Beyond the Garden Party: Rethinking Edwardian Culture

Inaugural conference of the Edwardian Culture Network

Schedule:

Day One: Durham (12th April)

9.30-10.15: Registration

10.15-10.30: Introduction

10.30-12.15: Panel One: Economics, Entrepreneurs and Visionaries (Chair: Samuel Shaw)

Andrew Glazzard (Royal Holloway) – Bricks, Mortar and Moonshine: House-Building in the Edwardian Novel
Alexander Medcalf (University of York) – Re-thinking Edwardian Marketing: A case study of Britain’s Railways
Sophie Martin (University of Bristol) – Robert Ross: Edwardian Vision

12.15-1.00: Lunch

1.00-2.30: Panel Two: Men in Performance/Costume and Theatre (Chair: Naomi Carle)

Geoff Levett (Birkbeck College) – ‘A lesson in the game of life’: Rugby, masculinity and degeneration in Edwardian London
Katie Faulkner (Courtauld Institute) – The Good Soldier? Chivalric costume and conduct in Gilbert Bayes’ Edwardian Statuettes
Rudolph Weiss (University of Vienna) – The Liminality of Harley Granville Barker’s “The Voysey Inheritance”

2.40-4.10: Panel Three: Early Modernism in the New Age (Chair: Andrew Hodgson)

Finn Fordham (Royal Holloway) – Early Modernism between materialism and spiritualism, 1901-1911
Christos Hadjiyiannis (Wolfson College, Oxford) – Early Modernism and Conservatism, 1910-1912

4.10-4.45: Tea.

4.45-5.45: Keynote lecture and closing remarks:

Ysanne Holt (University of Northumbria), “A bon-vivant in a buttoned-down city”: F. C. B. Cadell’s paintings of Edinburgh interiors
Beyond the Garden Party: Rethinking Edwardian Culture

Inaugural conference of the Edwardian Culture Network

Schedule:

Day Two: York (13th April)

9.30-10.15: Registration

10.00-10.25: Edwardian Paintings Slideshow

10.25-10.30: Introduction

10.30-12.15: Panel Four: Historical Perspectives/Outsider Views (Chair: Ollie Clarkson)

Jeffrey Green (Independent Scholar) – The Black Presence in Edwardian Britain
Anna Vaninskaya (University of Edinburgh) – Edwardian Britain through the Eyes of Russian Foreign Correspondents
Eve Colpus (University of Southampton) – Looking for Edwardians in the Dictionary of National Biography

12.15-1.00: Lunch

1.00-2.30: Panel Five: Erotic Culture: (Chair: Jason Edwards)

Jonathan Wild (University of Edinburgh) – Sex and the Single Edwardian Girl: Sex and Censorship in the Edwardian Novel
Hugh Stevens – (UCL) Edwardian Pastoral Erotics
Sarah Green – “A secret pleasure in being mastered”: power, pain and pleasure in the work of J. M. Barrie

2.40-4.10: Panel Six: Literary Culture (Chair: Sarah Shaw)

Sarah Edwards (University of Strathclyde) – Neo-Edwardian Summer: Dawn of the New Age
Rebecca Barnes (University of York) – Smog at the Garden Party: Atmospheric Pollution in Henry James’ “Wings of the Dove”
Susan Gray (Royal Holloway) – A Honeymoon in Space: The Opulent Age of the Scientific Romance

4.10-4.45: Tea.

4.45-5.45: Keynote lecture and closing remarks:

Simon J. James (University of Durham), The Strange Death of Victorian Literature

5.45-7.00: Wine reception
Abstracts:

Panel One: Economics, Entrepreneurs and Visionaries

Bricks, Mortar, and Moonshine: House-Building in the Edwardian Novel

Andrew Glazzard - Royal Holloway, University of London [theglazz@gmail.com]

‘It is curious how many of these modern financiers of chance and bluff have ended their careers by building. […] Sooner or later they all seem to bring their luck to the test of realization, try to make their fluid opulence coagulate out as bricks and mortar, bring moonshine into relations with a weekly wages sheet. Then the whole fabric of confidence and imagination totters – and down they come…’ (H.G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*, 1908)

Edward Ponderevo is not the only Edwardian house-builder to express both his character and the spirit of the age in bricks and mortar. Wells’s Artie Kipps, Galsworthy’s Soames Forsyte, and Bennett’s Darius Clayhanger all commission architects to design new houses, to cement, literally, their social and financial success.

The preoccupation of Edwardian fiction with property is evident: “One has only to list some of the country houses in Edwardian fiction […] to see how heavily the imagination of the era was invested in landed property.” This paper will examine this preoccupation – focusing on new houses – to explore what fictional house building can tell us about the social and moral issues of the age. It will explore why house building was an issue of such interest to Edwardian writers and readers, and why *Tono-Bungay, Kipps* (1905), *The Man of Property* (1906), and *Clayhanger* (1910) all make a new house the focus of moral, aesthetic, and social contention. The paper will show that the cliché of the Edwardian country house, with its garden parties and (in Orwell’s phrase) “oozing, bulging wealth”, is challenged by these novels’ questioning of the values reified in bricks and mortar.

Rethinking Edwardian Marketing: A Case Study of Britain’s Railways

Alexander Medcalf - University of York [alexander.medcalf@york.ac.uk]

For some, Edwardian advertisements (the railway poster in particular) perfectly capture the idea of the era as a serene, golden afternoon. They are seen as quaint, nostalgic relics. This view comes at the expense of critical examination. It is true that questioning posters, flyers and photographs is often complicated because these records outweigh ones explaining their creation. But examining the promotional minds responsible for this output reveals that increasingly complex sales strategies such as market segmentation, assessing customer needs and wants, and aspirational advertising were well understood in the Edwardian era. Above all, evidence suggests that some Edwardian companies increasingly sought to put customers first and see consumption from their perspective

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for the first time. In the process companies developed their own take on what we today would term ‘marketing’.

In asking, ‘was there such a thing as an Edwardian culture of marketing?’ this paper focuses on some of Britain’s largest Edwardian companies, the railways. It finds that they deployed new methods to research and understand customer desires. These methods were regularly scrutinised in business journals and debated at lectures, encouraging a burgeoning marketing culture which looked outwards and engaged with developments in other sectors. The paper considers what prompted a turn to envisaging customer wants, before asking what railways found out about consumers and how they used this information.

Sometimes misunderstood as a lacklustre stage in marketing’s evolution (before rapid escalation in the interwar period, for example), this paper argues that the Edwardian years are better understood as a period of transition. The examination has implications for considering consumption in the period more generally. Questioning the quaint exterior of Edwardian advertising reveals a complex story about how companies tried to comprehend and manipulate consumption at the time.

Robert Ross, Edwardian Vision.

Sophie Martin – University of Bristol [sophie.martin88@googlemail.com]

‘Yet painting, however aristocratic it must always be in its aim, can be democratic in its appeal’. (Robert Ross, ‘The place of William Blake in English Art’, The Burlington Magazine, 1906)

The critic Robert Ross occupied a central position in the Edwardian art world, yet remains largely overlooked in revisionist accounts of the period. One reason may be the eclecticism of his activities: as a close friend of Oscar Wilde and the executor of his literary estate, manager of the Carfax and Co. dealer gallery from 1900-1908, connoisseur of William Blake and art critic for The Morning Post from 1908, he appears as a ‘jack of all trades’ and so slips under the radar in genre specific studies. In addition, his critical stand-point, which draws heavily of the conventions of the Aesthetic Movement, proves problematic to teleological studies of the period investigating the development of Formalism.

His critical and commercial significance in contemporary terms necessitates a closer examination of his contribution to the Edwardian art world. The eclecticism of his activities provides a crucial insight to the relationship between criticism and commercial activities in the period. His critical exploration of the nature of the viewing experience and his intricate theoretical relationship to democratic and commercial ideals provides a valid alternative to the Formalist critical cannon.

The project of recovering Ross ultimately becomes part of the project of exploring the multiple narratives of the Edwardian period. This paper will look at the critical writings of Robert Ross alongside his commercial activities in order to explore his understanding of the nature of the viewing experience. The aim will be to re-position him within a revisionist account of the period which challenges teleological investigations that have constructed linear Formalist accounts of this complex era.
Panel Two: Men in Performance/Costume and Theatre

‘A lesson in the game of life’: Rugby, masculinity and degeneration in Edwardian London

Geoff Levett – Birkbeck College [geoffreylevett@me.com]

In 1905 the New Zealand rugby union football team made a triumphal tour through the United Kingdom, thrashing club teams and losing only one international match – narrowly – to Wales. Their superiority was credited by the New Zealand premier, Richard Seddon, to the colonial way of life. This was said to combine the physical prowess of the rugged frontiersman with a team ethic deriving from the need for colonialists to come together to face the sometimes hostile indigenous population.

Their success provoked a crisis in English masculinity in which fears over physical degeneration that emerged after the poor performance of the British Army in the South African War of 1899-1902 were amplified in the press following failure on the rugby pitch. Attention focused in particular on London where the pernicious effects of town life, both in the slums and in the suburbs, stimulated a debate on the future direction of British society.

This paper argues that sport was central to anxieties about London’s position at the centre of the Empire, anxieties that were concerned with perceived working class degeneration and a fear of the mass middle-classes developing in the metropolitan suburbs.

The Good Soldier? Chivalric costume and conduct in Gilbert Bayes’ Edwardian Statuettes

Katie Faulkner – Courtauld Institute of Art [katherine.faulkner@courtauld.ac.uk]

My paper will place the work of the sculptor Gilbert Bayes (1872-1853) in the context of concerns around ideals of masculinity in the early twentieth century. These concerns will be read into the presentation of dress or armour in Bayes' work. I will give detailed reading of several equestrian statuettes produced by Bayes between 1898 and 1918. These statuettes explicitly reference chivalric archetypes and can be related back to the Arts and Crafts and Pre-Raphaelite interest in the medieval, and take the chivalric poems of Morris and Kipling as their subject matter. At the same time, these sculptures can also be interpreted in relation to the anxieties surrounding ideal masculinity at the turn of the century, as exhibited in modernist movements such as Vorticism. The notion of the armoured body will be questioned and interrogated in order to argue that the statuettes are representations of bodies that are deficient and lacking rather than super-human. The construction of the armour in the statuette will be compared to developments in contemporary male clothing, in particular sportswear and military uniforms. New
showerproof and tear resistant fabrics were being manufactured and made into warm and protective suits and coats for aristocratic sportsmen and soldiers alike. These developments came at the same time as concerns mounted about men’s health and the preparedness of the British army in the face of foreign invasion. Clothing manufactured by the Burberry Company will be compared to Bayes’ statuettes, both in terms of methods of construction and the discourses of strength and masculinity around both sculpture and clothing.

"The Liminality of Harley Granville Barker's The Voysey Inheritance"

Rudolf Weiss - University of Vienna [rudolf.weiss@univie.ac.at]

Harley Granville Barker was the visionary as well as the primum mobile of the Edwardian theatre, his major work for the stage coinciding almost exactly with the Edwardian era. Already in his early years in the theatrical world, as an actor and soon as a playwright, we observe the co-existence of the traditional and the modern. In 1899, while he was playing minor roles in two of Pinero’s Victorian problem-plays he was writing The Marrying of Ann Leete, a highly innovative play, far removed from Pinero’s surface realism and exploring a radically new dramatic aesthetics. In the years immediately prior to the writing of The Voysey Inheritance (1903-05) he acted in and directed plays by such diverse contemporaneous dramatists as Henry Arthur Jones, William Somerset Maugham and George Bernard Shaw as well as by Shakespeare and Marlowe. At that time, while he was very much rooted in the contemporary theatrical landscape, he wrote, together with William Archer, A National Theatre (1904), a vision of the theatre of the future. This simultaneous presence of tradition and innovation, a quintessentially Edwardian quality, also informs his plays of the 1900s, among them The Voysey Inheritance, the Edwardian play par excellence.

The focus of my paper will be on the liminality of The Voysey Inheritance, a realistic family play reaching out into the modernist domain, structurally as well as thematically. While typical parameters of the well-made play, omnipresent on the late Victorian stage, are invoked, they are inverted and deconstructed at the same time. The disintegration of the family and the challenge to the middle-class culture is mirrored in the dismantling of the formal dramatic scaffolding. Moreover, the twilight of the familial structures and financial practices of the past is juxtaposed with the dawn of more advanced social organisms and new business ethics.
Panel Three: Re-thinking Edwardian Culture: Early Modernism in The New Age:

Early Modernism between materialism and spiritualism: 1901-1911

Finn Fordham – Royal Holloway [finn.fordham@rhul.ac.uk]

A major but neglected context for the development of ‘cultural modernism’ was the ‘Modernist controversy’, centred in the Catholic Church, which, from 1907-1910, issued four encyclicals condemning modernism as ‘the heresy of all heresies’. As my forthcoming article for Literature & History shows, this was widely reported in Britain – in broadsheet newspapers and little magazines (such as The New Age, The Freewoman, etc.). The issues in question had many ramifications with contemporary intellectual debates and, I claim, gave the term ‘modernism’ a new urgency and applicability to progressive cultural movements in general.

In this paper I will present the results of further research in this field; how firm lines were being drawn up between ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heresy’, ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, focusing in particular on discourses about spiritualism and materialism. Can we characterise the Edwardian period as a time in which materialism was in crisis? If so, did it help shape the way Freud, Bergson, William James and Nietzsche were absorbed into cultural discourses? To address these questions, I will take as my material, on the one hand, the surprisingly spiritualist interpretations of Nietzsche by Catholic Modernists (like Maude Petre), and, on the other, the new-Pagan appropriations of him in other discursive fields (such as The New Age).

A Conservative Ethic: A.R. Orage and T.E. Hulme, 1908-1916

Henry Mead – Worcester College, Oxford [henry.mead@gmail.com]

Building upon Finn Fordham’s discussion of the Catholic ‘Modernist controversy’ as a context for ‘cultural modernism’, my paper traces echoes of the theological debate in work by the poet and philosopher, T.E. Hulme. My focus is on Hulme’s interaction with writers at the socialist journal, the New Age; and in particular, with its editor, A.R. Orage.

The New Age’s contributors frequently invoked forms of spiritual immanentism, drawn from a heady range of sources – neo-Vedantic, Theosophical, occult, Nietzschean, and Bergsonian – usually to support a spirit of utopian progressivism encapsulated in the journal’s title. Hulme’s hostility to these ideas, in line with his Tory ‘classicism’, is striking; and his involvement with the paper, as one of a small minority of conservative contributors, has puzzled historians. I propose, however, that one can see in Orage’s writing the seeds of a conservative worldview: an attraction to a harder, somewhat pessimistic spirituality very similar to Hulme’s. G.K. Chesterton’s description of Orage as being ‘emancipated from emancipation’ captures, I argue, an avant-garde position developed in collaboration with Hulme. It is no accident that, at the height of their interaction as editor and contributor, both writers turned away from progressive forms of immanentist and vitalist belief, emphasising the limits of human understanding, while advocating forms of pluralistic politics (Orage’s Guild Socialism, Hulme’s Toryism). Orage’s failure to develop this religious attitude after 1917 may reflect the intellectual gulf left by Hulme’s premature death – a gulf that, for Orage, was to be filled by the
seductive, immanentist logic of G.I. Gurdjieff. However, a group of younger writers, whom Orage had brought together at the *New Age*, did inherit and develop Hulme’s and Orage’s emergent ‘conservative ethic’, forming the Chandos and Christendom discussion groups.

Finally, I note how T.S. Eliot attended meetings of these groups, and how their ideas informed his evolving theological and ideological position during the interwar years – as recorded by the dedication of his *Notes on the Definition of Culture* (1948) to Orage’s protégé and biographer, Philip Mairet. I conclude by trying to pin down the ideology produced by this strand of ideas, which originated in an Edwardian moment of philosophical vitalism and progressive politics, but grew towards a form of religious orthodoxy.

**Early modernism and Conservatism: 1910-12**

**Christos Hadjiyiannis – Wolfson College, Oxford** [christos.hadjiyiannis@ell.ox.ac.uk]

Between May and June 1911, J. M. Kennedy published in five instalments in *The New Age* a series of articles entitled “Tory Democracy”. Described by Wallace Martin as a “reactionary conservative”, Kennedy hoped that his treatise would serve as the basis of a conservative revival. Kennedy’s interpretation of intellectual history, according to which the fundamental error of Liberalism is that it doesn’t take into account the “limited” or inherently bad nature of humanity, and that Liberalism can accurately be characterised as “Romanticism” as opposed to the “Classicism” that is Conservatism, has received substantial critical attention, specifically in relation to the early modernist poetics of Pound and Eliot. However, the historical context in which Kennedy made these remarks has remained almost completely overlooked.

Drawing on my archival work on the short-lived conservative weekly *The Commentator* (1910-13), my paper will argue that Kennedy’s central premise – that “there are no ideas in the Tory Party” – can be seen as part of the topical debate that followed the electoral defeat of the Conservative Party in the May 1910 election. Writing between *The New Age* and *The Commentator*, Edward Storer and T. E. Hulme berated the way in which the Tory Party lacked a distinct, coherent political programme. Believing that that was the reason for the Party’s electoral defeat, they campaigned for a reformed Tory propaganda strategy. It is as part of this campaign that they introduced the terms “romanticism” and “classicism” into political rhetoric in the first instance, and in modernist poetics subsequently. By returning attention to the writings of Kennedy, Hulme and Storer, my paper argues that only a deeper knowledge of topical Edwardian political discussions can lead us to a full understanding of the nature of their specific brand of modernism.
Keynote:


Ysanne Holt – University of Northumbria

With his own living spaces as setting, either side of the First World War, the Scottish painter Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell produced a series of paintings of elegant models in carefully arranged domestic interiors, all of which refer us to a construction of artistic and social identity, to social relations and discourses about art and decoration, taste and fashionability. To properly access these representations of interior spaces, the figures and objects therein requires an analysis drawing upon studies of material culture, design history, cultural geography, social class and networks, as much as the characteristic procedures of art history. My paper raises questions about how we might therefore comprehend the performance of Bunty Cadell’s own personal and professional identity amidst the shifting experience of modernism and modernity in the Scottish capital throughout these years.
Panel Four: Historical Perspectives/Outsider Views:

The Black Presence in Edwardian Britain

Jeffrey Green – Independent Scholar [jeffnsue@eastgrin.fsnet.co.uk]

People of African birth or descent were out and about in Edwardian Britain, living lives that involved most areas of activity. They wrote plays, poetry, novels and history books; they mixed with royalty, the middle classes and inhabitants of the slums. They were lawyers and doctors, undergraduates and clergymen, soldiers, children, rogues, criminals, and sportsmen. Conan Doyle mentions blacks, Jack London described black soldiers in his People of the Abyss, and Arthur Ransome had a Jamaican nurse for his daughter.

Details of this often overlooked element in Edwardian Britain will be presented in two sections: first, an overview of stereotypical roles including popular entertainers, human zoos, and sportsmen. Secondly, a more detailed biographic account of some residents including the widow of an African president, three local councillors (Cheshire and London), a composer of orchestral music, a woman accused of murder, a lawyer with ambitions to become a Member of Parliament, a Rhodes Scholar and his African friend at Oxford, a businessman and an author.

The purpose of the paper is to broaden awareness of both the black presence and the range of its activities.

Edwardian Britain Through the Eyes of Russian Foreign Correspondents

Anna Vaninskaya - University of Edinburgh [avaninsk@staffmail.ed.ac.uk]

A certain traditional view of the Edwardian era, much challenged but nevertheless tenacious, holds that the period was the last great heyday of British parochialism before the disruptive forces of war and modernism opened up the country to the outside world. One can disprove the stereotype by pointing to tourism, travel writing, and the various cosmopolitan networks of cultural exchange – the vibrant internationalism that existed at all levels of Edwardian culture. But one can also take a somewhat more unusual approach and ask: what did the outside world think of Edwardian Britain?

My paper will offer a case study of the writings of three London-based journalists who moulded Russia’s views of Britain in the Edwardian period. Isaak Shklovsky (1865-1935) (pen-name Dioneo), the FPA-affiliated correspondent of a Moscow daily and a St Petersburg monthly review, was a thoroughly establishment figure whose turn-of-the-century articles were collected as Sketches of Contemporary England (1903) and English Silhouettes (1905). The image of Britain that Dioneo presented to his Russian audience was a familiar Victorian construct (‘the mighty tree of Anglo-Saxon liberty’), with predictable topics ranging from the world of letters (Pinero, Shaw, Meredith, Spencer, Grant Allen) to politics (the colonies, jingoism, trade unions, child labour, the rise of protectionism), to reflections on manners and customs, on the various manifestations of national character and eccentricity (the police, Father Christmas, the Derby, the Diamond Jubilee, Whitechapel). Although this basic ethnological template proved
remarkably durable, foreign correspondents varied in their degree of assimilation to local realities. Dioneo’s younger contemporaries positioned themselves as ‘foreigners’ who interpreted the strange but fascinating rituals of Edwardian culture to Russian readers back home. Korney Chukovsky (1882-1969), a young acquaintance of Dioneo and a self-taught working-class correspondent for Odessa News in 1903-4, was a socially liminal figure who covered much the same ground – from Oscar Wilde and West End drama to East End Jewry; from Watts and Spencer to tariff reform and Hyde Park orators; from Spiritualism and the Salvation Army to the readership of Tit-Bits; from the British Museum to the Working Men’s College – but with a rather more critical edge. Chukovsky’s judgemental and at times intemperate dispatches were wholly unlike Dioneo’s leisurely, scholarly and measured essays in tone. The novelistic and light-hearted travel sketches of Samuil Marshak (1887-1964), a young Zionist poet who arrived in Britain in 1912 after a tour of Palestine and supported himself through his studies at the University of London by contributing foreign correspondences to a number of St Petersbourg newspapers and magazines, were different yet again. Yet he too covered ‘typical’ manifestations of national life: from East End cinema to the Children’s Welfare Exhibition, from Welsh Simple Life schools to Cornish fishermen and Irish Home Rulers. Insiders and outsiders simultaneously, such foreign correspondents actively shaped and transmitted a version of ‘Edwardianism’ to the outside world.

Looking for Edwardians in the Dictionary of National Biography

Eve Colpus - University of Southampton [e.c.colpus@soton.ac.uk]

This paper is prompted by a simple activity: looking for Edwardians in the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB). The DNB was a late-Victorian project of collective biography, which was supplemented at intervals throughout the twentieth century. The first three supplements were published in 1912, followed by volumes published in 1927, 1937 and 1949; together they capture the lives of men and women born, living through and dying in Edwardian Britain. The ‘Edwardian period’ was not something clear and distinctive – either to contemporaries, later writers or to subsequent historians. At one level, it was simply an intrinsically short period, and for many post-World War One writers it was all too easy to see continuities from the Victorian into the Edwardian period, with real change being proclaimed after 1918. In relation to the DNB this tendency was exacerbated by the fact that the Edwardian years were in one sense subsumed into the original volume, in the 1912 supplements. But many subjects whose life-stories spanned the Edwardian period died within the compass of volumes published in the 1920s-40s, and hence were assessed retrospectively according to a range of differently formulated criteria. Some of these indicated changing understandings of individual and public achievement in the Edwardian period compared with models favoured in, or applied to, the 1880s and 1890s. Others suggested continuity with an older (notionally ‘Victorian’) concept of eminence. This paper analyses the DNB as an index of shifting interpretative lenses on who and what was Edwardian. In doing so, it traces how significance was defined; analyses principles of inclusion and styles of writing as a way into reflection on periodisation and processes of canon formation; and considers intersections between literary modes and popular culture (reflecting upon reviewers’ critiques of who was not included). Looking for Edwardians in the DNB does not produce a definitive list, but I argue it does shed new light upon the shifting cultural and intellectual landscapes of that era and opens up a conversation about the challenges of distinguishing its distinctiveness.
Panel Five: Erotic Culture

‘Sex and the Single Edwardian Girl: Sex and Censorship in the Edwardian Novel’

Jonathan Wild - University of Edinburgh [jwild@ed.ac.uk]

Unlike the stage, for which the Lord Chamberlain had acted as censor since the passing of the Licencing Act in 1737, the publishing profession was largely a self-regulating body during the Edwardian period and so decisions on inappropriate printed material were typically left to private individuals and committees. It was in this uncertain climate that mainstream publishing firms, such as John Long, published risqué material evidently designed to test the tolerance of the period’s moral guardians. In an effort to understand the development of the Edwardian ‘sex novel’ my paper looks at the circumstances surrounding the successful prosecution of Hubert Wales’ *The Yoke* (published by Long in 1907). While the role of the National Vigilance Association in this prosecution has received some critical attention, little notice has been taken to date of the important part played by the Academy in instigating this action. My investigation reveals that the sustained campaign waged by the Academy against Wales’ novel was part of a more general attack on John Long’s firm: indeed the Academy’s editor, Lord Alfred Douglas (a key figure in the Wilde trials in the nineties), originally picked his fight with Long after he had received for review two other ‘indecent’ books from that publisher: these were Victoria Cross’s *Five Nights* (1908) and Cosmo Hamilton’s *Keepers of the House* (1908). What is unusual in this publishing context is Douglas’s willingness in editorials to identify specific examples of what he called ‘wicked and unregenerate’ literature. In doing this he brought the ‘sex novel’ into public discussion, and in focusing his attention on *The Yoke* he made that title into an Edwardian *cause célèbre*. My paper concludes with speculation into the reasons why the novel’s successful prosecution had so little effect on Long or on the more general publication of ‘sex novels’ during the period.

Edwardian Pastoral Erotics

Hugh Stevens - UCL [h.stevens@ucl.ac.uk]

‘There the daffodils were lifting their glorious heads and throwing back their wanton yellow curls to sport with the sun. … I felt inclined to hug them, I wanted desperately to know their language so that I might talk out my heart to them.’ (draft to *The White Peacock*)

One advantage of loving a flower is that a flower can’t say no. (Have you ever been rejected by a daffodil?) This paper will consider D. H. Lawrence’s love of flowers in relation to Edwardian nature writing. Its primary interest will be in the natural world conceived of as a sexual space, a place where one can resist the cultural arrangement of sexuality. Lawrence will be considered alongside other British figures, including E. M. Forster, Edward Carpenter and the (largely forgotten) Richard Jefferies. I will also make connections between philosophical writing about the natural world and Lawrence’s Edwardian fiction.

The main focus will be Lawrence’s first novel, *The White Peacock*, a range of his early short stories, including ‘The Shades of Spring’, ‘A Modern Lover’ and ‘The Thorn in the
Flesh’, and his *Study of Thomas Hardy*. I will argue that Lawrence is aware of a number of different ways of thinking about the relationship between the human, the natural world, and ‘civilization’. All of these influences feed into his first novel – Aestheticism (with its cult of floral beauty); Darwinism (with its privileging of the species over the individual); Schopenhauerian ideas about natural world as a grand theatre staging performances of the *Wille zum Leben*, or will to life; celebrations of nature as offering an escape from the ravages of modernity. Lawrence’s own original contribution to these traditions is to make our relationship with nature, and in particular with flowers, intensely and strangely erotic.

'A secret pleasure in being mastered': power, pain and pleasure in the work of J. M. Barrie

Sarah Green [sarah.green1@cantab.net]

This paper will examine an under-appreciated aspect of J.M. Barrie's work: his preoccupation, stretching from his early journalism to late plays, with the relationship between power and pleasure.

Barrie frequently represented one person's exercise of power over another as pleasurable for both parties; yet also, and often simultaneously, as troubling and even dangerous. Beginning with one of his more overt recurring images – the child who wishes to be beaten – I will go on to recognise the importance of this dynamic to readings of some of Barrie's more confusing, yet most powerful work. In particular, I will examine a recurring scenario in Barrie's novels, in which a woman expresses reluctant pleasure in being dominated by a powerful man. Further, I will suggest that this combined awareness of the pleasures and dangers of surrender is eventually utilised in Barrie's thinking about the relationship between an artist and an audience. This preoccupation, I will suggest, becomes essential to the production of his most famous trope, that of the eternal boy, as Barrie seeks for an expression of artistic activity and experience which, in remaining playful, escapes the dangers inherent when pleasure and power combine.

Though the popularity of *Peter Pan* (1904) crosses both time and nations, nevertheless its author continues to be a neglected writer from a neglected period. This paper seeks to contribute to a restoration of confidence in the competency and complexity of Barrie's work, in the hope of adding nuance to conceptions of the time to which he belongs.
Panel Six: Literary Culture:

**Neo-Edwardian Summer: Dawn of the New Age**

Sarah Edwards - University of Strathclyde [sarah.m.edwards@strath.ac.uk]

This paper reflects on cultural constructions of the Edwardian period as a ‘long hot summer’ preceding the Great War. It argues that both Edwardian and later twentieth-century representations invoked symbolic images (Eden, pastoral) to create nostalgic images of a ‘golden age’. However, the identification of this season with childhood, the rural and nostalgia also allowed for diverse re-imaginings of summer as a brief and exotic space of social experimentation, anarchy, sexual fall and fiery destruction. I begin by examining critical debates and a range of literary and cultural examples of familiar narratives of Edwardian summer (including the garden party), before undertaking readings of specific fictional texts. I then consider two evocations of summer 1900: L.P. Hartley’s *The Go-Between* (1953) and its account of a second Golden Age following the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and Joan Lindsay’s *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1967), an Australian account of an outback summer encountered by colonial schoolgirls. Finally, I discuss A. S. Byatt’s *The Children’s Book* (2008). Byatt devotes several chapters to a cultural history of the Edwardians which knowingly invokes a range of neo-Edwardian scenarios; her work represents a twenty-first century take on neo-Edwardianism, which both acknowledges the range of nostalgic investments in the period, while looking back thoughtfully from the centenary of the age.

**Smog at the Garden Party: Atmospheric Pollution and the Polluted Mind in Henry James’ Wings of the Dove**

Rebecca Barnes - University of York [reb507@york.ac.uk]

This paper considers the representation of respiratory experience in Henry James’ 1902 novel *The Wings of the Dove*. In this novel James illustrates that breathing the rarefied atmospheres of “garden party” Edwardian society risks simultaneously inhaling the noxious fumes of emotional trauma and the suffocating social realities that emanate from its depths: these atmospheres mingle as readily as smoke in the wind.

During the Edwardian era a heightened awareness of respiration was for many the consequence of a daily struggle against pulmonary irritation and respiratory disease in a polluted, industrialised Britain. The portmanteau term “smog” first appeared in the Edwardian era, evoking a vision of Edwardian Britain far removed from any garden-party. However, these smogs were not viewed by the Edwardians as being only physically detrimental. For many, they were also a source of psychological corruption, polluting minds as well as bodies: the antismoke activist John Graham claimed in 1908 that as a result of smog, the populace was becoming “nervous and depressed”.

Although useful socio-historical analysis of Edwardian attitudes to air quality exists in works such as *Smoke and Mirrors: The Politics and Culture of Air Pollution*, there has been as yet no critical consideration of how Edwardian conceptions of the specifically psychological damage caused by “bad air” provided a literary trope through which to
critique the trauma caused by the era’s social, economic and cultural realities. Here, I demonstrate how James uses a range of atmospheric and respiratory images to intensify the reader’s perception of the various inspiring and toxic “psychic atmospheres” that circulate between his characters and that pervade the social and economic milieu they inhabit. I argue that this would have been a familiar concept to James’ readers, one emerging from politicised origins to infiltrate the culture of the era.

**A Honeymoon in Space? – The Opulent Age of the Scientific Romance**

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The early 1900s witnessed a number of remarkable scientific developments, such as Pierre and Marie Curie’s isolation of Radium, Einstein’s theory on the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies following on to the Theory of Relativity, Planck’s Quantum Theory and Rutherford’s discovery of the atom’s nuclear model. This paper explores through this situation the rise of the science fiction story with the birth of the pulp magazine. With Science Fiction being arguably the most self-reflexive genre on the literary scene, I aim to discuss the distinctions and tensions made in Edwardian fiction between the technical and the flighty, between fancy and reason. This paper explores the Edwardian science fiction legacy, especially in terms of the voyage extraordinaire and the attitudes towards interplanetary travel. The Edwardian period is particularly important as the legacy of the Victorian era was beginning to permeate a larger audience and education was becoming more widespread. Evolution, the advent of the X-Ray and the Anti-Copernican ideal began to re-route our sense of place in the universe and in turn the concept of humanity itself. Ideas were changing – no longer fallen angels but an evolutionary step up from the creatures with which we share the planet. This can be reflected in the wide scope of the Scientific Romance – the idea that we can see the Earth from a distance for what it is really is, relative to the unknown universe. H.G. Wells staged humanity in thought experiments, having cast us as both monsters and victims in his novels The War of the Worlds and The First Men in the Moon, whereas George Griffiths depicts a couple exploring the solar system at large in A Honeymoon in Space before they return home, their eyes opened. I use these examples alongside Wells’ Anticipations, analysing the thought behind this extrapolation of self and other to the thrill of new scientific discovery – from the prophetic messages that ring of Icarus to the romantic implications behind space travel. Which fears and which optimisms still exist in our Science Fiction today? Exploring near and futures, is there still faith in the trajectory of science on our earth as we know it and other lands? Do we still have the scope and/or the passion to discover anew in Science Fiction? Are we simply experiencing the fallout after the Edwardian scientific honeymoon period or are we overly romanticising the past?
Keynote:

**The Strange Death of Victorian Literature**

Simon James – University of Durham

[This paper will be followed by a wine reception]