

UWE Regional History Centre and M Shed Seminar Programme, 2017-18

Princes Wharf, Wapping Rd, Bristol BS1 4RN

18.00-19.30

Admission: Free

Thursday 21 September 2017

Clive Burlton

Bristol's White City, 1914: from extravagant exhibition to military barracks

Planned as a cross between the 1911 Festival of Empire and an amusement park, the Bristol International Exhibition was established in a purpose-built 'White City' at Ashton meadows near the Cumberland Basin in May 1914. Although it had the look of a government sponsored platform for the promoting Empire trade, it was actually a risky private commercial venture. Although planned to run until October, the Exhibition closed its doors in August following the outbreak of the First World War. The War Office purchased the exhibition buildings and transformed the site for use as a military barracks. In this talk, Clive Burlton traces the rise and fall of Bristol's White City.

Clive Burlton is an independent historian and publisher.

Thursday 19 October 2017

Deborah Hutchinson

Geology in Victorian Bristol: Curating the Bristol Institution, 1823 - 1872

The early nineteenth century was an extremely important and exciting time in the history of geology. The museum of the *Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science, Literature and the Arts* officially opened on the 6th January 1823 in a purpose built building on Park Street with some of the great pioneers of early geology directly involved in setting it up. Many other pioneers of the subject were either frequent visitors or provided astonishing specimens, some that were yet to be described by science. Not so widely known are the first curators, all geologists of note. Who were the men given the important task of caring for and developing the geological collections in the newly established Institution during such a pivotal time in the establishment of the discipline of geology? This talk will explore Bristol's important role in early geology and palaeontology during the time of the first four curators of the Bristol Institution and the legacy they left behind.

Deborah Hutchinson is Geology Curator at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Thursday 16 November 2017

Mark Hailwood

What did Women do all Day in the Tudor and Stuart South West?

What can a variety of different sources can tell us about the lives of working women in the South West of England in the period 1500-1700? In this talk, Mark Hailwood considers the use of printed conduct books from the period, surviving wage information from household and farm accounts, and probate inventories of wealthier widows and spinsters. His current research is focussed on the use of witness depositions given before a range of early modern civil and criminal courts, in which many witnesses provided details about work activities they were engaged in at the time they witnessed or were involved in an incident. These provide a wealth of incidental information about both women's and men's everyday working lives, and can help us to build up a much more detailed picture of the division of labour between men and women in this period than has previously been possible, and in the process to challenge many assumptions and stereotypes about the nature of women's work in the past. You can find out more about the project via its website and blog:
<https://earlymodernwomenswork.wordpress.com/>

Dr Mark Hailwood is Lecturer in History 1400-1700 at the University of Bristol

Thursday 7 December 2017

Helen Doe

Challenging the Atlantic: Brunel's First Steamship, *The Great Western*

The Great Western is the least known of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's three ships. Launched in 1837 from Bristol, it was his first great success, confounding the critics to be the fastest ship to steam continuously across the Atlantic, and beginning the era of luxury transatlantic liners. It was a bold venture by Brunel and his Bristol colleagues, who were testing the limits of known technology. In this talk, Helen Doe looks at life on board this important wooden paddle steamer and considers its influence and legacy. Her latest book, *The First Atlantic Liner: Brunel's Great Western Steamship*, was published by Amberley in 2017.

Dr Helen Doe is a Research Fellow at the University of Exeter

Thursday 18 January 2018

Julian Warren

From Pageants to Powerboat Racing: the Film Collections at Bristol Archives

Bristol Archives holds a collection of over one thousand reels of film shot in Bristol, many of which record aspects of the city's civic life throughout the course of the twentieth century. Early film like this opens a unique window onto Bristol's historic streets, spaces and buildings, and on some of the people who once lived and worked in them. But it also reveals something of the motivations of the early film makers themselves. Thanks to hours of work by volunteers at Bristol Archives, many of these films are now available to view in digital form. In this fully illustrated talk, former City Archivist Julian Warren will introduce a selection of clips from the collection and talk about the film makers and the contexts in which the films were made.

Julian Warren is, Keeper: Digital and Live Art Archives, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

Thursday 15 February 2018

June Hannam and Lucienne Boyce

Women, Citizenship and the 1918 Representation of the People Act: Bristol Women in Politics

In this talk, Professor June Hannam and local suffrage historian Lucienne Boyce will look at women's participation in local and national politics following the Representation of the People Act 1918. They will consider why women wanted the vote; how the Representation of the People Act 1918 affected both the municipal and Parliamentary franchise; and how women prepared for their new status as citizens. They will explore these and related questions with a focus on Bristol, using local case studies, including the careers of Mabel Tothill and Emily Smith.

June Hannam is Professor Emerita of Modern British History at UWE

Lucienne Boyce is an independent scholar

Thursday 15 March 2018

John Chandler

'The World Runnes on Wheelles': Travel by Water and Road in Seventeenth Century Bristol and Gloucestershire

Roads and rivers were vital channels for the development of regional trade and economic development in the early modern period. This talk examines the campaign by the Gloucester-born water poet, John Taylor in the 1630s and 1640s to encourage river traffic along the Severn and its tributaries, which was overtaken by the Civil War, and then compares it to some previously neglected lists from an unpublished county history, describing the local road network later in the same century, at a time when most county and regional maps ignored roads. By combining the evidence in these lists with other contemporary records, it is possible to build up a picture of road traffic in the region before the turnpike and stagecoach revolution.

Dr John Chandler is consultant editor for the Victoria County History in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Regional History Centre, UWE.

Thursday 19 April 2018

Katy Layton-Jones

Brandon Hill to Ham Green: Survival, Loss and Innovation in Bristol's green spaces 1750 – 2017

For over 200 years, cities like Bristol have retained and protected a variety of public green spaces. From eighteenth-century pleasure walks to Victorian parks and post-war memorial gardens, we have inherited a diverse and valuable canon of urban green space. Yet, today, Britain's public parks and gardens face threats of privatisation, development, and dereliction. Focusing on Bristol, but also taking in the national context, this talk examines the political, economic, and cultural journey that has shaped the form and management of urban green space and led us to the crisis point we now face.

Dr Katy Layton Jones is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester

Thursday 17 May 2018

Nick Nourse

The People's Music: From Street Ballads to Music Hall in Nineteenth Century Bristol

The nineteenth century was a period of significant change in the music of the people. Most notable of those changes was the advent of music hall. Legislated into being so as to separate drama and high society from the popular music of 'the people', it was a roaring success across the country, followed, somewhat reluctantly, by Bristol. Here, the city hung on to its pubs and 'convivial,' and to its simplest form of the people's music: street ballad singers. Targeted by the city's law-makers as beggars rather than entertainers, they and their songs were – mostly ineffectually – banned from the streets, but singers were occasionally gaoled for their efforts. This paper will examine the people's music in nineteenth century Bristol in terms of performers, venues and the music itself.

Dr Nick Nourse is a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Bristol

Thursday 21 June 2018

Clare Hickman

Therapeutic Landscapes: The Design and Use of Bristol's Hospital Gardens since 1800

Focusing on examples from the Bristol area, this talk will explore the history of the garden as a therapeutic space. Considering both the use of hospital gardens within the city and the creation of specialist institutions in more rural areas, the interrelationship between the urban and the pastoral in relation to concepts of health and disease will be revealed. We will trace their history from the grottos and summerhouses of elite nineteenth-century lunatic asylums, through Florence Nightingale's championing of the Victorian pavilion hospital design with its courtyard gardens, to the open-air institutions of the Edwardian period with their revolving chalets. Specific examples will include Brislington House Asylum founded by Dr Edward Long Fox, the roof garden of Bristol General Hospital, the open-air landscape of Winford Orthopaedic Hospital and the Wills's Homeopathic Hospital.

Dr Clare Hickman is lecturer in History at the University of Chester

Illustration: Thomas Rowbotham, The Harbour from Below the Ropewalk and Wapping, 1825, © Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, M2929