

UWE Regional History Centre Seminar Series 2011-12

In association with M Shed

Venue: M Shed, Whapping Wharf, Princes Rd, Bristol BS1 4RN
17:00 -19:00, admission free, all welcome



University of the
West of England





Thursday 20 Oct 2011

Sarah-Joy Maddeaux (doctoral student, University of Bristol)

'Our Zoo': The relationship between Bristol Zoo gardens and its neighbours

How does a zoo's location affect its development as a place to be known and experienced? When the Bristol, Clifton and West of England Zoological Society purchased a site on which to open a zoological garden in 1835, the surrounding area largely consisted of fields. The Zoo has since both affected and been affected by the locality's transformation into the site of a public school and an affluent residential neighbourhood. This talk will look at some of the ways in which the Zoo has been adopted or rejected as the 'Clifton Zoo' or the 'Bristol Zoo', and the implications these associations have had on its function as a leisure space. It will also examine the permeability of the different barriers separating the Zoo from what is outside and the impact this has had on the Zoo's relationship with its neighbours.



Thursday 24 Nov 2011

Dr Madge Dresser (UWE, Bristol)

Samuel Gist and the 'Gist slaves': Bristol and Virginia history.

This talk begins with the extraordinary story of Bristol's Samuel Gist which spans Bristol, Virginia and London and whose legacy is still commemorated today by a group of African-Americans. It goes on to reconsider the links between Bristol and colonial Virginia in relation to the slave economy and the social networks it generated. What can an 'Atlanticist' perspective add to our understanding of the role slavery played in both Britain and the colonial South? What archives remain to be explored? What can family historians add to and learn from this 'special relationship'? And what insights about contemporary American politics might such historical investigations yield?

Thursday 15 Dec 2011

Dr Kath Thompson (HEFCE)

The Norman lords of Bristol

This talk examines the careers of the lords of Bristol from 1066-1183, the period when Bristol emerged as an important commercial and maritime centre. It will demonstrate the questions that interest medieval historians and also introduce the range of sources that they use. We will explore the influence of the four individuals covered: the prince-bishop, Geoffrey of Coutances; Robert Fitz Hamon, his son-in-law, Robert, earl of Gloucester, and grandson, William earl of Gloucester and relate their influence on the development of the city to their careers on a broader stage.



Thursday 19 Jan 2012

Curators' Roundtable

A panel of M Shed curators and professional historians lift the lid on some of the museum's most interesting exhibits and discuss the ways in which they may be displayed and interpreted. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions and make observations of your own – so come along and join in!

Thursday 16 Feb 2012

Dr Jonathan Barry (University of Exeter)

Methodism and Mummery: George Lukins and his Devils

When the vicar of Temple, Joseph Easterbrook, assisted by six Methodist laypreachers, used prayers to cast seven devils out of George Lukins of Yatton in the vestry of Temple church in 1788, the case caused a sensation locally and nationally, generating extensive newspaper coverage and a series of pamphlets. This talk will examine both the nature of the controversy and the contrasting perspectives of the main protagonists, including Lukins himself. The apparent dichotomy between evangelical (often Methodist) support for Lukins and secular scepticism (led by the surgeon Samuel Norman) will be shown to be over-simplified, as Bristolians reacted according to a more complex agenda of concerns, although the case was largely regarded nationally (and in retrospect) as a final expression of enthusiastic credulity in the face of either fraud or mental illness.



Thursday 15 March 2012

– in association with the Thomas Chatterton Society

Dr Dimitra Fimi (University of Wales Institute, Cardiff)

Chatterton's Forgery, Feigned Manuscripts and Literary Legacy: The Case of J.R.R. Tolkien

Chatterton's forged manuscripts created an imaginary persona and a pseudo-medieval 'secondary' world. The impact on his career can be compared to that of Macpherson's Ossian poems, and other contemporary feigned documents, often linked to the pursuit of national identity. J.R.R. Tolkien's 'secondary' world of Middle-earth can be read as part of the same legacy of forged/faked/feigned manuscripts, giving his invented cosmos a sense of historicity that goes beyond imagination. This talk will therefore explore the tensions between 'real' and imaginary, feigned and forged, history and fantasy.

Thursday 19 April 2012

Dr Kerri Andrews (University of Strathclyde)

Hannah More, Ann Yearsley, and David Garrick: the politics of patronage in the eighteenth century

For eighteen months in the 1780s Hannah More became the patron of Ann Yearsley, the 'Milkwoman of Bristol', a poetical phenomemon that fascinated polite society. With the spectacular and public failure of their relationship in September 1785 the behaviour of both patron and client was, and continues to be, the subject of intense speculation. But Hannah More had herself been the protegee of David Garrick, the most renowned actor and theatre manager of his age; More's experiences as a client of Garrick's would fundamentally shape her behaviour as Yearsley's patron, and this in turn would affect how Yearsley pursued her literary career after the break with More. This talk will use correspondence between More and Garrick, Yearsley and More, and More and her wider circle, to explore why and how these patronage relationships succeeded, and failed, and will consider some of the implications for our understanding of literary culture during this period.

Thursday 17 May 2012

Curators' Roundtable

A second panel of M Shed curators and professional historians discuss the display and interpretation of some of the Museum's exhibits. As usual, there'll be plenty of opportunity to ask questions and make observations of your own – so come along and join in!



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

