

Symeon

Issue Three, 2013

With this third issue of *Symeon* we are entering a new era for the magazine, as the 'old guard' of editors who produced the first issue begin to hand over to the first new watch in what will hopefully be a longer line of succession. In this capacity, we would like to welcome George Stevenson to the editorial team. We have greatly enjoyed working with a range of highly enjoyable and stimulating articles in the three issues so far, a range which has magnificently underlined the breadth and depth of historical research which goes on in a department such as Durham's.

As the much-anticipated Research Excellence Framework (REF) review of research in UK higher education draws nearer, the focus on the public value which universities can and do generate from this research capital is only intensifying. In this field, there are many innovative schemes and new ideas for translating specialist intellectual endeavour into more practical benefits. But amongst all of this innovation it is sometimes forgotten that this transfer and translation of ideas ultimately begins and ends with the university's original teaching mission, and with its bachelor's and master's students past and present. But the venerability of this tradition may also be its achilles heel, or at least a restriction on its growth and development. Perhaps it is partly custom which makes it seem so natural to us that 'teaching' should be contained within the timeframe of a degree; but when we view this process from the other direction, and call it 'learning', it seems preposterous that it should be bounded by matriculation and graduation. Yet all too often, access to higher education of the quality which graduates will remember from their student days is hard to come by outside of the university. Clearly there has never yet been a consistent and concerted political will (accompanied by sufficient resources) to fully open up higher education beyond the limited, and increasingly costly, window of opportunity provided by degree programmes.

If *Symeon* can offer a small redress to this balance, we hope that it is a welcome one. But we would also like this process to be a two-way exchange. However many issues of this magazine you have already received, we warmly invite you to get in touch with your thoughts, news and comments on history, higher education, and your own experiences from your time at Durham and subsequently. We would love to be able to feature more of your contributions in future issues – contact details can be found on the final page.

Philippa Haughton, Ben Pope, George Stevenson and Lindsay Varner

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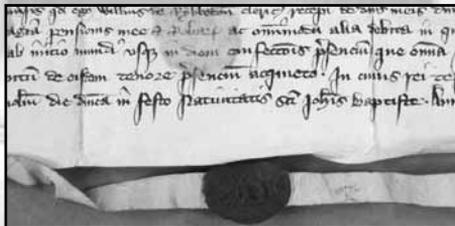


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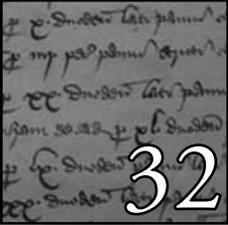
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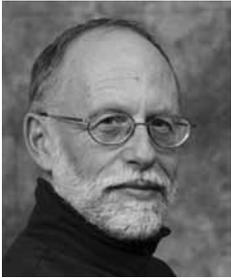
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Front: Justin Willis' office (design: Philippa Haughton); inside front: TBC (TBC); inside rear: the Hall of the Ambassadors in the Palace of King Pedro the Cruel, Seville (Spain) (David Rollason); rear: TBC (TBC)

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The Power of Place: Rulers and their palaces, cities and holy places from the Roman Empire to the end of the middle ages



Following his recent research on the history of early medieval Northumbria and Durham, including the works of Symeon, Professor David Rollason is currently engaged on a three-year Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship to research and write *The Power of Place in Medieval Kingship 500-1500*.

Thanks to the financial support of the Leverhulme Trust, my last three years at Durham (I retire at the end of September 2013) are being devoted to researching and writing a book, 'The Power of Place: Rulers and their Palaces, Cities, and Holy Places from the Roman Empire to the End of the Middle Ages'. The aim is nothing less than to cast light on the nature of political power, and on why people accept the exercise of it. The method is to focus on the ways in which rulers, across Europe and across many centuries, shaped not only the built environment of their palaces, cities, churches, burial-places, coronation-places, and the landscape itself, to reflect their power, and also to enhance it.

It is a project so wide-ranging and risky that I should never have dared to undertake it when I was younger, and I should certainly never have suggested it to a student. No one has ever tried to write a book like this before and perhaps no one should. But, with retirement in front of me, I can take risks – it is one of the consolations of age – and the Leverhulme Trust has proved equally a risk-taker. The rewards are potentially great, for I have become increasingly irritated as the years have gone on with period and national boundaries in historical work. Of course, it is convenient – and in many ways necessary – to specialise as a 'late medievalist' or an 'early modernist' or as an 'ancient historian'; but that often blinds us to the fact that fundamental processes – such as the creation of power-structures – run right across human history, and we need to think about them on as broad a canvas as we can manage. Has the power of rulers been the same – and have people accepted that power for the same reasons – at all periods and throughout Europe? It strikes me as pretty crucial to understanding human society.

So these three years have seen me labouring at my desk to try to grasp, pretty well week by week, periods and areas of Europe which I have never seriously thought about

before, and they have equally seen me – always in company with my wife and partner Lynda – ranging across Europe to gain first-hand experience of places of power, from the Moslem palaces of southern Spain to the royal and imperial city of Prague as it was in the fourteenth century, from the massive mausoleum of the Emperor Augustus in Rome to the mysterious royal burial-mounds along the coast of the Oslo Fjord, from the palace of the retired Roman emperor Diocletian at Split in modern Croatia to the towering Palace of the Popes in Avignon, and from the earthworks of Tara in the Irish midlands, to the royal palace of Clarendon, nestling against the great hunting park of that name as it still survives, looking down on Salisbury Cathedral.



Figure 1: The courtyard of the Emperor Diocletian's palace at Split (Croatia). The façade at the far end, with its great arch and balcony, may have been for the emperor's ceremonial appearances.

Why did rulers invest so much effort and wealth in creating such power-centres? How did the power-centres work and how – if at all – did they increase the rulers' power and influence, during their lifetimes and after their deaths, when what they had built or created often stood as monuments to them? The book addresses three questions about the nature of power, which anyone who has sat through my lectures of recent years will recognise.

First, did power derive from the personal relationships which rulers developed with their subjects, with their war-bands, with their armies, with their extended families, or with their courtiers? The book examines the great halls of the early middle ages at Yeavering in Northumbria or Lejre in Denmark, where war-bands drank and feasted with their rulers, and the tradition of building such halls, from the stupendously large

late eleventh-century hall which the second Norman king, William Rufus, built at Westminster, to the imitation medieval hall, complete with fourteenth-century-style roof and fireplace in the centre with no chimney, which Henry VIII built at his palace at Hampton Court. The book looks also at other ways in which rulers may have developed some level of personal relationship with their subjects – in the great public processions, meetings and public addresses which marked a ruler's entry into a city, or the rituals which accompanied the Roman and Byzantine emperors' attendance at the chariot-races in the hippodrome which was usually directly connected to their palace.



Figure 2: The entry into Naples of King Alfonso the Magnanimous in 1443 after his capture of the city, as carved on the entrance to the Castel Nuovo in that city. The king sits on a chariot drawn by four horses, in the manner of the ancient Roman emperors.

Secondly, did the power of rulers derive in a much more mundane way from the exercise of law and the creation of bureaucratic and fiscal machinery to enable the ruler to impose his will on his subjects? The book tackles this question through a study of power-centres such as the medieval Palace of Westminster, in which the great hall was used for a series of law-courts when it was not needed for feasts or assemblies, and adjacent to it from as early as the twelfth century were constructed the various rooms of the exchequer, that is royal financial office; or the Palace of the Popes at Avignon where the private chambers of the pope were immediately adjacent to his treasury offices, and where his treasure itself was kept directly under his bed-chamber; or the palace of the Kings of Bohemia at Kutna Hora near Prague, where the royal palace looked out over a square lined with the high-security workshops of the specialist metal-workers processing the silver from the nearby mines to create the king's coins.



Figure 3: The Palace of the Popes, Avignon (France). Behind the grandeur of its facade lay a series of great halls, state-of-the-art residential chambers for the pope's court and guests, administrative offices, and a treasury which lay directly below the pope's own bedchamber.



Figure 4: The palace of Kutna Hora (Czech Republic), showing the view from the king's chamber over the courtyard where silver from the nearby mines was processed to produce royal coins. The doors and windows of the high-security silver workshops appear as now blocked up openings in the walls of the courtyard.

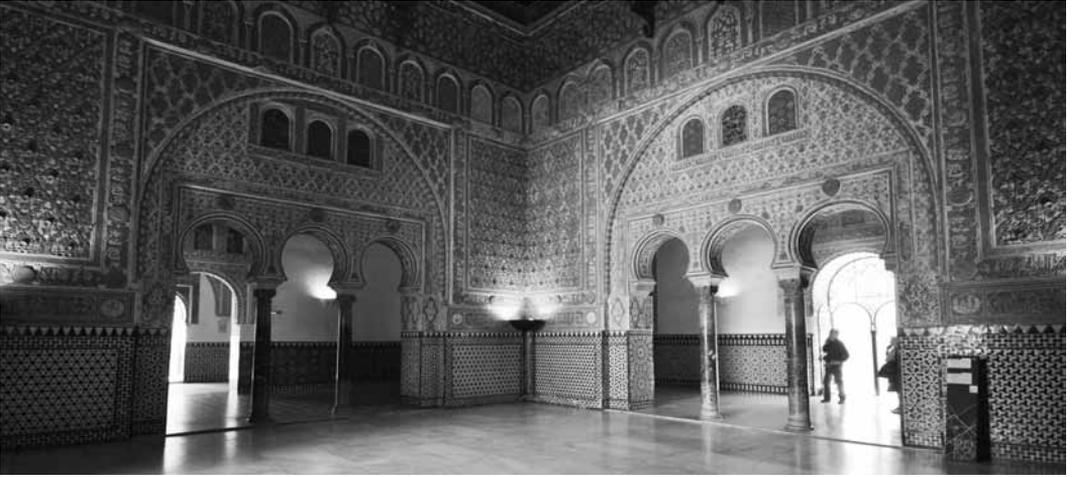


Figure 5: The Hall of the Ambassadors in the Palace of King Pedro the Cruel, Seville (Spain). The golden dome above, with its pattern of stars, hints at the cosmic power of kingship. See also colour version, inside back cover.

Thirdly, did power derive from the belief that the ruler held his office from God or the gods, and that he was a priestly, or divine, figure in his own right? This question is addressed through an exploration of power-centres such as the magnificent hall called the Hall of the Ambassadors built by King Pedro the Cruel at his new palace in Seville, with dome representing the heavens and hinting at the cosmic power of kingship, or the chapel-cum-great hall in the royal palace of Palermo in the Norman kingdom of Sicily, the Cappella Palatina, glowing with golden mosaics of Christ, or the now lost Painted Chamber in the Palace of Westminster as it was decorated by the thirteenth-century king of England, Henry III, to resemble the palace of the biblical King Solomon. The book also examines the possibility that such power derived from associating rulers closely with the divine could be strengthened by their connections, real or imaginary, with saintly rulers of the past. It explores the power of history or pseudo-history in the portraits of emperors decorating the royal hall of Karlstejn Castle near Prague, and in the veneration of the emperor Charlemagne as a saint in his own palace-church at Aachen – his throne as it still stands in the western gallery there being the throne on which all German kings had to be crowned. But it examines also the way in which power-centres from earlier periods were often located close to prehistoric monuments, such as the great tomb of New Grange in Ireland near to the royal centre of Tara, presumably to associate the rulers who created the power-centres with the religious power of past rulers.

Writing a book strikes me as rather like how I imagine flying an airliner. I have fuelled the tanks with my reading and exploration; I have entered the proposed flight-path into the guidance system; and now I am on the runway powering up the engines for take-off. Will the next few months see my book rise into the sky as the culmination of my career, or plunge into the surrounding fields as a risk that should not have been taken?

Industry in England's Indies: Work in seventeenth-century Newcastle



Andy Burn is a fourth year PhD student researching the economic and social history of the North East in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His thesis utilises parish, probate and tax material to examine occupational change in the urbanizing and industrializing areas of the region.

In 1651 a popular poet drew what might seem a surprising parallel between north-east England and the Spanish colonies of South America:

*England's a perfect World! Has Indies too!
Correct your maps: Newcastle is Peru!
Let th'haughty Spanyard triumph, till 'tis told,
Our Sootie Min'rals purifye his gold!¹*

The 'sooty mineral', of course, was coal, and Cleveland was not the first to comment on its almost alchemical properties - that 'it doth dull metals change to gold'.² But his hyperbole reflected a growing awareness of the national importance of north-east coal as the chief energy supplier to a prosperous London. Coal was shallow and accessible near the Tyne and mining had a long pedigree, but exports grew considerably from the 1570s, at least doubling by 1600 and again by the 1630s, and the population probably kept pace.³ Newcastle bucked the trend of urban stagnation that beset other towns in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and by 1700 it was the fourth biggest town in England, after London, Norwich and Bristol.

The impact of the coal boom on Tyneside was profound. William Gray, a royalist historian writing in 1649, described how 'Many thousand people are employed in this trade of coals; many live by working of them in the pits; many live by conveying them in waggons and waines to the river Tine; many men are employed in the conveying of coals in keels from the stathes aboard the ships'.⁴ Beyond Gray's vast abstractions,

¹ John Cleveland [?], *News from Newcastle*, publ. William Ellis (Newcastle, 1651), p. 1.

² Poet John Johnston quoted in William Gray, *Chorographia, or a Survey of Newcastle upon Tyne* (Newcastle, 1649), p. 83.

³ John Hatcher, *History of the British Coal Industry* (Oxford, 1993), I, pp. 487-9.

⁴ Gray, *Chorographia*, p. 84.

historians still have little idea how many people worked in Newcastle during this early industrial boom. Before the first census in 1801 there are no full lists of people that include their occupations as it was usually unnecessary information in a time when paper was expensive. But the sheer population of Newcastle's parishes (All Saints', which included the Quayside, had roughly 9,000 people by 1660) meant that the parish clerk had to use additional distinguishing information to tell fathers apart. Just as it would be today, this was most often their job. We can use these occupational descriptions of fathers to construct a rough outline of changes in the economic structure of the town as it grew (Table 1), although unfortunately they omit almost all women as well as unmarried men.

Table 1:- The transformation of the Newcastle economy, 1601-1705. Occupations from baptisms in all four Newcastle parishes.

		1601-5		1661-5		1701-5	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
	mining	6	1	1	0	108	3
manufacturing	carpentry	39	3	92	3	83	3
	building	39	3	137	5	156	5
	glassmaking	-	-	40	2	38	1
	metalwork	70	6	82	3	115	4
	food & drink	65	6	211	8	247	8
	textiles	108	9	248	9	243	8
	leatherwork	107	9	130	5	171	6
	shipbuilding	14	1	146	6	131	4
	surgeons	22	2	57	2	72	2
	househ. goods	10	1	16	1	20	1
transport and labour	coal transport	107	9	621	24	891	29
	other transport	119	10	210	8	243	8
	manual labour	115	10	101	4	193	6
tertiary	merchant	111	10	201	8	120	4
	profess./service	66	6	130	5	159	5

Source: Tyne & Wear Archives MF 249/250, 263, 279, 528.

The transformation of the Newcastle economy, 1601-1705. Occupations from baptisms in all four Newcastle parishes. Tyne & Wear Archives MF 249/250, 263, 279, 528.

It was the keelmen, 'employed in the conveying of coals', who saw the largest growth in numbers; or, to be precise, it was the work that pulled so many people into the city. Three men and a boy would shift as much as 21 tons of coal from a riverside staith onto a keel and sail or row it out to the waiting ships, which were frequently eight miles away at Shields. They then lifted the coal onto the ships through portholes, before returning to Newcastle, a round trip that could be twelve hours or more in an unfavourable

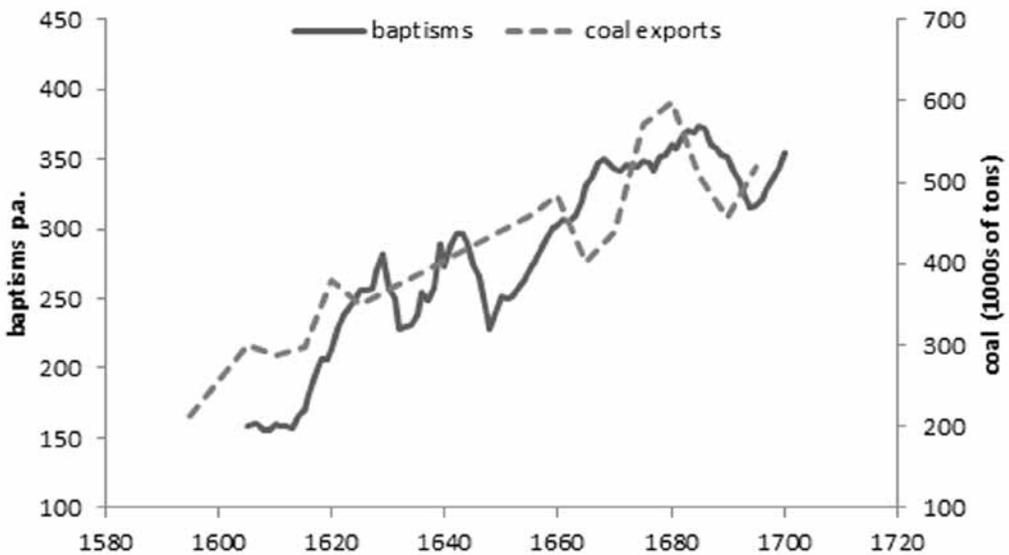


An 1823 engraving of Newcastle upon Tyne by F. Lupton after a painting by J.M.W. Turner. The town is viewed from the ballast hills above the north shore of the River Tyne. All Souls Church Gateshead can be seen to the left of centre, with the tall narrow shot tower of Elswick Lead Works in the distance. Newcastle City Libraries.

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wind.⁵ The job was heavily manual, and there were few gains in productivity before the late eighteenth century, so the population involved in moving coal rose in line with the growth of coal exports – a close correlation demonstrated in the graph below.

The extent to which the coal trade supported a number of other sectors in Newcastle's economy is also clear. The town's shipbuilders expanded in numbers across the century as they were flooded with orders for keel boats and coal ships and for the Royal Navy as war with the Netherlands dragged on through the 1650s, 60s and 70s. Joining the shipbuilders in the eastern suburbs of Newcastle was a brand new glassworks run by Huguenot immigrants. It made the most of cheap coal from local mines, ballast sand and broken glass that had arrived in half-empty ships, as well as a growing local market, to expand considerably from nothing up to nearly 2 per cent of fathers by 1660.



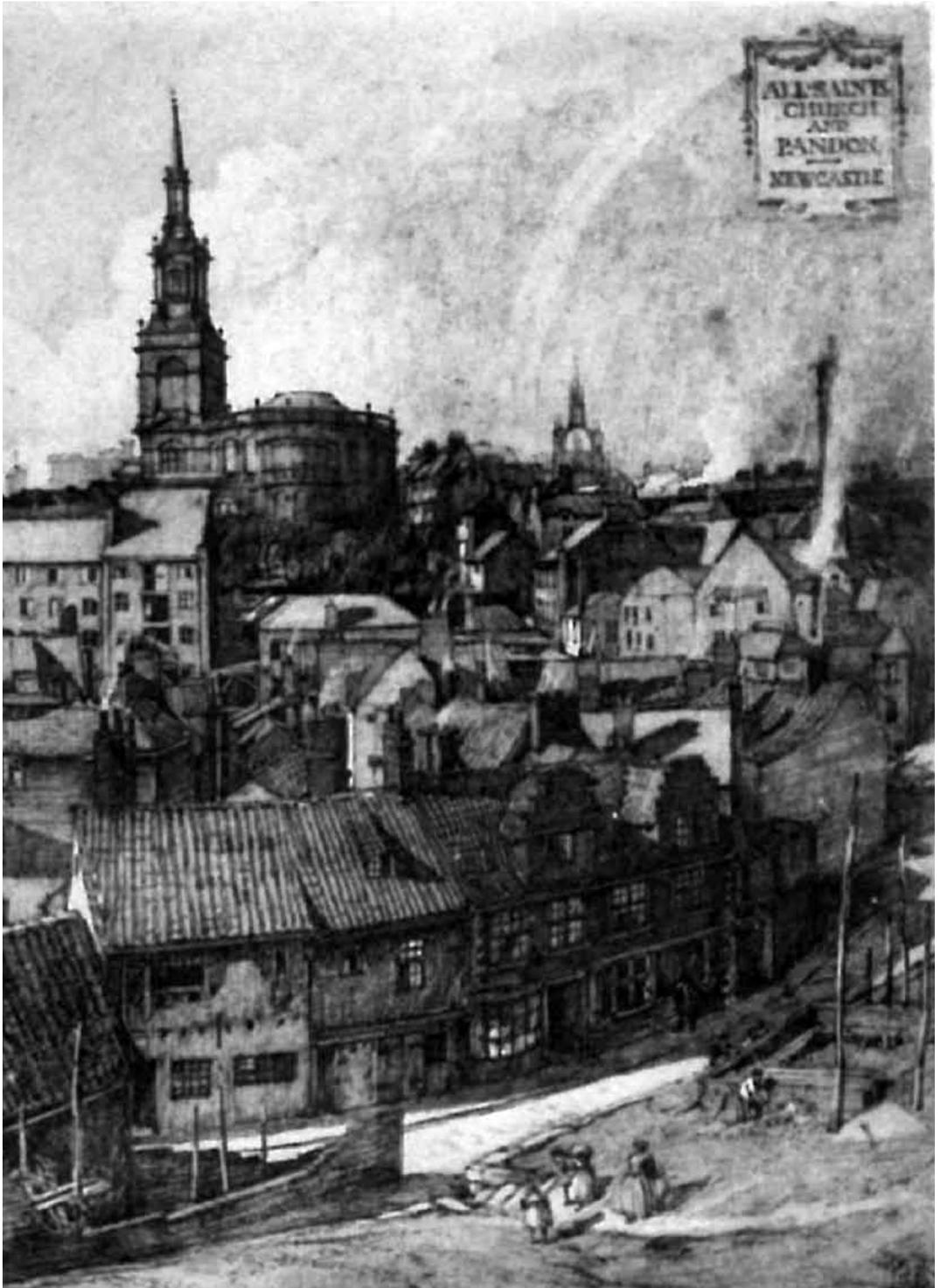
Coal exports from Newcastle port and baptisms in All Saints' parish. Tyne and Wear Archive Service MF258; John Hatcher, *History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1993).

Food manufacturers and sellers were also successful in supplying the necessities of life to a growing town and its surroundings. William Gray was in no doubt that it was the population of Tyneside, buoyed by coal, that led to the vibrancy of Newcastle's markets:

*the Flesh Market, [is] I think the greatest market in England ... the reason is not the populousnesse of the town that makes it, it is the people of the country (within twelve miles of the towne), who makes their provision there, as likewise all that lives by the coale-trade...*⁶

⁵ See J.M. Fewster, *The Keelmen of Tyneside* (Woodbridge, 2011).

⁶ Gray, *Chorographia*, p. 68.



A postcard of All Saints church and Pandon, Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1910. The drawing shows houses in Pandon in the foreground with All Saints Church on a hill in the background. The tower of St. Nicholas Cathedral can be seen in the middle distance. Newcastle City Libraries.

It was more than just the established bakers, brewers, butchers and so on who traded in food and drink. For instance James Yonger, in an inventory taken after his death, had more than 800 individual salted fish in his cellar and loft, along with ‘Fortie & eight barrells of white he[r]rings’, plus a large quantity of rye, malt and two milk cows.⁷ He was known as a cutler (a knife or sword-maker) by trade, but it seems he or his wife had joined the large numbers of tradesmen and women who were needed to feed Newcastle’s growing population. Commerce was flourishing and everybody, it seemed, was trading something.

Newcastle was undoubtedly a commercial hub but it was also something of a cultural centre in the seventeenth century, reflected in William Corbett’s twin bookshops in the East and West sides of the city. Most of his books had a religious tone: ‘Elton upon the Romanes’ would have cost the reader two shillings and sixpence, as would the dauntingly titled ‘the History of Woman’; but most of books were only a shilling, well within the range of the increasingly literate middle class.⁸ And his was not the only bookshop: in 1649 the Town Council sold the lease to ‘a Shoppe ... being on the west side of the Tyne Bridge, in the tenure or occupacion of William London Bookeseller’.⁹ These men’s shops were part of a Newcastle that would be both a conduit for cultural trends from London and at the heart of creative region of its own.¹⁰

Between the bookshops and the fish-selling cutler, the shipbuilders and the keelmen, Newcastle was a multi-dimensional town, as intriguing to outsiders as it was lucrative to the oligarchy of men that controlled it. It had an industrial side, reflected in a high concentration of waged workers and repeated strikes, but the scale and variety of work that bustled up and down the Quayside and Newgate and Pilgrim Streets was widely remarked. Already by 1662 the proverb ‘to carry coals to Newcastle’, meaning to do something plainly superfluous, was well established.¹¹ And when John Taylor recounted his arrival into Newcastle-under-Lyme forty years earlier, he felt his readers might need clarification: ‘(Not that Newcastle standing upon Tine)/ But this Townes scituation doth confine/ Neere Cheshire, in the famous County Stafford’.¹² Newcastle-upon-Tyne – England’s ‘Peru’ – was a household name.

⁷ Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections (DUL) DPRI/1/1615/Y4/2-3.

⁸ DUL DPRI/1/1626/C7/2-7

⁹ M. H. Dodds, *Extracts from the Newcastle upon Tyne Council Minute Book, 1639-1656* (Newcastle, 1920), p. 110.

¹⁰ Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (eds.), *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830* (Ashgate, 2004).

¹¹ John Graunt observed it was ‘our English Proverb’. See ‘Coal, n.1.’, *Oxford English Dictionary* <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/35041>>.

¹² John Taylor, *The pennyles pilgrimage...* (London, 1618), B3.

The Case of an Unnecessary Identity: Anonymity, authorship and relevance in medieval medicine



Currently completing an MA in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Lydia Harris will pursue her PhD in the History Department, specializing in gender, medicine and Classical thought in the Middle Ages. Here she introduces a fascinating compendium of women's medicine from the twelfth century.

One of the more enduring traits of historical study is its abhorrence of anonymity. In a profession which deals primarily with facts, running into an intellectual hiccup like a pseudonym or a discredited document can prove to be frustrating, time-consuming and often fruitless for the historian. Without knowing the specific identity of an author, the document itself is hard to place, and thus hard to legitimize, as an accurate portrayal of an individual's experience. Lack of information concerning the sex, status or education of the author can often negate the relevance or social significance of the document itself. But is this the case for every anonymously written source?

The *Trotula*, described by its modern editor as 'a medieval compendium of women's medicine' is one remarkable example of the complications that may arise from anonymity. It is considered to have been written in Salerno in the twelfth century by a woman named Trota or Trocta, and is an outstandingly detailed account of women's reproductive health, cosmetic improvements and even sources of abortive and contraceptive measures.¹ As with many other unidentified authors, we can only speculate as to whether Trota actually existed or not. But despite the mystery surrounding the identification of the author, it is not surprising that such a work emerged from Salerno, which at this time was a thriving centre of medical study.² It *is* surprising, or at least intriguing, that the most disputed aspect of this work's origin concerns not the author's social status or educational background, but their sex.

¹ Faith Wallis, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 185.

² Monica H. Green, *The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 4.

Women are known to have practised medicine in Salerno at this time, so the possibility of the author of the *Trotula* being a woman is not too shocking.³ The breadth of the knowledge shown by the author concerning the classical influence of medicine, or the learned tradition, shows a more remarkable take on women's education. To read as a woman was one thing. To read, interpret and comprehend Latin and works of Hippocrates and Galen was quite another.⁴ Though the author's social class and upbringing are unknown, it is safe to assume that s/he benefited from an expensive education and received some form of apprenticeship, through which they gained their medical knowledge.

However 'scientific' the *Trotula* may have been by medieval standards, it also contains various folk remedies, often alongside Hippocratic or Galenic prescriptions. One treatise which reflects the more scientific view of medicine by modern standards, 'On the Regimen of Pregnant Women', correctly identifies pica, a form of anaemia in which the sufferer craves non-nutritious substances like ice, dirt or chalk. The remedy is to feed the woman 'beans cooked with sugar' if the subject 'desires clay or chalk or coals'.⁵ Beans are an iron-rich food and thus would have been a perfectly viable solution for a severely anaemic invalid.

Other prescriptions are a bit more unorthodox. The treatise 'On Those Who Do Not Wish to Conceive' gives several contraceptive measures. One solution is for a woman to carry 'against her nude flesh the womb of a goat which has never had offspring'.⁶ Another is to 'take a male weasel and let its testicles be removed... let the woman carry these testicles with her in her bosom and let her tie them in goose skin or in another skin'. By our modern standards at least, it is little wonder, considering the stench and unpleasantness that this would induce, that such a measure would have been seen as a suitable for contraception.

In spite of this mix of learned and folk medicine, it makes little difference whether or not the medical tracts in the *Trotula* are scientifically viable by modern standards. People well into the fifteenth century found this work helpful for their own medical practice as an enlightening interpretation of

Facing page: fifteenth-century image of female anatomy, courtesy of the recent exhibition at Palace Green Library, 'The Practical Art of Medicine'. Johannes Ketham, fasciculus medicinae. Palace Green Library, Kellett +1

³ Ibid, 47-48.

⁴ For a greater understanding of the debate between Hippocratic and Galenic medical ideals concerning gynaecology, see Faith Wallis, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Owsei Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); and Vern L. Bullough, *Universities, Medicine and Science in the Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2004).

⁵ Green, *The Trotula*, 77.

⁶ Green, *The Trotula*, 78.



From an eighteenth-century anatomical treatise, also courtesy of the 'Practical Art of Medicine' Exhibition. Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697-1770), *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani*. Palace Green Library SC++01090/1

Galenic views.⁷ Our own interpretation of the scientific validity of these works is more of a curiosity than a necessity for determining the historical significance of such a work.

The identity of the author, in both of these treatises, can be seen as insignificant. They are simply writing on various ailments concerning common issues of female safety during pregnancy and contraceptive measures for easing problems that may arise from a financially burdened family or a woman who has suffered a history of difficult labours. This is subject that men were writing on at the same time, so determining whether or not the author is a woman is a result of mere curiosity and not scholastic imperative when viewing the *Trotula* as a medically historical treatise and not through gender studies. Though the *Trotula* does explicitly aim to ease both concerns, the real motive of the author may be seen as something a bit more sororal and familiar to female readers.

At the beginning of the 'Book on the Conditions of Women', the author, as Trota/Trocta, outlines their reasons for writing such a work. Though we can surmise that the overwhelming majority of readers of the *Trotula*, and indeed most medical texts, would have been men, the author says that it is written mainly for a female audience.

*...women, from the condition of their fragility, out of shame and embarrassment do not dare reveal their anguish over their diseases (which happen in such a private place) to a physician. Therefore, their misfortune ought to be pitied, and especially the influence of a certain woman stirring my heart, have impelled me to give a clear explanation regarding their diseases in caring for their health.*⁸

This is a rather compelling and compassionate argument for compiling such a work.

The *Trotula*, in spite of these queries or various interpretations as to the identity of the author, is unique. Any of the usual frustrations concerning the author's identity are entirely unnecessary for determining the validity or cultural relevance of this particular work. The fact that any document, either penned by a woman or by a man, was being written in a time of overwhelming patriarchy in order to ease the embarrassment and discomfort of a woman can be seen as meaningful and essential to our historical understanding. The *Trotula* remains one of our most valuable witnesses to medieval medical knowledge. The author's identity, much to this historian's relief, is blissfully (and unusually) not the crux of the matter.

⁷ Laurinda S. Dixon, *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 24.

⁸ Green, *The Trotula*, 65.

Between Federal and Native: The value of Native American Tribal Council Minutes as a historical source

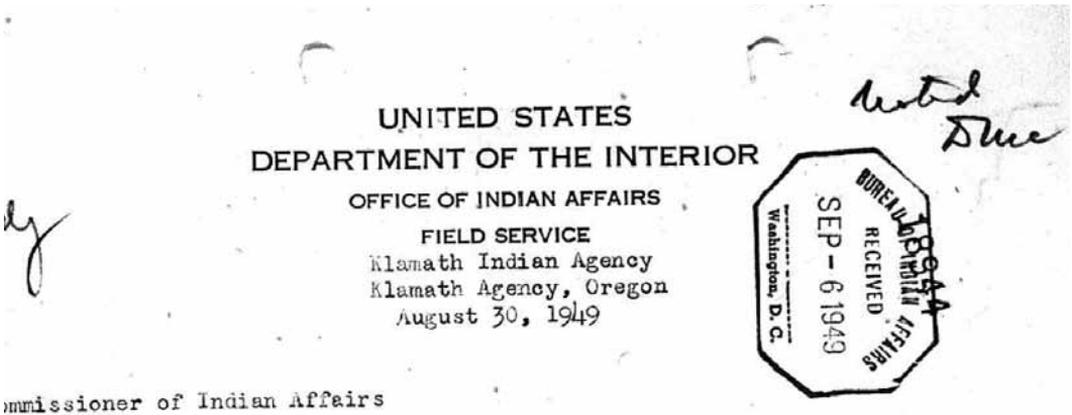


Reetta Humalajoki is a second year PhD student researching how national and international contexts effected policy towards indigenous populations, through an investigation of debates surrounding Native Americans during the era of United States Termination policy, circa 1950-1970.

Exerting her position as an indigenous researcher, Maori decolonization theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith has criticised the discipline of history, stating: '[History] is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others.' Seeing as literature on Native American history has traditionally prioritised government policy, this criticism is also valid in the United States context. For instance, federal officials and legislation were virtually the sole focus of writing on the Termination era (roughly 1945-1970) until well into the 2000s. Termination was indeed aimed at dominating an indigenous population: the US government's aim was to make 'full American citizens' of the Native population, removing special trust status of tribal lands to force individual land ownership on tribes, whilst simultaneously extending state criminal jurisdiction over reservations.

Though this era marked a shift in government policy, literature focused solely on legislation does not tell the whole story. More recently, ethnohistorians including Edward Charles Valandra (Sicangu Lakota) and Valerie Lambert (Oklahoma Choctaw) have brought in an invaluable indigenous perspective, drawing on oral history to bring out Native responses and actions. Interestingly, neither trend in the historiography has made use of a source base situated uniquely between the federal and the Native – the minutes of tribal councils. Available here at Durham University's Bill Bryson Library, the microform collection Major Council Meetings of American Indian Tribes spans several decades of the twentieth century and includes minutes from a variety of tribes

including, for instance, the Mississippi Choctaw, Klamath and Navajo tribal councils. These minutes provide an insight into the interactions between federal officials and tribal elites, as well as responses of tribal members to US policy, revealing nuances of Native American history not available elsewhere.



Commissioner of Indian Affairs

Header from a set of Klamath Tribal Council minutes. Note the stamp on the right side, indicating that the Bureau of Indian Affairs received the minutes on 6 September 1949. This demonstrates how minutes were sent to and stored by the BIA. Klamath Tribal Council (30 August 1949), Major Council Meetings of American Indian Tribes, 1914-1956, Part I, Section II, Reel XVIII.

Both the value and limitations of tribal council minutes as a source are evident in the history and formation of these councils. Though tribes had varying forms of governance before European contact, the councils that function today are largely a product of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. This act, born out of New Deal hopes for development of reservation bases and revitalization of Native American cultures, called for the organization of tribal governments to manage tribal affairs and funds. In practice tribal councils were not allowed the level of autonomy initially planned, meaning most modern tribal councils in the twentieth century were to a great extent administered by the federal office responsible for Native Americans – the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). In terms of accessing the Native American voice, oral historians might criticise the use of council minutes, claiming they only display elite discourse or are too heavily influenced by the US government. Since copies of minutes were always sent to the BIA, speaking within the forum of the council meant not only speaking to one's own tribe, but also being monitored by federal officials.

Indeed, in order for BIA officials to understand the discussions, meetings were always held in English, potentially making it difficult for the average tribal member to participate. However, when actually reading the minutes, it becomes clear that speaking tribal languages was not uncommon. In general council meetings tribes always had an interpreter ready, and members were not penalized for speaking tribal languages instead

22 *Symeon*

of English. For instance, it is noted in the Klamath Tribal Council minutes of 17 November 1949, that ‘Mr. Delford Lang made a speech in the Klamath language’. No translation is included as typists were usually Euro-Americans appointed by the BIA rather than tribal members. Though this must be considered a limitation of the source as statements not in English are not available in the minutes, the use of tribal languages illustrate that council meetings were not just a forum for elite discussion. Furthermore, statements by ‘average’ tribal members also appear in English. For instance, Mississippi Choctaw farmer Jim Gardner was allowed to make a statement against elitism within his tribe’s council in a 1950 council meeting: ‘I’m not trying to hit you hard you councilmen here. Some things we got to talk over. You got to explain where you are at’. Non-elite members of tribes actively participated in general council meetings and made impassioned speeches, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the usually better educated and wealthier council members. Tribal council minutes then offer evidence not only of elite and grassroots discussions, but also the interactions between intra-tribal factions.

Criticising tribal councils for being too ‘elite’ furthermore implies that members blindly supported the US government. However, the minutes show tribes to be considerably critical of the government, both explicitly and more subtly. Particularly staunch criticisms of Congress were exhibited by the Klamath Tribal Council. The Klamath

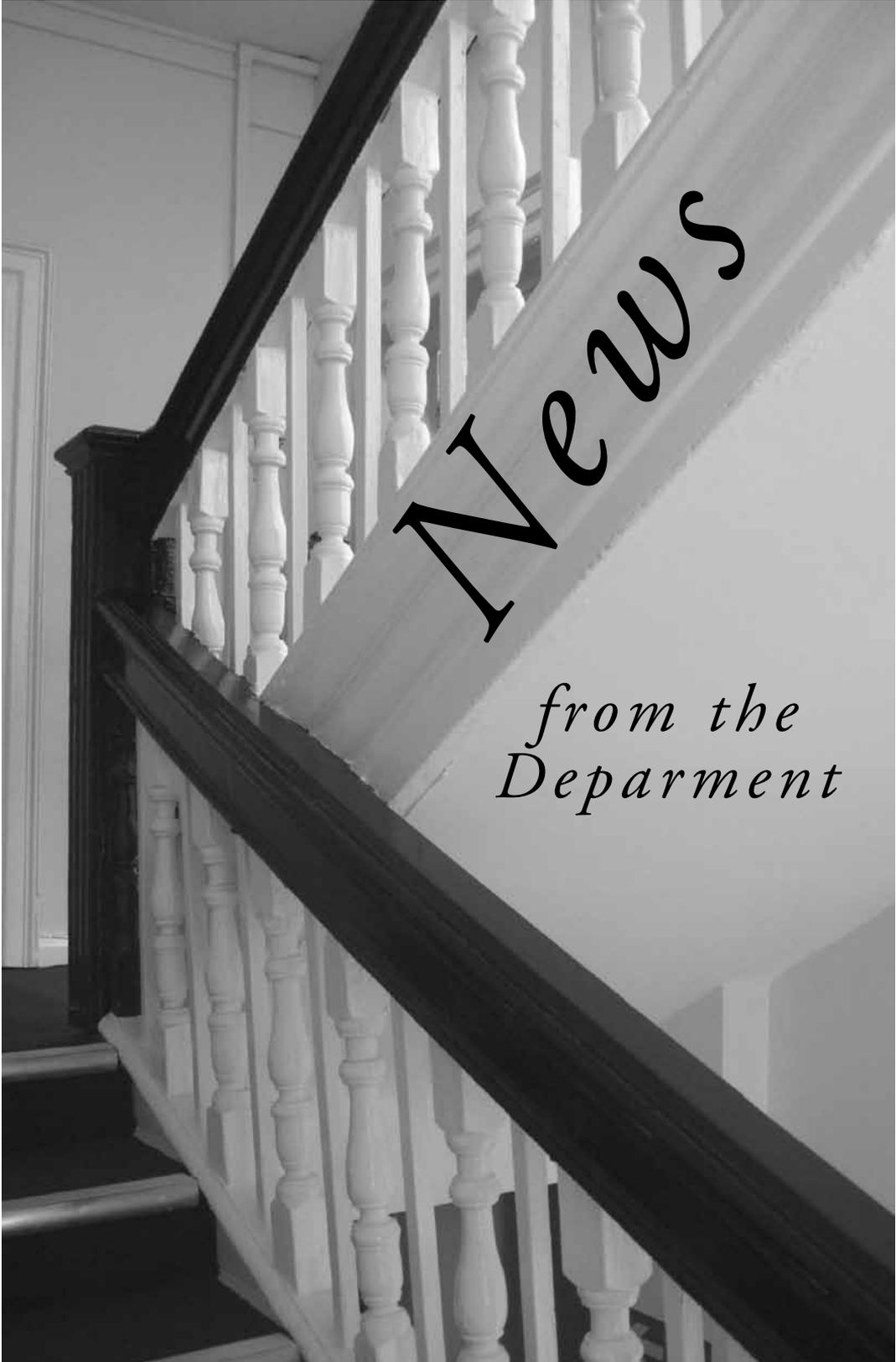


Monument Valley Tribal Park, Navajo Nation. Familiar from many films, Monument Valley is situated on the Arizona-Utah border of the Navajo reservation and falls under the administration of the Navajo Tribal Council. Reetta Humalajoki, 2013

were one of the first tribes pegged for swift removal of trust status: Congress passed a bill to terminate the tribe in 1954, and trust status of their lands was removed in 1961. Federal officials claimed tribes were only terminated voluntarily, but an examination of Klamath minutes shows otherwise. In a 1955 meeting, council member Boyd Jackson expressed clear concern over the management of tribal land after Termination: 'The whole thing is nobody knows where to begin it, nobody knows, not even those who passed the law'. Statements like this are abundant throughout the Klamath minutes, proving that members were overtly critical of policy. These sources are thus useful for policy historians in providing fuel for the argument that tribes were coerced into Termination by federal officials.

Tribes that did not immediately face Termination, like the Navajo, were less overtly critical of the government, in some cases even praising officials. For instance in 1961, the Navajo Tribal Council passed a resolution titled 'Expressing Appreciation of the Distinguished Services of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Glenn L. Emmons, Retired'. However, the justifications presented within the resolution are carefully selected, avoiding mention of Termination policy. Emmons supported the eventual Termination of all tribes, but the Navajo document commends the progress seen in 'living standards, health, education, welfare and economic opportunities for Indian citizens' and 'expresses the hope that the Congress will continue to advance and enlarge these objectives'. The Navajo Tribal Council obviously intended this document to be read and considered by Congress; as such the suggestion that the Termination-driven government continue to improve conditions on reservations can be read as a subtle criticism of policies breaking up land bases.

Despite being monitored by the BIA and controlled by tribal 'elites,' Native American tribal councils were a forum in which any tribal member could air their opinions. Furthermore, tribal councils were aware that these minutes would be received and filed by the BIA; even when BIA officials were not sitting in on meetings personally, tribal council meetings were an arena in which to send messages, explicit or subtle, to Congress. Captured in the minutes are the discrepancies between government policies and practice, as well as the agency demonstrated by tribes in dealing with the legislation they were faced with. Council minutes should not therefore be overlooked by either policy historians or oral historians, as they provide a unique and valuable middle ground for exploring tribes' internal conflicts and their interactions with and responses to government policy. As a space in which federal and Native rhetoric collides, the minutes of tribal council meetings are an invaluable source for historians.



News

*from the
Department*



California Dreamin'



Professor Chris Brooks has wide-ranging research interests in the history of early modern England, with a particular focus on the law and its social and cultural implications. During the 2012-2013 academic year he held the Fletcher-Jones Foundation Distinguished Fellowship in British History at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. He is retiring this year.

On Saturday, 6th April 2013, I gave a paper, 'Through the Looking Glass: Law and Revolution in England 1640-1660' to an Early Modern British History Seminar jointly sponsored by the University of Southern California and the Huntington Library. Since the seminar marked my last formal obligation, and the two-thirds point in my 10 month stay in Pasadena, California, this is not a bad time for me to reflect on my tenure as Fletcher Jones Distinguished Fellow in British History at the Huntington Library, Art Gallery and Botanical Gardens.

The circumstances of my appointment to this post were serendipitous. On a miserable, wet October night in New Haven, Connecticut, where we had come so that I could spend a month working on manuscript material in the Beinecke Library at Yale University, I found myself quoting casually from the song, *California Dreamin'* (which now serves as the theme tune for the California State Lottery), when I mentioned to my wife, Sharyn, that 'I would really rather be in LA'. A few hours later, I opened my laptop and found a completely unexpected message from the Director of Research at the Huntington offering me the Fletcher-Jones, one of five distinguished fellowships in various fields that he has at his disposal each academic year. These days, being offered a major research fellowship without having to go through a laborious application process is an indescribable luxury. Receiving such an offer when the destination is the Huntington is even better.

Like many educational and civic institutions in Los Angeles, the Huntington was founded by individual philanthropy on a baronial scale. Henry E Huntington (1850-1927) made a fortune in railroads and real-estate just as Southern California was beginning to grow in the late nineteenth century. He bought the San Marino Ranch (now the Huntington) in 1903. Within sight of the beautiful San Gabriel Mountains, he built a large house and planned the extensive gardens that now form the main attraction for thousands of visitors from around the world each year. He and his wife, Arabella, put together a superb art collection, including pieces by eighteenth-century British masters such as Lawrence and Reynolds. They also purchased large numbers of early printed books, and large collections of manuscripts relating to English history,

which form the basis of an excellent research library and ever-growing collections of primary research materials in British and American history and literature, western (US) history and the history of science.

I first visited the Huntington just after I completed my doctoral thesis in 1978. A college friend I was visiting in Orange County lent me his car. I dodged and dived on the freeways so that I could spend a couple of days looking at the papers of Thomas Egerton, Lord Chancellor Ellesmere. It is one of the largest collections of its kind anywhere in the world, and historians were already using it to write the legal and political history of late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Since then I have returned several times for periods of up to a month to work on the manuscript collections. Despite expending a good deal of will power avoiding the beaches and other attractions of LA, I always come away with the feeling that there is more to do.

Thanks to the efforts of its leadership, and the impressive generosity of individual (as opposed to corporate) donors, every aspect of the Huntington has grown since I first knew it. In September when I got here, I found that a Chinese Garden had been added to the other fabulous botanical collections, which include one of the largest desert gardens in the world, a Japanese Garden (complete with tea house and bonsai), a 'Shakespeare Garden', and a vast rose garden. In addition the Library and Research Divisions have prospered, too, especially since the early 1990s, when a new Rare Books Reading Room and a research centre, including a suite of offices for visiting fellows, like myself, were completed. To give just one example of recent acquisitions, a few years ago the Huntington bought a collection of President Abraham Lincoln's telegrams, an aspect of his conduct of the American civil war that was touched on in the recent film starring Daniel Day Lewis.



The general policy of the Huntington is to make its collections available to the public and to all qualified researchers. The Library is going slowly on the process of using digitalisation to put manuscript material on-line. Their thinking is that the process is expensive because of the manpower and time it takes, plus there is uncertainty about formats in the face of on-going technological change. The Huntington has for a long time offered short-term fellowships to applicants who demonstrate that they need to work on one or more of the manuscript collections, and hundreds of people come through for a month, or three months, during the course of a year. The distinguished fellowships, and a dozen or so long-term fellowships that are available through a highly competitive application process, are a more recent development. Alongside the community of scholars created by the fellowships, the Huntington hosts an amazing programme of public lectures, conferences and seminars. My public lecture in February on 'Law and Religion in Early Modern England,' was a week after one on the famous crime-novelist Raymond Chandler. In April, for example, there is planned a panel discussion on electricity and Los Angeles during the second half of the twentieth century and a conference on the history of credit and capitalism. Though many of these activities involve academics from universities in the greater Los Angeles area, the Huntington also works on its relationship with the (affluent) neighbouring community. I was very pleasantly surprised that over 200 members of the public turned out for my lecture on a Wednesday evening, and there were good questions from the audience as well.

My personal objective for this year has been to advance the research I'm doing towards a very large book on the history of English law between the accession of King Charles I and the Glorious Revolution in 1688. It is a dauntingly vast subject, but I've already spent years collecting source material from many different archives in the UK and USA. Progress at this stage of the work is hard to measure precisely, and moving abroad temporarily inevitably costs time and effort. But I've enjoyed and valued this year because I've had an office within an excellent library where I can do some of the hard (and sometimes boring) graft necessary to turn the research into intelligible prose. For the most part this is work a scholar just has to get on with on their own; the more solitude the better. But I've been kept company more than once by reflecting on an undergraduate or post-graduate dissertation project, or by fond memories of discussions in some of the excellent Durham special subject classes I've had over the years.

At the same time, there have been tangible and intangible benefits from being a participant in a community of scholars working on a range of topics about many different times and places. Listening to someone talk about eighteenth-century trials of mutinous slaves in North America and the Caribbean is thought-provoking. I've been absolutely delighted to learn from one colleague that one of the main characters in my work, the legal scholar John Selden, was also one of the first major collectors of English broadside ballads, and the inventor of the phrase that popular ballads were 'straws in

the wind' that could indicate shifts in public opinion. Even more surprisingly, it would seem that the great mathematician Sir Isaac Newton had an extremely litigious mind set which was revealed not only in his political and business affairs as a member of Trinity College, Cambridge, but also in some of his religious and controversial writings, which included, for example, adopting a forensic approach to the evidence and putting various early-Christian fathers on trial for their beliefs and actions.

Of course, decency prevents me from saying anything other than that the sunny and warm Southern California climate is hard to complain about, especially after the weather we've had in the UK over the past year. A walk in the Huntington gardens is an excellent way to clear the cobwebs and recharge. But as summer approaches everyone in our 'fellowship' is aware that time is getting short and that there's a need to buckle down, to focus and concentrate. Back to the manuscripts, the rare books, the PC screen and keyboard.



The Beauties and the Beasts of Medieval Durham



Dana Durkee reveals the uglier side of medieval manuscripts, but simultaneously one of the more delightful sides of practising as a historian in Durham. Dana's PhD, funded by the Durham Doctoral Scholarship, looks at Norwich merchants 1450–1530, and the role of social mobility in the development of urban governance and social stratification in England.

This summer may well prove to be the 'summer of medieval manuscripts' in Durham as the university gears up for its spectacular exhibit showcasing the Lindisfarne Gospels. For those not well-versed in the world of medieval writing, one might be forgiven for assuming that beautifully formed book hands in opulent tomes were the norm. After all, most books on medieval manuscripts feature full-colour glossy spreads of lavishly illuminated manuscripts. These impress thanks to their artistic qualities, each letter and word precisely formed and meticulously set amidst lavish ornamentation on a carefully-planned page. Books such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, whatever their intended purpose, were penned with exacting precision for a reading audience. These books are rightly treasured by museums and archives today, and, as the crowds flocking to Durham this summer will inevitably prove, one does not have to be a medievalist to appreciate them.

The beautiful display book hands of the medieval world may be what excite museum crowds, but conversely it is the quotidian records of business and government that constitute the core of Britain's medieval archival collections, and indeed in such vast quantities that published editions represent a mere fraction of what survives. Most importantly, these documents bear no resemblance to the Lindisfarne Gospels at all.

Those trained on a curriculum of Penguin editions may not be fully aware that for many medievalists, just reading the text is half the battle. The undergraduate history curriculum covers a fairly broad spectrum of skills, but only as postgraduates are we urged to tackle the specialized skills of medieval Latin and palaeography. Many topics in medieval history are fully served by published sources, neatly typeset and helpfully translated into modern-day English, but much more research can only be accomplished via a foray into the un-transcribed, un-translated depths of Britain's national and

municipal archives. For many research students our work depends on being able to develop the specialist skills involved in reading medieval manuscripts simply in order to be able to work with our sources.

Comprehension is stymied both by language and by script. Middle English may have been Chaucer's language of choice, but a surprising percentage of Britain's day-to-day records were still being kept in Latin well into the sixteenth century. While not as rigid as classical Latin, medieval Latin can frustrate and puzzle in its invention of new vocabulary and usage not found in classical reference works. Our comprehension is further inhibited by words 'compressed' with elisions and cryptic symbols, to which the reader must supply missing letters or syllables in order to reconstruct a word's original meaning. For example, *noia* with a bar over the middle is actually *nomina*, *scdm* expands to *secundum*, and *ppt* with a tick at the end becomes *propter*.

This is only half the fun; the other half is understanding the script. As the middle ages wore on, an increasing demand for written documentation unfortunately coincided with a marked decline in scribal precision. Such secretarial or legal hands served the purpose of producing a written record for posterity, with speed of writing (much to the chagrin of late medievalists) ranking far above ease of reading. Because of this, these texts can be vexingly difficult to understand. Let us just say that legibility seems very often not to have been a major concern.

For the novice untrained in Latin palaeography, the combination of foreign words, textual abbreviations, and poor letter formation is a grave barrier to conducting archival research. Yet training is usually limited to nothing at the undergraduate level, and one or two modules in a taught master's course at the postgraduate level. Even with taught modules, the task is daunting enough that only extensive practice will adequately supplement our limited classroom exposure.

Durham is remarkably lucky in having an excellent resource available to medievalist research students in the form of the Durham Cathedral muniments collection, which is arguably one of the best in the country, and one of the reasons I chose to study at Durham. Yet this embarrassment of riches also suffers from its own superabundance. Much of the Cathedral's extensive medieval collection still lacks modern finding aids at item level. Those that do exist are paper based and are thus unavailable to distance researchers. This lack, however, has provided an opportunity for Durham students to be involved in an exciting way with original medieval sources.

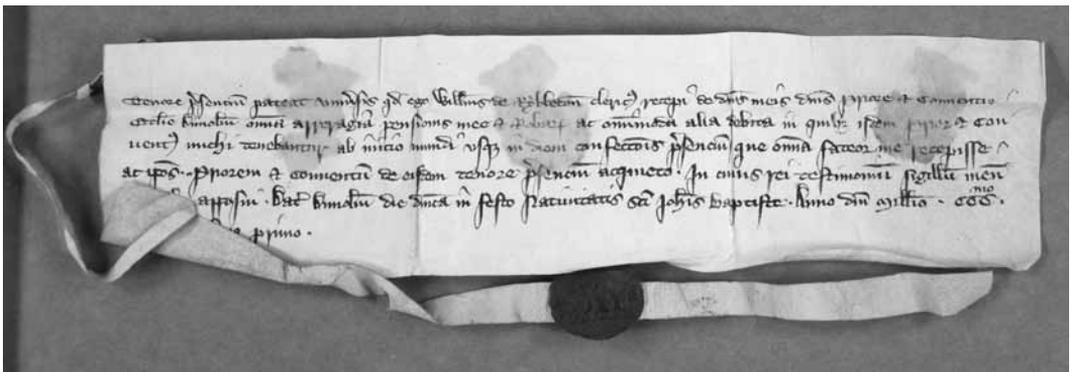
In my first two years at the university I took part in an ongoing project at the university archives to help create new digital indices to medieval record series. The collection on which my group worked is a veritable jumble of 7300 medieval receipts, letters, deeds, and other miscellanea relating to the monastic community in Durham, written on scraps of parchment, in Latin, and predominantly in a fourteenth-century legal-style hand. The bulk of the series was calendared in the mid-nineteenth century, but the

calendar entries are terse, handwritten, and also entirely in Latin. The book is large and bulky, and only available on-site. Many entries leave out key bits of data. Naturally, the need to update old indices is not unique to Durham. Nearly every repository must find ways to transition nineteenth-century indices to twenty-first-century technology, and archives across the country are working hard to bring old finding aids online for a new generation of digitally networked researchers.

To start, library staff digitally photograph individual documents from the collection. Working from the photographs, the students read through each Latin document, then abstract out the key information into English summaries in a structured XML catalogue file. This file eventually finds its way onto the Durham University library website as a searchable index. Unlike the old paper calendar, our summaries include all the names, locations, dates, and events mentioned in each document. Hopefully, in the future, researchers will be able to decide whether or not they need to travel to Durham to view the collection based on the information we are providing.

Many of the documents we read are extremely formulaic, but this is an advantage for learners. Repetition aids both vocabulary acquisition and palaeographic recognition, and also allows us to enjoy such charming idiosyncrasies as one clerk's assurance that the debts owed to him had been satisfied 'from the beginning of the world up to the present day' in 1341.

Projects such as ours are a win-win for both sides. The university archivists get some assistance with the task of producing digital finding aids while the students are developing valuable research skills by reading medieval documents. We can also enjoy the personal satisfaction of knowing we are assisting future research. Thanks to the practice at Durham, I was well prepared for research trips to the National Archives in London. I knew how to handle parchment, I was already familiar with the handwriting, and I had a much easier time reading the sources I need for my own research.



William de Rybbeton, clerk, acknowledges receipt of arrears in his pension, his robes, and any other debts which the prior and convent might owe him 'from the beginning of the world up to the present day' (24 June 1431). Durham University Library, Special Collections, Durham Cathedral Muniments, Miscellaneous Charters 3782.

PhD DIY: Building the National Archives of South Sudan



Nicki Kindersley is a second-year PhD student working on the history of migrant communities in South Sudan. She is currently working as a coordinator of the South Sudan National Archives emergency conservation project with the Rift Valley Institute (riftvalley.net) and blogs at internallydisplaced.wordpress.com.

Despite decades of conflict and successive economic and governmental crises, there are still national archives in South Sudan. These documents, dating back to 1901 and the start of external administration of the south under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, have survived bombardment, fire, flood and total neglect in Juba, the regional and now national capital. The documents – a hundred years of local administration, disputes, civil wars and border issues – are a major and unique historical legacy in South Sudan.

I first saw the mounds and sacks full of mouldy documents in Juba in 2008, while working with the British Institute in Eastern Africa as a graduate research assistant. They were then housed in a donated tent (see facing page), reaching a balmy 50 degrees centigrade by midday and filled with enthusiastic termite colonies. The documents had seen worse: after being collected on a shoestring budget from various places across southern Sudan in the early 1980s by Douglas Johnson, who used empty beer boxes as conveniently-sized file storage, they had been bundled into a basement when civil war broke out again in 1983. Decades later in 2006, they were moved to a donated USAID tent, where they waited and rotted.

After a pilot project in 2010, a first attempt to sort and store the documents in better conditions was made in summer 2012. I've been waiting to get my hands on them; even covered in dirt and insects, these are some of the only existing local histories of the South in the world. I was lucky to get a place as a volunteer on the summer project, where I had a swift induction in the huge challenges of removing, sorting, cataloguing and digitizing the remaining documents; then, coinciding with a six-month extension of my Economic and Social Research Council PhD grant to cover extended Arabic language study, I became the part-time coordinator of the current emergency conservation project.



In October, then, I became a colleague of Youssef, senior inspector of the archives, in a dilapidated rented house filled with piles of disordered, insect-ridden documents and old newspapers, working with a stressed and confused team from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in the new Government of South Sudan. We have no electricity supply for fans or air conditioning, during a dry season that has reached a balmy 40 degrees centigrade in the shade; the ministry staff, thanks to an oil shutdown and resulting financial crisis, are paid a few hundred dollars' worth of salary every two or three months; and the rented house is stuffed to the rafters with files upon files. The new government hardly knew about the project, and those who did were barely interested. What was the point of a pile of documents from the 1920s or 1970s when there was so much to do in the 2010s?

While working on the seemingly endless process of sifting through the piles, reformulating the old government filing system and constructing the archive, the point of it all started to become clear. In my first week, I discovered the founding constitutions and lists of members of the first Southern political parties in the 1940s. These were conventionally thought to be lost. Now, every day, there is a new key historical find. The archives contain the detailed negotiations for setting up British colonial administration in the South, including punitive raids against local powers, in the 1910s and 1920s; the beginning of Southern political movements in the 1930s and 1940s; the first uprisings against northern authoritarianism in the 1950s and 1960s. We have found files full of secret intelligence reports on the first civil war, including intercepted messages between the guerrilla groups and threatening letters from guerrillas to the government forces. And we have found records of the negotiation of the end of the first civil war in 1972 and the attempts at reconciliation and local restitution: echoing the current attempts at peace-building and conflict resolution in South Sudan today.

The letter reproduced opposite is an insight into the ways in which the guerrilla forces operated:

Gentlemen, our struggle is now reaching its most critical moment, and unless all of us work hard, the enemy is likely to triumph over us. We have with renewed determination to pluck up and discover our hidden energies to face the enemy in full force and to use all means and tactics inherent in our people.

The national value of many of these files is obvious. We have large holdings of documents on the South Sudan national borders, many of which are disputed territories. We also have extensive collections of local conflict resolution meetings from the 1910s to the 1980s: all of which are vital to the process of addressing resurgent internal conflicts and strengthening local mediators. While being probably the longest-running and least-cared-for development project in Juba, the archive is also a quiet, unrecognized political force.

Dear Aloisio Lakanga,
 Otarion Laperite,
 Gordon Lokipi, and other Topetha and Bidinga Leaders,

Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to send you this message of greetings and goodwill to all of you and to your people. It is a pity that I cannot come to your area to see you and your people, but I hope that one day I shall come.

Gentlemen, our struggle is now reaching its most critical moment, and unless all of us work hard, the enemy is likely to triumph over us. We have with renewed determination to pluck up and discover our hidden energies to face the enemy in full force and to use all means and tactics inherent in our people. The natural bravery of our people should be properly and intelligently harnessed to obtain the best results. Mind you that the rest of the south looks to only four tribes in Eastern Equatoria i.e. Topetha, Bidinga, Baya and Letuho. We cannot afford to disappoint the expectations of the rest of the Southern people. We have to ~~show~~ effectively prove that the gift of bravery is abundant in our people by using the best young, intelligent and brave young men to send out of Eastern Equatoria the Arabs.

Of course, I am aware that Eastern District has not the weapons that other parts have, and it is here that I wish to inform you that it is my personal intention to see that as seen as the Movement - the Azania Liberation Front finds its own means, I will see to it that you get as many arms as there shall be available. At the moment I have no money nor any other means to obtain these things for your brave people. I have tried to influence someone who has money to send something to your area, but in the past he used to object saying that the tribes in the east were wild and would go and use the weapons to kill each other but not to fight the enemy. At any rate last July I succeeded to convince him to give your area at least 12 weapons, but now I heard that he only sent 5. Never mind, I hope that sooner or later he will do something more.

I am however sure that with sufficient propaganda, you can get more weapons and ammunition from your own people for the time being, and with what little you have and given the braveness and ability to fight that your people have, I am sure that you could do better than areas where people have modern weapons and yet are unable to capture even a small place or a single gun from the Arabs. It is not the weapon that does everything, but it is the man behind the weapon. With proper organisation and training, and under a very good leader, I am sure that the Topetha, Bidinga and Baya alone could even capture Aspekta with spears alone.

My heart is very badly disturbed over the fact that people from other areas that have weapons don't want to share these weapons with you, it is for this reason that I have decided to put great importance to the mining of the gold in your area. Paterno has been appointed as the Party official in charge of the mining works. I hope that if you cooperate with him and see that the workmen do their work well, I think we shall be in a position to obtain enough gold to purchase a good number of weapons for your area in a very short time. I hope that you yourselves will understand the importance of honesty and sincerity in tackling a problem like that. In the past, some Anya-Nyas from your area used to bring gold and were always cheated due to ignorance. Gold was taken to the Congo, but was lost, brought to Uganda but was also lost. None of the people brought it to us or to me in particular simply because they did not trust me. But I am the leader of the Movement I cannot be expected to steal anything belonging to the Movement which I myself lead, this is ridiculous. I am therefore reorganising the mine works in such a way that the gold will reach to the responsible authorities in the Movement who will find a market for it. I can even take it to sell it in Switzerland where it will bring lots of money, than selling it locally here in Kampala.

Do therefore cooperate to see that sufficient gold is mined and brought to the Movement which will market it. My best wishes to all of your people.

Kampala,
 1st. September, 1966

sig.
 J. H. ODUHO
 PRESIDENT. AZANIA LIBERATION
 FRONT.

An intercepted smuggled letter from Joseph Oduho, leader of one of the guerrilla factions in 1966 (then called the Azania Liberation Front), found in a security file. National Archives of South Sudan.

However, beyond the immediate political implications of the archive, the documents are of immense importance to more nebulous national problems. South Sudan is an entirely new country, with a population that has mostly been displaced or at war for decades. Southern history has not been on any curriculum; most people have gained education, and often also new citizenships, outside Sudan. People have lost, through death or displacement, family members and family histories. Internal differences between peoples across the huge area of the South and between violent factions of rebel groups have further divided and antagonized communities. The possibility, however small, of creating a national store of local historical records, including electoral, census and tax registers, where people can trace their familial or local history, may go some way towards building a sense of national identity.

With no national legislation, no governmental protection, and rent that runs out in November, the future of the archive is extremely uncertain. While the Norwegian Government are funding an archive building for 2015, the papers continue to rot. The Rift Valley Institute are funding a digitization programme of key political and historical documents, as a key means of saving decaying files. I am also working with Juba University and the Catholic University lecturers and students, as well as with supportive local civil society organisations, to create a volunteering and campaigning base for the future. Local and international students are already beginning to use the archive for research on national history. There is hope for the future of national history in South Sudan.



‘Why the **** are you
doing *that*?’

Researching the American Stove and its Industry



Professor Howell Harris, who is retiring this year, studies the business, economic, labour and technological history of the USA in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recently, his research has focused on the history of the stove industry in the United States.

I have given my last lecture and marked my final exam. This is the first time in more than forty years that I don't have any career plans, other than to stop having a job a few years earlier than I need to. I am in transition between one form of existence – I have been at university in one capacity or another since I was seventeen – and another, retirement, providing even less structure. To help to pass the time, I have begun to try to retrace my steps and wonder why I have done some of the things that I have. This has already led to a memoir of my years as a postgraduate, which is going to be published in a management journal this summer – as a lesson in how not to be an efficient research student.¹ I enjoyed writing that so much that I used my research blog to do something similar and begin to answer a question that quite a few people have asked me in the last few years, and which I have chosen as the title for this piece.² All academics with jobs like ours, where we are expected to be continuously engaged in research leading to high-quality publication, have to be able to answer their own version of the ‘why the ****’ question. This is one of the hardest parts of the academic job, and also one of the justifications for the immense amount of freedom we still have to control our time and set our own agendas.

We claim that we need these privileges in order to be self-motivated and creative. But, just in case we abuse them, our employers keep an eye on us – increasingly closely since the Good Old Days a generation ago, when lunchtime in ‘The Shakespeare’ could last

¹ ‘The Path I Trod: A Portrait of the (Business) Historian as a Young Idiot,’ *Pannon Management Review* 2:2 (June 2013), the original version of which is freely available online: http://www.dur.ac.uk/h.j.harris/TRTM/TRTM-The_Path_I_Trod.doc.

² ‘A Life in Stoves,’ November 2012, <http://stovehistory.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/a-life-in-stoves.html>.

three or four hours, and some of the department's star teachers never had finished and published anything significant, and were not much the worse thought of for it. So now we have to account for ourselves – to ourselves and our students, our colleagues, our superiors in the department and up the managerial line inside the university, our peers in other places, and the national bodies on whom our careers also depend.

If you can't keep answering the 'why the ****' question, and provide a steady stream of good publications and other research outputs to prove that your attempts to answer it are leading somewhere worthwhile, you will not enjoy a very jolly experience in the modern university – indeed, you won't get your foot on the first rung of the job ladder. Annual appraisal meetings will be embarrassing. Career reviews will be awkward. Promotion will not happen. You will have a hard time justifying getting the time off for undertaking the research that, your lack of publications suggests, you are not doing. Nowhere else will bid for your services, and in due course your own university won't want to keep you around either. You will have become 'dead wood' – a label good neither for the self-esteem nor the bank balance.

Students who can write excellent essays when asked a question and given a reading list often find themselves stressed or even completely stumped when we ask them to set their own questions and decide what they will read, and why, and how they will analyse it. But they don't always appreciate that we find all of this difficult ourselves, throughout our careers, too. In my experience, deciding what to do, and figuring out why, has always been much harder than actually *doing* it, which has usually been quite straightforward and enjoyable.

My doctorate and subsequent publications kept me busy until the first time I really had to answer the 'what the **** *next*' question, around my thirtieth birthday, soon after I got my job in Durham. I floundered for a while, before I found an idea with promise, and then I made that good idea last as long as I could stretch it. Too long – research is the fun part, writing is harder, getting published hardest, and if you do too much research you may end up writing too much (as I did on my second book), and then taking yet more years *un*writing (editing, cutting) in order to produce something publishable.

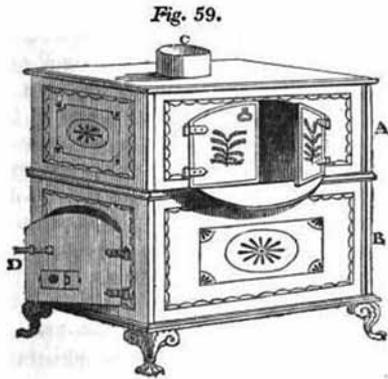
By the time I had reached the end of that long road I was fast approaching fifty. I had always published enough other stuff along the way to get by and earn me promotion. But when my second big book, *Bloodless Victories*, was finally out in 2000, I found that I had fired off almost all the shots in my locker, and had to answer the 'what the ****?' question again.

The good thing about a lengthening career is that you accumulate knowledge, ideas, questions, a sense of what is do-able and how to go about it. Much of this intellectual capital is quite specialized, and it can lock you into doing more or less the same thing over and over again. Most of us follow this line of least resistance – modern academic

research is organized into proliferating sub-fields, and we are generally quite comfortable staying within our little boxes. Over almost thirty years, I had turned myself into one of the go-to guys for the history of relations between American employers and their workers between the 1860s and the 1950s. But a dozen years ago I felt that I had exhausted that once-rich but narrow vein.

So what to do? I have always followed any interesting leads within my research even if they don't seem to be very closely related to what I'm supposed to be doing at the time. This is a symptom of my lack of single-mindedness. But the upside was that, when I

decided to do something a bit different, I found that I already knew enough about it to be able to proceed quite swiftly.



Canadian Stove. from John Holland, A Treatise on the Progressive Improvement & Present State of the Manufactures in Metal, Vol. II: Iron and Steel (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown Green & Longman, 1833), p. 185.

Why stoves? I knew that the industry had been important, its past intersecting with a number of interesting themes in the history of business and technology, but I also knew that it was almost completely neglected. So there was a gap to fill. Its history was researchable but not overwhelming, so I could hope to cover the lot. I didn't embark on it immediately after finishing the other project – I was tired and disillusioned, partly with a sense of the futility of having put so much effort into a book that few people could be bothered to buy, read, or use, partly because of the tide of charmless

and incompetent managerialism sweeping into universities at the time. But once I had decided that I wanted to stick around Durham for a while longer rather than retiring immediately, I knew that I would have to answer the 'what' and 'why' questions again, and I would have an answer: stoves!

What has surprised me is how much there has been to find out, and how interesting it has all been. In the beginning this new and final research project was more than a bit instrumental: it would meet some of the job-related needs of a middle-aged professor approaching the end of the paid part of his career. But it quickly became *fun*.

Part of the fun was the field research. Between 2005 and 2009, I spent about three weeks a year in the United States — in Detroit, Troy, Albany, New York City, Philadelphia, and the outskirts of Wilmington, Delaware, where there are two wonderful specialized research libraries. As well as the enjoyment of reading and discovery, there was also the pleasure of reversion to the simple and solitary life of the researcher on the road, eating in downmarket neighbourhood restaurants and staying in B&Bs that sometimes contrived to be quite nasty though not particularly cheap. The bare-bones lifestyle was

partly a matter of lack of choice for the visiting researcher dependent on his feet for local transport – for three days in Detroit I survived on coffee and cookies, because there was nowhere to eat that I could safely get to from my nice B&B after darkness fell, and coffee and cookies was all they provided in the rooms – but it was also a consequence of trying to live on the lavish research expenses a generous department and faculty were happy to provide.

Another part of the fun was the character of the archival materials. My entire research career had been spent in the Age of the Typewriter, and sources have mostly been the products of professionals working in and for bureaucratic organizations – boring people not unlike me. But the last few years have taken me back to the 1810s (and, for printed sources, well before). I have had to learn at last how to cope with handwriting of differing kinds and qualities. Years of reading exam scripts turn out to have been good preparation. Any problems deciphering fading ink on yellowing paper have been heavily outweighed by the pleasures of unmediated contact with the minds of early-nineteenth-century men, some of them barely educated, others (recent German immigrants) operating in a language that was new to them, almost all of them writing straight from the heart and the gut, sometimes with great wit and eloquence. Business correspondence where, for example, partners accuse one another of being unChristian thieves, murderers, liars, assassins, drunks, and cheats, is far more enjoyable to read than the much more considered phrasing of later generations.

The history I used to write was mostly a history *of* organizations, and even the most important historical actors that I came across rarely became familiar to me as rounded individuals. But within the last few years I feel that I have encountered a bunch of fascinating new acquaintances, long-dead inventors and entrepreneurs in a world of small-scale, informal, very personal business, about whom I now know and understand far more than I ever did about the people whose lives crossed my path in much more recent archives.

Finally, there has been lots of enjoyment from having been fortunate enough to work in the Age of the Internet. For most of my career, I have had to adjust to the fact that most of my research sources are thousands of miles away, so ‘research’ was something I could only do from time to time. Now the situation is transformed. Thanks to the Making of America project, the Library of Congress’s wonderful ‘American Memory’ website, and then Google Books, the Internet Archive, the Hathi Trust, and other American information enterprises that are either not-for-profit or free to use, I can now access a wider range of printed primary sources than is available in all but a handful of the best research libraries in the United States. And I can do this from any web-connected device, anywhere, anytime.

Of course, most archival holdings have not been digitized, and there is still plenty of nineteenth-century printed material that needs to be visited and read in the few places holding a copy. But even here the information revolution makes new ways of working



Detroit Stove Works advertisement, The Metal Worker 1:14 (30 September 1876): 1. A base burner was a very efficient heating stove, made more versatile in this case by having a small stove attached, so that a family could keep itself warm and also cook on the same attractive (in Victorian terms) appliance.

possible. Gathering material on research trips has become much more efficient now that most archives and research libraries allow users to take their own digital photographs rather than having to rely on photocopying. I have also reduced the need for such trips by hiring young American researchers to go into archives and photograph material for me, so that I can acquire thousands of page-images for just a few pennies each, without going anywhere myself. Free file-sharing sites enable my researchers to upload the stuff as they do it, and I can strip it off, download it, and work on it at my own pace, on my own screen. The result of the information revolution is therefore that gathering material for my project has been much more efficient, less interrupted and frustrating, and much cheaper than it would have been even a decade ago.

There are other new ways of working that I find very rewarding too. For example, something that I have done for years (ever since I bought my first primitive computer in 1987) is to organize masses of scraps of information about organizations, industries, companies, and individuals into databases. I was always aware that much of this information was tied to a particular *place*, but Geographic Information Systems were much too complicated for an amateur to use. Now I can use Google as a poor man's GIS, see the shape of my data in a new way, and communicate the results via simple maps.³

I can also share some of what I find and think about, without waiting or depending on formal publication. I can publish it myself – on my research website or my blog. Research is quite a solitary business, particularly when you are working on such a neglected topic, so you are bound to think from time to time ‘Why am I doing this? Will anybody ever find it at all interesting?’ Publishing stuff myself has answered the latter question in the affirmative, and put me in touch with people who are happy to read my work in draft and share their own work with me in return.

Finally, my stoves have served the crude purpose a modern academic's research effort is supposed to. They have resulted in four good articles in three fine journals with an international circulation, one prize, and quite a few citations. They've provided me with something to talk about in my annual staff reviews and point to when asking for a pay rise, and something for my department to enter into the next national assessment of the quality of the research outputs of British universities. They will translate into a worthwhile stream of income for the department from 2015 until 2020, years after I have retired, and everybody, including me, will I hope be happy.

³ <https://sites.google.com/site/stovehistorystuff/home/stove-maps>.

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Novelty: WITH A CAST IRON ASH PAN.
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Southern Stove Works,
 KIECHLE, BRENTANO & OBERDORFER, Proprietors
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This stove will bear critical examination, and when the price is quoted dealers will be surprised to find it so low.

Southern Stove Works advertisement, Stove and Hardware Reporter 16:19 (7 May 1891): 6. A small, cheap kitchen stove for rural and small-town families. It is uncertain whether the African American woman is supposed to be a servant cleaning it, or a poor but proud housewife owning it. The advertisement is an early example of a photograph being turned into an engraving in order to be reproducible, rather than having been hand-drawn to start with.

Please get in touch!

We hope you have enjoyed the third 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.

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Learning to vote: practice ballot in Omdurman, Sudan, 1953. Durham University, Sudan Archive.