

Romance, Revolution & Reform Conference 2020

'Reform'

Wednesday 15th January 2020 9:00-5:00

University of Southampton, Nuffield Theatre

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Conference Welcome

Katie Holdway & Zack White

On behalf of the editorial board of *Romance, Revolution & Reform* it is our pleasure to welcome you to the University of Southampton. *RRR* was founded in 2017 as the Journal of the Southampton Centre for Nineteenth Century Research (SCNR), and during its short lifetime has already enjoyed remarkable success. Its first issue was published in April 2019 and is available to access for free on our website www.rrrjournal.com.

In July 2019, the Journal received an award from the University of Southampton's Doctoral College for its visionary approach to Open Access publication and commitment to supporting the next generation of scholars – principles which have always been fundamental to the journal's operation. It has been our pleasure to work alongside the SCNR in hosting symposia (notably our 'Resistance' Symposium in May 2019), and evening lectures. Full details of the programme of SCNR and *RRR* events can be found on our website.

If you are not already a member of the SCNR, we would whole-heartedly recommend joining. You can also stay up to date with *RRR* and SCNR news by signing up to our mailing list – just email rrr@soton.ac.uk for more details. January 2020 represents an important milestone for *RRR*, both crowning the achievements of 2019, and hailing new beginnings. We are proud to be publishing Issue 2, on the theme of *Resistance*, this afternoon, which exemplifies our interdisciplinary and international reach by publishing the work of scholars, both established and emerging, from across Europe, Canada and North America. This conference also marks a 'changing of the guard', as our inaugural Editor-in-Chief, Zack White, steps down after two years co-founding and running the journal, handing over to fellow co-founder and Deputy Editor Katie Holdway.

We hope that you will enjoy what promises to be a superb day of conferencing, packed with papers covering a wide range of disciplines, topics and periods of the long-nineteenth century. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the conference committee for their help organising this event:

Chair: Katie Holdway

Members: Zack White

William Kitchen

Emma Hills

Prof. Mary Hammond



Romance, Revolution and Reform

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Editorial Board of *Romance, Revolution & Reform*

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Conference Timetable

'REFORM'

Wednesday 15th January 2020 | 9:00 – 17:00

Nuffield Theatre, University of Southampton

8:50-9:20	Welcome, Registration, Tea and Coffee – Nuffield Foyer	
9:20-9:30	Welcome Address 06/1077: <i>Katie Holdway, Conference Chair</i>	
9:30-10:50	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 1: 'Slavery, Abolition & Reform' Location: 06/1077 (Parallel Session) <i>Chaired by Hannah Young</i></p> <p>'Reforming our ideas of the position of enslaved women in British Caribbean slave society in the nineteenth century' Phoebe Style—University of Southampton</p> <p>'In No Way Reform: Philip Klitz's "Blackface" Ballads and Abolitionism in Victorian Southampton' Roger Hansford—University of Southampton Alumnus</p> <p>"That odious traffic": Abolitionary Reform in Captain Beaver's African Journal' Carol Bolton—Loughborough University</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 2: 'Reform, Charity and Campaigning' Location: 06/1083 (Parallel Session) <i>Chaired by Emma Hills</i></p> <p>'English women's campaigning, foreign policy and the crisis in France 1870-71' Sian Kitchen—Independent Scholar</p> <p>"Liberty joined with peace and charity": Elizabeth Inchbald's feminine Revolution' Eva Lippold—Coventry University</p> <p>"Beauty is confined to no people": The Charitable Aestheticism of Mary Eliza Haweis' Laura Allen—Canterbury Christ Church</p>

10:50-11:10	Tea / Coffee – Nuffield Foyer	
11:10-12:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 3: ‘Crime, Punishment, Reformation’ Location: 06/1077 (Parallel Session) <i>Chaired by Adrian Smith</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘Humanity, Honour, or Horrible History?: Re-appraising crime and punishment in Britain’s Napoleonic-era army’ Zack White—University of Southampton</p> <p>“Nothing can wipe out my Civil Code. That will live forever.” The beginning of the 19th century, a time of great law reforms - Napoleon’s Codifications’ Kamil Szadkowski—Jagiellonian University Kraków</p> <p>‘<i>De Profundis</i>, Robbie Ross and Oscar Wilde’s “Reformation”’ Aaron Eames—Loughborough University</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 4: ‘Literature & Reform’ Location: 06/1083 (Parallel Session) <i>Chaired by Katie Holdway</i></p> <p>‘Boredom and the Festive: <i>Hutom Pyachar Naksha</i> in Bengal’s Age of Reform’ Sumantra Baral—Amity University, Kolkata</p> <p>‘The Great (Un)Seen: Urban Lighting and Poverty in the Fin de Siècle Urban Adventure’ Emma Hills—University of Southampton; University of Exeter</p> <p>“No mortal pen may tell the wisdom of this scheme”: The Poetry of Postal Reform’ Karin Koehler—University of Bangor</p>
12:30-1:30	Lunch—Nuffield Foyer	
1:30-2:45	<p>Keynote Location: 06/1077</p> <p><i>Chaired by Katie Holdway</i></p> <p>‘The Slaveholder’s Tale: British Jamaica in an Age of Revolution’</p> <p>Professor Christer Petley</p>	

2:45-3:15	Tea / Coffee – Nuffield Foyer	
3:15-4:15	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 5: ‘Reform, Politics & Society’ Location: 06/1077 (Parallel Session) <i>Chaired by Zack White</i></p> <p>‘The general level of prices: from individual innovation to state production’ Jeff Ralph and Paul A. Smith—University of Southampton</p> <p>‘Mill’s Possible Case for Political Equality’ Ben Saunders—University of Southampton</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 6: ‘Reform, Landscape and the Visual Arts’ Location: 06/1083 (Parallel Session) <i>Chaired by Will Kitchen</i></p> <p>‘The Pre-Raphaelites and their Keatsian Romanticism’ Ester Díaz Morillo—UNED, Spain</p> <p>“‘A wild romantic dell... this is a fine place to talk treason in’: Political Reform and “Natural” Landscapes in Nineteenth Century Rural England’ Leonard Baker—University of Bristol</p>
4:15-4:30	<p>Launch of Issue 2 of <i>Romance, Revolution & Reform</i> and handover Location: 06/1077 <i>Zack White, Editor-in-Chief of Romance, Revolution & Reform</i></p>	
4:30-4:45	<p>Closing Address Location: 06/1077 <i>Katie Holdway, Conference Chair</i></p>	

Panel 1, Room 1077

Phoebe Style

Reforming our ideas of the position of enslaved women in British Caribbean slave society in the nineteenth century.

Abstract: In recent years, the historiography surrounding the dynamics of slave communities in British Caribbean planter colonies has experienced something of a shift. Instead of seeing slave communities as homogenous groups united by their shared exploitation and brutalisation, recent historians have drawn upon a huge range of sources to ascertain the discrepancies, hierarchies and diversities in slave societies that worked simultaneously in order to sustain a profitable system of transatlantic slavery. One of the less explored groups within slave societies is the role of enslaved women, particularly in relation to the domestic life of white male planters. The image of the African female slave in both planter and abolitionist discourse is multifaceted and provides a great deal of insight into the domestic life of Caribbean planters, especially in relation to housekeeping, intimacy and sex.

White planters like the wealthy Simon Taylor present black female slaves as integral to the functioning of day-to-day domestic life. However, in a darker sense, infamous planters like Thomas Thistlewood documented their sexual encounters with slave women almost obsessively. Accounts such as these provide a glimpse into the thought processes of white male planters and how they reconciled the discrepancy between the intimacy of their contact with slave women versus the brutality of rape. This paper seeks to illuminate the image of the African slave woman by looking at what planter correspondence, personal diaries, inventories and wills reveal about the way they were treated in comparison to male slaves, facilitating a deeper understanding of how slave women may have been underrepresented in the grand scope of the British Caribbean slave trade and the lives of white planters living there.

Bio: Phoebe Style is currently studying for a Masters in History at the University of Southampton, with special focus on looking at the history of women, sex and patriarchy.

Panel 1, Room 1077

Roger Hansford

'In No Way Reform: Philip Klitz's "Blackface" Ballads and Abolitionism in Victorian Southampton.'

Abstract: In 1847, Southampton's Philip Klitz (1805-54) added the "blackface" ballads 'Miss Ginger' and 'Dinah Dear' to a craze of cultural production responding to that year's British tour by the African-American musicians, the Ethiopian Serenaders. The music and words of Klitz and his fellow composers from Britain's 'Ethiopian' moment fed a stereotype affecting the portrayal and reception of black musicians here for decades to follow, just as T.D. Rice reputedly pioneered the original white-in-"blackface" comic entertainer. This paper challenges nineteenth-century racism by investigating how a minstrelsy trope functioned in Victorian drawing-room ballads. It applies the study of black caricature to Victorian songs and moots the idea of an orientalist "African Music" that was created or negated for effect in Klitz's compositions. It also examines his wider oeuvre, which upheld a post-emancipation British Imperialist outlook through jingoistic songs themed by militarism, monarchy and religious superiority. However, the composer made a little-known but worthwhile contribution to bourgeois musicianship and pedagogy. A context for the contemporary reception of Klitz's ballads, Southampton echoed a national culture where white or black abolitionism (slavery would continue until 1863 in the USA) and racial stereotyping were not mutually exclusive. Among investigations of how the Victorian arts in Britain constructed race, few give music – specifically the drawing-room ballad – the significance it holds in this paper, which argues that domestic artistic consumption impacted on real-life attitudes and experiences for middle-class participants and wider society. Klitz's parlour songs in no way signal a reform of attitudes to racism – locally or nationally.

Bio: Dr Roger Hansford's research focus is keyboard and vocal music in Victorian Britain. Roger has previously presented papers at the Biennial Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, the Biennial Conference on Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, and at University of Southampton's 'Other Voices Study Day'. His doctoral research attracted funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and led to the 2017 monograph *Figures of the Imagination: Fiction and Song in Britain, 1790–1850* (Taylor & Francis).

Panel 1, Room 1077

Carol Bolton

'That odious traffic': Abolitionary Reform in Captain Beaver's African Journal

Abstract: In 1805, naval officer Captain Philip Beaver (1766-1813) published his *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792*. Modestly declaring in the preface that his account was one of 'shreds and patches' due to his 'salt-water education', it is an absorbing testimony of his superhuman efforts to assist British colonizers in settling the island of Bulama (not far from, and initiated by, the anti-slavery principles of the more famous Sierra Leone colony). Despite the colonial ambitions of this project, Beaver and his fellow travellers were reformists at heart. The high-minded intentions behind the Bulama committee's decision to purchase the island, was to demonstrate the anti-slavery principles that propagation by 'free natives' would bring 'cultivation and commerce' to the region, and ultimately 'civilization [would] be introduced among them'. In setting up a colony that would employ free black workers they intended to benefit the African economy and set a precedent of humanitarian labour for the slave-owning lobby in Britain. This paper will demonstrate how the anti-slavery ambitions of the Bulama Committee led to the extraordinary emigration of 275 men, women and children to Africa in order to create a colony there that would put their humanitarian ideals into practice.

Bio: My research centres on writing of the Romantic period that represents exploration, colonialism, and empire. I have published a number of articles on these subjects and a monograph, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* (2007), as well as a scholarly edition of Southey's *Letters from England* (2016). I have worked as an editor on Southey's correspondence and poetry, and I am currently researching for a monograph on 'The Politics of Place in the Romantic Period'.

Panel 2, Room 1083

Sian Kitchen

English women's campaigning, foreign policy and the crisis in France 1870-71

Abstract: This paper will explore English feminists' responses to the political events in France of 1870-1871 through the historical analysis of women's campaign journalism in the same period. The research highlights the interconnection between women's reform campaigning and attitudes to foreign affairs. The paper argues that women's campaign journalism of the 1860s and 1870s provided an opportunity not only for promotion of women's campaigns but for the expression of opinion on other spheres outside those usually ascribed to women, including foreign events. The research contextualises the responses of English feminists to key international political events and campaigns, such as the anti-Contagious Diseases Acts movement and attitudes to European militarism and to the Paris Commune, and the intersection of the women's suffrage movement with anti-war sentiment, noting that feminist writings of this period were influenced not only by their campaigning but also political ideologies, recognising that feminist responses were formed of a complex intersection of liberal, radical or conservative viewpoints. Importantly, the research challenges notion of a 'collective imaginary' in British attitudes to European affairs, highlighting this is embedded in British masculine notions of self-identity that rely on a contrasting of themselves against a 'foreign other'. The paper argues that women campaigners in the period created their own 'shared imaginary' through strong international networks, which claimed to transcend class and national boundaries. These claims of a 'shared imaginary' may be challenged as themselves emerging from English feminists' experience founded in a background of class and ethnic privilege.

Bio: Sian Kitchen graduated from the University of Hertfordshire with a degree in Literature with Historical Studies in 1998 and completed her masters degree in European History at Birkbeck College, University of London in 2017, where much of her research focussed on aspects of women's and feminist history in Europe in the mid-late nineteenth century and the connections to wider events in the period.

Panel 2, Room 1083

Eva Lippold

'Liberty joined with peace and charity': Elizabeth Inchbald's feminine Revolution

Abstract: While the French Revolution was one of the defining events of the eighteenth century, it is conspicuously absent from female-authored plays of the time. Despite official censorship, women were using the drama genre to write insightful commentary on other political issues, so their silence on such a significant event seems unusual.

There is one exception to this general reticence: Elizabeth Inchbald's 1792 drama *The Massacre*, which shows the effects of revolution on a French family. While Inchbald was still reserved in her commentary (the play was not staged, and she never names the explicit inspiration for the plot), she provides a detailed and moving perspective on the Revolution by a British female playwright. This paper will offer an analysis of Inchbald's unique take on the role of women in political change, and her indictment of the Revolution's descent into violence.

I will show why *The Massacre* is such a unique text in relation to its time and genre, and consider some of the reasons other women were avoiding the same subject. The play is a departure both in style and genre from Inchbald's previous work, and thus reflects the major political and social changes that followed the Revolution. It is also an affecting portrayal of the effects of violence (both personal and institutional) on women, and a call for more reasonable means of reform.

Bio: Having obtained both my BA and MA from Anglia Ruskin University, I completed my PhD in English Literature at Loughborough University in 2018, focusing on the lives and works of female playwrights in the period 1760 – 1800. My work combines textual analysis, performance history, and social and historical context to contribute to the recovery of previously under-researched women writers. At the moment I work at Coventry University as a tutor and lecturer in Academic Writing.

Panel 2, Room 1083

Lauren Allen

"Beauty is confined to no people": The Charitable Aestheticism of Mary Eliza Haweis

In her work *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes*, Diana Maltz investigates the concept of 'missionary aestheticism.' By looking closely at Mary Eliza Haweis's self-illustrated, and often neglected work *Rus in Urbe* (1886) it will become clear how she can be seen to endorse this form of philanthropy. Haweis passed her gaze across London and noticed the need for an aesthetic intervention in the lives of the masses. Her advice is to improve urban spaces through the cultivation of beautiful flowers and plants, which will in turn give "the crowded slum...refreshed air" (*Rus* 13). Alongside *Rus*, she contributed to a discourse that promoted the use of aestheticism for urban improvement with her texts *The Art of Decoration* (1881) and *The Art of Beauty* (1878). She did so through dress reform, as well as through championing individualism, to enable further social change. A cross class appreciation of the aesthetic, Haweis suggested, could inspire reform, which she argues must "not come from above, but below" (*Decoration* 398). Greater artistic freedom, she contends, serves a social purpose. Thus, her works would wrest art from those that would see it in the hands of the few to distribute it to the many. It comes as no surprise that she supported the opening of museums on Sundays "when the busy working man can regularly visit them" (*Decoration* 399). Her texts can therefore fill gaps in the discourse of 'missionary aestheticism' and be considered as part of this artistic, and distinctly middle-class, reform movement.

Bio: Laura Allen is a part-time PhD candidate in the school of Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University. She is researching the life and works of the largely forgotten Victorian author Mary Eliza Haweis. Her main research interests are women's writing and feminism in the nineteenth-century, as well as New Woman fiction.

Panel 3, Room 1077

Zack White

Humanity, Honour, or Horrible History?: Re-appraising crime and punishment in Britain's Napoleonic-era army.

Abstract: Britain's armed forces during the Napoleonic Wars were infamous for their use of the lash. Hansard leaves little doubt that the heavy use of corporal punishment, particularly in the British Army, was a contentious topic that was debated at least once in every year of the conflict, although flogging was not actually abolished in the army for another century.

Historians have, for many years, been aware that there were humanitarian efforts to limit and reform flogging in the army during this period, spearheaded by King George III and his son and Commander-in-Chief of the army, the Duke of York. What has not been appreciated however, is that the imposition of punishments in the army was a far more intricate, multi-faceted and discrete process than the current scholarship suggests.

Drawing on a bespoke database of over 9,000 trials, in addition to soldiers' memoirs, the letters of army commanders, court martial proceedings and the papers of the Judge Advocate General, this paper will rigorously re-examine the process of issuing and implementing punishments under the British Army's military justice system. In the process, it will shed new light on the way in which diverging agendas led to a system where the lash was, conversely, both rigorously used, and frequently remitted. Although pressure to reform the use of the lash was largely ignored by the military courts, questions of honour, and the predominance of a pragmatic system of discretionary justice meant that the King's will was tacitly imposed.

Bio: Zack White is a Doctoral Researcher, and holder of the Archival Scholarship, at the University of Southampton, specialising in crime and punishment in the British Army during the early-nineteenth century. He is co-founder and inaugural Editor-in-Chief of the interdisciplinary research journal *Romance, Revolution & Reform*, the creator of the international online hub and discussion forum www.thenapoleonicwars.net, Post-Graduate liaison for the British Commission for Military History, and co-leader of the 'Bones of Burgos' Project.

Panel 3, Room 1077

Kamil Szadkowski

Nothing can wipe out my Civil Code. That will live forever. The beginning of the 19th century,
a time of great law reforms - Napoleon's Codifications

Abstract: In my speech I will want to focus on the reform of the law and its codification in France, in the time of Napoleon. I will briefly discuss and characterize, in the light of recent research, the most important codifications: the Civil Code of 1804 (Code Napoléon), the Code of Civil Procedure of 1806, the Commercial Code of 1807, the Code of Criminal Procedure/Instruction of 1808 and the Criminal Code of 1810. I will devote the most attention to the Civil Code because its partial innovation and significance exerted a significant influence on modern Civil law. However, contrary to popular belief, it was not a completely innovative code because it was based in part on old legal systems. Most came from Roman law, Canon law, and French customary law. In my speech I will want to pay special attention to these nuances. Codifications of substantive and procedural criminal law are also important because they replaced the institutions known to the inquisitorial process. Similarly, the Penal Code was progressive because it led criminal law towards humanitarianism. There are many legal provisions with imprisonment instead of qualified death sentences. I will also tell about plans to codify the law after the outbreak of the Great French Revolution, about the impact of the law of nature and other ideas and doctrines (liberal-egalitarian) on the final shape of Napoleonic codification. In the last part of my speech I will tell about the further fate of the French codification of Napoleon's time and their influences on the law of continental Europe.

Bio: My name is Kamil Szadkowski, I am a PhD student at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. I graduated (MA) historical studies in 2015 at the University of Lodz and a year later archaeological studies (MA). Since 2017 I have been studying law at the Jagiellonian University and I am preparing a doctoral dissertation about Napoleon's imperial court. My research interests are: history of France (especially the Great Revolution, Napoleon and its era), everyday life in the 19th century.

Panel 3, Room 1077

Aaron Eames

De Profundis, Robbie Ross and Oscar Wilde's "Reformation"

Abstract: While Oscar Wilde was himself a reformer, at various points in his career involved in dress reform, interior design, and the amelioration of conditions for prisoners, this paper will explore the efforts undertaken after his death in 1900 to 'reform', in the sense of 'ameliorate' or 'rectify', public opinion.

I will consider how the publication history of the manuscript which came to be known as *De Profundis*, the long letter to Lord Alfred Douglas written by Wilde when he was incarcerated at Reading Gaol, was utilised by Robert Ross, Wilde's literary executor, as a means to alter public perceptions. Ross, affectionately known to Wilde as 'Robbie', was a critic, writer and sometime manager of the Carfax Gallery. He managed Wilde's estate until his death in 1918, successfully rescuing it from bankruptcy.

This paper will question how far Ross was able to 'reform' and rehabilitate Wilde's reputation, destroyed by his conviction and imprisonment in 1895, and investigate the strategies he employed. With reference to contemporary critical responses, I will investigate the consequences of Ross's decision to publish the private letter *De Profundis*, and the backlash he faced from Lord Alfred Douglas and his associate at *The Academy* T. W. H. Crosland. I will also suggest how this strategy influenced subsequent critics and how Wilde's afterlife was shaped by the publication of new literary material, including forgeries, in the period 1900-1918.

Bio: Aaron Eames is a doctoral research student at Loughborough University. His thesis, supervised by Dr Nick Freeman and Dr Sarah Parker, is entitled 'The Critics as Artists: Oscar Wilde's Sexuality in Biographical Literature, 1900-1967'. His research investigates the development and transmission of ideas concerning Wilde's sexual identity. Aaron is also a committee member of the Oscar Wilde Society and is the editor of their regular e-Newsletter.

Panel 4, Room 1083

Sumantra Baral

Boredom and the Festive: *Hutom Pyachar Naksha* in Bengal's Age of Reform

Abstract: The proposed project will address how the colonial history and rise of urban culture documented in nineteenth century texts has been shaped by the Eurocentric analysis and theories of the twentieth century. The endeavor will be to go through Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hutom Pyachar Naksha*, 1861 (*The Observant Owl*) that can offer a critique of the Eurocentric discourses of "World-history", by invoking alternative Indian discourses of "*Itihasa and samaj*". *Babu* culture, public space, urbanity—the typical markers of Nineteenth Century, turned everyday life into a zone of sheer consumption where everydayness is shared by everyone in society regardless of class or specialty. *Hutom* finds its inception in an ambience surrounded by the *Uddom* (Spirit) of festival which can lead to people understanding and revolutionizing their everyday lives. Boredom, the rhythm of everyday repetition, is the place where colonialism survives and reproduces itself. Modelled on Dickens's *Sketches of Boz*, *Hutom* denounces western conception of everydayness and parodies *Boz*. Through scandal, rumour and farce, *Hutom* not only manipulates the three classes of his time—'Sahebi Old', 'New Class' and 'khas Hindu' but also illuminates what is unusual about usual in everyday life. The playfulness and self-parodying stance of *Hutom* is contrasted with the seriousness of world-history. To choose festival for *Hutom* is to choose freedom from 'everyday' of historia (Hegel) and through festivals, he tries to establish the historicity of everyday life.

Bio: Sumantra Baral is currently a postgraduate student at the Department of English, Amity University, Kolkata. His research interests include Philosophy of Body, Disaster Studies, and Visual Anthropology. He has presented papers at University of Oxford, University of Edinburgh, Jadavpur University and University of Calcutta. As a SUISS alumnus, Sumantra's poems have frequently appeared in University of Edinburgh Journal.

Panel 4, Room 1083

Emma Hills

The Great (Un)Seen: Urban Lighting and Poverty in the Fin de Siècle Urban Adventure

Abstract: The homogeneity and relative convenience of the electric lighting which we enjoy today in the United Kingdom mean that it is largely taken for granted and, excepting the occasional power cut, rarely consciously features in our experience of the world. Yet, at the beginning of its life in the late-nineteenth century, such lighting was a far more visible player in the lives of the urban population. The constant changes and innovations in lighting technology and their affront on the vision of the city's inhabitants, meant that although not new in itself – the city had been lit by individual householder's lamps since the sixteenth century – public street lighting was prominent and confrontational in this period.

This paper focusses on these new infrastructures of lighting as they are implemented in two fin de siècle urban adventure texts, Arthur Machen's *The Three Impostors*, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* stories. In analysing the ways in which lighting is manipulated to avoid, obscure and ignore, and by reading these texts alongside their contemporary narratives of social reform, particularly Charles Booth's poverty maps, it examines how the development of urban lighting influenced the upper-middle class perception of late-nineteenth century 'Darkest London'.

Bio: Emma Hills is a first year PhD student studying the reading of Victorian Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, at the University of Southampton. Specialising in the long-nineteenth century, with primary research interests in Book History, Cultural Heritage, imperialism, and urbanism, her current research focusses on the relationship between the role of literature, imperial ideology, and national identity in Disraeli's reading and subsequent global political agendas as evidenced by his library and papers.

Panel 4, Room 1083

Karin Koehler

'no mortal pen may tell the wisdom of this scheme': The Poetry of Postal Reform

Abstract: This paper considers poems, published in British newspapers in the 1830s and 1840s, about postal reform. I argue that these literary responses to postal reform debates worked to shift attitudes toward infrastructure, reconceptualising access to affordable communications as a right rather than a privilege.

Rowland Hill began his campaign for postal reform in 1837, promoting the introduction of uniform penny postage and prepayment for letters. Over the following three years, the proposed reform was fiercely contested, largely on economic grounds. Proponents argued that more affordable postage rates would not only reduce the Post Office's operational costs, but also, like other infrastructural developments, stimulate commerce and increase national wealth. Opponents of Hill's proposals insisted that the reform could never be financially viable. While political debates focused on economics, the wider cultural discourse moved in a different direction, emphasising the moral, educational, and emotional potential of postal reform as well as the measure's egalitarian nature. Poems with such titles as 'The Universal Penny Postage', 'The Penny Post', or 'The Penny Post-*age*' appeared – and were reprinted – in newspapers across Britain. While these poems play with economic vocabulary, using words such as 'tax', 'frank', and – again and again – 'penny', they sidestep questions of profit and emphasise value instead. While some authors acknowledge that cheaper postage might make the contents of letters worth less (than even a penny), they nonetheless celebrate the benefits of enhanced connectivity. These poems, then, challenge the model of infrastructure as a source of revenue and reimagine it as a public good.

Bio: Karin is a lecturer in 19th Century British Literature at Bangor University. Her first monograph, *Thomas Hardy and Victorian Communication*, was published by Palgrave in 2016 and her articles have appeared or are forthcoming in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, *Victorian Review*, *Brontë Studies*, and *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*. She edits the *Thomas Hardy Journal* and *Hardy Society Journal* and enjoys all kinds of teaching and educational outreach work.

Keynote Address – Room 1077

Professor Christer Petley

The Slaveholder's Tale: British Jamaica in an Age of Revolution

How should the slaveholders' tale be told? Slavery was central to the eighteenth-century empire. Between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, hundreds of thousands of enslaved people were brought from Africa to the Caribbean to toil and die within the brutal slave regime of the region, most of them destined for a life of labour on large sugar plantations. Their forced labour provided the basis for the immense fortunes of plantation owners; it also produced wealth that poured into Britain. However, a tumultuous period that saw the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions, as well as the rise of the abolitionist movement, witnessed new attacks on slavery and challenged the power of a once-confident slaveholder elite. Understanding the tale of the rise and fall of this elite is key to our understanding of slavery, its abolition and legacies. But perhaps it is of wider importance, too. The slaveholders of the British Caribbean were 'ordinary men'. What types of stories do they have to tell themselves to justify the harming of others to advance themselves? This presentation weaves its tale around the stories of one sugar planter, Simon Taylor of Jamaica, to make sense of why slaveholders did what they did, and of how they tried to justify their behaviour and protect their legacies in a changing world.

Panel 5, Room 1077

Jeff Ralph and Paul A. Smith

The general level of prices: from individual innovation to state production

Abstract: The fluctuation of prices resulting from great political and natural events has long been recognised as being harmful to all but the wealthiest in society. In response, rulers and governments have tried to control prices, especially of essential goods, with little success. Today, while central banks attempt to limit price changes, we accept their inevitability and use measures of the “general level of prices” to adjust wages, pensions and benefits. The monthly official consumer price inflation figures are arguably the most important and influential of all economic statistics. Where did these measures come from? Over the course of the period 1780 to 1880, a number of highly innovative and insightful individuals investigated the problems caused by changes in the value of money and gradually worked out the conceptual and practical foundations of how to measure it. While the concepts were developed by these innovators, by 1880 it became apparent that the scale of work needed to produce robust national measures required the resources of the state. From modest beginnings in the 1880s, the Board of Trade established surveys to collect data on retail prices and household expenditure, driven by increasing political calls for better data to determine policy. The Board of Trade produced the first “cost of living index” in 1914. This paper examines the transition from individual innovation to implementation and onward development by the state in creating measures of consumer price inflation.

Bios: Dr Jeff Ralph worked as a statistician for the Office for National Statistics for 14 years, mostly in the Methodology area with a particular focus on price statistics. He retired from the Civil Service in 2018 and now holds visiting academic status in the school of Economic, Social and Political Sciences at Southampton. His research interests include the historical development of Official Statistics and their uses.

Paul A Smith is Professor of Official Statistics in the school of Economic, Social and Political Sciences at Southampton with a particular interest in sampling and estimation methods in government surveys. He worked for 25 years in the Office for National Statistics, spending most of that time in the Methodology area. Paul is a member of the Royal Statistical Society, an elected member of the International Statistical Institute and a member of the International Association of Survey Statisticians and International Association for Official Statistics.

Panel 5, Room 1077

Ben Saunders

Mill's Possible Case for Political Equality

Abstract: Mill infamously argued for a system of plural voting, which is widely rejected by modern democrats. Some sympathetic interpreters have sought to downplay Mill's commitment to these proposals, suggesting that they were merely a transitional measure, but this is contradicted by textual evidence.

I acknowledge that Mill was actually committed to plural voting, but seek to show that his broader political philosophy gives grounds on which he might have rejected it. Mill has two arguments for plural voting. First, he claims it is a matter of justice that the more enlightened should have more say. Second, he argues that plural voting can protect a minority class from majority tyranny. In Mill's day, these coincided in recommending additional votes for the educated middle class but, in other circumstances, they could pull apart. If the more educated were a numerical majority, then the first argument would still say that they were entitled to additional votes, but the second would recommend giving the uneducated more votes.

While modern thinkers are accustomed to think that justice has priority over utilitarian considerations, and thus that the first consideration would trump the second, Mill views justice as whatever conduces to the greatest happiness. If circumstances are such that equal voting better serves this end, then equal voting is not only what we should endorse all things considered, but also what justice requires. Thus, while Mill regarded equal voting as in principle wrong, at least for his society, he may have endorsed it in other circumstances.

Bio: Ben Saunders is a political philosopher at the University of Southampton. Before coming to Southampton, he held posts in Oxford and Stirling. His main research interests are contemporary democratic theory and the moral and political thought of John Stuart Mill. He has published papers on these topics in various journals, including *Ethics*, *Mind*, and *Utilitas*. He is also deputy director of the Faculty of Social Science graduate school.

Panel 6, Room 1083

Ester Díaz Morillo (UNED, Spain)

The Pre-Raphaelites and their Keatsian Romanticism

Abstract: This paper examines the influence of Romantic poet John Keats on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, since Keats became a source of bonding and the strongest poetic influence on the Brotherhood. The aim of this paper is to prove how Keats became, moreover, the connecting link between Romanticism and the Victorian era, thus enabling the continued existence of certain Romantic aesthetic features until the beginning of the twentieth century, in what we could call a neo-Romanticism, immersed in a time of revivalisms and anti-industrialisation. This neo-Romanticism of the Pre-Raphaelites hoped to reform artistic practises in their times, by rejecting neoclassical conventions and the cultural establishment and by expanding the revolution already started by the Romantics in literature to all artistic endeavours.

Just as Romanticism had previously done, Pre-Raphaelitism revolted too against the established order and the artistic conventions, pleading for an artistic renovation and reform. This they did especially through and by Keats, who enabled these artists to transpose relevant qualities such as medievalism, the stress on individuality and imaginative power or the importance of sensuality. That is to say, through Keats and by remaining faithful to him, they incorporated their own visions and preoccupations in their works of art, therefore, expressing their feelings in a very Romantic conception of the individuality of the artist.

Bio: My name is Ester Díaz Morillo and I am a PhD candidate in English Literary Studies at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Spain. My doctoral research focuses on the study of the English poetic language and how it can be translated, adapted or transferred into other languages (i.e. into Spanish) or artistic means such as painting and music, considering these different practices as comparable creative processes.

Panel 6, Room 1083

Leonard Baker

'A wild romantic dell... this is a fine place to talk treason in': Political Reform and 'Natural' Landscapes in Nineteenth Century Rural England.

Abstract: As the struggles for representation intensified in the early-nineteenth century, so too did concerns for the environment. With the ecological consequences of the Industrial Revolution becoming seemingly irreversible, politicians and activists from across the political spectrum began to incorporate 'natural' landscapes into their invectives. However, whilst historians have stressed the centrality of policies such as 'radical agrarianism' to nineteenth-century reformist ideologies, few have studied how these political movements materially exploited the countryside to advertise or achieve their goals. The relationships between rural environments and long nineteenth-century political conflicts have often been portrayed as purely symbolic, with these spaces becoming merely imaginary rhetorical devices. Yet these landscapes were far more than inert stages or symbols; they were physical sites imbued with customary beliefs, communal memories and political meaning. This paper, therefore, will explore how politicians, preachers, orators and protestors utilised or altered rural environments to 'perform' their ideal national government. Through demonstrations that ranged from lone acts of 'tree-maiming' or effigy burning to mass hilltop gatherings, protesting men and women physically remade local spaces into 'exemplary sites', or material embodiments of their desired political order. Consequently, whilst many protest repertoires were inherently local, the identities and ideologies of these crowds were not geographically bounded. By repositioning fields, rivers, woodlands and hilltops as quotidian sources of political agency, this paper will reveal how the countryside encouraged urban and rural groups to challenge national political injustices. Far from being a bucolic background, England's 'green and pleasant land' consistently shaped and facilitated reform movements.

Bio: Leonard Baker is a History PhD candidate at the University of Bristol, whose research explores the connections between protest, customary culture, material space and meaningful place in nineteenth-century rural England. In particular, he studies how protestors physically and symbolically 'remade' contested landscapes during their resistance. He has recently published articles in *History Workshop Journal* and *Romance, Revolution & Reform* exploring trespass as an act of protest and rural electoral culture respectively.