

HISTORY STUDENT

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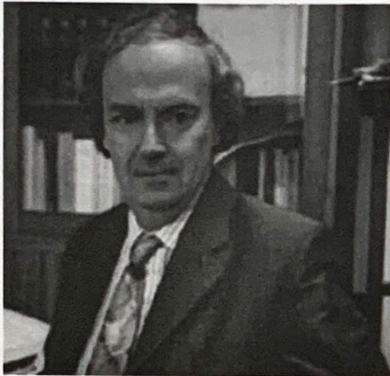


LGBT
lesbian
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history month
2009

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Issue 3

MEET THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

CLAIRE FREESTON TALKS WITH GRAHAM LOUD TO FIND OUT WHAT GET'S HIM BUZZING AND WHAT TURNS HIM ON...AND OFF.



Why History?

It's been my hobby since I was seven! I didn't decide to be an academic from the beginning but History just got me buzzing.

Can you give us a short summary of your career?

I went to University at Oxford and my PhD thesis was entitled, "Church and Society in the Norman Principality of Capua 1058 – 1197." I've been at Leeds for a long time - I lived in Headingley – Leeds' academic ghetto – for years.

What's your favourite period?

My specialist subject is South Italy in the 11th and 12th centuries but at the moment I'm focusing on my love for Medieval Germany. I'm currently in the middle of my next book which will include translated texts about the crusade of Frederick Barbarossa. It is due to be printed in 2010.

Are there any periods you don't like?

Yes – Nazi Germany totally turns me off.

You've had many books published – does it still excite you?

I'm more used to it now as I have eight or nine books out but yes, it still excites me and it's a buzz seeing your name in print. The one I'm most proud of is 'The Latin Church in Norman Italy'. [Editor's note: GAL showed me this masterpiece – it is indeed a lovely tome.] I love books—my office is full of them and my wife is concerned for the floorboards at home as I have so many there too. I should mention Ian Moxon here: he's a great aid to me and an absolutely fantastic Latinist. He assists me with my translations and helps me when I am absolutely stuck, although we sometimes quibble over different translation techniques!

What modules are you teaching this year?

I taught the Medieval and Renaissance Europe course. I have two crusade modules in second year, and my third year Special Subject and Medieval Germany module. My favourite is probably the last one as it's the most fresh and we're using never-before translated texts.

Do you know any famous historians?

The Crusades is a small field so all the historians know each other and we all meet every four years at the International Crusades Conference. Among Crusades scholars I know Peter Edbury and Bernard Hamilton well – I went out with

Bernard's sister-in-law at university!

Do you have any hobbies?

Apart from History?! I'm a great cricket fan, like going to the theatre and I love travelling. I have had two holidays in Provence in recent years (one of my favourite regions), but obviously the region that I really know well is Southern Italy. My favourite place to visit there is Cava di Tirreni, near Salerno, a very beautiful spot where there is a Benedictine abbey that dates from 1011, which also has the largest archive of medieval charters in southern Italy.

If you could be one historical figure for one day, who would you be and when would you be them?

King Roger, founder of the kingdom of Sicily [1096 – 1154], has always interested me. He was very learned, cultured, had remarkable tolerance and he succeeded in brains, not brawn – a rarity in the Middle Ages.

What's your favourite drink?

Very dry white wine. I like malt whiskey, but as you get older, spirits don't tend to agree with you!

What's your favourite place to go out in Leeds?

Going out is an increasing rarity for me, sadly. There used to be a very good Italian restaurant in Headingley called Pietros, I wonder if it's there now...I don't like expensive and pretentious restaurants – in fact, I much prefer going out for lunch in country pubs.

Complete this sentence: "During my History lectures, I want to..."

...convince my students that History is actually fun.

Do you have any amusing anecdotes from your time as a History tutor?

We used to take the Second Year History students on a residential to Northumberland. I remember on one occasion – we were in a fourth floor room and it was very late. There was about four or five staff members and ten students and we'd all had a bit to drink...One said that he fancied a walk but instead of taking the conventional route down the stairs, he climbed out on to the roof! Anthony Wright finally persuaded him to come back in. It's a shame that those trips had to stop as it was good fun and the staff and students mixed and got to know each other but it was just too costly to fund and difficult to organise.

Do you have any as of yet unfulfilled ambitions?

I feel that I still have more of a contribution to make to historical knowledge so I'd like to write more. Also, I've never been to Greece so I'd like to see the Byzantine churches and the Medieval castles in the Peloponnese. Also, one of my friends is now the British Ambassador to Japan so I'm trying to wangle a trip there so that we can stay with him!



FORGET ME NOT? VALENTINE'S: THE HISTORY

AFTER THAT INTERVIEW WITH GRAHAM LOUD, LOVE IS MOST DEFINITELY IN THE AIR. HELEN BRADLEY DELVES INTO THE HISTORY OF THE BIG DAY...

Valentine's Day is a date in the diary that is either eagerly anticipated or regarded with the utmost contempt. It is a holiday celebrated on 14th February to symbolise the exchange of romantic love between two people and commonly takes one of two forms. Some choose to send their sweethearts cards, flowers or chocolates, book a candlelit meal, go for a romantic ice-skate, scatter rose petals, propose... Others prefer to spend the day gnashing their teeth, refusing to emerge from the duvet and listening to angry music. Whichever it was this year for you, Valentine's Day is a globally recognised date even though its origins remain uncertain.



There is some indication that the holiday originated from two Christian martyrs in the ancient period. Although many Christian martyrs went under the name of Valentine, it is Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni that have been recognised and celebrated on the 14th of February. However, though their names suggest some association with the holiday, there appears to be little explicit suggestion of romance related to either priest.

Others stipulate that the association of romance with Valentine's Day did not emerge until the early medieval period. One theory suggests that Valentine was a priest who refused to abide by a law made by the Roman Emperor, Claudius II, which ordered young soldiers to remain single. Claudius II believed married men did not make the best soldiers as their minds were partial to distraction. Refusing to accept this law, Valentine performed many marriage ceremonies for soldiers in secret. On discovery of this practice, Claudius II arrested Valentine and sentenced him to death. On the eve before his execution, Valentine sent the first 'valentine' to his beloved, the jailer's daughter. It was a note signed 'From your Valentine', a phrase that would become synonymous with February 14th.

A significant school of thought however argue the romantic origins of Valentines Day can be first identified in

the works of Chaucer. In his poem *Parlement of Foules* (1382) it states;

*'For this was on seynt Volantynys day
Whan euery bryd comyth there to chese his make.'*

This poem was written to honour the first anniversary of the engagement of Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia. Some however, have argued that Chaucer cannot have been referring to 14th February as birds were unlikely to be mating in England in this season.

In the early modern period, there is little debate about the increased recognition of Valentine's Day. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the character Ophelia uses the term 'Valentine's Day' with significant ease, perhaps indicating that it was a date recognised by many in society;

*'To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.'*

The increased significance and celebration of Valentine's Day can also be identified in the nineteenth century. In Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mr Harrison's Confessions*, she comments upon the English tradition of sending and receiving cards as tokens of affection. Indeed, in 1857 Esther Howland successfully established a business in Massachusetts which created hand-made Valentine's cards. Howland was allegedly inspired to create such a business after she received her own valentine from an English gentleman. The popularity of Esther's business perhaps was an early indication of the future commercialisation of the date.

In the twentieth century the holiday became globally recognised. The US Greeting Card Association estimates that approximately one billion valentine cards are sent each year world-wide, thus making it the second largest card-selling holiday in the calendar. The Association has also predicted that women make up 85% of the receivers of gifts, thus perhaps explaining its association with feminine gifts such as flowers. The origins and existence of Saint Valentine's Day are clearly reliant on fragmentary sources and ancient myths. Perhaps a key reason historical study has proved so difficult is due to the hidden and secretive nature of Valentine's Day. After all, many cards are signed 'From your Valentine' and thus an air of mystery surrounding the date seems very fitting indeed.



WHO DO YOU THINK THEY ARE?

DORINDA GEAR INTERVIEWS LEEDS HISTORY GRADUATE PENNY LAW—
DEPUTY EDITOR OF *ANCESTORS* MAGAZINE, BASED AT THE NATIONAL
ARCHIVES IN KEW, GREATER LONDON

When Penny Law graduated from the Leeds School of History in 2005, she could hardly have imagined that she would soon be adding the title of Deputy Editor of *Ancestors* to her CV.

We're sitting in the bustling café at the National Archives in Kew, where the magazine *Ancestors* is based. Penny says, "It was never what I intended to do, but it's really fun and very varied. I get a few perks; geeky perks, history related perks and it's a fun job." Of her current job, she says it was more luck than stringent planning, "It's tricky because I know really it was 'right place, right time' but I know I'd got good experience – I did bits through university and had some interesting things on my CV, but I certainly wasn't what you'd call qualified to do the job! I worked at Bonhams auctioneers, and I was a volunteer at the Second World War experience in Horsforth for two years. It shows if you're not just doing things for the CV, if you can prove that you're genuinely interested and passionate about something – that's the key."



Photo: Dorinda Gear

Penny's experience is proof of her point, and an example to anyone considering a career in journalism, or indeed any field and worrying about the prospect of added years of postgraduate, specialist training. She says honestly, "I hadn't had any journalist training. Both my parents are journalists and I'm always very anal about grammar and spelling, but other than that I don't have any formal training and I just fell into it." She did, however get some early professional advice that would later prove fruitful, "I did work experience when I was quite young, at the BBC, and a lady there said whatever you do, don't bother doing a Media studies degree. She said at the BBC you learn it all in six months. My parents always said the same: people shouldn't bother to do a journalism degree. If you're on a local paper, for example you're sent to do all these little jobs and you have to pick the skills up, so that kind of degree can be a waste of time."

Her rise to an editorial post may seem like something of a fluke, but she's quick to reinforce the necessity of a strong work ethic. "When I finished university I worked, just as a waitress for six months. Then I went to Paris and studied over there for a bit. Then I came back and thought I better grow up now. All I knew was that I wanted a job that had something to do with history, I wasn't really worried about what it was, so I applied to various film and documentary production companies and various magazines. I did work experience on three, including one here and really it was just a case of working very hard."



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Aside from working hard, one of the best ways to progress in the competitive

world of journalism is to make an impression during work experience or early jobs. That, coupled with a little spontaneity helped Penny establish a new role for herself at *Ancestors*, "I got a scoop; I got an interview with Miriam Margoyles. Pure fluke, I was looking at something online and saw her name. So I just did a Google search and found her agent, and she got back to me straight away and said 'oh, I'd love to do an interview, come round to my house next week', so I went along and had a lovely interview with her. My editor was so pleased because I was just the work experience girl. Eventually the deputy editor was looking to move on and so I sort of fell into it." She is quick to try and dispel some of the mystique surrounding journalism, pointing out that while the reality is often less glamorous than imagined, specialist print journalism offers a stepping stone for fledgling reporters to progress to more high profile work. "It's a small team; it's just me and the editor, a picture researcher and then the design team. Often people are daunted by applying to magazines or production companies that they think are these massive places, but most of them are not and if you can get a foot in and do a job well that's all it's about."

In the coming weeks, Penny will be covering an exhibition linked to the BBC show, called 'Who Do You Think You Are - Live' [Look out for a report on the event in a future edition of HST]. As well as representing *Ancestors* magazine she is expecting to give a short talk on the trendy new process of DNA ancestral analysis. While some companies run reputable tests, an article Penny wrote on the more dubious results she'd had from others got her into some journalistic hot water, "There are lots of different tests you can take. I took a few with different

companies and I would say err on the side of caution. They can be quite expensive. I wrote an article about the various tests, just advising that people be cautious about them. It wasn't damning, it was very fair, but the title was 'Heritage tests – revelation or rip-off?' and all the scanners in tabloid news departments obviously picked up 'rip-off' and after it came out the Daily Mail rang and interviewed me. Then I had a call from Five Live and I had to go on another radio station and talk about it too. For a week my name was two Google pages worth of stuff – my name was mud! It was a bit of an exposé that didn't really mean to be one, but I'm a journalist first and foremost. We were always really keen to point out that it was just one particular type of test, and there are ones that are worth doing."

There's an air of determined optimism about Penny which defies what has been a rather tragic family history. Though her office is based at the National Archives, she admits to not having found the time to do much research on her family. "It's one of those things where you really have to devote a whole day to it; you can't just sit down for an hour or two and expect to find your whole family history." Given what knowledge she has so far, it's easy to see why she may not want to, "My dad's family are all very much South London, and my mum the same but a little bit further out. My mum's mum is Yorkshire; she's from Huddersfield and I know there's a few black sheep there. My maternal great-great grandfather committed suicide; he hung himself when his son, my granny's dad, got married, because he got married to someone below his station. Someone else on granny's side committed suicide too – he'd married a woman who had a baby illegitimately with a doctor who was staying in the house. So the Yorkshire pride was a bit dented. That's almost all I know. I know I had some ancestors on my dad's side that went to Canada, and they all died in a house fire. They lived in a log cabin." She says sadly, "I just stopped going back – it's too depressing!"

Penny confesses to being a stranger to the archive resources compared to her friends, "I never really had to use archives that much. My dissertation was on pubs – which is why Professor Chartres and I got on so well! [Editor's note: Professor Chartres is currently on sabbatical researching the history of gin.] I did all my research going through the Leeds newspapers; so, every single issue of the Leeds Mercury and I used a bit of microfilm. I never had to go outside Leeds, whereas friends of mine were coming to the National Archives, or going to the local and regional archives all the time."

Penny remembers her time at Leeds fondly, "I did completely different things; from Ancient Greece to consumerism in the 1800s...I loved my course; I often think I'd really like to read up about something and write an essay!" Nostalgia takes hold and we spend a few minutes comparing notes on modules and tutors, "Every single one of my tutors was brilliant." She thinks for a moment, "Who's the really cute guy with fuzzy hair who does Ancient Greece and Rome? I love him; he's so sweet. Dr Moxon. I love him nearly as much as I love John Chartres." She gushes, "I love Professor Chartres."

Penny's advice for dissertation writers is much as it is for budding journalists; find something you're passionate about, "I was reading about freak shows in local pubs, mysterious deaths and drunkards and things like that. It was brilliant – and being able to go round all the old pubs of course! I could say 'I'm in the pub, researching; I have to be in the pub otherwise I can't write my dissertation'. I'm not saying everyone should do that. My friend did the AIDS epidemic in Uganda in the 1980s. She was up and down to London, travelling to the archives, ordering stuff in advance...she really liked it, but I was happier typing about beers and circus freaks."

While her work at *Ancestors* and our small capitulation to nostalgia seems fitting fodder for a history graduate, Penny's sights are set firmly on the future. Issues of *Ancestors* are planned months in advance, with a wide team of writers and researchers all handled through the small office at Kew.



Photo: Dorinda Gear

In the next issue of HST, looks out for a report of the 'Who Do You Think They Are - Live' event and Penny takes time out of her busy schedule to take us behind the scenes at the National Archives to explain why it's about much more than looking at dusty old books...



FEBRUARY: LGBT HISTORY MONTH

MATT EDWARDS TELLS US ALL ABOUT LGBT AND THE INFLUENCE IT HAS HAD ON HISTORY



About LGBT History Month

LGBT History month was first celebrated in the UK in February 2005 to mark the diverse ways lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual individuals have influenced British history. It is also intended to raise awareness of, and combat prejudice against an otherwise substantially invisible minority. A major issue being concentrated on this year is the Holocaust.

LGBT People and the Holocaust

At least 15,000 LGBT individuals died during the Holocaust. This is the number of recorded deaths of prisoners interned for homosexuality, but things get blurred when one considers that many homosexual prisoners were probably also Jewish, communist etc.

Despite being technically illegal in pre-Nazi Berlin, LGBT culture prospered. It was indeed the most gay-friendly city in the Western world. From the start the Nazis did not like homosexuals and began enforcing the anti-gay Paragraph 175. They effectively destroyed the most thriving gay community in the world in less than a year.

Gay men were often treated very badly in concentration camps, not only by guards, but by fellow inmates. After World War II, this treatment remained unacknowledged by most countries. It was not until the 1980's that governments acknowledged this episode and it was not until 2002 that the German government officially apologised to the LGBT Community for the persecution that they suffered under the Nazi Party.

With such little recognition of this aspect of the Holocaust, it is naturally important for the LGBT community to draw attention to it and focus on this aspect during 2009's LGBT History Month.

LGBT History Month @ Leeds University

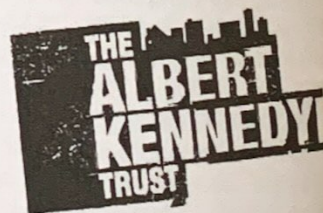
With nearly two dozen events taking place during February, this year's LGBT

history month has been the largest ever organised at the University of Leeds.

The LUU LGBT Society and Assembly worked with Amnesty International, Film Society, Students for a Sensible Drug Policy and the University Equality Services to provide a comprehensive programme of events. These ranged from film showings to debates on the compatibility of religion and 'alternative sexuality' and were geared at raising awareness of issues facing the LGBT community not just in the UK but across the world.

The main event was club night 'Love Music Hate Homophobia', a two-roomed extravaganza in the Student Union building. In Mine, there was a band night featuring Jacob's Stories, White Boys For Gay Jesus and Izzie Voodoo. The LGBT Society's club night, 'Smash the Closet' featured in Pulse for those who would rather just dance the night away.

The money raised throughout the entire month will be going to the Albert Kennedy Trust. AKT are a charity providing safe, supportive homes for young LGBT people who would otherwise be homeless or in a hostile environment.



For more information on LGBT History Month at Leeds University please contact Maryam Ahmad, LGBT History Month Coordinator and LUU Equality & Diversity Officer m.ahmad@luu.leeds.ac.uk or Matt Edwards, LUU LGBT Society Events & Promotions Officer matthewedwards1987@yahoo.co.uk. A full listing of the Leeds events appears opposite.

For more information on joining the LUU LGBT please contact Matt Edwards at the email address above.



LGBT History Month is a time when we can explore and share some hidden aspects of our past, both recent and remote. We have a fun packed and insightful programme lined up with events ranging from quiz nights, film showing, informative lectures and much much more. Everyone is welcome whether L, G, B, T or something else.

To have your event listed on the LGBT History Month programme or to publicise on the website please contact LUU Equality and Diversity Officer and LGBT History Month Coordinator, Maryam Ahmad: m.ahmad@luu.leeds.ac.uk.

Sun 1st Feb | Quiz Night | 8pm
Library Pub | Come join the LGBT Society at the official opening of LGBTHM and maybe win a prize. Presented by Molly G.

Thu 5th Feb | Film Screening
17:30 - 19:30 | Speakman Lecture Theatre, Textiles & Design | Join the School of Art as they show both Queer Fear I and II: The Sexual Cleansing of Iraq and Homecoming. Refreshments will be available.

Thu 5th Feb | LGBT Issues Display | 10:30 - 16:00
Parkinson Court | The LGBT Society will be putting on a display covering various issues relevant to the LGBT Community.

Mon 9th Feb | AGENDA: LGBT & RELIGION II | 17:30 - 19:00 |
Manmade Fibres LT 2 (3.04) Building on the success of last year's event, Pav Akhtar, Chair of the Muslim LGBTQ group Imann and Dr Ron Knott, the Northern Rep for the Evangelical Fellowship of LGB Christians will be joining other speakers to discuss faith and LGBT.

Tue 10th Feb | Tongues United and other short films | 1pm onwards |
School of Art Foyer | A collection of short films that each highlight an everyday issues that the LGBT Community faces.

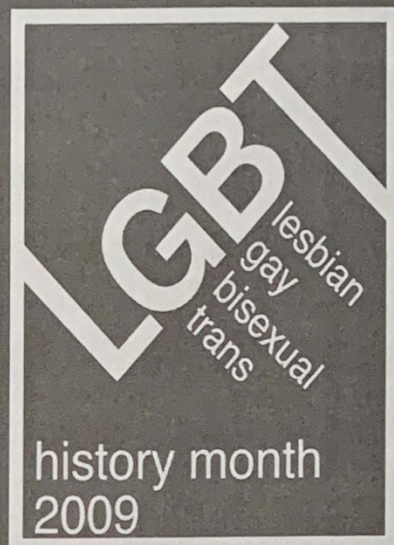
Tue 10th Feb | Positive Voices presented by THT | 17:00 - 19:00
Parkinson SR B:11 | Terrance Higgins Trust present a workshop dealing with the human side of living with HIV. This promises to be an interesting and eye-opening experience dealing with an issue that is still very relevant to the LGBT Community.

Thu 12th Feb | LGBT and Drugs: LGBT rights and the drug reform movement | 17:00 - 19:00
Parkinson SR B:09 | Sarah McCulloch, Associate Director of Students for a Sensible Drug Policy and LGBT rights activist discusses the controversial topic of drugs reform and the LGBT community.

Fri 13th Feb | Love is a Human Right | All Day |
Outside the Union | Amnesty International lead the way presenting the true state of LGBT rights across the world.

Wed 18th Feb Bi NOW! | 14:00 - 15:00 |
ARC Room 3 | Blurred sexual preference? Totally straight but find people of the same sex hot from time to time? Come to Bi NOW!, a workshop to find out more about all things bisexual from Kinsey to bisexual erasure in the media.

Thu 19th Feb | AGENDA: LGBT & POLITICS | 17:00 - 19:00
Parkinson SR B:10 | LUU LGBT Society would like to invite you to the fourth of our AGENDA debates. This time we turn our attention to the issue of Politics and discuss various topics relevant to the LGBT Community from a party political perspective.



Fri 20th Feb | LGBT Film Festival
11:00 - 23:00 | Peanut Gallery Film Soc are hosting a festival of LGBT Films in Peanut Gallery through the day. All are welcome to pop in and take a break whilst appreciating some of the best 'gay' films around.

Mon 23rd Feb | Trans Awareness Workshop | 17:00 - 19:00 |
ARC Meeting Room 8
A workshop presented by the LGBT Society's Trans officer Jacob on issues related to the Trans Community

Wed 25th Feb | LGBT Issues Display | 10:30 - 16:00 |
Outside the Union | For those who missed the display on the 5th, it's presented again outside the Union building.

Wed 25th Feb | Love Music Hate Homophobia | 7pm till late |
Mine & Pulse | The finale of LGBT History Month. In Mine, a band night featuring Jacob's Stories, White Boys for Gay Jesus and Izzie Voodoo. In Pulse, the Union's club night, Smash The Closet. Tickets are £6 in advance and £7 on the door.





WHAT IF... AFRICA HAD NOT BEEN COLONISED?



**SIAN BALLETT TAKES US ON A TENTATIVE JOURNEY INTO THE WHAT-MIGHT
- HAVE BEEN'S OF HISTORY**

The colonial period in Africa dominated the 19th century and much of the 20th century. Colonialism affected Africa both positively and negatively, and continues to do so. But how would the continent, and indeed the world, have changed if Africa had not been colonised?

Colonial power structures are thought by many to have provided the roots for many of the despotic governments in Africa today. The colonial state promoted selfish and corrupt thought in that it showed Africans that if you held power then you could reward and be rewarded. Governments in Africa copy colonial predecessors and attempt to control the local level rule. In Angola tribal chiefs, the Sobas, have attempted to keep traditions and culture alive. Without colonialism would this system of community meetings and councils of elders have developed within a modern democratic system to form 'African Democracy'?

Many of the Sobas in Angola have been bought by corrupt government, and we must speculate as to whether this corruption would exist if colonialism had not occurred. As so much of African countries' budgets are dependent on foreign aid donors, the power also lies with these sources. African voters feel unable to hold their governments accountable as this power was taken away by international creditors. Without colonialism would Africans have had a stronger and more influential voice?

When Africa was colonised it was carved up by the imperial powers. The new boundaries showed no regard for families, tribes or rival kingdoms. People who previously had been enemies were suddenly forced to define themselves in these new groups. If rival kingdoms had not been forced to think of themselves as one population then would so many of the divisions and splits that have weakened Africa have still occurred? Would tribal rule be strong? And if it had, would these tribes have remained in their traditional form or would they have changed with the years to emulate a more modern style of government?

Colonialism has led to former colonial powers perpetually viewing Africa and Africans as victims leading to a lack of self-esteem. Attempts by former colonial powers to raise money and awareness to 'fix' Africa have been argued to be maintaining the dependency culture created by colonialism. Commentator Yasmin Alibhai Brown accuses organisations such as Live Aid of, 'infantilising an entire continent'. If

colonial powers had not taken over Africa then would Africa have developed in the same way as the Western World? And if not then would the west still view Africa as a charity project? Or without the interruption of colonial powers would Africa have been able to develop in its individual way and be strong enough to resist the West's views and interference?

Uganda relies on foreign aid for nearly half the country's budget. However, it is not that Uganda cannot fund its own development, the government simply does not collect taxes it is owed, and uses money for its army and political patronage. Allen Kagina, Commissioner General of Uganda's tax authority said, 'The URA has been lax in collecting...If donors cut off we'd have to collect 100%'. If Africa had not been colonised then would it have developed its own tax systems and administration? Would they be more suitable and successful than the post-colonial systems that are in place? And the taxes that the colonial governments collected whilst in power? Without them where would western countries be?

Colonialism established buildings, currency and uniforms that have been passed on to Africa today. It would be interesting to see what uninterrupted creativity would have spawned. There is also the issue of race. Without colonialism this issue could be different. Equal rights movements around the world may have been strengthened by an unexploited black continent, and may have felt more powerful with the backing of African governments. Attitudes to race may also have been different without the development of the racial arrogance of colonial attitudes.

Colonialism had positive effects on Africa such as its aid in the elimination of slavery. Its introduction of forced labour provided the means for the introduction of tax. It brought medicine to Africa and improved peoples life expectancy. Also, colonialism may not have affected Africa as much as this. We must remember that environmental poverty greatly affects Africa's development. Colonialism is only one episode in a long history of changes in Africa.

Perhaps it is time for us to think more creatively about the future. Many Africans believe the trauma of colonialism needs to stop being used as a reason for all of the continents problems, the belief that aid will help is also being re-examined. Maybe this change in attitudes will promote deeper thought about Africa's issues and we will see Africa enter a new episode in its long history.



THE DEBATE: DO LEGENDS, MYTHS AND FOLKLORE HOLD ANY HISTORICAL VALUE?

MIKE HARRIS: "Myths merely serve to divert attention from real History."

There is no other way to go about arguing 'no' to this question other than to be bold and straightforward, so I will begin my argument with a statement; 'when writing or talking about history, facts are paramount.' For example, historical evidence is usually useless without dates and they serve as a key reference point from which to centre discussion. I'm sure everyone reading this can remember a time when they have tried to remember streams of numbers and the events attached to them, because without a 'what happened when', historical discussion is almost pointless. Cynical as it may sound, without dates, the past is merely a blur.

If we are to actually define the concept of accurate history, then we can see that it is incomparable with that of myths and legends. I will take the example of Ancient Greece to help illustrate my point. Actual accurate history of the ancient Greeks, such as the development on the Polis from 800 BC onwards, cannot be intertwined with the popular tales that were told at the time, and that are still known today. Examples of this are the epic poetry of Homer, such as the *Odyssey* and the *Illiad* and interaction with the ancient Greek Gods. What we can see is that this is not at all comparable in terms of accurate history.

Legends also serve to confuse real history. When Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his fanciful and unbelievable stories of King Arthur in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, completed in 1138 and the origin of the interest in Arthurian legend that is still prominent today, he also wiped away any hope of gathering together factual information about the real British king that King Arthur was based upon. Therefore, even though primary evidence still exists that a king fought his last battle at Mount Badon in 537 with his nemesis Medraut, (Mordred in legend) it is questioned by historians due to the later meddling of Monmouth and others.

As is true for any legend, once a historical event is given to the vernacular without being written about for a length of time, it will take on a fluid nature and, becoming exaggerated, will be turned into a story solely for the purpose of entertainment. If we concentrated on History's fabricated stories that have stood the test of time passed down in entertaining myths and legends, we would miss what really made civilisations great; inventions, art, literature and ways of thinking. The great historical contributions interlinked with everyday life are not based in myths or folklore. Therefore, these legends cannot be included as part of accurate history due to their fluid and largely vernacular nature. They merely serve to divert attention away from actual lessons to be

learnt from history, and confuse events and facts so that they become stories which are useful for entertainment, but useless for learning.

MICHAEL BIRD: "Myths influenced the very cultures which created them, rendering them indispensable."

When studying history we often get caught up in the value of events, dates and places; things that are obviously important but can never constitute the complete story or experience of the past. For example, when looking at the Roman civilisation, it is obviously important to place study in a dated context, know that Claudius invaded Britain in 43AD, know who ruled Rome when, and a million other factoids. However, the importance of a more liquid and evasive social history is essential in understanding the mindsets of the individuals that shaped this history. A huge part of what shapes social history is the way in which people within a civilisation interact with each other, the traditions they form and accumulate, the ideas they share, and therefore the culture they create. Following this, a huge part of culture from a very early period has been a belief in the mystical: legends, myths and folklore. So, whether written down or performed in the vernacular, these are indispensable in delving deeper into the thoughts and feelings of the people who lived in whatever age it may be that we are studying.

As an example then, the Ancient Greek's legends and myths constituted a huge part of their actual religion, and therefore were pervasive arguably pervasive in formulating their behaviour. This can be seen in Greek myths such as Theseus and the Minotaur, where one lone man enters the twisting lair of a beast who has killed many others and hunts down the monster in an act of heroic courage and bravery, thus defying the efforts of Daedalus, (creator of the labyrinth,) and King Minos, (supposed son of the Greek god Zeus, and owner of the Minotaur's labyrinth under the Palace at Knossos). This myth is just one of many which encouraged the positive action and bravery of Grecian individuals, and its effects can be seen in the mindsets of the warlike Spartans.

It can be seen then how culture and consequently myths, legends and folklore obviously influence the very real actions of individuals, and thus cannot be discounted from holding historical value even if they are fictitious. The messages and morals behind folklore give us an idea of what the cultures who invented them held to be important values in people, and also influenced in turn the very cultures that created them.



SEE THE WORLD

OUR INTREPID EXPLORERS DISCOVER THE WORLD SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE LEEDS...

Sarah Gibbons discovers Normandy, France...

My first impression of Normandy was how much it looked like Kent, where I live, with its traditional country villages and vast stretches of patchwork fields scattered with hay bales. I had never been more North in France than Paris, so was quite surprised by how different the landscape was in Normandy compared to the South. The first night we stayed in medieval Bayeux which was spared damage during the Second World War, and so still retains its medieval feel with a grand Romanesque cathedral and cobbled streets, lined with charming shops and cafés. It is famous for the tapestry, recording William the Conqueror's invasion of England in 1066, (sadly a complete rip off to see which put us off going.)

During our three days in Normandy, we set about visiting many of the notable sites and memorials from the Second World War. We began with the D-Day beaches. It is hard, when walking along the white sandy beaches in the sunshine to get a sense of the horror and destruction that happened there in 1944 but hearing personal accounts

really made a difference and made the experience far more poignant. Among the list of places we visited Pointe de Hoc really stood out from the rest; mostly due to the impossible task the American soldiers had been set during the Normandy landings here. After disembarking their boats on D-Day, they had to climb up a very steep cliff whilst being shot at by enemy artillery. It was unbelievable that anyone survived to get to the top, let alone to capture the German guns a mile inland from the cliffs. The Merville gun battery which fired on Sword beach during the invasion of Normandy was also well worth a visit. They hold a sound and light show inside the perfectly preserved bunkers, re-enacting the sounds the Germans would have heard during the bombings. I personally found that experience quite frightening so I cannot imagine how scary the real thing would have been!

There are sites worth visiting all over Normandy, and you usually only had to pay if you want to look around the museums. I never would have thought that I would have found visiting these sites so fascinating and thought provoking. It brought the enormity of the Second World War military operation to life, yet now all that remains is a calm and tranquil countryside.

Danielle Sheridan visits Hong Kong...

Hong Kong, also known as, "Fragrant Harbour", ironically, is anything but 'fragrant'. Instead, Hong Kong is affected by the suffocating amount of pollution that China inflicts on its people. Walking down the streets, I remember looking up at the blue sky and thinking how sceptical my friends were when I told them I intended to go to Hong Kong. "It's so smoggy over there; it won't feel like a summer holiday!" they said. I chuckled to myself; it certainly was not smoggy but my friends were right about one thing; it was not a typical summer holiday, but a highly cultured adventure.

During its rocky history, Hong Kong has been passed between many foreign powers, firstly being occupied by Mongols and then the Qing Dynasty. These rulers refused the importation of opium, causing the Opium War with Britain in 1839 which resulted in British occupation. In answer, Kowloon developed into an isolated area, ravaged by anarchy, drug problems, murder, rape and the evolution of the 'triads' or Chinese Mafia. As a tourist in the 21st Century, one would never know that it was once the source of corruption as the peaceful 'Gardens of Four Seasons' and 'The Yamen' (the only historical building which was restored to its Qing Dynasty look), make Kowloon look idyllic.

I couldn't help feeling throughout my 'holiday', that it was a shame Hong Kong had not retained more of its

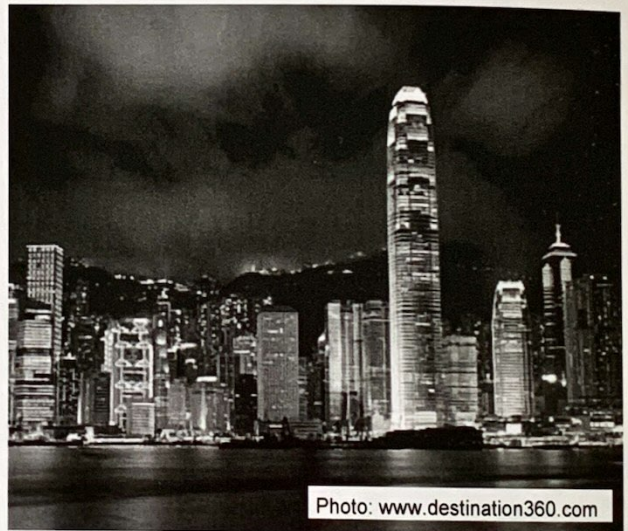


Photo: www.destination360.com

culture as what I noticed the most was how Westernised it was. Being completely ignorant to the history of Hong Kong, I simply presumed everything would be fantastically oriental. In the main tourist parts, such as The New Territories, buildings looked much like they do in England, albeit slightly more cramped and compact as the population for such a small island is overwhelming. However, it is well worth exploring the heart of Hong Kong, where you can find some monumental sights that the British did not 'westernise' when they took power in the nineteenth century and many places remain true to the Chinese culture and especially Buddhism.

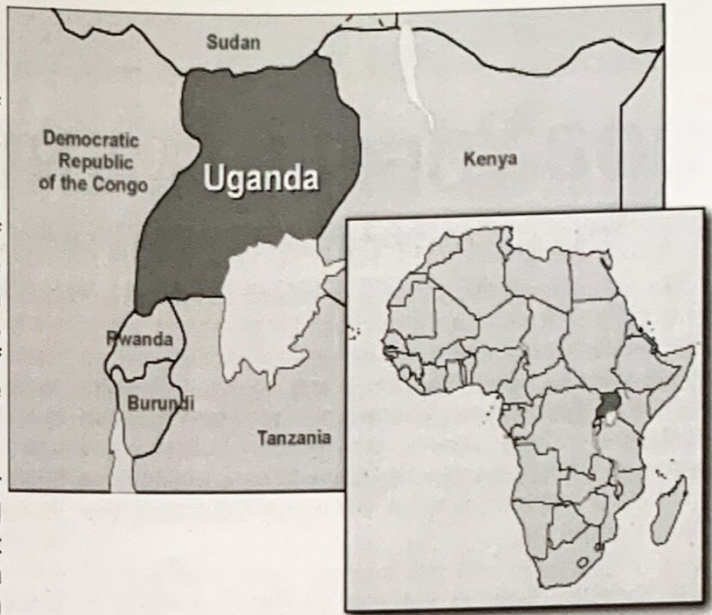


Tory Coates goes to Uganda...

Stepping out into Entebbe airport I had visions of McAvoy being brutally attacked in Duty Free, as you find him in *The Last King Of Scotland*. The brutality of Idi Amin's regime is widely publicised and accounts for the negative perception of Uganda today. This conception ignores the glowing example of Empire that Uganda represented before Amin's reign. Uganda was once described, by Churchill, as the "Pearl of Africa" and this image continues to encapsulate the lush and welcoming environment.

Tourists have recently ventured to Uganda for excitement and adventure; they have found gorillas in the wild, lions, and elephants in Mount Elizabeth and Murchison Falls National Parks - a fantastic experience overall. For the adrenaline junkies whitewater rafting Grade 5 rapids down the Nile is the only attraction Uganda has to offer. However for a student on a budget I found the serene beauty of the Ssesse Islands and the dramatic scenery of the Crater Lakes near Fort Portal gave a more accurate depiction of Uganda.

Traveling around Uganda, despite being told that roads had improved, was still a death defying experience. The only training the mutatu (minibus) driver seemed to have been given were the commands to cram passengers into his vehicle with no thought of their welfare, drive as fast and recklessly as he possibly could and never give way under any circumstances. Cycling with maniacs like this on the road was dangerous at best. My Ugandan bicycle - also dangerous in itself: think no gears, poor brakes, far too big, and on which stopping meant falling - made me

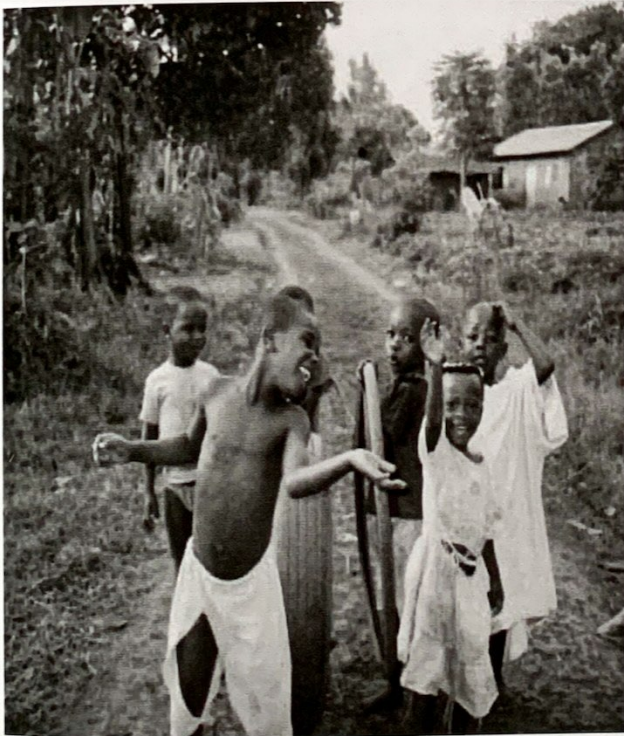


"Muzungo, how are you", roughly translated as "white person, hello", and I feel that these welcoming calls represent the friendliness of the people in west Uganda. Their bold grins show their resolute nature in the face of civil war in the North and the devastation caused by HIV.

Their encouragement meant I reached the Crater Lakes intact with enough energy to tackle the climb. The view of the numerous and dramatic lakes was well worth it, and was made all the more enjoyable by the myths my tour guide related to me. One particularly gruesome belief is about one of the lakes, which is tainted a reddish-brown colour. Urban legend has it this used to be green-blue until Amin had several traitors killed and pushed into the lake...

Nevertheless, after all this activity a few days recuperation was needed, including reading, kayaking and aimless wandering around the Ssesse islands. The Ssesse islands are situated in the middle of Lake Victoria and this isolation means they have missed out completely on any of the economic and social development that the rest of the country has seen. Staying at the Hornbill campsite, on Buggala Island, was pretty basic but the fantastic communal dinners were worth the expense. My stay was greatly enhanced by meeting a "crazy muzungu", whose drinking, smoking and outrageous views have gained him a place in the Lonely Planet. His often racist, and outlandish views on international aid made interesting listening to around the table, as did his penchant for young English-girls!

Uganda conforms to the normal Western stereotype of Africa: uncommercialised, rural, and poverty stricken. Whilst this does obviously pose a number of problems and heartbreak for Western visitors, it does retain a certain charm. My advice would be to visit now before the uniqueness of Uganda and Africa as a whole is lost to the commercialized apathy and 'Have a nice day' culture that globalization and Westernisation so often bring.



long for the easy ride through Hyde Park! Despite the pitfalls, this encounter with Ugandan culture was one of the most memorable. As I shakily passed houses, schools and markets children would run out crying



DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT IN MICHAEL SADLER IS TO RECEIVE A FACELIFT FROM MARCH. HST KEEPS YOU CLUED UP...

The History Department is to be refurbished this year. In March, History will move temporarily to Hyde Terrace, near the Faversham, where they will operate until September 2009. During this period, builders and designers will refurbish all the History Department's offices and help create a more social and welcoming atmosphere to the department.

The foyer will become a space for History students to socialize together, offering comfy chairs and a place to relax. This space will also allow societies and groups of students to hold meetings and events and it is hoped that the History Society will make use of it from next year. The second foyer across the hall will become a work-space with computers, desks and power points for laptops. Due to space issues, the department will still not be home to much teaching but the staff hope that there will be more of a community feel to the third floor of Michael Sadler.

Laura Pattison, President of the History Society, said, "The new refurb is exactly what History students need! Living at

the top of what feels like a million stairs, the Department has been waiting for something like this to attract students to spend more time up there. If you look around you will actually find a whole host of information and resources available and waiting to be used. The new space will also provide the perfect location for group work so all in all it's fantastic!"

There is still discussion about what to do with the Grant Room. Like the rest of the floor, this will be refurbished and will still be used for teaching purposes. However, the department is interested to know what other ideas students have for this space. If you have any suggestions as to what could happen to the Grant Room, please email James Curtis, the Student Rep: jcurtis07@hotmail.co.uk.

The Department will let all History students know more about the specifics of the move in due course.



Photo: www.destination360.com

Ok, so Michael Sadler probably won't resemble the Sistine Chapel when it's all done. I don't think Leeds decorators are this good. Still, it'll be an improvement...



LETTERS FROM THE HISTORY SOC

KATHERINE FLINT REVIEWS THE CHRISTMAS BALL

On the 2nd of December, two hundred History students and staff donned their glad rags and made their way to the Queens Hotel for the annual History Christmas Ball. The night was filled with fantastic music provided by Leeds band 'deFunk!', copious amounts of wine and a delicious three course meal. A champagne reception greeted the guests on their arrival, after which they were invited into the ballroom where dinner was served. Following no doubt a few too many glasses of wine, the revellers began to fill the dance floor, enjoying the jazz tunes played by the band, and later the music played by the DJ. A professional photographer was on hand to take some superb pictures of the night, some more memorable than others as the night wore on!

The whole night went without a hitch, despite the slight power failure the DJ seemed to experience at one point, and succeeded in getting everyone in the Christmas mood. It was a brilliant way to see out the first semester of the year, and no doubt next year's will prove to be just as successful! A BIG thanks to all our guests, the fantastic band, the Queens Hotel, the History Department and the HIST SOC committee.

Photographs from the evening are available to buy from www.artsphotography.co.uk, and the password to view the pictures is, (surprise, surprise) 'history'.



Don't forget to keep your eyes peeled as the History Society is in the process of organising socials, talk evenings, film nights and much more...



WHEN IN ROME... BY LAURA PATTISON

Pack your bags, drop your books and grab a bottle of Peroni because the History Society is off to ROMA! This fantastic city is bursting with an abundance of historical marvels for our budding eyes to see and our curious brains to absorb. Open to all, even scientists, the annual History Society trip is an experience not to be missed.

Having visited cities such as Amsterdam, Prague and Krakow in previous years Rome is set to top the list of destinations as we take the biggest group on tour in the history of the History Soc. We will be spoilt rotten with historical landmarks including the massive marble structure that is the Colosseum (Maximus Decimus Meridius here we come!), the Fontana di Trevi ('La Dolce Vita' - try and stop me) and we will have the opportunity to experience a world of artistic delights with the chance to see Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Italy Heaven also offers great nightlife (even if all you want to do is drink champagne and prance around in fountains waiting for Marcello) so there really is nothing Rome doesn't have to indulge the student!

If you are interested in Roaming the streets with us then get in touch with Laura Pattison (hy06llrp@leed.ac.uk). We fly on 7th June and return on 11th.

Until then,

Ciao bella xxxxxxx



'THE DEVIL'S WHORE'

JOCELYN PAYNE REVIEWS HISTORICAL BASED FILMS GUARANTEED TO POP YOUR CORN...

Channel 4's recent series 'The Devil's Whore' is a dramatic story of love against the background of the English Revolution. The main character, Angelica Fanshawe, is portrayed as a modern woman in the tumult of the seventeenth century; very independent and outspoken. She



Photo: www.channel4.com

is confident enough to risk arrest and death to help her friends and her cause, and proves attractive to many different men including two husbands, her almost-lover Christian, and the devoted Edward Sexby. She is a challenge to authority, evoking the constant pursuit of Joliffe. With his own sword she killed the man who tried to rape her. But Angelica Fanshawe never existed.

With the help of Stevie Davies' book 'Unbridled Spirits - Women of the English Revolution' (London, 1998) I intend to find out who the real heroines of the Civil War were, and whether Channel 4's 'The Devil's Whore' did them justice.

It is important to remember that, for most women at this time, life continued as it always had; a cycle of child-bearing and housework. For them, it was accepted that politics was part of the male world, be they upper or lower class, Parliamentarian or Royalist. 'Revolutionary' women who stood out for their beliefs and actions were frequently frowned upon. 'Liberty of conscience' was the aim of the early Parliamentarians, but not for women. Yet women still had to bear the consequences of the Civil Wars and the Interregnum; tending the wounds of their husbands, sons and fathers, carrying on after the death and destruction of battles and watching their children starve as a result of Cromwell's crushing taxes.

There were of course those women who would not accept this lot. There are reports of some dressing as men for battle, for example Jane Ingleby who fought at Marston Moor. Other aristocratic women commanded the defence of their houses or castles in the absence of their husbands. Notably, the Countess of Derby swore she would fight the Parliamentarian army to the death before she surrendered Lathom House to them. In 'The Devil's Whore' Angelica gallantly tries to

compel Harry to fight for the freedom of Fanshawe House, although he relinquishes their home without resistance.

Equally, the nameless masses cannot be forgotten. Although few single names survive from the 1643 Peace Mob, this group of women sporting the white ribbon and campaigning against the wars, caused

such a commotion at Parliament that arms eventually had to be used to dispel them. It comes as no surprise that even before the Revolution of the late 1640's, there existed women who would today be termed 'feminists' and it is thus apparent that it would be these women who would join more radical social, political and religious groups, such as the Quakers, Levellers, Diggers or Ranters. It was in these groups that women could have their opinions heard as equal to the men's. Angelica highlights the shortfalls of these groups. When asked to leave the Digger community, she asks 'If men and women are equal, why do the women work in the fields during the day, then prepare the men's dinner at night?' In real life, it was the Leveller women who petitioned, 'Have we not an equal interest with the men of this nation, in those liberties and securities contained in the good laws of the land?'

One character in the program who was very much a real person was Elizabeth Lilburne, wife of the Leveller leader 'Honest' John Lilburne. She stands out for her unceasing support for her husband, continuing the distribution of his illegal propagandist pamphlets after his arrest, and indeed her own arrest in 1647 followed this act. It was reported that in 1648 she stood between John and the soldiers muskets when he was taken to the Tower of London. In the production, Elizabeth storms into Parliament threatening to kill Cromwell if her husband is found guilty of treason, and indeed in real life her letters and personal addresses to the Protector are well documented.

In the long term, with the Restoration in 1660, the world returned to much the same as it had always been and women resumed their subservient places. But the preceding two decades had given women a glimpse of a world in which their voice mattered. The women of the Revolution, it could be said, began the real battle for women's equality. 'The Devil's Whore' pays homage to just

MEET THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

WE CHAT WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S UNASHAMED 'S CLUB' FAN...
DR. ALEX BAMJI



Why History?

Well I got interested when I was at school. I think I was fascinated by the fact it was real. I liked English, but I liked reading about real events and especially about the lives of real people rather than things like battles!

of poetry. I'm not sure what Voltaire would make of her though.

If you could be one historical figure for one day, who would you be and when would you be them?

I think I'd be a Doge. I would have to be someone from Venice wouldn't I?! I mean, the Doge has a great hat, an amazing golden boat and he's the head of state. He knows everything that's going on, even if doesn't have as much power as many heads of state. And I quite like knowing what's going on! If I had to pick a particular Doge I'd go for Andrea Gritti as he built lots of interesting things and really reshaped the city.

Any hobbies?

I'm really into music; I used to sing in a choir and I play the flute. I don't do that now but still like to go to concerts. But I like a wide range of music, not just classical. And I love to spend as much time as possible in Italy.

Which period do you specialise in?

I'm an early modernist but I mainly look at the 17th century, particularly Venice. A lot of my teaching here at Leeds draws on my research interests - bringing in things like Inquisition records, and the history of medicine.

Why did you choose to teach at Leeds

I liked the fact that it's a big university and a big city. I really like big cities and there's lots going on - it's all quite exciting! It's also a large department with lots of people doing different types of history. And it's great that you're allowed to do new things - I'm taking my special subject to Venice at Easter which should be fun!

Where are you from originally?

I'm originally from Kent. Sometimes people can't place my accent, and I've had people ask me if I'm from New Zealand or Australia!

What books or articles have you had published?

I have had one article published, called 'The control of space: dealing with diversity in Early Modern Venice?' It's about the relationship between space and disease in Venice.

If you could have three historical guests round for dinner, who would it be and why?

It's tough to pick three, but I think my first one would be Voltaire; I'm a big fan of him, and think he's very funny and very clever. He'd be good for conversation. I would probably also ask Bismarck: if I'm going to have historical people round, I think it would be good to have an important political figure. Apparently he was also very keen on food, especially buttered eggs! Although I really don't know how you'd butter an egg. And finally I would probably invite Veronica Franco - she was a very famous Venetian courtesan in the 16th century and would liven things up at a dinner party - witty conversation and maybe even a bit

What's your favourite drink?

In the UK my favourite drink would be gin and tonic or white wine, but in Italy I'd go for prosecco, or a Venetian cocktail called 'Spritz'. Not a Bellini: I prefer my prosecco unadulterated. Oh, and prosecco is quite cheap, only 2.50 Euro a glass, so you can't go wrong!

What's your favourite place to go out in Leeds?

One of my favourite places to eat is 'Café Aagrah' at Clarence Dock. They do excellent Indian food but served like tapas. So you can have curry, vegetables and different bits and pieces without having too much! I quite liked 'Wardrobe' when I went there and also 'Epernay' near Millennium Square.

Complete this sentence, "during a lecture I want to....."

Know what people are saying when they whisper! Has someone else said that? I always wonder if they're talking about the lecture or something else. I'm intrigued to know what they're thinking. I think it's quite funny in big lectures when people whisper and seem to think you won't notice.

Do you have any as of yet unfulfilled ambitions?

Yes! I'd really like to go from St Petersburg to Beijing on the Trans Siberian railway. I was quite interested in Russian history when I was younger, but when I tried to learn Russian it was a bit too hard. Italian is much easier, and Italy's pretty great too.

If you had a walk on theme for lectures what would it be:

Guilt Oooh, yes...erm...hmmm... I'm tempted to say S-Club 'Reach'!





So there it is, Issue Three done and dusted. Hope you liked it. The HST is shortly to receive a revamp in style and tone—we want to make it more amusing, more satirical, more interesting and have some fun with it. So if you're interested in getting involved with any aspect of that then let me know.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome James Laws to the team—he has recently been appointed Fund-raising Manager. If anyone fancies joining his team, then drop me a line.

Many thanks to Helen Burne for helping me to put this issue together when flyering and newspaper got the better of all of my free time.

Thanks for reading.

Claire Freeston
Editor 2008/09

**The next issue will be published in March.
Interested in contributing?
Contact the Editor: hy06cf@leeds.ac.uk**