

UWE Regional History Centre and M Shed Seminar Programme

2014-15

Venue: M Shed

Princes Wharf
Wapping Road
Bristol BS1 4RN

18:00 - 19:30

Admission: Free



Thursday 16 Oct 2014

Onyeka

Everyday Lives: Africans in South West England During the Tudor Period

In a special seminar marking this year's Black History Month, the historian Onyeka uncovers the pivotal role people of African descent played in the development of English port towns, such as Bristol, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not merely as enslaved people, as commonly believed, but as people who came with a range of skills and influenced many parts of English society.

Onyeka is a writer, law lecturer and historian. His books document the lives and history of the African experience in Britain. His work explores issues about cultural identity, national identity and the independence of historical scholarship. Onyeka latest book is Blackamoors: Africans in Tudor England, their Presence, Status and Origin.

Thursday 20 Nov 2014

Rose Wallis (UWE & VCH Gloucs)

The Wild West? Crime and the commons in Yate c. 1790-1830

In the summer of 1826, the local and national press were thrilled by the story of the Wickwar Gang, a group of 'banditts' who had terrorised South Gloucestershire for more than seven years. The gang had robbed farmers from Wotton to Sodbury, secreting their booty in a 'subterranean cave'. Much to the chagrin of the corporation, they were not – as reported – from Wickwar; they were in fact, based on Yate Lower Common.

Drawn from research conducted for the Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, this talk considers the relationship between the landscape, communities, crime, poverty, and policing.

Rose Wallis is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Regional History Centre, UWE, Bristol and a contributing editor for VCH, Gloucs.

Thursday 18 Dec 2014

Professor Peter Malpass (UWE)

The Poor in Victorian Bristol: How the City Preserved its Slums

The homes of the poor in Victorian Bristol were found in hundreds of courts and narrow alleys, which were often overcrowded and unfit for human habitation. This presentation looks at how housing reformers aiming to tackle the problem were thwarted by the town council and its officials. David Davies, the Medical Officer of Health from 1865 to 1886, pursued a strategy based largely on denial and evasion which enabled him to minimise the exercise of statutory powers. After his retirement powers to clear away unhealthy areas remained unused, and not one new house was built by the council before 1900.

Professor Peter Malpass is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Regional History Centre, UWE, Bristol.

Thursday 15 Jan 2015

Andy King (BMGA)

City Docks to Harbourside

In November 1974, the last regular trading ship left Bristol's City Docks, bringing to an end a trading history stretching back to the very beginnings of the city. In April 1975, formal responsibility passed from the Port to other departments of the City Council, and the long process of redeveloping the docks began. On the 40th anniversary Andy King looks at the reasons for the closure of the city-centre docks, the end of the way of life associated with them and the politics and plans that created the Harbour that we see today.

Andy King is Senior Collections Officer, Industrial & Maritime History & Working Exhibits, Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives.

Thursday 19 Feb 2015

The Bristol Deaf Culture Collective

As Bristol Becomes More Visible, it Disappears.

Experience the city from a different perspective. This multi-media, tactile presentation will map some issues of importance to local Deaf communities; tracing threads of visibility and invisibility through living memory, plotting the untold narratives of Bristol's Deaf peoples, charting Bristol's rise and fall as a capital of Deaf culture, and revealing how community memory is preserved through visual and embodied language.

Presented in British Sign Language by members of Bristol's Deaf communities, interpretation will be provided for the comfort of audience members who do not sign.

Thursday 19 March 2015

Professor Jonathan Barry
(University of Exeter)

Raising Spirits: How the tale of Thomas Perks of Mangotsfield (c.1675-94) and his conjuration of spirits was transmitted across the Enlightenment.

The story of Thomas Perks, a gunsmith's son from Mangotsfield, conjuring spirits in Kingswood in the early 1690s, was first told in a letter by Arthur Bedford, vicar of Temple in Bristol, in 1704. Thereafter his letter, reprinted in varying versions in both manuscript and print, became a regular feature in anthologies of the supernatural. This talk, while exploring what we know about Perks' himself, also considers the changing meanings of the story as it was reported over the next two centuries. Although subject to Enlightenment scepticism, the story also attracted belief from a surprising range of people, sometimes as a warning against the dangers

of the diabolic, but for others as proof of the potential for communication with spirits. Although there was a folk tradition associated with Perks, the story also appealed both to the learned clergymen and, in particular, to self-educated laymen.

Jonathan Barry is Professor of History at the University of Exeter.

Thursday 16 April 2015

Professor Peter Fleming

The Bristol Region in the Age of Magna Carta: Or, what did King John do for us?

In November 1216 Magna Carta was reissued by the royal council meeting in Bristol, soon after the coronation in Gloucester of the infant Henry III, son and heir of King John. Arguably, this was the start of Magna Carta's afterlife, during which it became such an important symbol of English - and then British - liberties. In this paper Peter Fleming puts this event in the context of the Bristol region's history in the century from the accession of King John's father, Henry II, in 1154, to the middle of the thirteenth century, during the reign of John's son, Henry III. This was a dynamic century for this region, beginning with the expansion of the Gascon wine trade, which had a very important impact on Bristol's economy, and ending with the extensive civil engineering projects in Bristol in the 1240s: the creation of a new deep-water harbour, new bridges and town walls, and the reclamation of much of the marshland around Bristol's original site. In the middle of this period, John, first as prince and then as king (1199-1216), was an important patron of Bristol, and the way in which he was remembered in the town is perhaps surprising, given his modern reputation as 'Bad King John'.

Peter Fleming is Professor of History at UWE, Bristol

Thursday 21 May 2015

Alex Craven (UWE & VCH, Gloucs)

**'Takeing Securitye of Obscure People':
Military Rule and the 'Suspected
Persons' of the Cromwellian South-West**

Following a failed Royalist uprising against the rule of Oliver Cromwell in 1655, the Lord Protector imposed a system of military government across England and Wales. The country was divided into several regions, each governed by a Major-General, who were commanded to take bonds for good behaviour from suspected Royalists. In the south-west, Major-General Desborough took bonds from over 5,000 men, many of them of very humble status. This paper will explore who these south-west 'suspected persons' were, and examine what it meant to be included amongst their number.

Alex Craven is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Regional History Centre, UWE, Bristol and a contributing editor to the Victoria County History of Gloucestershire.

Thursday 18 June 2015

Professor Steve Poole (UWE)

**A Hogarthian Second City? Bristol and
the Crowd in the Eighteenth Century**

William Hogarth's portrayal of eighteenth century London life has heavily influenced the ways in which we imagine the urban scene in Georgian England. From riotous elections and gin-soaked rookeries to pox-marked prostitutes and bacchanalian behaviour at the gallows, Hogarthian London is a place marked by moral turpitude, disorder, corruption and squalor. But what do we know about everyday life on the streets of England's second city? Nineteenth century chroniclers may have exaggerated when they labelled Bristol's mob the most dangerous in England, but social relations between the city's poor and elite classes could certainly be lively and were often fraught. What provoked and motivated the Bristol crowd and by what rules, if any, was it governed? This talk places the mob under the microscope and examines life in the second city from below.

Steve Poole is Director of the Regional History Centre and Professor of History and Heritage at UWE, Bristol. Steve Poole is Director of the Regional History Centre and Professor of History and Heritage at UWE, Bristol.

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