

RRR

Romance, Revolution & Reform

*The Journal of the Southampton Centre for
Nineteenth-Century Research*

Welcome to this edition of Post Print!

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Hello all, and welcome to the newest edition of *Post Print*!

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday period and that New Year has been going well so far. I'd also like to personally congratulate everyone for getting through January, which I am *convinced* is actually six months rolled into one.

Everyone at the RRR board wanted to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those who attended our fabulous conference on the 15th of January, at the lovely Stirling University. From the outstanding research presented to the warm and welcoming atmosphere cultivated, we couldn't have asked for a better way to kick off 2026.

Didn't make it? Not to worry! We have an excellent conference review by the brilliant Rebecca Williamson inside this edition, and some fabulous photos too.

This issue's researcher insights focus on our fantastic PGR and Academic editors, Johanna Harrison-Oram and Ellie Hibbert, who are both conducting fascinating work which we can't wait to share with you all!

Don't forget, the call for papers is now open for RRR Issue 9, 'Sex in the Long Nineteenth Century'! You can find more info in our 'Diary Dates' section at the end of the issue.

As always, we at RRR hope you're having a wonderfully productive time, and we can't wait to see what you're working on.

Happy reading!

Beth

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Researcher Insights

In this month's Researcher Insights — where we focus on the exciting research being done by our PGR and academic editors — we will be sharing insights from the brilliant Ellie Hibbert and Johanna Harrison-Oram.

Ellie Hibbert:

"I am a PhD researcher at the University of Essex, funded by a Chancellors PhD Scholarship. My thesis is titled 'Midwives and Mothers: Experiences, Emotions and Embodiment, c.1750-1850', and seeks to explore the experiences of midwives and mothers in pregnancy and childbirth during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with a particular geographical focus on London and the East of England.

This research explores the perspective of ordinary women, utilising ego-documents to access their experiences of childbearing in their own words, whilst also using institutional records such as those of maternity charities to gain an insight into the experience of those within the lower classes of society, who would not have recorded their own experiences directly. My broader research interests include medical humanities, women's and LGBTQIA+ histories, and the role of archives, particularly uncovering archival silences and the hidden histories of marginalised groups.

in 2025 I was awarded a small grant from the Broadly Conceived network from my project 'Name the Midwife: Identifying the women working for the Royal Maternity Charity, 1761-1915'. This project used the records of The Royal Maternity Charity to create a publicly accessible database of the women who worked for the institution across its two-hundred years of operation, with the aim to give these women back their profession in the historical record, from which they are so often absent. Alongside my thesis I am now working on chapter related to this project for the upcoming edited collection by the network."



Johanna Harrison-Oram:

"I am in the third year of my studentship-funded PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London, under the supervision of Prof. Ruth Livesey. My provisional thesis title is 'A woman's life in labour: women, work, and speculation in the fin-de-siècle novel, 1880-1901'. My thesis argues that there is a speculative quality to women's labour in the fin-de-siècle realist novel, particularly in undervalued labour practices such as maternal care, political speech, agricultural labour, and urban commerce.

I'm currently working on political speech in Henry James' *The Bostonians* (1886) and Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893).



Both novels feature female protagonists who speak politically, but their audiences do not hear them. I interpret these novels using speech-act theory, a strand of Ordinary Language Philosophy which argues that spoken utterances perform actions, for example I promise or I resist. I argue that, where female characters' speech acts go unheard, their political speech becomes laborious. I contextualise this within a period of what I call 'vocal anxiety', since the fin de siècle saw an explosion of recording technology and treatises on vocal health. Human voices were becoming a medium through which individuals could insert themselves into the historical record, and I contend that these novels problematise this phenomenon along gendered fault lines.

Through my research, I more broadly argue that end-century literary realism reframed women's speculation as a labour practice that philosophically and materially contributed towards British interests. I look forward to seeing where this takes me for the next chapter!



Review: Sex in the Long Nineteenth Century: 15th January 2026 | University of Stirling, Scotland |

Rebecca Williamson - University of Glasgow



On Thursday 15th January, scholars from across the globe made their way to Stirling University's idyllic campus to coalesce around a single topic: sex. More specifically, sex in the long nineteenth century, the theme of this year's Romance, Revolution and Reform conference. As an historian of nineteenth-century sexuality, I was delighted by the prospect! The usual routine of scouring a programme for papers which touch upon sexuality was replaced by a welcome sense of abundance.

The parallel panels took place across two spacious rooms in Stirling's central campus. After a warm welcome from conference chair Katie Maclean in the 'A' room, I elected to stay put for a fascinating trio of papers on sex work and sexual assault. Scarlette-Electra LeBlanc opened with an astute reading of Aurora Leigh, tracing performances of respectability in contrast to the established 'Harlot's Progress' narrative, while Aurora Soriano provided an alternative account to dominant tropes of fallenness and violence through an exploration of sex-worker-centred sources. Lastly, Dr Madeline Sporer presented an insightful interpretation of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Jenny and Christina Rossetti's Goblin Market as offering divergent narratives of 'fallenness'. The session, expertly chaired by Dr Rebecca Whiteley, ended with a stimulating question and answer session.

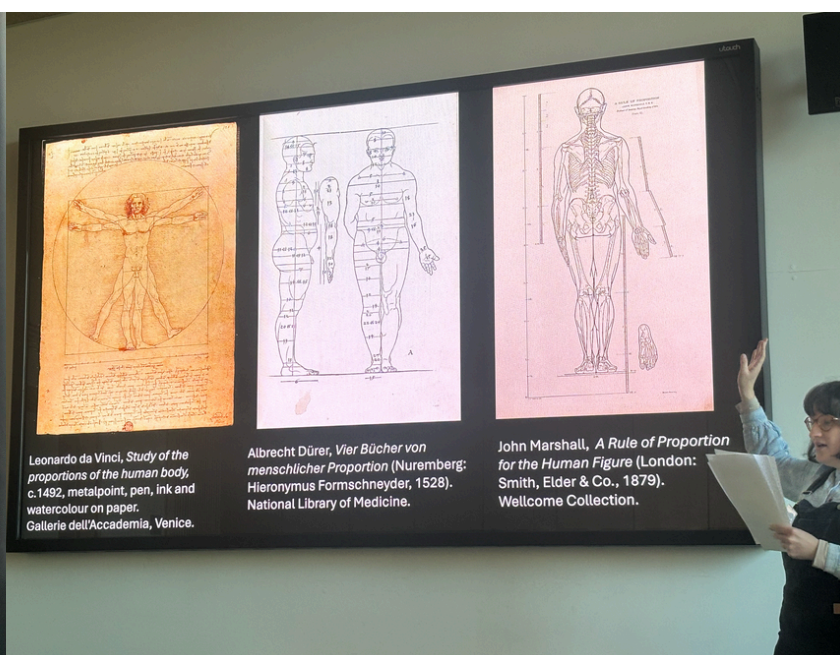
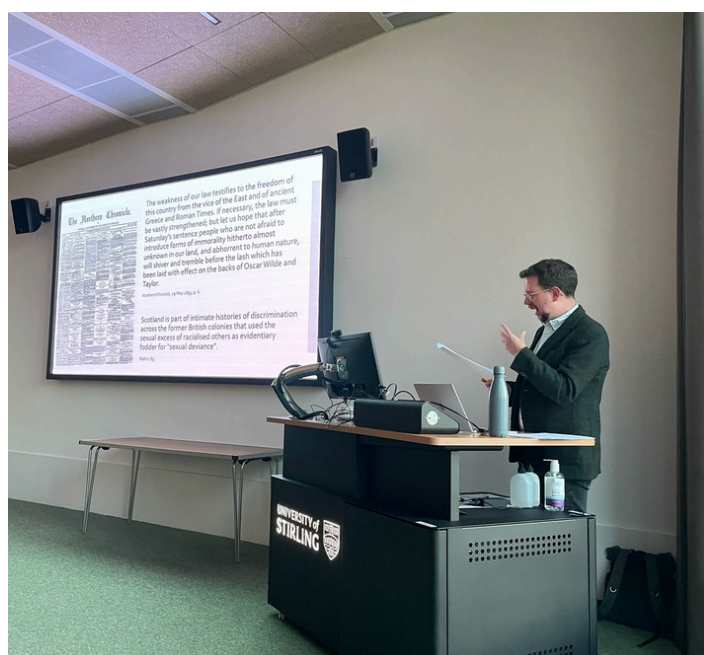
My next decision was made for me: I was due to deliver my paper as part of the 'Policing Gender' panel. Siobhan-Michelle Smith opened with her paper on representations of women's moustaches in newspaper titbits, making a convincing case for these tiny texts as powerful in policing gender performance. Next, I presented some of my research into 1850s child murder trials in Scotland, exploring the consolidation and contestation of femininity and illegitimacy in court documents. Then came Emily Bardgett's wonderful paper on smoking and sexuality. Accompanied by striking visuals, Emily linked late-nineteenth century cigarettes with misogynist satire and 'exotic' eroticisation. Our chair Katie Maclean facilitated some insightful questions before we finished up for a well-deserved lunch

We headed into the afternoon portion of the conference fuelled by sandwiches and coffee. Due to a slight programme change, all attendees were treated to a fantastic panel on 'Sex and the Novel'. Rebecca Hamilton offered a developed and convincing metonymic reading of art in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, while Sylwia Stokłosa took us on a fascinating exploration of female student identity in Józef Ignacy Krasiński's *Szalona*. Closing off the panel was Zhongyi Yin, whose interpretation of female genius as a catalyst for self-division in May Sinclair's *The Creators* sparked some lively discussion in the Q&A hosted by our excellent chair Sophie Thompson.

Conference Review

While the last panels of the day both sounded appealing, I opted for 'Race and Nation'. After an introduction from chair Kibria Nasir, Shelbi Ferguson made a thorough and intriguing case for justified flagellation as central to notions of British strength and sexual desire. Dr Rebecca Whitely then presented some of her incredible research on the 'medical nude' and the medico-connoisseurial eye. Finally, Enit Karafili Steiner offered an engaging interpretation of the intersection between race, sexuality, and enslavement in Olaudah Equiano's writings.

Rounding off a day filled with innovative research, our keynote speaker Dr Michael Shaw presented his paper: 'Queering Scottish Periodicals in the Long Nineteenth Century'. Michael's interpretation of the relationship between queerness and Scottish nationhood sparked palpable interest and excitement from the audience. RRR's Sophie Thompson and Katie Maclean then closed the conference with the launch of this year's journal: *Play in the Long Nineteenth Century*. A call for papers for the next edition was also announced, much to the excitement of those who had presented their research earlier in the day. We finished off a deeply enjoyable day with an equally enjoyable meal at The Maharaja, kindly covered by the British Association for Victorian Studies. I left Stirling feeling invigorated; this conference offered a microcosmic view into the challenging, necessary, entertaining, and interdisciplinary histories of sex arising from this lively field of research.



Diary Dates: Talks, Conferences, and CfP:

Dr Adam James Smith – ‘Winifred Gales & Radical Print Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Sheffield | York Medical Society

On the 14th February 2026, Dr Adam James Smith will be giving a lecture on the private memoirs of Winifred Gales, the wife of Joseph Gales, founder of The Hartshead Press, which was opened in Sheffield in 1784. In this talk, Smith explores the extraordinary role Winifred played in her husband's enterprise, and demonstrates her commitment to his radical vision. He will consider how Winifred's 'agency has been obscured' historically, and offer 'means for its recovery.'

For ticket information, please visit:
<https://www.georgianyork.org.uk/2025-26-lecture-programme>

Call for Papers: The Burney Society Annual Conference 2026 | Oxford

The call for papers is now open for the Burney Society UK's annual conference, taking place at Kellogg College, Oxford, 11-13th June 2026. The conference is entitled 'The Burney's at 300: The Legacy of Dr Charles Burney (1726-1814) and his creative family.'

The deadline to submit a proposal is the 30th March 2026, and feedback will be provided as early as possible. A Conference Prize of £100 will be awarded for the best paper, open to all speakers.

To download a proposal form, please visit
<https://burneysociety.uk/conferences>.

Rory Fraser – ‘Vanbrugh and the Relapse’ | 6 Fitzroy Square, London

In this paper, architectural historian, Rory Fraser, will discuss the work of John Vanbrugh, in particular, *The Relapse*. Fraser, who is set to publish a new Vanbrugh biography in 2026, will illustrate how Vanbrugh's comedy acted as a 'reflection of both the excitement and the existential questions current in the post-revolutionary England of the 1690s.

For more information, please visit:
<https://georgiangroup.org.uk/event-directory/lecture-rory-fraser-vanbrugh-and-the-relapse/>

Call for Papers: *RRR* Journal Issue 9, ‘Sex in the Long Nineteenth Century’

In *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault outlines the 'discursive explosion' that occurred around sex during the long nineteenth century. Sexuality, as we define it today, became attached to personal identity for the first time. Across mediums, sex often reflected the period's social anxieties and around gender and power, yet also newfound uses of erotic aesthetics. Modern queer theorists first situated their work within nineteenth-century studies, and recent work in the field historicises marginalised groups. Sex encourages us to consider the broader cultural and societal dynamics of the long nineteenth century, and the lasting influence of these structures today.

This issue of *Romance, Revolution and Reform* is looking for papers of 5,000-8,000 words on 'Sex in the Long Nineteenth Century' (1789-1914) in all its forms and in a global context. We encourage broad interpretations of sex and invite submissions that explore its fluid and multifaceted nature. The journal encourages multi- and interdisciplinary papers from across the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities and invites contributions from those at any career stage, including PGRs and ECRs.

The closing date for submissions is midnight on Friday 16th April. Papers should be submitted to rrr@soton.ac.uk



Romance, Revolution & Reform

That's everything for this edition of Post Print. Thank you, as always, for reading, and make sure you get in touch if you have anything you'd like to review, share, or announce in the next edition!

Thank you for reading! 

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