

Symeon

Issue One, 2011

Welcome to the first issue of *Symeon*, a magazine for alumni and friends of the Durham University history department. We hope to offer you a chance to keep in touch with the departmental community, and conversely that the magazine will help to keep the department up to date with the lives and careers of its old members beyond graduation. But over and above this we would like to open a direct channel of communication between current research in Durham and our diverse alumni community, and to give historians at all levels within the department an opportunity to share the products of their research with an audience of historically-aware and interested people beyond our usual more inward-looking conversations.

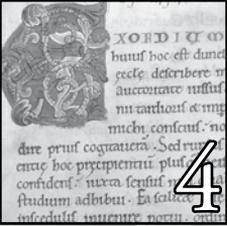
Academic historians are constantly being exhorted to improve or demonstrate the relevance of their work – as well as being both a current and a timeless political topic, the idea is very familiar to anyone who has ever been asked to explain the ‘point’ of their long and laborious study to bemused friends and relatives. We believe that high-quality historical research pursued for its own sake is never lacking in relevance, and that what makes the difference is how this research is communicated to a wider audience. Clear, lively presentation of the latest thinking on our past should enable others to discover for themselves the ways in which each historical narrative is relevant to them. History graduates seem a natural place to start, and we hope that you will enjoy this magazine as a small contribution to your continuing engagement with history, whatever you are doing in your lives today.

This magazine has been edited and produced by research students, and you will see that most of the articles are by students too. Our perspective is very much one that you might recognize: still slightly over-awed by the book collections, such as the one on our front cover, which line the walls of the offices at 43 North Bailey, and intensely curious about their contents. For those of you who are curious about our title, the magazine is named after the first known historian to work in Durham, about whom you can read in Charlie Rozier’s article on page 4. For now it only remains to say how much we would like to hear from you about life beyond the study of history at Durham in time for next year’s issue – please turn to page 48 for our contact details.

We hope you enjoy the read,

Philippa Houghton, Ben Pope and Lindsay Varner.

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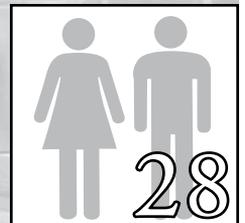


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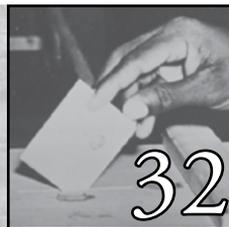
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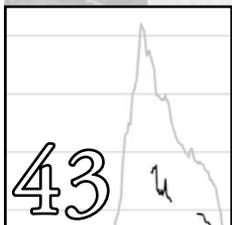
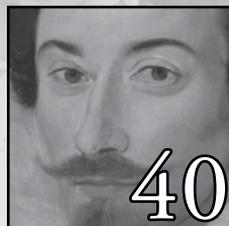


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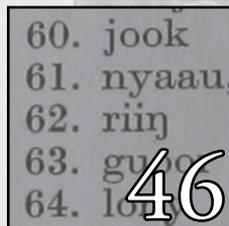


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Cover Images

Front: Dr Andrzej Olechnowicz's office; inside front: self-portrait by Laurence, prior of Durham 1149-54, now the face of the Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies (Durham University Library Cosin MS V.iii.1); inside rear: fifteenth-century psalter (Durham University Library Bamburgh Select 25); outside rear: St Augustine's *City of God*, copied by Symeon of Durham (Durham Cathedral Library B.II.22).

Durham History on the Web

Throughout the magazine we will be introducing websites and blogs run by staff and students, so that you can also read about (and interact with) current research from Durham on the internet.

The Durham History Department, c.1090-c.1130



With his tract or ‘little book’ *Symeon of Durham* inaugurated the study of history on our peninsula above the Wear. But what relation is a *libellus* to a fat modern monograph? Third-year PhD student Charlie Rozier introduces our unwitting predecessor.

This magazine is full of examples that illustrate the skills, the work and the innovation that currently exists within Durham University’s Department of History. You will be aware that our Department has engineered a research and teaching environment that has led the field of historical studies across disciplines and time periods for many years. Yet many may be surprised to learn that the study of history at Durham goes back far further than the foundation and development of the current University. It is possible to date the study of history at Durham’s Cathedral Priory to as early as the 1090s, laying the foundations of our contemporary knowledge of this period and of the centuries before.

It is thanks to Durham’s early historical authors that we know, for example, the much-celebrated story of Durham’s foundation. Established in 995 by a band of itinerant Lindisfarne exiles with help from a wandering brown cow and the obstinate body of a long-dead but very famous Northumbrian saint, the religious community at Durham was re-organised along strict monastic rules in 1083. The construction of the Cathedral as we know it commenced in 1093.¹ By this time, Durham’s monastic community had developed a reputation for its learning. Manuscript evidence informs us that it appealed to competent scribes, whose manuscripts were collected in large numbers over a relatively short period of time in the few years either side of 1100, and then consistently thereafter.² Among the scholars working in this environment were the first Durham historians, the most notable of whom was Symeon of Durham (fl. c. 1090-c.1130).

Among the most useful texts for those who seek to understand the role of history in the Anglo-Norman period is Symeon of Durham’s *Tract on the origin and progress of*

¹ Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie*, ed. and trans. D.W. Rollason (Oxford, 2000).

² Michael Gullick, ‘The Hand of Symeon of Durham: Further observations on the Durham Martyrology scribe’, in D.W. Rollason (ed.), *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North* (Stamford, 1998), 14-31.

this church of Durham.³ Symeon began working on this text in or just after 1104, and was finished by 1115.⁴ It is one of the first full-scale historical narratives composed in England since Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* was completed in 731, and represents the first major work of Northern historiography in that time.⁵

In order to gain an insight into his motivations for writing, the contents of Symeon's history should be considered alongside the wider context of his career as a scribe and a student, as well as those of his Durham contemporaries. We are very fortunate that more than thirty of Symeon's original manuscripts have come down to us over their 900-plus years of existence and many of them remain *in situ* at the Cathedral, or nearby in Palace Green.

Symeon's life as a scribe stands in sharp contrast to the career of the modern historian. His primary duties lay in the copying of manuscripts for Durham's expanding library, the majority of which were theological and biblical rather than historical in content.⁶ Despite this overall trend, Symeon was nevertheless involved in a number of historiographical ventures. His characteristic handwriting is recognisable in manuscripts featuring William of Jumièges' famous *Deeds of the Dukes of Normandy*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and a selection of annals (simple tables of dates and historical events).⁷ In addition to this, Symeon helped to revive the *Liber Vitae* of his community: a memorial necrology that recorded the names of deceased monks from Lindisfarne as far back as the ninth century, and which can be seen as a historical source in its own right.⁸ Despite this work, Symeon did not present himself as a historian. At no point did he describe his *Libellus* as such (the Latin word 'historia' is entirely absent from its introductory preface) and neither did he refer to himself as its author.



³ Symeon, *Libellus*.

⁴ Rollason, 'Introduction', in Symeon, *Libellus*, xlii-xliv.

⁵ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1972).

⁶ Gullick, 'Hand'.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-31.

⁸ *The Durham Liber Vitae*, eds. David and Lynda Rollason with Alan Piper (London, 2007).



XORDIUM

huius hoc est dunelmensis
ecclēe describere maiorū
auctoritate iussus. inge-
nu tardioris & imprae
michi conscius. non obe-
dire prius cogitauerā. Sed rursus obedi-
entiae hoc precipientū plus q̄ meis uirib⁹
confidens. iuxta sensus mei qualitatē
studium adhibui. Ea scilicet que sparsim
in scedulīs inuenire potui. ordinatim
collecta digessi. ut eo facilius p̄tiores
si mea non placent. unde sue p̄tiae
opus conueniens conficiant. in prom-
ptu inueniant.

Itaq; congruum uide-
tur. ut omnium ipsius ecclēe ep̄orum ab
illo qui eius fundator primus exiterat.
usq; illū qui in presentia est. maximū uidetur
Kannulfus
hic ex ordine nomina ponantur. quibus &
eos qui illis successuri fuerint ep̄os. diligens
futurorū cura scriptorū apponere n̄ negligat.

A I D A N U S

F inany

s.

Colmany sTuda

E ata

Nevertheless, it is clear that Symeon saw himself as the heir to the long-established but now vacant tradition of Northumbrian historical writing. He noted that he had used Bede's writings as a major source, and had 'assembled and arranged' the relevant information, 'concerning the origin and progress' of the Durham church from this material.⁹ However, Symeon's mission was not simply to update Bede's account. While he stated that his history existed in order to propagate the memory of the past 'for posterity', Symeon's reasons for doing so were very different from those that underlie our research today.¹⁰ His motivations were dominated by his identity as a Durham monk. His history was one that depicted his community as heir to an unbroken chain of continuity stretching right back to the foundation of Lindisfarne Priory in the seventh century. Many scholars, including our own David Rollason, have argued therefore that the history was originally intended as a socio-political tool, devised in order to preserve the continued prosperity and autonomy of the Durham Priory.¹¹ This aspect of Symeon's writing is also evident in his unswerving loyalty to Durham's patron, Saint Cuthbert, who appeared in numerous visions throughout the *Libellus*, and even intervened in person on a few occasions.

Such religious and spiritual aspects of Symeon's writing were reinforced by the role that his history was to play in Durham's collective spiritual veneration. Many of the individuals featured in his work were also the recipients of prayers because of their presence in Durham's *Liber vitae*, and his history can be seen as a useful narrative accompaniment to this prayerful veneration. Symeon even included a long list of names of people for whom he hoped his readers would pray in one of the earliest manuscripts produced under his direction.¹²

In reviewing the motivations of our early predecessors, it is fitting to end with the religious. While today we might write out of an interest in history for its own sake, Symeon and many of his contemporaries were shaped by their monastic or ecclesiastical disposition. His mission was to ensure the spiritual well-being and socio-political independence of his home community, with *Libellus* as the perfect example of how history achieved these aims in early twelfth-century Durham.

⁹ Symeon, *Libellus*, 18-19.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 18-19.

¹¹ David Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', in Carola Hicks (ed.), *England in the Eleventh Century* (Stamford, 1992), 183-198, at p. 183; Meryl Foster, 'Custodians of St Cuthbert: the Durham Monks' View of their Predecessors, 1083-c.1200', in David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (eds.) *Anglo-Norman Durham* (Woodbridge, 1994), 53-65, at p. 56; A.J. Piper, 'The Historical Interests of the Monks of Durham', in Rollason (ed.), *Symeon: Historian*, pp. 301-32, at p. 302; W.M. Aird, 'The Political Context of the *Libellus de exordio*', in Rollason (ed.), *Symeon: Historian*, pp. 32-45, at p. 42 and p.43; Gullick, 'The Two Earliest Manuscripts of the *Libellus de exordio*', in Rollason (ed.), *Symeon: Historian*, pp. 106-19, at p. 118.

¹² Symeon, *Libellus*, 4-7.

Why is there a Giant Perogy in a Canadian Village?



Hélène Feest from the History Society considers one of the bigger questions in modern historiography – and produces some interesting answers about the interplay and fluidity of apparently timeless and self-sufficient cultural identities.

Since 1991 the village of Glendon, Alberta, has hosted the world's largest perogy. It stands at 8.2 metres high and is 3.7 metres wide, and rather than the usual unleavened dough of the Ukrainian dumpling, it is made of fibreglass and steel. Why is it there? The story of Glendon's perogy illustrates important themes in migration and identity in Canada. It signifies not the isolation of Ukrainian immigrant identities, but rather their endurance, and their vibrant, changing dialogue with other cultures.

As mayor of Glendon, an unremarkable village with fewer than 500 inhabitants, Johnny Demienko decided to erect a sculpture that would attract visitors. Since most of the village were of Ukrainian and Polish descent, he commissioned a perogy.¹ The idea of large novelty structures in small, ambitious towns was already in the national consciousness, as was the celebration of Ukrainian traditions. The town of Vegreville, Alberta, built a giant Ukrainian Easter egg in 1975 to commemorate their gratitude for the work of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the egg became a news-story and a tourist attraction. The Glendon perogy was not the first, therefore, and neither has it proved to be the last. Since 2001, Mundare, Alberta, has exhibited something of even more dubious aesthetic merit: a giant fibreglass Ukrainian sausage.² The perogy also inspired Prince Edward Island's Potato Museum to build a giant potato to attract visitors.³

However, these sculptures are about more than just publicity. They immortalise an important aspect of the towns' identities. Sudbury's Big Nickel, the world's largest coin, was originally designed to celebrate the centenary of the town, a place famous

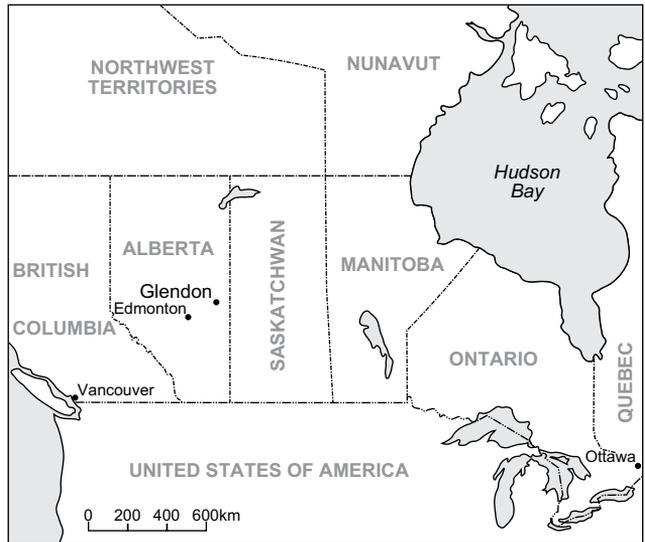
¹ CBC, 'Supersized Sights of Canada', <http://archives.cbc.ca/lifestyle/travel/topics/3756/> [accessed 25 March 2011].

² David Yanciw, 'Big Things', <http://www.bigthings.ca/alberta/mundare.html> [accessed 25 March 2011].

³ CBC, 'Supersized Sights of Canada'.

for its mining. The delightfully-named Thimble Tickle Bay in Newfoundland built a 17-metre squid commemorating the largest squid ever found, a monster hauled in by their fishermen in 1878.⁴ Similar to war memorials, though considerably more light-hearted, these sculptures become a focal point in communities, where memory is shared, created and broadcast.

Glendon is situated in one of the prairie provinces, which



were the principal destination for the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada. In the nineteenth century, Canada welcomed immigrants. They were a method of state-building, both literally, since labour was needed for large building projects like the railroads, and figuratively, especially as Canada was losing population to her greatest rival, the United States.⁵ Politicians like Clifford Sifton wanted to attract Ukrainians because of their reputation as good farmers.⁶ Dr Osyk Oleskiv was one of a group of Ukrainians who would scout the region and return home to persuade others to emigrate.⁷ These tactics were successful: from 1891 to 1914, around 170,000 Ukrainian immigrants settled in Canada.⁸ The First World War marked a xenophobic shift in official attitudes towards Ukrainian immigrants: under the War Measures Act (1914), they were labelled 'Enemy Aliens' and made up the majority of the 8,759 people interned in forced-labour camps.⁹ Ukrainian Canadian identity has been bolstered by the subsequent campaign for redress, which gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰ Immigration following the war was more restricted because from 1923 Ukrainians were designated as non-preferred, and so could come only if they had family, sponsors, or would farm the land. The third wave of Ukrainian immigration was made up of those displaced by the Second World War.¹¹

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Paul W. Gates, 'Official Encouragement to Immigration by the Province of Canada', *Canadian Historical Review*, 15.1 (1934), p. 24.

⁶ Paul Robert Magocsi, *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto, 1999), p. 1283.

⁷ James W. Darlington, 'The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West', in Stella Hryniuk and Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (eds.) *Canada's Ukrainians: Changing Perspectives, 1891-1991* (Toronto, 1991), p. 56.

⁸ Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 1283.

⁹ Bohdan. S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoner of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal-Kingston, 2002), p. 36.

¹⁰ InfoUkes, 'Internment of Ukrainians in Canada 1914-1920', <http://www.infoukes.com/history/internment/> [accessed 13 April 2011].

¹¹ Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 1283.

Since the end of these waves of immigration, Canada has adopted a guiding principle of multiculturalism, first declared as official policy in 1971.¹² Indeed Canada has always had two dominant heritages rather than one: the English and the French. There was therefore already a notion of pluralism, and recognition of the importance of cultural preservation.¹³ Nonetheless, there has been a marked change in the way Canadian heritage has been fostered since 1970s. This can be seen in changes in celebrations of Dominion Day (renamed Canada Day in 1982), an event led by politicians and bureaucrats who explicitly designed it as a way of advertising Canadian heritage to immigrants.¹⁴ In 1958, the English and French heritages were clearly dominant.¹⁵ Now, different cultures – including First Nations and Ukrainian – are showcased in Canada Day celebrations and the events have spread into smaller communities which can display their own particular identities. In addition, Multiculturalism Day has been observed since 2003. It falls on 27 June and forms part of the lead up to Canada Day on 1 July.

This would suggest that minority identities have managed to survive as separate entities. For the Ukrainian population, this has been aided by their geographical placement, in that they formed large, isolated groups. Although land policy forced immigrants to settle on separate homesteads, they would group around the point where the corners of four homesteads met, creating small villages. New immigrants would take land close to existing communities. Often this meant taking poorer land, which left them reliant on their community when times were hard, and consequently communal bonds were strengthened further.¹⁶

Immigrants have also retained their original ethnic designation. Canadian censuses had always been interested in origins, particularly as a way of monitoring the size of the French Canadian population. Respondents cannot record ‘Canadian’ as a race, so ethnic identities have retained an official and psychological presence.¹⁷ There is an assumption that Ukrainian-Canadians, ever mindful of their hyphenation, are more heavily influenced by their original culture than by that of their new home. The writer Myrna Kostach, of Ukrainian origin but born in Canada, was somewhat perturbed by the fact that her entry in the Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature placed her more within the Ukrainian literary context than the Canadian.¹⁸

¹² Patricia E. Roy, ‘The Fifth Force: Multiculturalism and the English Canadian identity’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 538 (1998), p. 199.

¹³ Anthony H. Richmond, ‘Immigration and Pluralism in Canada’, *International Migration Review*, 4.1 (1969), p. 7.

¹⁴ Matthew Hayday, ‘Firework, Folk-dancing, and Fostering a National Identity: The politics of Canada Day’, *Canadian Historical Review*, 91.2 (2010), pp. 292, 295.

¹⁵ Hayday, ‘Canada Day’, p. 288.

¹⁶ Darlington, ‘The Ukrainian Impress’, pp. 56, 73, 79.

¹⁷ Kenneth Michael Sylvester, ‘Immigrant Parents, Ethnic Children, and Family Formation in the Early Prairie West’, *Canadian Historical Review*, 84.4 (2003), pp. 597-8.

¹⁸ Roy, ‘The Fifth Force’, pp. 202-3.

However, Ukrainian identity has been far from static and separate. Changes in official designations have played a role in this. In the early days of immigration, Ukrainians were classed under other names, for example as Ruthenians, Galicians or Austrians. The name 'Ukrainian' first appeared in the Canadian census in 1921.¹⁹ It has become even more prominent after 1991, as Ukrainian independence from the USSR has galvanised the celebration of Ukrainian identity.²⁰ Furthermore, historians have debated what multiculturalism actually means. For a long time, Canada was characterised as a mosaic, rather than the American-model melting pot. However, Ukrainian Canadians were some of the first to point out that the mosaic depiction was misleading, because it hid the level of integration achieved by immigrant communities.²¹

Ways of life did change. For example, federal land policy produced small and simple households, a departure from the traditional extended household.²² Like the giant perogy, Ukrainian architecture has stood out in the landscape as a recognisable sign of Ukrainian identity, with its distinctive onion-domed buildings and white limewash.²³ Now, though, the architecture in these towns is less traditionally Ukrainian.²⁴ Culture is in a continuous state of transformation. Ukrainian folk dancing is another piece of culture that has become widely recognisable, and is also an example of change.²⁵ There are more partner dances in Canada than in the Ukraine and there are new songs and dances too, like Kanada, which are now performed in the Ukraine as well.²⁶

Furthermore, Ukrainian culture has permeated into the wider Canadian heritage. Perogies have an appeal that reaches beyond the Eastern European population. By the 1990s, the perogy was clearly adopted into the mainstream diet all across Canada, as was the Ukrainian sausage, the kielbasa.²⁷ One of the most successful perogy producers, the Cheemo company founded by Walter Makowecki, Canadian-born and of Ukrainian ancestry, chose a First Nations name. Cheemo is Inuktitut for 'we are friendly'. The current President, his son Joe, believes everyone can relate to a perogy, since dumplings are part of many ethnic cuisines.²⁸ This is, of course, advertising rhetoric to attract a wider market for his products, but it rings true as well. As for the giant perogy, it must also have a wide appeal since it is there, after all, to encourage people to visit the village. It is now part of a larger collection of giant objects distinguishing otherwise-

¹⁹ Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 1284.

²⁰ Glenn Randall Mack and Asele Surina, *Food Culture in Russia and Central Asia* (Westport, 2005), p. 9.

²¹ Roy, 'The Fifth Force', p. 200.

²² Sylvester, 'Immigrant Parents', p. 598.

²³ Darlington, 'The Ukrainian Impress', p. 53.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

²⁵ Andriy Nahachewsky, 'New Ethnicity and Ukrainian Canadian Social Dance', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 115 (2002), p. 177.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

²⁷ Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 1294.

²⁸ The Calgary Herald, 'Success of Cheemo Perogies Billows beyond Alberta', <http://www.ukrainians.ca/recipe-cuisine/41101-success-of-cheemo-perogies-billows-beyond-alberta.html> [accessed 2 April 2011].

quiet Canadian towns.²⁹ Perogies have even become part of the political discourse. Over the past couple of years they have been widely used in demonstrations against Stephen Harper's penchant for proroguing parliament. Protest posters have included pictures of barred perogies, perogies have been eaten at rallies, and one campaign urged angry citizens to flood Harper's mailbox with pictures of perogies.³⁰ The message is clear: perogies are more popular than prorogations.

Glendon's giant perogy has been described as a great example of 'the popularization of visual Ukrainian symbols' but also of 'the perversion of traditional Ukrainian folk-art'.³¹ It is beloved, but it is also gently ridiculed. For minorities in any culture, there is always a fear of tokenism, of 'reducing "otherness" to singing and dancing or exotic food'.³² However, food culture is clearly a legitimate and significant branch of social history. Susan Tax Freeman's defence of studying food cannot be surpassed. She writes, 'A cuisine intersects with major topics of scholarship such as environmental studies, economics, politics, philosophy, religion, kinship and social organisation, population biology and nutrition, and taste and aesthetics. It provides probably the richest source of symbol and metaphor in cultural expression.'³³ For Ukrainian-Canadians, food is a stronger expression of Ukrainian identity than language or religion.³⁴ Nonetheless, we have certainly moved beyond thinking about identity in terms of either/or questions. Identities are formed by processes of communication that are never complete, and having a giant perogy in your village is both wonderfully Ukrainian and charmingly Canadian.

²⁹ CBC, 'Supersized Sights of Canada', <http://archives.cbc.ca/lifestyle/travel/topics/3756/> [accessed 25 March 2011]. David Yanciw, 'Big Things', <http://www.bigthings.ca/alberta/mundare.html> [accessed 25 March 2011].

³⁰ Susan Delacourt and Richard J. Brennan, 'Grassroots Fury Greets Shuttered Parliament', <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/746068> [accessed 28 March 2011]. CBC News, 'Perogy Protestors put Bite on Prorogation', <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2010/01/22/bc-perogie-protesters-porogation.html> [accessed 28 March 2011]. Alex Ross, 'More Perogies, less Proroguing': Thousands in Toronto tell Harper to get back to work', <http://thevarsity.ca/articles/25134> [accessed 28 March 2011]. Genesee Keevil, 'Yukoners Protest Prorogation, Eat Perogies', <http://www.yukon-news.com/news/16427/> [accessed 28 March 2011].

³¹ Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 1295.

³² Roy, 'The Fifth Force', p. 203.

³³ Susan Tax Freeman, 'Culturing Food', *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, 6.4 (2006), p. 100.

³⁴ Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 1294.

Image posted to Flickr Creative Commons by Al Hunt.



An Eighteenth-Century Adolescence in Newcastle



Barbara Crosbie's recently-completed doctoral thesis uses age relations to investigate cultural change in eighteenth-century England, tracing the roots of a generational division discernable in the Newcastle parliamentary election during the summer of 1774.

Adolescents are given a central place in the investigation, and they provide a particularly useful gauge of cultural mores. This is because they try the patience of their elders, testing and transforming the boundaries of adult authority, and the consternation they provoke highlights the social norms they are seen to transgress.

Youthful rebellion in the eighteenth century was not dissimilar to that of more recent times, and the primary sources reveal considerable continuities in this generational tension despite the changing context in which it was played out. A glimpse into this youth culture was recorded for posterity by an apprentice named Ralph Jackson, whose diary offers one of the few firsthand accounts of life as an eighteenth-century adolescent.¹ Ralph was the second son of a moderately well-to-do family from Richmond in the county of York. He began his diary at the age of twelve, as he embarked upon a seven year apprenticeship in Newcastle in October 1749. The copious and mundane entries Ralph made in his journal reflect his relatively privileged social status, but his experiences provide more general insights into the lives of apprentices, and paint a vivid picture of growing up in Newcastle during the 1750s. The first words he wrote were:

*My father told me when I began to keep this Journal –
Let not that Day pass by
Whose low descending Sun,
Views from thy hand
No noble action done.*

Despite such laudable aims, in the first few months of his apprenticeship Ralph made more references to playing cards than any other activity. However, it would seem that unbeknown to Ralph his father had encouraged him to keep a journal so as to monitor his progress, and after spending Christmas with his parents Ralph made far fewer references to cards and began to record regular Sunday attendance at church. As the

¹ Ralph Jackson Diaries, Books A-U, Teesside Archives, U/WJ.

years went by he expressed an increasing self-determination, implying that his journal was either less likely to be scrutinised or he was less concerned about the consequences of disclosure.

Ralph's master, William Jefferson, was either a bachelor, or widower with no children, and in addition to Ralph his household included old George, his servant, and Jenny the domestic. Jefferson's nephew Billy, who was around Ralph's age, also spent a lot of time at his uncle's house. Ralph appears to have been welcomed into his new home with kindness, and he initially spent his evenings in the company of his master. Besides cards, indoor activities included baggamond, dice, and Jeckers (later written as Checkers), and on 31 October each year they played a game akin to apple bobbing called 'apple & candle'. As an increasing amount of his leisure time was spent outdoors, Ralph's social circle widened. He often walked with friends before supper, or in the summer months played at Burn Ball, which was akin to basketball, 'Shittle cock', 'horse shoes', and 'spell & Nor', in which a stick was used to flick a ball into the air before attempting to strike it. He also occasionally went fishing or netting larks, and as he got older he went shooting, firing a gun for the first time in October 1752. In addition to his more routine pastimes, there were other events to occupy a young lad. During his first year in Newcastle these included going to see prisoners taken to court, soldiers exercise, or a house on fire, and the only exception to this otherwise free entertainment was when his master 'treated [him] to the Play'. Ralph was gradually given more social freedoms, but he was still obliged to ask for permission to do anything out of the ordinary and a lack of funds continued to restrict his access to public leisure venues.

During the summer of 1752, at the age of fifteen, Ralph began to rebel against adult authority. The manner in which he did so appears somewhat unconventional to a modern eye, as he expressed his youthful self-determination in religious terms. Yet, his increasing autonomy was in many ways a ubiquitous feature of growing up. As Ralph developed a more independent interest in God he provoked the disapproval of both his master and his father, but this censure went unheeded. By the time he heard John Wesley preach in Newcastle in April 1753, Ralph's new-found piety dominated his diary entries. In addition to attending church daily, and often twice, he accompanied friends to private prayer meetings and read religious books as he walked, or sat by hedgesides, and even in a local 'newsroom' which, like coffee houses, are more often associated with the secularization of society. Ralph's religious practice was evidently also a social activity, and the amount of time that he devoted to these 'religious duties' inevitably lead him into conflict with his master.

Then, in early August 1753 Ralph failed to make an entry in his journal for two weeks. While he had occasionally summarised a few days after the event, and even skipped the odd day whilst staying with his parents over Christmas, this was unique. When his entries resumed on 15 August he suggested that a 'want of opportunity or negligence hindered me from noting my particular Actions in this Book'. This was the day that

his father arrived in Newcastle. It was two and a half years since Ralph's father had been in town, and he had never stayed at his master's house before. Ralph gave no indication of what his father said to him, he simply wrote 'I came home I sat with my Father & Master', and when his father was due to leave two days later he noted 'I was called on early and I went into the room where my Father lay, I stayed some time'. Ralph's attendance at church became more spasmodic during the following days, but his interest in religion was no less keen. On Sunday 26 August he stayed in his room until church, then went to a prayer meeting before attending church for a second time, and he uncharacteristically engaged with the content of the sermon as he wrote of the dead being judged 'according to their works'. Three days later he stopped keeping his journal (apart from one entry) until nine months before the completion of his apprenticeship in December 1756.

Ralph's journal had been started under the direction of his father, and the fact that he continued to record the events of each day demonstrated a certain level of submission to paternal authority. To stop marked a strident self-determination. Although rebellious in nature, his piety was clearly heartfelt, and his independence of thought reflected an essential aspect of growing up and a spiritual awakening. What is most surprising in this context is that the heightened individualism associated with the eighteenth century is usually linked to the idea that the opportunities for 'self-definition' became more material rather than focused upon the soul. Yet, Ralph's experiences demonstrate that adolescent self-realisation could still be a very spiritual journey.

Durham History on the Web

Nicki Kindersley has come to Durham with a combined MA and PhD scholarship from the Economic and Social Research Council, and is currently researching her MA dissertation on political thought and organization within the displaced South Sudanese population living in the Republic of Sudan: the northern, predominantly Arabic-speaking area of what was, until very recently, a single Sudanese state.

So far she has been able to post on a wide range of issues, from considerations of the purpose and value of blogging for historians to live reporting on South Sudan's independence day on 9 July from the capital Juba. Her thoughts on both Sudanese politics and the modern business of studying history make the blog (with due allowance for parochial preference) a varied, stimulating and revealing read, though equally instructive is the number of posts tagged under 'procrastination'.

Nicki's blog can be found at <http://internallydisplaced.wordpress.com>.

History as Autobiography: Johan Huizinga and *The Waning of the Middle Ages*



First published in its original Dutch in 1919, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* has been one of the most enduring and yet disputed historical works of the last century. As part of his MA, Joe Cronin considered the great, and controversial, Johan Huizinga.

Old works of history which continue to be read often owe their enduring appeal to what they tell us about the time in which they were written, rather than what they contribute to scholarly debate today. Few would argue that Johan Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* is an example of this, despite bearing so many hallmarks of its author's own life and the period of its composition. It does not matter whether the historian's life manifests itself in his or her work; the issue is whether or not this has a positive impact on its quality. The idiosyncratic nature of *The Waning of the Middle Ages* has prompted numerous scholars to consider the origins of its peculiarities and the effect these have on the book as a whole. Some argue that the elements which can be traced to events contemporary to Huizinga undermine his thesis, while others contend that they have contributed to the book's longevity.¹

The Waning of the Middle Ages was embedded in a number of historiographical debates. Most obviously, it was a reaction against positivist history, which dominated the newly-professionalized discipline. Huizinga did not conceal his disdain for 'scientific historians' who merely assembled dry facts without cohesion or literary flair. Their reliance on official documents 'which rarely refer to the passions... runs the risk of neglecting the difference of tone between the life of the expiring Middle Ages and that of our own days,' Huizinga wrote.² It was they who made inappropriate analogies between past societies and the present, not Huizinga. Instead, by using chronicles as his main sources, Huizinga felt that he was able to discover the unique cultural and psychological characteristics of the late Middle Ages. His rejection of 'quantitative valuation' placed him in opposition to prevailing trends in historical scholarship, yet it immeasurably improved the quality of his book.³

¹ W.J. Bouwsma, "'The Waning of the Middle Ages' by Johan Huizinga", *Daedalus*, 103.1 (1974), pp. 35-43, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ See J. Huizinga, 'History Changing Form', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4.2 (1943), pp. 217-23, p. 223.

A major academic debate concerning the Renaissance was in full bloom by the beginning of the twentieth century, and *The Waning of the Middle Ages* consciously attempted to modify and refine its parameters. Huizinga accepted the main tenets of Jacob Burckhardt's thesis: that the Italian peninsula was culturally distinct in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, enjoying a classical revival while northern Europe remained 'medieval'. However, he did not shirk from challenging aspects of what had become, by this point, an academic orthodoxy. In particular, he considered that the quest for individual glory was not exclusive to Renaissance Italy. Huizinga claimed that Renaissance individualism was 'essentially the same as the chivalrous ambition of earlier times', and that the aspiration to antiquity owed something to the chivalrous ideal from across the Alps.⁴ In these, and in other respects, Huizinga argued, 'Burckhardt has exaggerated the distance separating Italy from the Western countries and the Renaissance from the Middle Ages'.⁵



Illumination from a fifteenth-century psalter, an example of the vigorous visual culture of the late Middle Ages from Huizinga's native Low Countries (see also overleaf).

The role of art and artists in the Burgundian era was one of the most innovative features of Huizinga's study. Yet this too was a result of his engagement with a rich historiography concerning the significance of late-medieval Flemish art. Early twentieth-century Dutch historians had debated whether the work of artists such as Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden were expressions of a primitive and backward-looking medievalism, or whether they anticipated the coming Renaissance.⁶ Huizinga's interest in this question was therefore not especially original, although he did provide arguably the most nuanced appraisal. He rejected the assertion that these 'masters of

⁴ Huizinga, *Waning*, p. 70.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ For a more in-depth discussion of these debates, see E. Peters and W.P. Simons, 'The New Huizinga and the Old Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 74.3 (1999), pp. 587-620, pp. 599-600.



Illuminations from a fifteenth-century Flemish psalter. Previous page: King David nearly submerged ahead of the words 'Save me, O God, for the waters have risen up to my neck'; above: 'The Lord is my light'; facing page: three clerics and fool. See David Brown, 'An Illuminated Psalter from Flanders', in Richard Gameson (ed.), Treasures of Durham University Library (London, 2007), pp. 60-3. Durham University Library Bamburgh Select 25.



the fifteenth century' were in any way primitive, calling this a 'misunderstanding'.⁷ The hyperrealism and rendering of minute details which characterized the artwork of the Flemish painters harmonized with other aspects of late medieval culture. Though it was undeniably 'a new form of pictorial expression', it did not emanate from a new mindset.⁸ Rather, Huizinga concluded, the work of Van Eyck and his contemporaries represented 'one of the ultimate forms of the development of the medieval mind'.⁹

The visual richness of *The Waning of the Middle Ages* can be attributed to Huizinga's own passion for art. He was a keen exponent of what he called 'the aesthetic element in historical thought', and described historical understanding as being 'like a vision, or rather like an evocation of images'.¹⁰ Indeed, it may have been a visit to a Bruges exhibition of Flemish art in 1907 which inspired *The Waning*, the title of which was originally *In the Mirror of Van Eyck*.¹¹ In his youth, Huizinga was also involved with contemporary artistic movements, helping to organize exhibitions of Van Gogh and Jan Toorop.¹² These formative experiences provided him with excellent skills of visual analysis which proved indispensable when he turned his attention to the artwork of the Franco-Burgundian period.

Huizinga's distinctive prose style was also influenced by his artistic disposition. *The Waning of the Middle Ages* is littered with arresting turns of phrase and visual metaphors, which corroborate Huizinga's earlier statement that the historian's task was to 'to conjure up living pictures in the private theatre of the mind'.¹³ There is no doubt that Huizinga's soaring prose was a product of a particular time and cultural milieu. As a young man in the 1890s, Huizinga was captivated with the literary circles of the *fin-de-siècle*, whose 'decadent' mood resonated in his own work some two decades later. Some of the most famous passages in *The Waning*, for example 'the mixed smell of blood and roses', owe something to the wistful melancholy of Joris- Karl Huysmans and Frederick Rolfe, both novelists of the time.¹⁴ But does this literary inheritance weaken Huizinga's book? Certainly it does not damage its readability. A neutrally-written text probably would not have stood the test of time quite so well. And even if we heed the complaints made by contemporary critics that the book's style was 'old-fashioned', this did not prevent it from containing some of the most innovative ideas yet seen in medieval studies.

⁷ Huizinga, *Waning*, p. 264.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ See 'The Aesthetic Element in Historical Thought', pp. 219-43, and 'My Path to History', pp. 244-76, p. 269, both of which can be found in J.H. Huizinga, *Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century, and Other Essays*, P. Geyl and F.W.N. Hugenholtz (eds.) (London, 1968).

¹¹ Krul, 'In the Mirror of Van Eyck', p. 363.

¹² See Huizinga, 'My Path to History', p. 258.

¹³ Huizinga, 'Aesthetic Element', p. 237.

¹⁴ Huizinga, *Waning*, p. 26.

A final word must be reserved for Huizinga's personal life. Although it did not manifest itself so strongly in his work as some scholars have claimed, it did nonetheless colour aspects of *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Throughout the text, Huizinga cast a scornful eye over the excesses and the hypocritical nature of late-medieval Catholicism. 'The irreverence of daily religious practice was almost unbounded,' he wrote.¹⁵ Huizinga's Mennonite upbringing, and the staunch and sober piety it entailed, revealed itself in his indignation towards superstition, ritual, and the singing of 'profane words' in religious ceremonies.¹⁶ In addition to his latent religious affiliations, Huizinga may also have allowed his psychological disposition to seep into the text. In his autobiography, Huizinga discusses suffering from symptoms of manic depression.¹⁷ It therefore seems more than a coincidence that he should write about medieval life in terms of bipolarity, as a 'perpetual oscillation between despair and distracted joy'.¹⁸ In the course of the book's preparation, Huizinga suffered an even greater mental trauma. The premature death of his wife in 1914 may partially explain Huizinga's pessimistic tone, perhaps even his interpretation of the period as essentially negative. In the preface to the first Dutch edition, Huizinga cryptically suggested that 'too much of the shadow of death has been allowed to fall upon his work'.¹⁹ One only has to read the chapter 'The Vision of Death' to gain an impression of what he meant. Here, Huizinga vents his moral outrage at the self-serving materialism of medieval attitudes towards death: 'It is hardly the absence of the departed dear ones that is deplored; it is the fear of one's own death'.²⁰ In such passages, the boundaries between art and life dissolve almost completely. Yet this does not detract from the overall argument. Huizinga's forthrightness, even in such delicate emotional matters, makes *The Waning* what it is: a book to arouse strong opinions and stimulate discussion. This, after all, is all one could hope from a good work of history.

The Waning of the Middle Ages bears obvious traits from the time in which it was written and of the man who produced it. Huizinga's fascination with images and his flamboyant, *fin-de-siècle* prose style are evident throughout the text, whilst the impact of contemporary political events is almost entirely absent. The most 'obvious' influences did not always manifest themselves, and those which do appear are, in the main, subtle or stylistic. Huizinga may not have chosen them carefully, he may not even have been aware of their presence, but they considerably enrich the quality of his work. *The Waning of the Middle Ages* remains a masterpiece not only because of its erudition, but because its author was not afraid to reveal a little of himself in its pages.

Joe's MA study was funded by a scholarship established by Tom and Lucy Beresford.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 160.

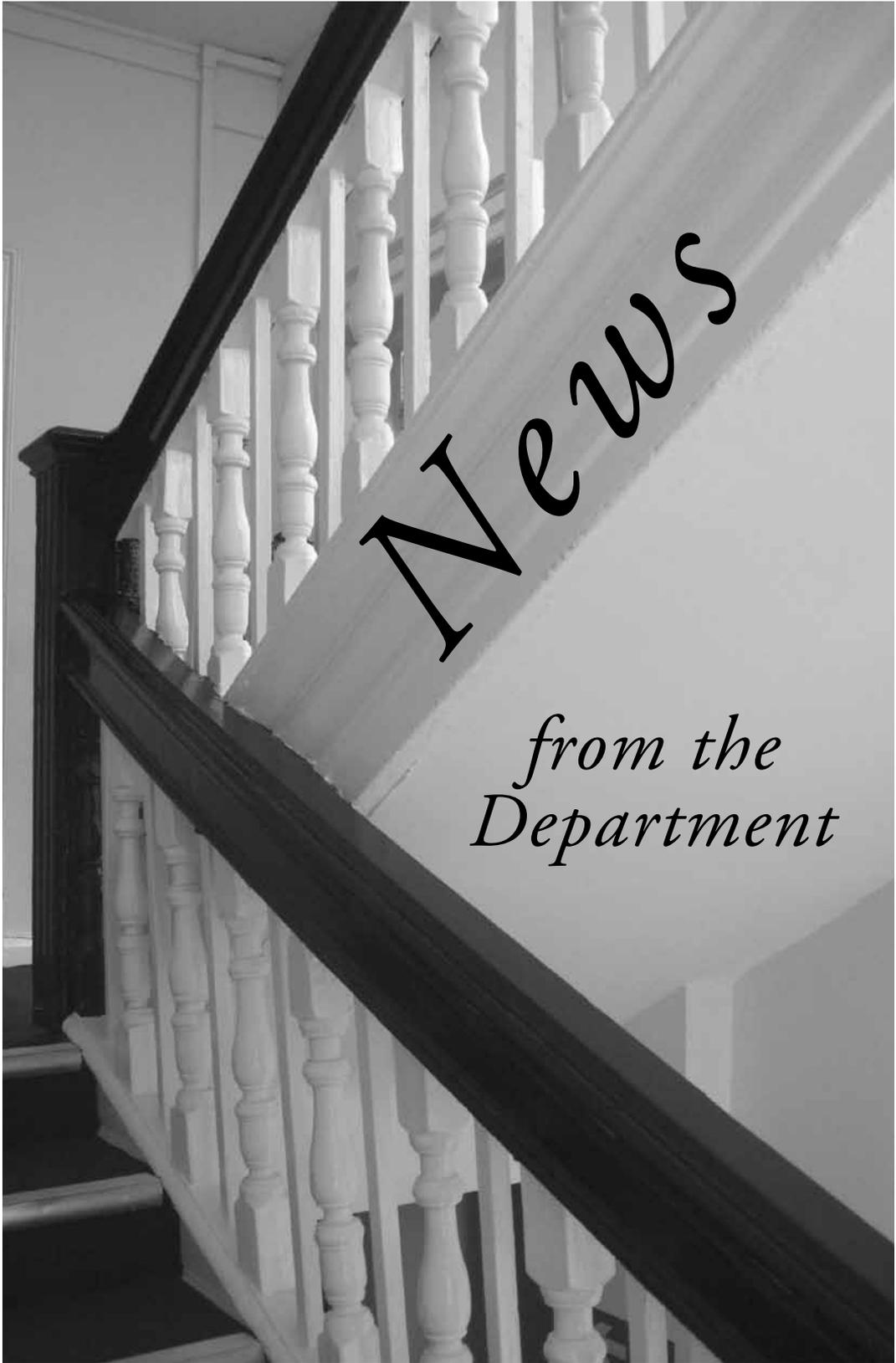
¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Huizinga, 'My Path to History', p. 265.

¹⁸ Huizinga, *Waning*, p. 10.

¹⁹ J.H. Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mimmitzsch (Chicago, 1996), p. xx.

²⁰ Huizinga, *Waning*, p. 151.



News

*from the
Department*

This has been a good year for us in surveys and league tables. The 2010 National Student Survey showed that 98 per cent of our students were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’, and since September 2010 the Department has been rated as the best in the UK by the *Sunday Times*, the *Complete University Guide* and, most recently, *The Times*. While surveys and tables can be fickle, clearly these results do say something about the commitment and professionalism of everyone in the Department, both academics and administrative staff. They also reflect the abilities and success of our undergraduates, since their degree results and subsequent employment are factored into these results.

The success of colleagues has also been recognized in other ways. Kay Schiller’s book on the Munich Olympics has won the National Award for Sports History in the US; and both Kay and Lawrence Black have been promoted to readerships with effect from October 2011. Adrian Green has been given a university award in recognition of his excellent work as a doctoral supervisor. Philip Williamson has been elected to the Council of the Royal Historical Society, a mark of his outstanding reputation among historians in the UK. Cathy McClive, who has been on maternity leave this year looking after baby Lily, has been awarded a fellowship under an EU scheme to spend next year in Lyons, researching and writing for her next book; Nicole Reinhardt has a fellowship to spend the year 2011-12 in Erfurt, at the Max Weber Institute; and Jo Fox, who will be on well-earned research leave from October, has a fellowship to spend a term at the Australian National University in Canberra. Some of you may have seen Jo’s appearance on the *One Show* earlier this year; Ranald Michie has also been on screen, talking about the occupant of one of the properties featured in the *Country House* series (yes, it was a City broker...).

We have been able to recruit several excellent new colleagues on fixed-term contracts to help with teaching from October. Elizabeth Lapina – whose daughter Beatrice was born in June – will be staying with us until 2012; and we will also be joined by Gesine Oppitz-Trotman, a medieval historian who has been working at the University of East Anglia, and Catherine Fletcher, an early modern historian who comes to us from the European University in Florence. In October, David Coast, another early modern historian, will take up a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship in the Department for the next three years.

This year’s finalists have just graduated, in the last Congregation to be graced by Bill Bryson, who is standing down as Chancellor for family reasons, and whose gentle wit and charm will be sadly missed. Our finalists were, once again, very successful; we awarded thirty seven First class degrees, and there were some simply outstanding performances. Particular congratulations are due to Angus McLaren, who won the Thompson Prize for the best overall performance in History; to Alexandra Paulin-Booth, Angus McLaren (again) and Thomas Woodhouse who shared the prize for the best dissertation in History; and to Richard Low-Laurie, who won the Gibson Prize for the best dissertation on local history. The prizes for outstanding performance by non-finalists went to Adam Scrace (Edward Allen Prize, Level 1); and Sarfraz Ali, (Alumni Prize, Level 2).

These are difficult times, and the next couple of years will be challenging for us, as it will for every university in the UK. Our students will be facing much higher debts in a time of some economic uncertainty; as teachers and researchers, we will be working with increasingly tight budgets. But looking back over the year, I find plenty of reasons to be cheerful: we are in the enviable position of recruiting some of the brightest and best students in the UK, and the Department has – and continues to recruit – excellent staff.

Justin Willis, Head of Department

Dr. **David Sweet** died in Canada on 22 January 2011 aged 72. A native of the north-east, after national service largely spent in Germany, David read history at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and then went on to a PhD under (Sir) Harry Hinsley, who remained his mentor, and in whose *Festschrift* David's most significant research was published. He was appointed a lecturer in history at Durham in 1964, and remained in the History Department until his retirement in 2005, teaching British and European History both at Durham and later Stockton, as well as maintaining his commitment to teaching mature students through the Certificate in Social Sciences and London University extra-mural courses. A dedicated teacher, successive generations of students will remember especially essays returned with idiosyncratic pencil markings neatly inscribed in the margin, as well as his sense of humour and warm disposition. A memorial event was held in Hatfield College (of which he was a long-time tutor) on 11 June, at which tributes were paid by members of his family and by some former colleagues from the Department. His ashes were scattered the following day on Lindisfarne.

Alan Heesom

Professor **Reg Ward**, who died in 2010, was for many years a dominant figure in the History Department, alternating as its chairman with Professor Offler. Reg was an astonishingly productive scholar, abandoning his early, and excellent, work on the Land Tax and on Georgian and Victorian Oxford to study the religious revival of the eighteenth century. He transformed understanding of the origins of the evangelical awakening, challenging established views with his deep, magisterial scholarship. His room in the Department was remarkable, not simply for the quantity of books, but also for the small kitchen hidden behind the bookshelves, in which he would prepare lunch for his colleagues. He was a man of great kindness, both to those he taught, and to his colleagues, even if they did not share his powerful convictions, born of Primitive Methodism. He never entered a Durham pub. He was a great walker, until his knees could no longer take the strain. Reg left Durham when he retired, moving to Petersfield to be closer to his family, and where he continued to research and to write on a truly prolific scale. His achievements were acknowledged when he became a Fellow of the British Academy in 2009. He had the devoted support of his wife Barbara for sixty years. They had three children and nine grandchildren.

Michael Prestwich

On Friday 1 July a drinks reception for the department's new graduates was held in the gardens of St Chad's College.



Image courtesy of Durham University

Sex Education Films in East and West Germany, 1950-1970



Anita Winkler, studying for a PhD with the Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease, considers a post-war revolution in education and attitudes to sexuality, and the different yet sometimes parallel paths that it took either side of the Iron Curtain.

A new era for sex education in Germany opened with the introduction of co-educated sex education to the East and West German school curricula in the late 1940s and 1960s, and the production of the first sex education films for the young audience and for this specific purpose. Although important initiatives, including the release of sex education films, most notably Richard Oswald's *Different from the Others* (1919), took place in the inter-war Weimar Republic, it was only after the Second World War that sex education for the young became a national concern. This article traces the role of sex education films for the young in 1950s and 1960s Germany by identifying the social, political and pedagogic interests that triggered the national commitment to the films.

Film has been considered as an effective educational tool since its beginnings. In 1913, Thomas Edison, an early advocate of film in the classroom, claimed that every branch of human knowledge would be taught by motion pictures in the future.¹ Progressive educationists assumed that a single film had the potential to reach huge audiences and teach thousands of students. During the Second World War training films were used as an effective mass medium to prepare soldiers for the battlefield and maintain morale on the home front. According to estimates, during 1944 in America, military training films were screened more than 700,000 times to an audience of nearly 68 million.² The Nazi war machinery also used propaganda films with racist messages to great effect and many were particularly directed at the young as future soldiers fighting for their nation. In organized youth groups propaganda films were shown on a regular basis to promote values such as honour and sacrifice for their nation.

By the 1950s, films were regarded by the Information Control Division of the US Army as a core element of the political re-education of West Germany. Obligatory

¹ Cited in Ken Smith, *Mental Hygiene: Classroom Films 1945-70* (New York, 1999), p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

screenings of films about the Holocaust confronted West Germans with their Nazi past, while films containing nationalistic, racist and communist ideas were prohibited by the new national film law (*Bundesfilmgesetz*).³ American financial and technical support, granted through the European Recovery Program (ERP) between 1948 and 52, laid the foundations for a prospering free market economy and Americanized consumer culture. As well as financial support, the programme included exhibitions, radio programmes and films that aimed to direct and control the processes of the democratic reconstruction of West Germany. The mass media were purposefully deployed to promote consumerism, liberal-democratic ideas and US American benevolence such as the provision of CARE packages containing food supplies.⁴

Films also played a crucial role in the re-education programmes in the German Democratic Republic. The East German production company DEFA committed itself to producing educational films that featured humanistic ideals, to support the re-construction of Germany, and to combat nationalism, militarism and fascism. Institutionally DEFA was closely linked to the East German Ministry of Culture, where, from 1954, the influential film department (*Hauptverwaltung Film*) exercised censorship over all film productions.⁵

However, critical voices questioned the educational value of films in the post-war era, especially given the youth riots which were unsettling both German states in the 1950s. Critics often pointed to the degenerating influence of American youth delinquency films which intensified the notion of the youth as an at-risk group.⁶ The underlying assumption of both advocates and critics of educational films was that film had an intrinsic power to educate and guide, but also to manipulate, the young who were a highly impressionable audience.

***Helga and Partner* – two paradigmatic sex education films in comparison**

Helga: From the Origins of Human Life (1967) marked the start of the West German Federal Ministry for Health's production of sex education films. It was the first sex education film for the young not only produced for the classroom but also released as a feature film for cinema screenings. The film was successful in West Germany and abroad (but restricted to Western countries). According to the Social Democrat Minister of Health, Käte Strobel, the film provided a 'modern' tool for 'modern' sex

³ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 87-118.

⁴ Greg Castillo, 'Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Germany', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.2 (2005), pp. 261-88.

⁵ Hake, *German Cinema* (2003), pp. 87-118.

⁶ Daniel Biltereyst, 'American Juvenile Delinquency Movies and the European Censors: The cross-cultural reception and censorship of *The Wild One*, *Blackboard Jungle*, and *Rebel without a cause*', in Timothy Shary and Alexandra Seibel (eds.), *Youth Culture in Global Cinema* (Austin, 2007), pp. 9-26; Alexandra Seibel, 'The Imported Rebellion: Criminal guys and consumerist girls in postwar Germany and Austria', in Shary and Seibel (eds.), *Youth Culture in Global Cinema* (2007), pp. 27-36.

education and helped in the implementation of the new subject, which shortly after became part of the regular school curriculum within all federal states. The film thus represented a new synergy between public health policies and the mass media.⁷

East Germany's sex education with its focus on 'reproduction and the ontogenetic development of the human being' was integrated into the school curriculum in 1947.⁸ The restriction of sex education to the merely biological task, however, was heavily criticised by sexologists, psychologists and pedagogues throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁹ They argued instead that sex education should be considered as an inherent part of the education of socialist ideals. In 1958, eleven years after the introduction of sex education, Head of State Walter Ulbricht stressed the importance of providing a more comprehensive sex education for young people in his Ten Commandments of Socialist Morals at the Fifth Party Convention. In the mid 1960s the (East) German Central Institute for Teaching Aids (*Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel*) engaged in the production of a series of sex education films, depicting the young people in their social environment. *Partner* (1965), one film in the series 'Relationships between Boys and Girls', was specifically aimed at a teenage audience; the others were primarily directed at parents and educators. The release of the films can therefore be seen as a result of Ulbricht's request, and understood as the re-evaluation of socialist ideals in reaction to the hardening of Cold War conflict after the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

Despite earlier initiatives towards sex education, such as the establishment of marriage counselling services, the emergence of sex advice books as a genuine genre and the releases of sex education films in Weimar Germany,¹⁰ efforts lacked a coherent strategy and often remained limited to urban areas. Progressive thinkers mostly struggled with social reticence until the Nazis completely buried the previous achievements in sex education when they came into power in 1933. It was only after the Second World War that the production of sex education films for classroom teaching could become a national agenda.

The production of sex education films for a national audience in the 1960s can be interpreted as a concession on two counts. First, the rapid spread of mass media, most

⁷ Uta Schwarz, 'Helga (1967): West German Sex Education and the Cinema in the 1960s', in Lutz Sauerteig and Roger Davidson (eds), *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A cultural history of sex education in twentieth century Europe* (London and New York 2009), pp. 197-216, pp. 197-200.

⁸ Kurt R. Bach, 'Zur Entwicklung der Sexualpädagogik in der DDR', in Joachim S. Hohmann (ed.), *Sexuologie in der DDR* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 228-38.

⁹ Rudolf Neubert, 'Gedanken zum Problem der Sexualpädagogik' in R. Neubert and R. Weise (eds.), *Das sexuelle Problem in der Jugenderziehung* (Rudolfstadt, 1956), pp. 7-38, p. 10; See also Anton Makarenko, *Vorträge über Kindererziehung* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1951), 'Makarenko berät uns' in Heinz Grassel and K. Heilbock, *Erziehung zur künftigen Liebe* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1968), pp. 60-3.

¹⁰ Rudolf Helmstetter, 'Der 'stumme' Doctor als guter Hirte: Zur Genealogie der Sexualratgeber' in Peter-Paul Baenzinger et al (eds), *Fragen Sie Dr. Sex! Ratgeberkommunikation und die mediale Konstruktion des Sexuellen* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 58-93, at p. 66.

notably with the establishment of widely read youth journals such as *Neues Leben*, launched in 1945 by the Free German Youth (and re-launched in 1953 in East Germany) and *Bravo* (1956) in West Germany, challenged policy makers to respond to new trends in youth culture. Consequently, sex education films were regarded as an attractive and effective tool to implement both secular and socialist, Christian and capitalist values of partnership and family life. Secondly, sex education films created and responded to ways of seeing specific to East and West, as cinematic devices were deployed in very distinct ways. For this reason, sex education films can be regarded as an audio-visual contribution to the broader re-education project of society.

However, sex education films in both German states, despite the use of the distinct visual language, were also characterized by their adherence to traditional heterosexual norms and gender roles in partnerships that ideally led to marriage and family life.

Durham History on the Web

Over the last academic year **Professor David Moon** has been involved in an AHRC-funded network entitled 'Local Places, Global Processes: Histories of Environmental Change' with colleagues from Bristol University (Professor Peter Coates) and the University of East Anglia (Dr Paul Warde). The network organised a series of workshops at locations around England to discuss key issues in conjunction with non-academic project partners: Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire, in conjunction with the National Trust; The Quantock Hills, Somerset, with the Administration of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and Kielder Water and Forest Park, with Northumbrian Water and the Forestry Commission.

The project aims primarily to examine and contextualize the concept of 'environment' historically and in the present, but also to create a basis for future collaboration between academics and professionals involved in addressing and managing environmental change, and to give the subject of environmental history a louder voice within historical studies. Recently, the team made presentations about their network at a meeting at the Royal Geographical Society in London, organized by the AHRC, and at the sixth Conference of the European Society for Environmental History at Turku, Finland.

Blogs, podcasts, videocasts and papers are all available on the website: **www.environmentalhistories.net**, where you can also leave your own comments.

The Spoils of the Ballot: Elections in Eastern Africa



Justin Willis' research concerns identity, authority and social change in eastern Africa over the last two hundred years, and he has conducted both archival and oral research in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Sudan. From 2006 to 2009 he was director of the British Institute in eastern Africa, in Nairobi.

What has gone wrong with elections in Africa? At the beginning of the 1990s, the 'second liberation' was propelled by the belief that multi-party elections which allowed people to vote by secret ballot would transform African politics. Corrupt, incompetent and brutal regimes would be swept away, and the electoral power of the people would ensure that the governments which replaced them would be more stable and more democratic. But in the last few years, the troubled outcomes of elections across Africa – in Kenya, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe and elsewhere – have called into question the whole idea that the secret ballot can change politics.

My current research looks at the history of elections in eastern Africa, going back to the first widespread use of the secret ballot in the last years of colonial rule. It is not a study of results – there has already been quite a lot of work on that. Nor is it simply an investigation of malpractice – of stuffing ballot boxes, intimidation and the like – although that is an important part of the story. More generally the research is intended to explore experience: what it was like to be involved in elections, as a voter, or as a candidate, or as a polling official.

I have chosen this focus because some people have argued that the power of the secret ballot really lies in individual experience. Registering, queuing, and polling should teach people about citizenship, and make political participation into an orderly and individual experience. Serving as a poll official should encourage people to see themselves as servants of a system, whose duty is to follow the rules and to make sure others follow them too. Standing as candidates should lead people to see that political legitimacy comes only out of the ballot box, and that all who seek office have to follow the same rules – creating a political class with a shared experience, and a shared commitment to the system. Yet how far – if at all – this has happened in much of Africa is open to question: and this research draws on interviews with voters and former election officials and candidates, on newspaper reports, and the accounts of observers and monitors to examine what it was like to be a voter, or an official or candidate, and

asks what the experience of electoral participation has actually been, and how this has shaped people's sense of themselves and their relationship to government.

The research covers the period from the 1950s to the present day. When the colonial powers rushed to organize elections in Africa in the final years of colonial rule, it was partly because they hoped that the elections would be transformative – in Kenya, the leaflets which explained how to vote bore the slogan 'Teach yourself citizenship!' After independence, many of the presidents of independent Africa devised various ways of holding elections which made sure that they could not lose their own positions, but required the public and civil servants – and some lesser politicians – to go through the performance of an election by secret ballot. This was partly intended as a show for the wider world – 'the eyes of the world are upon us', as more than one ruler declared. But it was also an enforced performance of citizenship, much valued by officials who always suspected that the wider population were disloyal – or at best, disinterested. So even where there was only one political party involved, and no policy decision to be made, and no possibility of changing the ruler, elections were held and people were encouraged, or bribed, or bullied – sometimes all three - to cast their votes.

In the early 1990s, multi-party elections were reintroduced in much of Africa. How much of a difference this made is very much open to question. In some countries, the ruling party stayed in power anyway; elsewhere, even where the ruling party changed it seemed as though little else did. But elections did become more vigorously contested, and more expensive, both for contestants and for the state as a whole; and in some cases they also became very much more violent. Violence became a part of electoral practice: used before the poll, to drive voters out of certain constituencies, or used after it to contest the result.

Research has so far been focused on Sudan, where I worked with colleagues from the the University of Khartoum and the University of Reading to undertake an intensive study in advance of the 2010 election, which suggested that electoral practice there has been chronically deformed by the demands of authoritarian regimes and by the practical challenges of electoral organization. In this context, the secret ballot is not a lesson in citizenship, but a way for intermediaries – powerful local figures or organizations – to show their control over people. The 2010 election offered a depressing confirmation of this analysis. Future research is planned in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, working with colleagues from Oxford, Leeds and Kenyatta University. A number of publications have already arisen from this work:

“‘We changed the laws’”: electoral practice and malpractice in Sudan since 1953’, with Atta el-Battahani, *African Affairs*, 109 (2010), pp. 191-212.

Elections in Sudan: Learning from Experience, with Atta el Battahani and Peter Woodward (London, 2009). Available at: <http://www.riftvalley.net/resources/file/Elections%20in%20Sudan%20-%20Learning%20from%20Experience.pdf>.

Towards a Modern Consumer Society: The British Retailing Trade, 1850-1914



First-year undergraduate Sabine Schneider asked whether Britain experienced a ‘consumer revolution’ prior to the First World War as part of the module on ‘Britain as an Economic Superpower’ with Professor Ranald Michie.

Between 1850 and the First World War the British retailing sector and the nature of household consumption in Britain changed significantly towards a modern consumer society. By 1914, rapid population growth (from 20.879 million in 1851 to 40.918 million in 1911) accompanied by increasing real wages and a rise in living standards had triggered modernization in the distributive sector, which affected both the methods and space in which products were sold and the range of goods available to British consumers.¹ Additionally, the extension of transport and communication systems alongside the expansion of the British Empire and its integration into a globalizing world-market provided further incentive for structural change in distribution.² The changes taking place in the distributive sector between the mid-nineteenth century and the outbreak of the First World War can be divided into those raised by shifts in the demand and supply structure of consumer goods, and those emanating from an overall rise in purchasing power and its effect on consumer behavior and demand. In considering these aspects alongside the expansion of large-scale retailing and its impact on British household consumption, I will be able to draw a conclusion as to whether Britain, in the period 1850 to 1914, experienced a ‘consumer revolution’.

Small-scale, local retailing in various institutionalized forms with distinctive methods and customs was characteristic of the distributive framework around the middle of

¹ Phyllis Deane and W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959: Trends and Structure* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 8; James B. Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain, 1850-1950: A Study of Trends in Retailing with Special Reference to the Development of Co-operative, Multiple Shop and Department Store Methods of Trading* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 38 and R.C.O. Matthews, C.H. Feinstein and J. Odling-Smee, *British Economic Growth 1856-1973: The post-war period in historical perspective* (Oxford, 1982), p. 171.

² Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, pp. 6-7.

the century.³ Manufacturers, producers and wholesalers sold their goods in fixed shops to specialized retail units such as grocers, hosiers and drapers.⁴ Alongside the specialized retail units existed producer/retailers, such as boot and shoe makers, tailors and blacksmiths, who combined craftsman- and salesmanship. Markets were established institutions in rural areas for the sale of farm produce and a wide variety of household goods. Travelling tradesmen, also known as pedlars, bagmen and 'Scotch drapers', supplemented the range of goods available to rural customers.⁵ Wholesalers, as intermediaries, gained from the improvements in transport and communication systems while producer/retailers, markets and travelling tradesmen were faced with the spread of factory produced goods and the import of cheap foodstuffs from abroad.⁶ Moreover, the relocation of parts of the British population to bigger cities made the direct contact between producers and consumers increasingly difficult.⁷ The industrial centres were consequently the first to experience the growth of multi-branch retailers and the establishment of new forms of shop retailing such as the Co-operative Retail Societies.

Co-ops offered their members (mostly from the poorer sections of society) agricultural and dairy products as well as some household goods at current market prices.⁸ The first record of membership and retail sales of Co-operative Societies dates from 1863, when membership was c.100,000 and total retail sales numbered £2,500,000.⁹ By 1915, Co-ops in Britain counted 3,264,810 members and £102,557,779 in retail sales which corresponded to a share of 17-19 per cent in the market for groceries and provisions and 11-13 per cent in household stores.¹⁰

Multiple-shop retailers and department stores contributed to the trend towards large-scale retailing after 1870.¹¹ By 1914, several giant enterprises such as W.H. Smith and Liptons Ltd had successfully established their own national distribution networks and serviced many hundreds of branches.¹² In addition to branch-retailing, some department stores and multiples, notably the Home and Colonial Stores, operated popular mail order services.¹³ Multiple-store organizations were subject to consistent growth from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1875, twenty-nine multiple-

³ John Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain, 1880-1980* (London, 1994), p. 61; Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 38.

⁴ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, pp. 1-2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸ Roderick Floud, *The People and the British Economy, 1830-1914* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 154-5; Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 17.

⁹ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 18, 461.

¹¹ Larry O'Brien and Frank Harris, *Retailing: Shopping, society, space* (London, 1991), p. 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹³ Michael J. Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World, 1830-1914* (Manchester, 1983), p. 35; Floud, p. 157.

shops controlled 978 branches in the UK whereas by 1915 there were 22,755 multiple-store branches operated by 433 firms, mainly in the food and clothing trade.¹⁴ Department stores, catering exclusively for the affluent middle classes, operated on a business strategy of providing a large selection of manufactured goods in specialist sales units, but under one roof.¹⁵ In addition to the new diversity of merchandise and the methods of selling, Crossick and Jaumain attribute certain social functions to them. Department stores like Selfridge's and Harrods provided new spaces for sociability and redefined modes of consumption – shopping became a leisure activity in its own right.¹⁶ By 1915, the estimated share of department stores in the total retail sales was still only marginal, between 2.0 per cent and 3.0 per cent, compared to 7.5-8.5 per cent for multiples and 7.5-9.0 per cent for co-ops.¹⁷ Clapham and Benson, when arguing for a 'retail revolution', emphasize the development of large-scale retailing between 1850 and 1914, but overlook the fact that it accounted for only around one-fifth of total retail sales before World War I.¹⁸

From the early nineteenth century British consumers experienced the first wave of globalization through the expansion of British foreign trade with Europe, the Empire and after 1870 increasingly with the United States, Canada and Australasia.¹⁹ The cheap and continuous import of foreign goods, particularly staple imports such as tea, sugar and cheese changed British consumption behaviour and patterns of consumer demand. The import of meat per head, for example, exploded from 0.1lb in 1861 to 28.3lb in 1906, indicating a significant increase in consumer purchasing power.²⁰

Britain's rapid population growth and rise in living standards after 1850, a result of higher real wages and falling food prices, had driven the rise in demand and the expansion of the domestic market.²¹ Davis attributes the fundamental structural changes in the retail sector to a period of prolonged stagnation in the innovation of new methods of buying and selling from 1750 to 1850 and, in particular, to the complacency of British shopkeepers.²² Along the same lines, Jefferys argues that by 1850 the methods of the distributive trade had become wholly unsuited to the shifting patterns of consumer demand and the changes in supply structure of the British economy.²³ The opposing

¹⁴ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, pp. 22-3, 137.

¹⁵ Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World*, p. 34.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (eds), *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European department store, 1850-1939* (Aldershot, 1999), p. 9.

¹⁷ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 29.

¹⁸ Stephen Broadberry, *Market Services and the Productivity Race, 1850-2000: British performance in international perspective* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 175; Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain*, p. 61.

¹⁹ Peter Mathias, *Retailing Revolution: A history of multiple retailing in the food trades based upon the Allied Suppliers group of companies* (London, 1967), pp. 27-8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14, p. 30.

²¹ Matthews, Feinstein and Odling-Smee, *British Economic Growth 1856-1973*, p. 171.

²² Dorothy Davis, *A History of Shopping* (London, 1966), p. 252.

²³ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 38.

E.J. Reece of Cinderford, Gloucestershire
(I.A. Pope collection)



school of thought, led by Clapham and Alexander, suggests that ‘marked declines in the skilled nature of retailing, in the amount of capital required and in competition based on product differentiation [accounted for the] substantial increase in shop numbers’ by the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁴ From both perspectives, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the transformation of the British retailing sector occurred almost simultaneously with changes in the selling and marketing methods of foreign trading. British large-scale retailers like Thomas Lipton derived new ways to surpass intermediaries and undercut existing profit margins, with the knowledge that, by 1870, British capital investment abroad was gradually replacing the traditional merchant system with the more cost-efficient methods of branch selling and manufacturing.²⁵ In 1889 Lipton gained footholds in tea plantations in Ceylon and sold its produce in his shops for 1s 2d to 1s 9d per lb while tea prices at single retailers were at 3s to 4s.²⁶

The growing competition for market shares across all retail sectors motivated wide-ranging changes in business strategies and open price competition.²⁷ The slower increase in income per head after 1900 intensified the pressure on the retailing sector to adapt to and satisfy the new consumer demands.²⁸ Mathias suggests that the ‘keenness of price competition would not have been expressed so forcibly... had the gain in money wages been slow and steady’ over the period 1850-1914.²⁹ Small-scale enterprises responded

²⁴ Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World*, pp. 2-3.

²⁵ S.J. Nichols, ‘The Overseas Performance of British Industry, 1870-1914’, *The Economic History Review* 38 (1985), pp. 500-1; Mathias, *Retailing Revolution*, pp. 101-3.

²⁶ Mathias, *Retailing Revolution*, pp. 101-3.

²⁷ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 39; Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World*, p. 52.

²⁸ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 39.

²⁹ Mathias, *Retailing Revolution*, p. 13.

by adapting new sale methods – haggling over prices was replaced by clearly displayed price tickets in the shop windows.³⁰ Multiples pioneered brand-naming, uniform packaging, and modest forms of advertising, from window-dressing to promoting bargains in local newspapers. Department stores refined advertising through lavishly decorated window displays, and in doing so cultivated ‘window shopping’ as a new leisure activity for the urban middle classes.³¹ In contrast to the strict cash policy of the co-ops and multiples, small shopkeepers offered their customers credit and the luxury of orders delivered to their door step.³² *The Practical Grocer*, a manual for the grocery trade published in 1906, recommended the credit system as a competitive advantage: ‘A discreetly managed credit system, with its consideration for the customer’s convenience, is one of the weapons wherewith the retailer may best defend himself in competition with mammoth stores and more “company shops” which press him so closely in many towns.’³³ Higher up the social ladder, credit transactions or hire purchases became just as common, especially in the high-class clothing and furniture trade, as a means of strengthening customer loyalty and confirming social status.³⁴

The urban working class, benefiting from higher wages and more regular work after 1870, provided a growing market for mass retailing.³⁵ The fall in prices for staple imports after 1875 consolidated the success of multiple-shop organisations which, as a result of high turnover rates and low profit margins, were in a position to undercut the prices of single retailers in the industrial centres of Britain.³⁶ Jefferys estimates the increase in the number of fixed shops in the period 1850-1914 at a rate faster than the increase in population, which has frequently been used to argue that Britain experienced a ‘retailing revolution’.³⁷ Between 1869 and 1872, the number of residential shops in Great Britain totalled 177,000, corresponding to sixty-eight residential shops per 10,000 people, whereas between 1909 and 1911 the number of residential shops had risen to 310,000 or seventy-six per 10,000 people.³⁸ Although Jefferys’s estimates reinforce our impression of the reallocation of resources to the distributive sector and its rise in total output from 13.2 per cent in 1856 to 16.2 per cent in 1913, it does little to reveal the differences in consumer behaviour between urban and rural areas.³⁹ Markets, wholesalers and producer/retailers did not vanish from the British countryside, they continued to be of significant importance in the provision of foodstuffs and high-

³⁰ O’Brien and Harris, *Retailing: Shopping, society, space*, p. 47; Broadberry, *Market Services and the Productivity Race, 1850-2000*, p. 179.

³¹ Mathias, *Retailing Revolution*, p. 53; Crossick and Jaumain, *Cathedrals of Consumption*, p. 3.

³² Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper’s World*, pp. 53-5.

³³ W.H. Simmonds, *The Practical Grocer*, I, p. 102 (London, 1906) in Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper’s World*, p. 55.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-6.

³⁵ Mathias, *Retailing Revolution*, pp. 14-15; Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper’s World*, p. 5.

³⁶ Mathias, *Retailing Revolution*, pp. 13-15, 47, 51.

³⁷ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 15.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁹ N. Gemmill and P. Wardley, ‘The Contribution of Services to British Economic Growth, 1856-1913’, *Explorations in Economic History* 27 (1990), p. 306.

quality craftsmanship.⁴⁰ Itinerant traders, selling all sorts of commodities from crockery and hosiery to dry foodstuffs, became increasingly confined to marginal sectors in the industrial centres, but continued to fulfil a useful role in rural areas where demand was low and unstable.⁴¹ In the countryside, self-sufficiency certainly declined from the middle of the nineteenth century, but still constituted a fundamental element of daily life.⁴²

It is clear that there were considerable changes in this period in the patterns of consumer supply and demand, due to rising real wages and standards of living, falling food prices and the emergence of mass demand for consumer goods by the growing working class in Britain's industrial centres. The consumer behaviour of the population in the bigger cities was transformed by the spread of large-scale retailing, the use of marketing and advertising and the growing price competition in the retailing sector. The changes to British household consumption were reflected in a more varied diet and the rise of per capita consumption of tea, sugar, meat and cheese. By 1914, consumer behaviour and patterns of consumer demand had undergone drastic changes. Although Britain on the eve of the First World War was not yet a fully-developed 'consumer society', it clearly displayed some of its features. Above all, the choice in consumer goods had expanded through the growth and establishment of new retail shops and the access to new distributive channels. Credit had become more widely available through the adaptation of credit systems by many small scale-retailers as well as by department stores. At the same time, the striking differences in consumer demand between the rural and urban areas had become even more pronounced. In the industrial centres new forms of large-scale retailing developed and successfully catered for the growing working class population, but in the British countryside the production, processing and retailing of most consumer goods saw only minor changes. The heterogeneous nature of development in the retailing sector therefore, as well as the fact that small-scale retailing still comprised around 80 per cent of total retail sales in 1914,⁴³ undermines any claims of a 'retailing revolution'. Yet in the decades following World War I, the movement towards large-scale retailing, which had its foundations in this period, turned into the driving force for Britain's transformation into a modern consumer society.

⁴⁰ Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World*, pp. 4-6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴³ Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain*, p. 29.

Unsavoury Receptacles in Early Modern Urban Britain



Leona Skelton's doctoral research compares attitudes towards environmental regulation in Edinburgh and York, refuting stereotypes about early modern hygiene and revealing the interaction between top-down regulation of cleanliness and the self-regulation by townspeople of their own neighbourhoods.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century urban dwellers are certainly not renowned for their contribution to waste-disposal technology. Today, this period in particular conjures up a notion of mass indifference to the outdoor environment's hygienic condition, and consequently filthy and malodorous streets and open spaces, typified by the 'chamber pot out of the window' stereotype. Admittedly, the seventeenth century did not come to a close with a water closet installed in every home, with a comprehensive, underground sewerage system in every urban centre, nor with regular, centralized waste collections taken for granted in every community. But the years between 1500 and 1700 were not completely devoid of technological advances in hygiene. It is significant, for example, that the water closet was in essence first invented in 1596, by Queen Elizabeth's godson, Sir John Harrington. From grand and elaborate contraptions such as his, to dry privy pits, close stools, plate jakes and chamber pots, to the pails, barrels and buckets used by the poor, contemporaries designed, built and maintained an impressive array of receptacles to facilitate the act of nature which they called 'taking their ease' or 'easie' – an important aspect of their daily lives which has at best been marginalized and has at worst been completely ignored by most early modern historians.

Stationary toilets were called privies. These were usually found in separate outbuildings, but not all of early modern Britain's urban dwellers enjoyed access to one. Most were dry privies, which were deep pits below simple wooden seats with holes cut out of them, but some were wet privies which drained directly into sewers and rivers.¹ Dry privies were dug out quite regularly, but householders also used lime and sand to cover the waste and thereby suppress the privy's malodour. Some urban dwellers had access

¹ See M. Adams, 'Darlington Market Place: Archaeological Excavations', unpubl. archaeological report, Durham SMR, 4000, 4812, 1994, p. 24.

to publicly funded communal toilets, known as common houses of office or easement. Edinburgh Council built two privies in August 1684:

*the Counsell appoints two Jaques to be made ... and that a board be put up at the ... closs heads for directing them that are to ease themselves to find the ... Jaques. And that the same be convoyed by a syre to the northe Loch.*²

Town councils and corporations were not responsible for emptying householders' privies, but they did force individuals to dig them out if they leaked into the streets or became offensively malodorous. Nuisance courts, such as The City of London's Assize of Nuisance and Edinburgh's Dean of Guild Court, sent sworn viewers to assess such nuisances. In April 1585, presumably in preparation for the coming summer heat, Edinburgh Council ordered that 'none suffer their privies to gorge, break, and run out in the streets in due times'.³ This nuisance seems to have been relatively rare, however, only accounting for 1% of extant insanitary nuisance cases presented in seventeenth-century Carlisle,⁴ which suggests that the majority of people who had dry privies dug them out and cleaned them sufficiently frequently.

Those who lacked access to a stationary privy could use chamber pots, made from pewter, wood, brass, earthenware or glass, which those who had stationary privies also used at night for convenience.⁵ More elaborate cushioned chamber pots known as plate jakes and mobile close stools, complete with a storage compartment underneath the seat for removable pans, were also available.⁶ In 1605, for example, George Denton, gent., of Carlisle, died leaving two pewter chamber pots and 'ij plate jakes couered w[i]th cloth', worth 2s 6d.⁷ For those of less prosperous social strata, however, buckets, pails, simple chamber pots and outdoor privies were the norm; close stools were prohibitively expensive luxuries for most. The 1634-35 Carlisle City Chamberlains' accounts note that 1s was paid 'for a herring barrel and making it new for a close stool'.⁸ Inhabitants, too, might have created their own facilities using inexpensive receptacles such as barrels.

In 1596, Sir John Harrington, a courtier, writer and Queen Elizabeth's godson, published the pamphlet, *A New Discourse of a Stale Subject called the Metamorphosis of Ajax*, in which he proposed a solution to the domestic waste-disposal problems of the

² Edinburgh City Archives, Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 1684-1686: SL1/1/31.

³ Edinburgh City Archives: Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 1583-1585: SL1/1/7.

⁴ L. Skelton, 'Beadles, Dunghills and Noisome Excrements: Regulating the environment in seventeenth-century Carlisle', unpubl. MA dissertation, Durham University, 2008, p. 50.

⁵ M.H.B. Sanderson, *A Kindly Place? Living in Sixteenth-century Scotland* (East Linton, 2002), p. 97.

⁶ L. Wright, *Clean and Decent: The fascinating history of the bathroom and the water closet* (London, 1960), pp. 65-79.

⁷ Carlisle Record Office, Carlisle Probate, Wills and Inventories, 1605.

⁸ Carlisle Record Office, Chamberlains' Accounts: Ca4/2.

day.⁹ Basically, it was a flushing mechanism with a cistern, which stopped the running water after the waste had exited the bowl down into a river, sewer or airtight storage vat below. The word ‘Ajax’ refers to a common contemporary word for a toilet or chamber pot, jaques or jakes, and the title was designed to depict a metamorphosis, i.e. the purifying of privies themselves. Admittedly, Harrington’s invention was effectively a court joke, a shocking and indeed base subject for someone of his social standing to have published on at the time.¹⁰ Moreover, the pamphlet was not disseminated widely, only among social elites. While Queen Elizabeth had one of Harrington’s water closets installed at Richmond, those at court and wider society were largely disgusted by the invention, which was generally ignored. Nevertheless, this invention was hugely sophisticated for its time and while sadly it failed to solve the problem, this ‘unsavory discourse’ is a significant insight into one man’s proposed solution.

It is important to appreciate that householders used their own initiative to facilitate this important element of their daily routines. Contemporaries surely made many more ingenious and imaginative contraptions than those which were recorded in the documentary records. One can only learn about the converted herring barrel at Carlisle because the Chamberlain kept detailed accounts, whereas the majority of householders did not. While much of the history of this aspect of everyday life has unfortunately been lost, there are elucidatory clues in many documents, especially nuisance court cases.



Sir John Harrington, by Hieronimo Custodis © National Portrait Gallery, London.

⁹ J. Scott-Warren, ‘The Privy Politics of Sir John Harrington’s *New Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax*’, *Studies in Philology*, vol. 93.4 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 412-415.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

Tipping Points and History



Professor Randal Michie is a leading expert on the British financial system understood both in its global context and through the interaction and external connections of financial institutions. He is now part of a major new project at Durham examining the very pressing issue of instability in British banking.

Tipping Points is a five year interdisciplinary project directed by Durham University's Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience and funded by a grant of £1.2 million from the Leverhulme Trust. The Trust invited bids from all universities to devise a project on the theme of the Tipping Point: 'The name given to that one dramatic moment in an epidemic when everything can change all at once'.¹

Over fifty universities responded to that initiative, and they were reduced to a shortlist of five, who were then interviewed in London. There was only one winner: Durham University. The Department of History was closely involved in the bid, along with the departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences, English, Geography, Law, Mathematics and the Business School. This is a truly interdisciplinary project, and one that is made possible by the size and intimacy of Durham University's academic community. It was this interdisciplinary element that so impressed the Leverhulme Trust and it remains a core feature of the project since it began in 2010. The Tipping Points project represents a move by established academics to think about their own subject in terms of how it relates to other disciplines and the broader questions that can be answered as a result.

The inspiration behind the historical dimension of the project was the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/8. In Britain this crisis involved the failure and nationalization of one minor bank, Northern Rock; the rescue of two major banks – RBS (owner of NatWest) and Lloyds/HBOS – by the government; and the acquisition by the Spanish Banco Santander of three other banks: Abbey National, Alliance and Leicester, and the branches of Bradford and Bingley. Of Britain's leading banks only three, Barclays, HSBC and Standard Chartered, were able to continue without government support or takeover and, of these, the latter two had most of their operations located outside Britain. Not since the Overend Gurney crisis of 1866 had British banking experienced a crisis of this dimension. Why had this come about? What had changed?

¹ Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How little things can make a big difference* (London, 2000), p. 9.

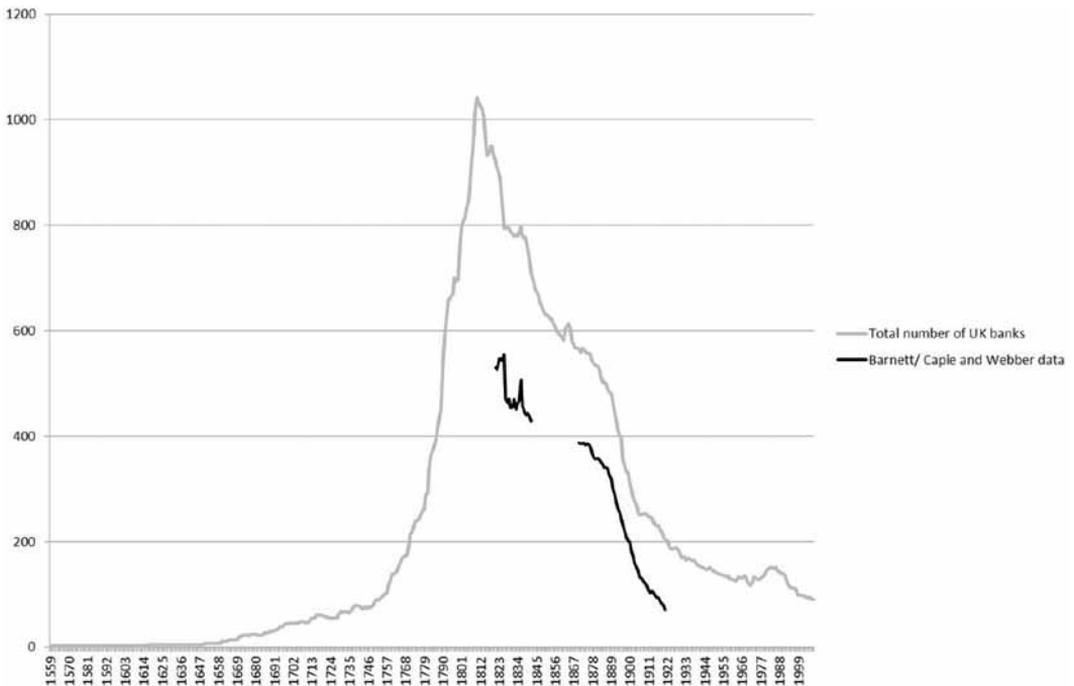
Certain features of the British banking system are well known. Sometime in the nineteenth century it moved from a position of instability to stability but the precise moment is unknown and there is much debate over the reasons. Related to this transition was the transformation of the British banking system from one of numerous banks that were – apart from the Bank of England – too numerous to survive, to one containing a small number of banks that were deemed too big to fail. All this was achieved without any active involvement of the UK government, apart from permissive legislation that removed the monopoly of the Bank of England over joint-stock banking in England and extended Limited Liability to banking companies. Various theories have been provided to explain this stability, ranging from the role played by the Bank of England as lender of last resort, through the structure of banking itself with its ability to spread risk through an extensive branch network, to the professionalism of staff trained to assess risk.

The current research uses the idea of Tipping Points to identify the moment or series of moments when British banking made the transition from stability to instability in the nineteenth century, and then from stability to instability in more recent times. It also tries to identify the causes and consequences of such moments.

As a control device it was also important to study non-Tipping Points in British banking history. Over the span of almost 150 years there were a number of occasions when a Tipping Point could have occurred. Individual bank failures continued to take place in the twentieth century, and a number of these involved bank runs, as with Farrow's Bank in 1920. However, the failure of a single bank, even in the glare of publicity, was no longer contagious and so no Tipping Point occurred. This raises the question of what was different between these examples of bank failure and Northern Rock in 2007. Another potential Tipping Point was during the global economic crisis of 1929 to 1932, which included the Wall Street Crash and Britain's abandonment of the Gold Standard. Though numerous banks around the world failed and governments were forced to intervene this was not the case in Britain, helping to enhance its reputation for stability. There was also the secondary banking crisis in Britain in 1974 but, again, that event failed to destabilise the entire banking system as in 2007/8. So what had changed by 2007/8? Did the attitude and actions of the media in reporting financial crises play a role in the change?

The project also uses the experience of US banking for comparison. For many, the behaviour and performance of US banks have been used as a proxy for banking systems as a whole. In turn, this had led to policy recommendations designed to meet US conditions being seen as universally applicable. The Glass Steagall Act, for example, which separated retail from investment banking, was passed in the USA in the 1930s and repealed in the 1990s. Many have suggested its re-introduction as a solution to bank instability, but it never applied to Britain. As a result it cannot be used to explain the switch from instability to stability and back in the British banking system.

Helping to direct research towards the US banking experience, in contrast to all others, is the availability of long run data on that country's banks. For the USA the number of banks is known for every year from 1834 to the present. In contrast, such data is only available for much shorter period for most other countries, including the UK. As a result, an initial priority for the project has been the collection of annual data on the number of British banks, including creations and extinctions. With that data in place – preliminary results are now available for the last 250 years – it becomes possible to identify noticeable Tipping Points in British banking. It also becomes possible to compare the UK and the USA and so establish whether the experience of US banking does have universal applicability. Once that is done the project can then move on to its second phase of researching key Tipping Points/non-Tipping Points and so explain the move from instability to stability and back again in UK banking. This will require further refinement of the UK data to differentiate between private and joint stock banks, domestic and overseas banks, and deposit and investment banks. It will also require detailed archival research into such episodes. Completion is expected in 2014/5.



Total number of UK banks, comparing new data from the Tipping Points Project with that previously available. Sources, new data: The Bankers' Almanac Register of Bank Name Changes and Liquidations: Amalgamations, Absorptions, and Liquidations of International Banks since 1750 (Bankers' Almanac, London, 1992); The Bankers' Almanac 2009 (Reed Business Information, London, 2009). Old data: R. W. Barnett, 'The History of the Progress and Development of Banking in the United Kingdom from the Year 1800 to the Present Time', Journal of the Institute of Bankers 1 (1880); F. Caple and A. Webber, A Monetary History of the United Kingdom, 1870 – 1982 (London, 1985).

Who was this for? A Sudanese Puzzle



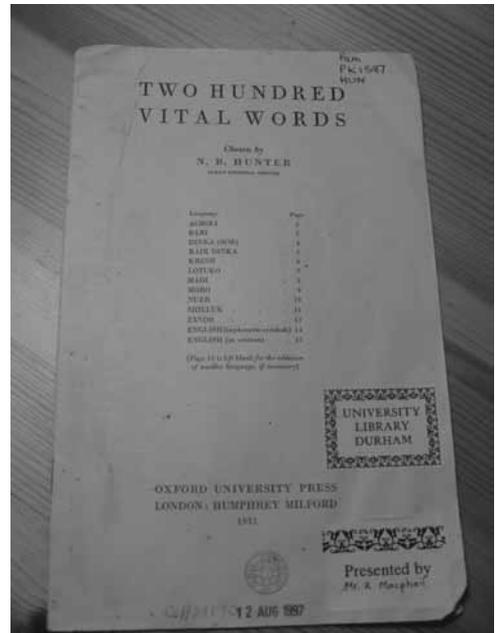
Zoe Cormack is currently spending the second year of her PhD in newly-independent South Sudan studying the influence of the state on marriage. Below is an extract from her blog, 'Researching Southern Sudan' (<http://zoecormack.blogspot.com>).

Durham University has an amazing collection of resources on Sudan, probably the best in the world. The library has virtually every book published, there is the Sudan Archive and the Middle East Documentation Centre has a huge quantity of recent grey literature and government documents. On a search for Dinka language material in the catalogue (of which there is quite a lot) I discovered a curious pamphlet from the Sudan Political Service.

It is called *Two Hundred Vital Words* and it is crib of basic vocab in eleven Southern Sudanese languages; Acholi, Bari, Dinka (Bor and Rek), Kresh, Lotuko, Madi, Moro, Nuer, Shilluk and Zande. It also has a key of the English words and a curious list of English words in phonetics. At first I presumed it was issued to Sudan Political Service (SPS) officers and administrators to help them with the local languages. But, after a bit more inspection, I was not so sure.

Some basic facts first: these words were selected by N.B. Hunter. He was in the education department of the SPS, serving in El Fasher (Darfur) and the Nuba Mountains before he took up his last position as Resident Inspector of Southern Education in Wau and Lalyo. His wife, Ysabel's diaries and photos from their time in Sudan are in the Durham Archive. The pamphlet was presented by a relative of J.G.S. Macphail, who had a long career in the SPS, including serving as the District Commissioner of Upper Nile between 1933 and 1939. (He has also left his papers to the Sudan Archive in Durham.)

The pamphlet itself was published in 1931. This struck me as being rather early, only



two years after the last patrol against Dinka resistance leader Ariandit, the time when ‘pacification’ in Dinka areas is nominally counted as having given way to regular civil administration. The pamphlet is fun and quite useful if you are interested in languages in Southern Sudan. Hunter has attempted to give the same 200 words in each language. Here is a snippet of the Nuer page:

NUER			
NOUNS	56. yaŋ me ŋuood	110. jen	154. keel
1. wuŋ	57. thook	111. jen	155. reu
2. dhool	58. manpaleay	112. kə(ə)n	156. dyok
3. cieek	59. tuoŋ manpaleay	you yen	157. ŋuaan
4. nyaal	60. jook	113. ken	158. dhyeec
5. teet	61. nyaau, bura	114. mōmō	159. bakel
6. pat teetä	62. riinj	115. mimi	160. barəo
7. yad	63. guoor	116. e ŋa ?	161. badak
8. cooy	64. lony	117. e ŋu ?	162. banwan
9. pat coh	65. kwac		163. wääl=jyath
10. yad coh	66. yah	PREPOSITIONS	kel
11. thok	67. mwom (?)	118. (ke)	164. je-reu
	68. f... ..		165. kwoor keel

It is very interesting to note which words he was or was not able to find in the eleven languages. For example, word number thirty was ‘rainmaker’: in Kresh and Shilluk, he found no word for rainmaker. In Dinka Bor he listed the word for rainmaker as “Tiet” but in Dinka Rek it is listed as “Beny Bith” (with a question mark). My understanding is the “Tiet” in Dinka Rek and Agar means a kind of technical specialist, quite different from Beny Bith, and I am not sure what the meaning is in Dinka Bor. In any case, a better translation of Beny Bith is ‘master/chief of the fishing spear’ (Beny = master/ chief, Bith = fishing spear). In Nuer, Hunter was also uncertain of the word and offered a tentative ‘Kwäär’ for rainmaker. There appears to have been no word for ‘banana’ in Dinka Rek, Madi, Moro, Nuer, Lotuko or Acholi (although this could have been due to a disinterest in bananas on Mr Hunter’s part).

The really curious thing about the pamphlet is a list of English words at the back which are spelt out phonetically. To me, this implies that the pamphlet could have been intended for someone who did not speak English, because why else would you need to be told how to pronounce English words? However, whoever this was intended for would need to be literate in order to read the words and understand their meaning. You would think that someone in Southern Sudan at this time (1931) who could *read* English, would also be able to *speak* English... It is a bit of a mystery. Was it meant for a clerk? An administrative assistant? A Northerner or a Southerner?

It came to Durham via a District Commissioner, but we can’t know why he had it or if he ever used it. Perhaps this was just the education department having a bit of fun, but I’d like to know more, if anyone has ever come across anything like this, I’d love to know about it!

Please get in touch!

We hope you have enjoyed the first issue of *Symeon*. We would like to include more about you, as alumni, in subsequent issues, so please do get in touch and let us know what you are doing now. Perhaps you are in a job in which you use on a daily basis the skills you learned studying history? Perhaps you are doing something entirely different? Either way, we'd love to hear from you.

Please write to:
43 North Bailey
Durham
DH1 3EX

or email:
history.alumni@durham.ac.uk

or join our Facebook group: 'Durham University History Alumni'.



Learning to vote: practice ballot in Omdurman, Sudan, 1953 (see Justin Willis' article, page 32. Durham University, Sudan Archive.