

Crossing *Currents*

HISTORY POSTGRADUATE
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

12-13 MAY 2026



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of History, Classics
and Archaeology

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY 12TH MAY 2026

09:30 Opening Remarks and Welcome from Director of Postgraduate Research, School of History, Classics and Archaeology (Dr Felix Boecking)

09:40 Panel 1: Twentieth-Century United States

From Wartime Mobilization to Cold War Order: Race Relations among Chinese Americans, African Americans, and Whites in California, 1940s-1960s (Cecilia Zhang)

Savvy or Strategy?: Television News and the Kennedy Administration, 1960-1964. (Adam Whitehouse)

Kinder and Gentler? The 1988 campaign rhetoric of George H. W. Bush (Luke Pike)

10:40 Tea Break

11:10 Panel 2: Faith, Feeling and Politics

Between Aid and Ambition: Power Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean (Antonis Leontiou)

Confidence, Defeat, Fear: Emotional Paths during the Anti-Hussite crusades in Bohemia (1420-1431) (Peter Ian Eger)

Covenanter Martyrdom: A Contested Space (John Brunlees)

12:10 Lunch

TUESDAY 12TH MAY 2026

13:10 Panel 3: Banking and Speculation

Credit, Community, and Capital: Banking the Whale Fishery in Antebellum New England (Bradford Gibbs)

Bailing out the Church: How the Presbyterian Church of Canada pivoted following a bank failure (Steven Bright)

Grain Hoarding and Speculation in Wartime China (Boshen Yan)

Invisible Architects (Nicholas Hall-Risko)

14:30 Tea Break

15:00 Panel 4: Conflict and Consequence

Post-Culloden Scotland. 'This country is far from Quiet' (Tom Carmichael)

Pardon My Treason: The Founding Fathers' Minuet with Patriotism and Treachery (Francis A. La Poll)

A New Look at "Old Put": The Making of a Commemorative Figure, Israel Putnam in American Memory from 1775-1904 (Adrian S. Manning)

"I am a member of the London Communists and can fight as any man" - rethinking the origins of the International Brigades (Annabel Gottfried Cohen)

16:20 Close

WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY 2026

09:30 Welcome

09:35 Panel 5: Capitalism and Commerce

Gendered Slavery, the Afro-Eurasian Commercial Revolution, and Northern Italian Notary Documents, 1270-1350 (Chloe Bramwell)

Charles Allan: the social and financial connections of a Scottish émigré silversmith in eighteenth-century Jamaica (Aisha Tahir)

The Beginnings of the Stockton and Darlington Railway: Modern Transport and the Durham Coal Trade (Martín González Cortés)

Class Politics, India, and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1868 - 1874 (Joshua Locke)

10:50 Tea Break

11:20 Panel 6: Nineteenth Century Scotland

The Not-So Humble Neep: The Rise of Turnip Husbandry in Caithness, 1790-1820 (Charlie Hoskins)

'Believe it or not': Walter Scott and the purpose of the supernatural in nineteenth-century Scottish literature (Ellie Whitehead)

Charles Lyell's Principles of Reform: Reconstructing Lyell's Early Intellectual Development 1816-1833 (Felicity MacKenzie)

'Unreasonable Expectations': Relief, Outrage, and Rural Relationships during the Irish and Highland Famines, 1846-1848 (Davide Lamparelli)

12:40 Lunch

WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY 2026

13:40 Panel 7: Women in Civil & Religious Communities

Lives After Death: Comparing the Cults of St Æbbe and St Margaret (EK McAlpine)

Invisibility? Irish-born female domestic servants in Victorian London (Amy Bracken)

That's Not Her Name: the Gibson Girl, the New Woman, and issues with umbrella terminology in defining a generation of British and American women 1870-1914 (Shelby Neuhauser)

(Russian) Life is a Cabaret: An Everyday Study of Community in a Parisian Commune (Ruby Martyn)

15:00 Tea Break

15:30 Panel 8: Connections of Power and Information

Corsets and Werewolves: Exploring the Complexities of Historioludicity through the Lens of *The Order*: 1886 (Bethany Chadburn)

'[H]e was a king and not a monk': Expectations of Family and the Temptation of Malcolm IV, King of Scots in William of Newburgh's *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (1190s) (Joshua MacRae)

Labor of Knowledge: Defining the Early Modern Intellectual (Juliana Coulton)

Respectable Work and Economic Survival in Antebellum New York's Black Press (Nia Kiara England)

16:45 Closing Remarks

ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1: TWENTIETH-CENTURY UNITED STATES

From Wartime Mobilization to Cold War Order: Race Relations among Chinese Americans, African Americans, and Whites in California, 1940s-1960s

Cecilia Zhang

Before the Second World War, Chinese immigrants had shaped the racial order of the American West and the cultural boundaries of whiteness. From the 1940s, as wartime defense expansion created severe labor shortages, large numbers of African Americans moved to California and entered defense industries, bringing Chinese American, African American, and white workers increasingly into the same industrial spaces and reshaping interethnic perceptions and interactions. Whereas existing scholarship has focused mainly on single-ethnic histories, this project draws on newspapers, oral histories, union records, civil rights organization archives, and government documents to examine the relative positions of Chinese American and African American workers and the different strategies they adopted in response to employment discrimination. It further analyzes how, amid the political and economic transformations of wartime and postwar California, these three communities perceived one another and defined both their own identities and the place of others through these interactions.

Savvy or Strategy?: Television News and the Kennedy Administration, 1960-1964.

Adam Whitehouse

The Kennedy Administration is the most romanticised political machine in American history, but just how true is the myth of media literacy within "Camelot"? Political and media historians have often cited Kennedy as the turning point in the relationship between television and the Presidency, but more recent scholarship diminishes the warm relationship between Kennedy and the media, arguing a more nuanced political plan was in place from the beginning.

Using records from the Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, MA, collections of personal correspondence from Kennedy and his top aides, as well as daily Presidential schedules to assess how much preparation and effort was placed into televised news broadcasts, and how much attention was paid to them as political tools. By assessing the Administration with the most perceived media literacy, this study will provide a unique insight into behind the scenes relationships between television news companies and Presidential administrations in the United States.

Kinder and Gentler? The 1988 campaign rhetoric of George H. W. Bush

Luke Pike

Ten years ago, by their own admission, historians of modern American conservatism conspicuously failed to anticipate the appeal of Donald Trump. The preponderant response within the field has since been to differentiate between mainstream conservatives and fringe extremists. Rather than reappraise the former, historians have given new attention to the latter. One implication of this approach is to associate Trump's radicalism with insurgent, as opposed to established, forces on the American right.

My research challenges these tendencies by analysing mainstream conservative responses to George H. W. Bush's rhetoric between 1987-93. Bush's rhetoric was often distinctly moderate. In perceiving and criticising this moderation directly, conservative commentators revealed their preference for radicalism. This case study provides proof of concept for a revisionist intellectual history of American conservatism framed in terms of moderates and radicals.

My presentation briefly surveys the historiographical landscape before sharing findings from my analysis of Bush's 1988 campaign rhetoric.

PANEL 2: FAITH, FEELING AND POLITICS

Between Aid and Ambition: Power Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean

Antonis Leontiou

After conquering the remnants of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1291, the Mamluks turned their attention to the remaining Christians States in the Levant, Cyprus and Cilicia Armenia. Cilicia bore the brunt of the assault and help from the West was negligible as they were fighting the Turks in the Aegean. However, this shift, along with a more Eurocentric approach has neglected the relations between Cyprus and Cilicia.

By looking at Peter I and his naval operations in Cilicia 1359-1369 as our case study, this paper attempts to unravel the nature of the support Cyprus provided. Although on the surface Peter I appeared to have been supporting Cilicia, there is evidence to suggest that his motives were more nefarious. It is apparent that Cyprus was using the Muslim threat in Cilicia to assert its dominance of the region by taking over the castle of Korykos.

Confidence, Defeat, Fear: Emotional Paths during the Anti-Hussite crusades in Bohemia (1420-1431)

Peter Ian Eger

The burning of Jan Hus in 1415, a popular Bohemian church reformer, led to one of the most successful heretical movements of the Late Middle Ages. Five unsuccessful inter-European crusades, launched by the Catholic Church against the Hussites, led the Church to seek peace in 1436.

No scholar has yet to produce a long-term study on the period with emotion at the forefront. This includes the reactions following Hus' death, the following upheaval, the crusading period, and the church council which brought peace.

Emotions in crusading have been surveyed from a Holy Land perspective, while English and Czech emotions studies on the Hussites have focussed on isolated events or the first chaotic years. This study will survey the Hussite Revolution from both perspectives—Hussite and Catholic—using a methodology of identifying emotions through vocabulary, expressions, and contexts. This explores emotional motivations beyond social, political, or religious explanations.

Covenanter Martyrdom: A Contested Space

John Brunlees

This paper introduces a PhD project examining the gallows speeches attributed to Scottish Covenanters executed during the first part of the Restoration period. These speeches are frequently cited in studies of persecution and dissent, yet they have rarely been analysed as a coherent body of material with their own structure, context, and transmission.

This presentation explores these themes through a focused case study of a Covenanter's gallows testimony, considering how a speech was recorded, shaped, and circulated. It examines how expectations surrounding martyrdom, religious language, and the ideal of "a good death" influenced both delivery at the scaffold and later representation in print.

By situating this example within wider early modern execution narratives, the paper argues that the scaffold functioned as a contested space in which religious conviction, political authority, and public memory intersected, positioning these speeches as active sites in the construction of martyrdom and collective memory.

PANEL 3: BANKING AND SPECULATION

Credit, Community, and Capital: Banking the Whale Fishery in Antebellum New England

Bradford Gibbs

By the mid-1840s, the American whale fishery was one of the Atlantic economy's most capital-intensive industries. While historians have documented innovations in equity financing, the debt financing supporting the industry remains under-examined.

Whaling's "golden age" (c. 1825-1860) coincided with an expansion of chartered American banks and institutional experimentation. Using Merchants Bank of New Bedford as a case study, this presentation demonstrates how antebellum banks financed multi-year maritime ventures through the repeated renewal of short-term credit despite formal adherence to real-bills lending principles.

Drawing on voyage records and discount books, I argue that renewals and insider lending networks transformed short-term commercial credit into long-duration financing. In doing so, the bank exemplifies the "fatal hybridization" of American banking described by Bray Hammond. This dynamic helps explain how local banks fueled whaling's capital requirements and contributed to New Bedford's global dominance.

Bailing out the Church: How the Presbyterian Church of Canada pivoted following a bank failure

Steven Bright

What happens at the intersection of finance and faith when the investments of an expanding church are heavily compromised by a bank failure?

This existential challenge faced the Presbyterian Church of Canada in the Victorian era. In the mid-1850s, Church members invested proceeds from a government endowment to help pay for ministerial stipends. They made their investments through the Temporalities Fund, an annuity fund created on actuarial principles developed at the University of Edinburgh in the 1740s.

The Fund was a large shareholder of Canada's biggest banks. This was prudent investing. However, the collapse of one of these banks in 1868 triggered a crisis for the Fund, and families it served.

My presentation analyses the reactions of the Fund's board to this catalytic event. In so doing, it frames banks and churches, two influential institutions in Victorian Canada, as mutually reinforcing agents of continuity and change.

Grain Hoarding and Speculation in Wartime China

Boshen Yan

During China's War of Resistance, the Nationalist state fought on the battlefield and on the home front. To stabilise prices and secure grain supplies, it expanded regulatory power and mobilised rural society. This research asks how the Chinese wartime authority defined "hoarding" and "speculation," and their political and social impacts.

Although state suspicion of merchants had deep roots in Qing-era market surveillance, wartime pressures sharpened the drive to label certain forms of grain storage as illegal. Building on scholarship on anti-smuggling and economic policing in modern China, I argue that regulation did not simply respond to scarcity; it actively produced categories of illegality through rules, inspections, and intelligence gathering. Using government regulations and official circulars on grain markets, the research traces how officials developed a recurring explanatory habit: attributing shortages to merchant wrongdoing. In doing so, it highlights how economic governance expanded beyond bureaucratic growth into everyday market monitoring.

Invisible Architects

Nicholas Hall-Risko

This paper situates family offices in postwar America as a misunderstood vehicle. They were not simply vehicles for the preservation of wealth, but as hybrid, risk-bearing institutions which financed innovation before modern venture capital had fully matured. Existing histories of postwar finance emphasize the state, banks (or lack thereof), and later venture capitalists, often treating wealthy families as peripheral actors. Furthermore, they typically were dismissed as pursuing a 'rich man's hobby'. My research intends to demonstrate that family offices such as the Rockefeller Brothers, J.H. Whitney & Company combined patient capital, elevated governance, and long time horizons which permitted them to deploy risk capital to ventures which spurred American, and global, innovation. Through this, they bridged the gap between private wealth, entrepreneurial finance, and public policy. Reframing family offices in this way recovers an overlooked institutional layer in the history of postwar American capital formation and risk capital.

PANEL 4: CONFLICT AND CONSEQUENCE

Post-Culloden Scotland. 'This country is far from Quiet'

Tom Carmichael

This presentation focuses on the role of the earl of Albemarle as Commander-in-Chief of the British army in Scotland, following on from the notorious 'Butcher' Cumberland in the aftermath of the 1746 Battle of Culloden, when the Jacobite army of Prince Charles Stuart was defeated.

My wider thesis examines the decade after Culloden, which, contrary to much of the historiography, was a period of military occupation in the Highlands, aimed at maintaining stability in the face of a possible French-supported Jacobite threat and anti-government disaffection.

I challenge the view that Albemarle was 'lacklustre' in the role. However, he did experience a cocktail of negative emotions, with anxiety as his overriding feeling. The work draws upon a range of primary evidence, including correspondence between Albemarle and the duke of Newcastle, the Westminster-based politician with responsibility for Scotland.

Pardon My Treason: The Founding Fathers' Minuet with Patriotism and Treachery:

Francis A. La Poll

In 1787, four years after the American colonies' victory over perceived British tyranny, colonial representatives met in Philadelphia to redress various Articles of Confederation deficiencies including the lack of a 'national' military able to put down insurrections. Schooled in monarchical abuses by study and experience, the 'Founders' debated whether there should be an executive and, if so, whether he should

have the kingly power to pardon. Could a President even pardon insurrection or treason by his co-conspirators—and himself?

This presentation postulates that the Founders gave the President a broad pardon power and intended it to be available precisely in cases of rebellion and treason, relying—perhaps unwisely—on impeachment to cure misuse. The pardons of the January 6, 2020 Capitol insurrectionists have elevated the subject from interesting to relevant, and all the more so as the Supreme Court has come to base decisions on what it considers the historical record.

A New Look at "Old Put": The Making of a Commemorative Figure, Israel Putnam in American Memory from 1775-1904

Adrian S. Manning

Major-General Israel Putnam, is most well-known for allegedly ordering his men, “Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes,” during the Battle of Bunker Hill and is a commemorative figure in American memory. During the nineteenth century biographers and writers of fiction idealized his life, presenting Putnam as an embodiment of American heroism. This presentation delineates Putnam’s memory from the outbreak of the American Revolution through the long nineteenth-century. Tracing his multilayered memory throughout the nineteenth-century illustrates shifting attitudes toward heroism and how authors adapted Putnam’s role as a commemorative figure in response to various societal developments and tensions. His alternating image, ranging from classical-republican to Jacksonian democrat, and from local legend to mass produced myth, highlights the changing trends in Revolutionary memory and reveals the mechanisms which contribute to the creation of historical memory.

"I am a member of the London Communists and can fight as any man" - rethinking the origins of the International Brigades

Annabel Gottfried Cohen

During the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War some 35,000 foreign volunteers fought for the Republic with the International Brigades (IBs), organised by the Communist International (Comintern) and part of a wider program of Soviet aid. In most anglophone histories of the IBs, a division is made between the IB recruits who were sent to Spain by their national Communist Parties (CPs) after the Brigades' founding in September-October 1936, and a small number of supposedly 'spontaneous', independent volunteers who had joined the Spanish militias before that date. Looking in detail at some of the first British volunteers—all of them dedicated Communists—this presentation will query that distinction, considering how the stories of these actors on the ground challenges both sides of what is a deeply polarized historiography.

PANEL 5: CAPITALISM AND COMMERCE

Gendered Slavery, the Afro-Eurasian Commercial Revolution, and Northern Italian Notary Documents, 1270-1350

Chloe Bramwell

As records of sale, wills and dowries, notary documents provide invaluable information for historians of gender, economies and social life. They are ubiquitous and plentiful in Italian city archives, essential witnesses to the Medieval Commercial Revolution and largely unpublished. This paper will demonstrate their value as evidence for historians of Medieval Mediterranean slavery by showing ways that enslaved people appear in these documents, as human beings made into merchandise.

By using legal documents of commercial activity, this paper will argue that dynamics of commercialisation and subsequent perceived labour shortages both resulted in and contributed to the sale of human beings. It will interrogate why across the Mediterranean it was women who were sought after for enslaved domestic labour by those of both elite and non-elite status. Finally, it will show how these documents can be used to reconstruct the networks which enabled the development of slavery as a regional institution.

Charles Allan: the social and financial connections of a Scottish émigré silversmith in eighteenth-century Jamaica

Aisha Tahir

The community of Scots in the eighteenth-century Caribbean has been characterised by its 'clannishness', a prominent network underpinned by kinship relations. Scholarship on this network has focused on planters, slavers, merchants, and doctors, with craftsmen overlooked.

However, socio-economic relationships were intrinsic to artisanal trades including silversmithing, from the credit extended to clients to the partnerships established between craftsmen. Analysing émigré silversmiths will therefore provide further insight into the functionality and significance of Scottish colonial networks.

This paper will focus on Charles Allan, a silversmith from Edinburgh who migrated to Jamaica in 1743 having received a large loan from two brothers from North Berwick, Sir Hew Dalrymple and Dr Robert Dalrymple. However, for over a decade, Allan did not pay the Dalrymples back. Using correspondence and extant silverware made by Allan, this paper will engender a fuller understanding of how personal connections facilitated, or hampered, success for Scots in the Caribbean.

The Beginnings of the Stockton and Darlington Railway: Modern Transport and the Durham Coal Trade

Martín González Cortés

Though often acknowledged as the first modern railway for its employment of steam locomotion, the Stockton and Darlington Railway's merits for historical relevance are actually rather nuanced, with most of the significance of the company coming from its operations through the late 1820s rather than from its design and form on opening day. By looking at correspondence regarding the founding of the company and the planning of the railway, as well as carriage accounts for its early operations, this research aims to weight the early expectations and achievements of the company and realise the extent of its contribution to the economic development of southern County Durham as well as to wider developments in the transport sector through the later stages of the British Industrial Revolution.

Class Politics, India, and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1868 - 1874

Joshua Locke

The Manchester Chamber of Commerce was the chief political instrument of employers in Lancashire during the Victorian period. It lobbied governments, and provided a forum for capitalists to discuss major political questions. In the early 1870s, it campaigned to install a “commercial representative” on the India Council – an important part of the imperial state apparatus – in order to further its interests in Indian affairs. The unfolding of this campaign reveals much about the politics of Lancastrian businessmen, including their animosity towards the aristocracy which dominated the India Council and increasing disappointment with the Liberal Party’s ability to fulfil their demands. The frustrations which the campaign experienced form part of a broader picture of relations between industrialists and the state, in which the latter struggled to assert their political objectives partly because of the impermeability of the aristocratic order, but also because of poor organisation and political incoherence.

PANEL 6: NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND

The Not-So Humble Neep: The Rise of Turnip Husbandry in Caithness, 1790-1820

Charlie Hoskins

This paper will explore how ideas of 'improvement' - the movement that sought to make land more commercially viable through new methods of cultivation and enclosure - were implemented in Caithness, and determine how these new practices impacted the lives of Caithnessians. For the last seventy years, many historians of the long 18th century have considered how 'improvement' impacted farming in Scotland. However, they seldom mention Caithness, the most northern county in mainland Scotland. Focusing particularly on turnip husbandry, this paper will examine how landowners' decisions to take up turnip husbandry in Caithness shifted farms towards agrarian capitalism and changed labour patterns in agriculture between 1790 and 1820. It uses estate papers, personal correspondence, and printed materials to assert the importance of this humble root vegetable in Caithness to historical understandings of agricultural change and its importance to the shifting landscape of Scotland.

'Believe it or not': Walter Scott and the purpose of the supernatural in nineteenth-century Scottish literature

Ellie Whitehead

Macbeth's witches, the Loch Ness Monster, and Highland fairies; the supernatural has always played a pivotal role in the production of Scottish culture. However, c.1685-1830 it experienced a particularly commercialised evolution. Changes in literary fashions, for instance its rise in nineteenth century antiquarian interest, meant the Scottish supernatural became a subject of increased literary attention.

Concentrating on the nineteenth century and Walter Scott, this paper will examine the variety of purposes that the supernatural served in Scottish literature, as opposed to looking at its appearance as simply evidence of belief in it. It will explore the presentation of the supernatural in both Scott's fiction, *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), and non-fiction, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802) and *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830). Using this case study, it will demonstrate the merits of using literature to interpret evolutions in the wider understanding of the supernatural in Scotland.

Charles Lyell's Principles of Reform: Reconstructing Lyell's Early Intellectual Development 1816-1833

Felicity MacKenzie

This paper will use the newly opened Sir Charles Lyell Collection at the University of Edinburgh to re-evaluate Charles Lyell's (1797-1875) early intellectual development and in turn, offer a new perspective on his identity and career. Lyell has often been treated as an influential geologist in the specialised, modern sense of the term (Wilson, 1972). This paper will build on the work of Secord (1999) and Porter (1982) to suggest that examining the key years of Lyell's intellectual formation (1816-1833) offers the opportunity to resituate Lyell as an elite, literary gentleman and educational reformer who actively understood his geology to be part of a project of moral, cultural and political reform. Lyell's 'mission' was to 'civilise' the British polity by expanding scientific knowledge and education. This paper will highlight the influence the Scottish Enlightenment social theory on Lyell's view of reform and the highly racialised ideas that underpinned it.

'Unreasonable Expectations': Relief, Outrage, and Rural Relationships during the Irish and Highland Famines, 1846-1848

Davide Lamparelli

The humanitarian crisis caused by the Great Famine in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands was exacerbated by an inadequate response from the British government and only mitigated by an unprecedented amount of private donations from across the globe. Recent scholarship has effectively reconstructed these domestic and transnational responses, but has exclusively taken the perspective of the donors, inadvertently perpetuating the idea that the Famine victims were passive aid recipients.

Using petitions for relief written by Irish and Highland cottars, this paper explores the expectations, emotional reactions, and impact on rural relationships that the lack of support provoked during the early years of the Famine. My paper will argue that, far from lacking agency, Famine victims reacted to their landlords' failure to meet their expectations about relief by transforming this lack of support and their outrage into an opportunity to redefine their local relationships and their social contract with their superiors.

PANEL 7: WOMEN IN CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Lives After Death: Comparing the Cults of St Æbbe and St Margaret

EK McAlpine

St Margaret of Scotland and St Æbbe of Coldingham have plenty in common – pious princesses with popular pilgrimage sites, and a concrete body of medieval hagiography produced by monks. Yet similarities between their saintly cults are contested. Scholarship suggests Margaret's was politically driven, a careful campaign to canonise Scotland's only royal saint to serve its royal dynasty. By comparison, Æbbe's cult appears to be more spontaneous, lay-driven, and organic. But further investigation suggests Æbbe's cult was perhaps equally institutional, and that its grassroots origin was an invention.

This paper will use their respective medieval biographies and miracle accounts to explore the similarities and differences between these two holy women, both from England but firmly rooted in the landscape of Scottish sanctity. Using this case study, the paper will critically evaluate the distinction between the institutionally sanctioned and the spontaneously inspired cult, highlighting the complexities of using hagiography as a source.

Invisibility? Irish-born female domestic servants in Victorian London

Amy Bracken

The Great Irish Famine is synonymous with having ushered in an era of emigration from Ireland that is unique, especially considering female migration patterns. Notably, in the aftermath of the Famine, shifts in familial and social structures made women especially mobile, with domestic service being their primary occupation. While Irish-born

servants on the eastern seaboard of North America are well-documented, both in contemporary literature and in recent academic studies, those who migrated to Britain, and specifically London, despite being high in numbers, remain largely absent in the historiography. I argue that despite their invisibility, Irish female servants played a formative role in Victorian London's middle-class households. Combining newly extracted census data with genealogical records, my study will extract a prosopography of Irish-born servant women in Victorian London, interrogating their lived experiences, the structural reasons for their historic marginalisation, and offer thematic comparisons to their counterparts across the Atlantic.

That's Not Her Name: the Gibson Girl, the New Woman, and issues with umbrella terminology in defining a generation of British and American women 1870-1914

Shelby Neuhauser

The "New Woman" is still a problem. This ambiguous term has become synonymous with feminism, independence, and modernity and applied liberally by historians to define multiple generations and classes of women over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Gibson Girl illustration, some historians claim, is a visual representation of New Womanhood; a fictionalized, dramatized, and sensationalized character. These problematic umbrella terms obscure our understanding of turn of the twentieth century women. Extracting young, white, upper-middle-class and high society British and American women who were coming of age and marrying between 1870-1914 from broad groupings, isolating their influences, experiences, and clarifying their essential nature, allows us to see this generation in a new light. This research intends to join ongoing conversations in women's history surrounding Victorianism, femininity, female power, visibility, economic capabilities, and propose new terminology for a generation of women who were previously imprecisely grouped under blanket terms.

(Russian) Life is a Cabaret: An Everyday Study of Community in a Parisian Commune

Ruby Martyn

In the interwar period, a significant Russian population established itself in the commune of Boulogne-Billancourt, a suburb on the western outskirts of Paris. A key development in Russian refugees' efforts to build a new life for themselves in France was the creation of Russian businesses and institutions, which signalled their emplacement in the socio-economic fabric of their environment. The cabaret which was situated on rue Traversière and the spatially specific practices performed by Russian inhabitants who engaged with it appear in the memoir and short stories of writer and Boulogne-Billancourt resident Nina Berberova. It offers a striking example of a distinctly Russian public space in which men and women operated as consumers and producers of the entertainment and hospitality on display. An analysis of this space will illuminate the interplay between public and private spheres of Russian life and the centrality of women to the everyday operation of the community.

PANEL 8: CONNECTIONS OF POWER AND INFORMATION

Corsets and Werewolves: Exploring the Complexities of Historioludicity through the Lens of *The Order: 1886*

Bethany Esther Chadburn

Drawing from Matthew Kapell and Andrew Elliott's seminal concepts of the developer-historian and Adam Chapman's of the player-historian, this paper interrogates these concepts of historioludicity through the case study of *The Order: 1886*, one of the earliest games produced exclusively for Sony's PlayStation 4.

The Order: 1886 illustrates the complexities at the heart of this approach as it blends detailed historical accuracy with anachronism and mythology, and encourages the player to engage with the historical setting, collecting artifacts and creating archives to unpick the mysteries at the heart of the game's narrative. Combining with the interactivity of the medium, this style of gameplay creates a hyperreal experience which allows the player to feel as though they are exploring the past. As such, it offers a novel way of experiencing 'history' and also has the potential to impact the player's understanding of this past environment.

'[H]e was a king and not a monk': Expectations of Family and the Temptation of Malcolm IV, King of Scots in William of Newburgh's *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (1190s)

Joshua MacRae

In his *History of English Affairs*, William of Newburgh reported that Malcolm IV, King of Scots (r.1153-65) rejected his mother's attempts at match-making. Historians have long understood this well-known episode as one Yorkshire-based chronicler's celebration of an idealised form of kingship. Kings are well-studied figures in medieval Scottish history, but the understanding of their lives is incomplete

without closer attention to what was expected of them and their kin. Recent research is recognising that royal relatives exercised their own personal power and that cooperation was an essential feature of their relationships. Taking William's account as a case study, this paper develops the understanding of a royal kinship group in twelfth-century north-west Europe. By reading this account against the grain, the power of the queen mother can become a more visible and consequential negotiation of secular and religious interests, one which helped to embed Scotland in a European political culture.

Labor of Knowledge: Defining the Early Modern Intellectual

Juliana Coulton

Amid the political instability and confessional tensions of seventeenth-century Scotland, this presentation examines how knowledge was produced, circulated, and deployed by early modern thinkers, focusing on the role of the intellectual as a practitioner of "knowledge labor." This work reconceptualizes the early modern intellectual by shifting focus from institutional roles to practices of knowledge production. Rather than defining figures such as jurists or clerics by occupation, it proposes understanding them as "knowledge workers" engaged in the creation, circulation, and application of ideas within a historically specific knowledge economy. Using Sir George Mackenzie as a case study, the essay examines *A Moral Essay* and *Moral Paradox* as sites of intellectual labor. These texts intervene in debates over conscience, virtue, and obedience, advancing a neo-Stoic framework that balances intellectual withdrawal with political submission. Mackenzie's work demonstrates how knowledge labor translated political necessity into moral reason, legitimizing authority and disciplining judgement.

Respectable Work and Economic Survival in Antebellum New York's Black Press

Nia Kiara England

This presentation examines how Black-owned newspapers in nineteenth-century New York functioned as cultural agents to influence ideas about Black labor, morality, and citizenship. While existing scholarship thoroughly explores respectability politics, racial uplift ideologies, and intraracial class tensions in antebellum New York City, it often treats newspapers primarily as historical evidence rather than as institutions that shaped thinking about Black labor and the future of Black Americans in the United States. Addressing this gap, the presentation analyzes how newspapers constructed a Black labor public sphere, a space within the Black Press where relatively privileged voices assigned moral value to different professions and debated their implications for racial progress. Through close readings of articles, the presentation traces a persistent tension between Black economic survival and respectable work, revealing long-held and evolving anxieties about gender, class, and citizenship.

LIST OF PRESENTERS

WITH PROVISIONAL THESIS TITLES



Amy Bracken (a.t.bracken@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Irish female domestic servants in Victorian London: a transnational perspective

Panel: 7



Chloe Bramwell (c.bramwell@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Women's labour, wool and woollen production: changes to labour regimes between Italy, England, Scotland and the Black Sea from 1250-1400

Panel: 5



Steven Bright (s.j.bright@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Money for the Mission: The Temporalities Fund of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1855-1900

Panel: 3



John Brunlees (j.brunlees@sms.ed.ac.uk)

The true intentions of the Covenanter gallows speeches, 1660-c.1679

Panel: 2



Tom Carmichael (tom.carmichael@ed.ac.uk)

Anxiety amongst the British military and politicians in the aftermath of the Battle of Culloden

Panel: 4



Bethany Esther Chadburn
(b.e.chadburn@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Playing with History: An Exploration of the Adaptation of the Victorian Era in Video Games

Panel: 8



Martín González Cortés
(m.gonzalez.c@ed.ac.uk)

The Early Years of the Stockton and Darlington Railway: Transport Revolution and Economic Development in County Durham

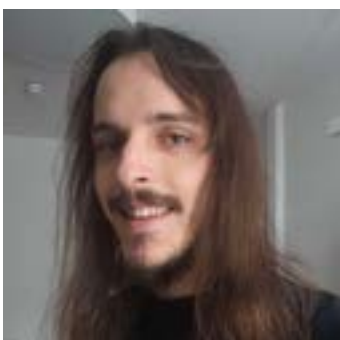
Panel: 5



Juliana Coulton (j.e.coulton-1@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Mackenzie and Steuart: Two Intellectual Visions of Authority and Obedience in Restoration Scotland (1640-1690)

Panel: 8



Peter Ian Eger (peter.eger@ed.ac.uk)

Christian against Christian: Emotion and Perception in Hussite Bohemia, 1414-1436

Panel: 2



Nia Kiara England (n.k.england@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Anxieties of Labor: How Debates over Work, Respectability, and Citizenship Formed a Public Sphere in Antebellum New York's Black Press

Panel: 8



Bradford Gibbs (b.m.gibbs@sms.ed.ac.uk)

The Role of Merchants Bank of New Bedford in Economic Transformation: From Whaling to Textiles in Antebellum America

Panel: 3



Annabel Gottfried Cohen

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Red Front: The agents, activists and apparatchiks who created the International Brigades

Panel: 4



Nicholas Hall-Risko

(n.d.hall-risko@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Invisible Architects

Panel: 3



Charlie Hoskins (c.l.hoskins@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Very Capable of Cultivation: The Changing Agricultural Landscape of Caithness in the Age of Improvement, 1790-1820

Panel: 6



Francis A. La Poll (f.a.la-poll@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Pardon My Treason: The Founding Fathers' Minuet with Patriotism and Treachery

Panel: 4



Davide Lamparelli
(davide.lamparelli@ed.ac.uk)

Receiving Aid: Solidarity, Identity, and Emotions in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands in the Years of the Great Famine, 1845-1855

Panel: 6



Antonis Leontiou (s2667924@ed.ac.uk)

Socio-Political and Cultural Exchanges between Lusignan Cyprus and Cilician Armenia, 1291-1375

Panel: 2



Joshua Locke (s1760002@ed.ac.uk)

Business Lobbying of Victorian Government, 1868-1874

Panel: 5



Felicity MacKenzie (s2667216@ed.ac.uk)

Charles Lyell's civilising mission, 1816-1865: geology, education, race and progress

Panel: 6



Joshua MacRae (joshua.macrae@ed.ac.uk)

The Canmores: A Thematic Study of Dynastic Politics in Scotland and Europe, c.1034-1292

Panel: 8



Adrian S. Manning
(a.s.a.manning@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Changing Symbolic Values: Israel Putnam in American History Culture from 1775-1904

Panel: 4



Ruby Martyn (r.martyn@sms.ed.ac.uk)

« Les femmes ne s'éternisent pas à Billancourt »: Selective Blindness and Russian Life in a Parisian Commune, 1921-1939

Panel: 7



EK McAlpine

Gender and Saints in Medieval Scotland

Panel: 7



Shelby Neuhauser
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The Bridge Ladies: Defining a generation of American, English, and Scottish women, their embracement of mass media, and modern celebrity status 1870-1914

Panel: 7



Luke Pike (l.m.pike@sms.ed.ac.uk)

The rhetoric of George H. W. Bush: His conservatism and its critics

Panel: 1



Aisha Tahir (aisha.tahir@ed.ac.uk)

Scottish Silversmiths in the Caribbean, c.1700-1820

Panel: 5



Ellie Whitehead (e.whitehead@ed.ac.uk)

From 'Fact' to 'Fiction': Exploring the development of the supernatural in Scottish literature c.1685-1830

Panel: 6

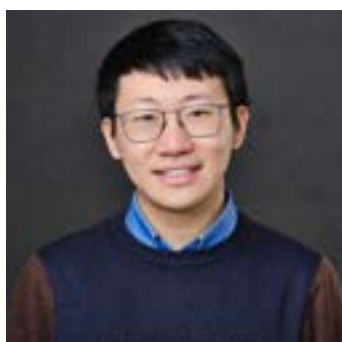


Adam Whitehouse

(a.n.whitehouse@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Savvy or Strategy?: Television News and the Kennedy Administration, 1960-1964.

Panel: 1



Boshen Yan (boshen.yan@ed.ac.uk)

Wartime Economy and Grain Politics in Nationalist China during the War of Resistance and the Chinese Civil War

Panel: 3



Cecilia Zhang (cecilia.zhang@ed.ac.uk)

Analyzing the African American Civil Rights Struggle: A Historical Perspective on the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC)

Panel: 1



If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the Conference Co-Conveners: Joshua MacRae (joshua.macrae@ed.ac.uk) and Boshen Yan (boshen.yan@ed.ac.uk).

Cover artwork by Aisha Tahir.