclipsed by a more detailed collaborative effort by the many members of the Geological Society of London. Nevertheless, Smith's great map of 1815 has since become an icon of geology, and in 2015-16 the bicentenary of its publication is being marked by conferences, exhibitions, lectures and other events across the country.

Tom Sharpe spent over 35 years as a curator in the Department of Geology at the

National Museum of Wales, where he looked after the world's largest collection of William Smith's 1815 maps. A renowned authority on early British geology, in this talk he looks at the development of the map and what it can tell us about geological history in the South West.

Tom Sharpe is a Geology tutor at the Cardiff University Centre for Lifelong Learning

Thursday 17 March 2016

Evan Jones (University of Bristol)

The Matthew of Bristol: life and afterlife

The ship on which John Cabot sailed on his epic voyage of discovery to North America in 1497 has played a key part in the city's historic identity for five hundred years. This talk will discuss the work of The Cabot Project, led by Evan Jones, which has been investigating Bristol's early voyages since 2009. The lecture will concentrate on the new information that has been revealed about the historic ship, before going on to consider when, how and why she was transformed from a physical vessel built to serve the trading needs of a busy port, into an emblem of Bristol's discovery and enterprise.

Dr Evan Jones is Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History at the University of Bristol

Thursday 21 April 2016

Jonathan Barry (University of Exeter)

The Place of the Theatre in Eighteenth Century Bristol

This talk will consider the debate regarding the role of the theatre within eighteenth-century Bristol which proceeded, and accompanied, the opening of the Theatre Royal in 1766. In particular, it will explore how debates about the physical location of the theatre, whether outside the city at Jacob's Well or in its very midst in King Street, served to articulate the varied interests and concerns involved in dramatic performance. The debate had been ongoing since the 1700s, but took on a particular character in

the early 1760s when the theatre managers Powell and Henderson, working with local supporters like the youthful Hannah More and with David Garrick in London, managed to project an image of a reformed and reforming stage, centred on Shakespeare, able to convince many city figures, at least temporarily, that the civilising benefits of the stage outweighed its corrupting potential.

Jonathan Barry is Professor of History at the University of Exeter

Thursday 19 May 2016

Peter Wardley (Regional History Centre)

Incarcerated in Bristol: An historical analysis of the inmates of Horfield Prison in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

On 8 April 1895 Sarah Ann Wakefield was discharged from Horfield Prison after completing a week's incarceration, with hard labour, for Drunk and Disorderly behaviour. Her experience of the penal system was typical. On arrival, staff routinely recorded several aspects of her life: her offence, sentence and any 'previous'; her religious affiliation, birth place, age, occupation and height: Sarah was 39, a washer-woman and half an inch shy of five foot. Sarah was one of eleven people inducted and documented that day. Remarkably, admissions to Horfield Prison in its first half-century correspond approximately to Bristol's adult population in 1901 and these records provide a significant sample of the city's community. This talk describes and explores these records to provide new perspectives on Bristol's community.

For over a century Horfield Prison has been a conspicuous landmark in Bishopston, but recent proposals for the replacement of 'heritage' gaols with larger, modern campus

prisons constructed in rural areas have left its future hanging in the balance. It is an interesting time then, to re-visit its history and examine the lives of some of its former inmates.

Dr Peter Wardley is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Regional History Centre, UWE.

Thursday 16 June 2016

Madge Dresser (UWE, Bristol)

The Elusive Lady Apsley

Many people are unaware that Bristol's first woman M.P. was Lady Apsley who won Bristol Central in 1943 for the Conservatives after her husband, who had previously held the seat, had been killed in an air crash. Given the brevity of her parliamentary career (she lost her seat in 1945) and the circumstances which led to her election, it is tempting to dismiss her as a political lightweight of little significance. Certainly her enthusiasm for hunting and participation in various women's Conservative Associations would have been typical of many Tory wives. But, as Madge Dresser argues in this talk, Lady Apsley was no mere political consort but a more intrepid figure whose experiences as a VAD nurse during the first war, a qualified pilot, an undercover investigator in the Australian outback, and, after a hunting accident, a permanently disabled wheelchair user, broadened and shaped her political vision. This paper will consider Lady Apsley's public life in Bristol and consider what her life can tell us both about Bristol at that time, about the political values of right wing women and about why it took over 40 more years before Bristol had another woman M.P.

Dr Madge Dresser is Associate Professor of History at UWE, Bristol

These are public events at M Shed and open to everybody. If you would like any further information about the series or the Regional History Centre at UWE, please contact steve.poole@uwe.ac.uk for directions see www.mshed.org