EDWARDIAN PREMONITIONS AND ECHOES

University of Liverpool: Rendall Building, Lecture Room 5

10-11th April

Conference Schedule

THURSDAY 10th April

Registration 9.00-9.45

Introduction 9.45-10.15

Panel One: Empire and War 10.15-12.25 (chair: Harry Wood)

Paul Stocker – The Imperial Spirit: The Edwardian Era, Empire and British Fascism

Andrew Glazzard – “And Now I Build Destroyers!” The Economics of War in Edwardian Fiction

Michael Robinson – Perceptions of the Irish soldier during the time of the Great War: A Victorian and Edwardian Legacy of Anti-Irish Prejudice

Patrick Longson – Before the German Menace: British Imperial Anxiety before 1896

Lunch: 12.25-1.15

Panel Two: Art and Conquest 1.15-2.45 (chair: Nicholas Bubak)

Robert Brown – ‘Painted Geishas’ or ‘Coloured Conquest’?: Anglo-Australian Exhibitions and Performances of East Asia, 1901-1910

Melanie Polledri – The Imperial Stage: British sculptural representations of its Colonised Peoples following the Victorian Scramble for Africa

Samuel Shaw – Aliens at Prayer: The Representation of Jewish Life in London’s East End c.1905

Tea: 2.45-3.15
Panel Three: Criticism and Tradition 3.15-4.45 (chair: Richard Huzsey)

Sarah Shaw – ‘To find an Open Sesame wherever true literature is valued’: Edwardian Readers and the Literary-Critical Pilgrimage

Sophie Martin – A Rhetoric of Newness and continuity in Edwardian Art Criticism

Kathryn Lamontagne – Maude Petre: Modernism, Domesticity, and Damnation for the ‘New Woman’ in Catholic Britain

FRIDAY 11th April

Registration: 9.00-9.45

Panel Four: The Neo-Edwardian 9.45-12.15 (chairs: Sarah Shaw and Samuel Shaw)

Julia Gillen – Writing Edwardian postcards: a revolutionary social networking phenomenon


Ben Roberts – Civic ritual, public festivity and Edwardian event fatigue: setting an example for twenty-first century national celebrations

Margaret Stetz – John S. Goodall and the Politics of Late-Twentieth-Century Edwardianism for Children

Ian Miller – Medical Ethics and Hunger Strike Management: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

Lunch: 12.15-1.15

Panel Five: Periodisation and Performance 1.15-3.00 (chairs: Emily Trafford and Andrew Glazzard)

Rosie Šnajdr – Cultural Revisions based in Predictions: How the War shaped Pre-War Culture in Britain

Sally Bruce-Lockhart – Between the Wars: The Edwardian Era as the Middle Coda between the Boer War and 1939
Viv Gardner – *From Matinee Hats and the K.O.W. Brigade to Flapper Furies: responses to the ‘feminisation’ of theatre spectatorship, 1900-1918*

**Tea:** 3.00-3.45

**Keynote: 3.45-5.00:** Jonathan Wild – *Driving the Twentieth Century: The Emergence of the Machine in Edwardian Writing*

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**ABSTRACTS**

Paul Stocker (Teesside University) – *The Imperial Spirit: The Edwardian Era, Empire and British Fascism*
The Edwardian period has often been awarded the dubious honour of a ‘proto-fascist’ era by historians of British fascism, referring largely to ideas of eugenics, anti-alienism and popular imperialism as pre-cursors to various interwar fascist movements. In particular, the relationship between imperialism and British fascism has often been indicated, but insufficiently fleshed out by scholars. This paper will explore the relationship between the British Empire, as both a physical notion and component of British identity, and the interwar British fascist tradition. It will argue that Edwardian ideas of popular imperialism were imperative elements of British fascists’ attempts to win popular support, the most palpable example being through the British Union of Fascists’ (BUF) cornerstone economic policy of ‘Empire autarky’, heavily influenced by Joseph Chamberlain’s populist Tariff Reform League. More importantly, British imperialism was a key component of British fascist identity which glorified Britain’s imperial past as justification for a fascist state. Fascism, it was argued, was the only political creed that could restore ‘Pax Britannica’ and return to the gilded age of Clive of India and Cecil Rhodes. The paper will conclude by arguing that the Edwardian Era was far from chronologically isolated and Edwardian ideas were both utilised and adapted to suit the extreme political climate of interwar Britain.

Andrew Glazzard – “And Now I Build Destroyers!” The Economics of War in Edwardian Fiction

In 1900, with the Boer War still raging, the British journalist and economist J.A. Hobson completed *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects*, a ferocious analysis of what he saw as the real motivation for the conflict. His argument that the war was really about the prosecution of financial interests led to his celebrated dissection of militant-capitalism, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902). It prompted a public argument with one of the war’s chief supporters, Arthur Conan Doyle, whose bestseller *The Great Boer War* (1900-01) was followed by a refutation of the war’s critics, *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct* (1902).

This debate between two major figures in the Edwardian cultural scene shows just how contentious ideas issues of war, empire and finance were in the period. Conan Doyle’s involvement also shows the extent to which writers of fiction helped to fight the war of ideas that followed the Boer War. Most importantly, perhaps, these arguments were not simply retrospective responses to the fighting in South Africa, but also reflected aspirations and concerns over Britain’s international role at a time of increasing rivalry among the ‘Great Powers’.

This paper will discuss Edwardian fiction’s engagement in the debate over whether war was really a product of economic and financial forces. It will show how writers as diverse as Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, Hilaire Belloc, E. Philips Oppenheim and H.G. Wells used fiction to discuss not only the relationship between economics and militarism, but also the risks and potential consequences of economic change: would growth and innovation lead to peace and prosperity, or to war and ruin.
Michael Robinson (University of Liverpool) – *Perceptions of the Irish soldier during the time of the Great War: A Victorian and Edwardian Legacy of Anti-Irish Prejudice*

Irish troops who participated in the Great War were perceived to possess unique ‘national characteristics’ such as being notoriously aggressive, ill-disciplined, child-like, and emotional. Historians have previously argued that such perceptions were a Victorian legacy of pre-war anti-Irishness which experienced its zenith in the mid-nineteenth century. However, one area which has not been investigated in any detail is the perception that Irish soldiers were more susceptible to suffer from nervous injuries in comparison to other troops from mainland Britain. Marking the centenary year of the conflict, this paper will demonstrate that a pre-war belief that the Irish were more likely to suffer from insanity continued to influence perceptions of Irish troops during the Great War and in its immediate aftermath. The Ministry of Pensions, the War Office, and the Report of The Committee into Shell-Shock (published in 1922) all claimed that Irish soldiers were more susceptible to suffer from war neurosis. This stereotype of emotional fragility will be challenged in this paper by utilising my own primary research to counter the scant evidence that suggests that more Irish soldiers required psychiatric care in ‘South Ireland’ than any other region in the United Kingdom. This paper will demonstrate that the Irish soldier was no different to other troops within the British Army and that unfair perceptions of the Irish units were a result of Edwardian and Victorian anti-Irish prejudices.

Patrick Longson (Queen Mary, University of London) – *Before the German Menace: British Imperial Anxiety before 1896*

In the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras British popular imagination, both in the Empire and Metropole, was gripped by acute anxieties about security and decline. Recent South Asian scholarship has argued that such anxieties lay at the heart of late-nineteenth century British colonial culture; across popular mediums images of ‘mutinies’, cults of stranglers, the rape of white women, cannibalism, and plots against the empire, both from without and within, were commonplace. Many literary and cultural scholars have described fin de siècle British culture as being gripped by concerns about societal degeneration, immigration, economic inefficiency, racial vigour and security. Such British anxieties evolved from the possibility of internal chaos and disorder. In this paper I will argue that an increasing sense of internal danger was vitally connected to external fears. As A. Michael Matin and Yumna Siddiqi have argued, in literary narratives, fears of enemies in the Empire were transported to the domestic scene. Britain was a constituent, if a key one, of an imperial ‘whole’; anxieties about colonial rule in India and elsewhere, rather than constituting a separate discourse, were in fact umbilically connected to the mainstream of British popular culture.
From the 1880s Britain should not be viewed as imagining itself in dichotomy - as metropole and empire - but as one imperial whole. This holistic view meant that a threat to imperial possessions could easily translate into a menace to the heart of Empire; this linkage is essential in order to understand the development of a what I view as a specifically imperial German ‘menace’ in popular culture after 1896. This paper will suggest that the roots of anti-German sentiment, which is commonly viewed as a specifically Edwardian phenomenon, should be traced back to late-Victorian era. There were substantial continuities in the culture of imperial anxiety and self-doubt from the 1880s into the twentieth century, suggesting that the ‘Edwardian’ periodisation can be problematic when tracing such cultural trends and developments.

Robert Brown (University of Birmingham) – Painted Geisha’s or ‘Coloured Conquest’?: Edwardian exhibitions and the Japanese Empire

During the 1880s and 1890s, ‘things Japanese’ became an arena of great cultural interest to the British Imperial public, and living exhibitions such as the Japanese ‘living village’ in Knightsbridge 1885 attest to the growing fascination with exotic human and material display. The quaint image of ‘Old Japan’, with its products and artworks, Geishas and tea houses, led some such as Rudyard Kipling to wish that Japan would ‘never grow up’, as rapid industrial, military and societal reform threatened to quickly transform the country. In combination with the 1902 Anglo-Japanese alliance, there existed ample opportunity for the imperial public’s appetite to be satisfied, and this was manifested in a number of exhibitions and exchanges between the two empires throughout the Edwardian period.

I will therefore be looking at representations of the Japanese in British and Australian exhibitions and exchanges, the most notable of these being the very popular 1910 Japan-British exhibition at Shepherd’s Bush. However, I will be arguing that imperial attitudes to Japan were also highly conflicted. I will consider the ways in which the exhibitions revealed undertones of tension, and contested the harmonious narrative that Japanese and British exhibition organisers were attempting to sell. The organisation and presentation of the exhibits, shows and events revealed a deeper anxiety was at work, even in a celebratory context.

This is mirrored in the work of those who attempted to construct and disseminate ‘yellow peril’ imagery in Britain and Australia, through vehicles such as right wing invasion fiction. The paper then attempts to conclude to what extent the image of Japan had already transformed from ‘Garden to Empire’ in the popular perception, and whether events such as the Japan-British exhibition were already becoming exercises in nostalgia, as the image of Japan developed an increasingly hardened, militarised, aggressive edge after victory over Russia in 1910.
Melanie Polledri (University of York) – *The Imperial Stage: British sculptural representations of its Colonised Peoples following the Victorian Scramble for Africa*

In 1906, the second-generation New Sculptor William Goscombe John exhibited his bronze head of a pygmy chief, *Bokani*, at the Royal Academy in London. The piece is a significant, yet problematic, visual representation that constructs early twentieth-century ideologies of empire and racial difference. Following the infamous Scramble for Africa, these can be considered as either a continuation of preceding Victorian ideologies, or reactionary responses forming considerations unique to the Edwardian era. In 1905, Bokani, a product of what Bernth Lindfors termed “ethnological show business”, was brought to Britain from the forests of the Belgian Congo by the game hunter, Colonel James Harrison. The small group of Mbuti pygmies toured Britain and Europe; a much publicised spectacle that entertained audiences at Buckingham Palace, music halls, and Glasgow’s zoo. Instigated by London’s Anthropological Institute and the Natural History Museum, they underwent extensive physical examination; these institutions instigated John’s modeling of Bokani. Initially trained under the influence of the late-Victorian French sculptor, Jules Dalou, John embodied the Victorian New Sculptural ideals of natural realism, yet, in the wake of the Boer War, this piece also projects socio-political challenges facing an Empire that needed to boost its Imperial prerogative. Pivotal, the *Bokani* intersects boundaries of politics, art, science, and popular entertainment. This paper will examine why the *Bokani* questions and endorses John’s notions of class, race, and Imperial power in comparison with the Congolese sculptures of John’s friend, the late-Victorian adventurer, Herbert Ward. In doing so, conflicting relational dynamics emerge: these works, produced during the final stages of Leopold II’s notorious misrule of the Belgian Congo Free State (of which Britain participated significantly) impacted on British early-twentieth-century ethnographical sculpture. John’s portrait of Bokani exemplifies the convergence of these approaches to question his socio-cultural attitudes, which highlight aspects of Imperial policies towards Britain’s colonised peoples.

Samuel Shaw (Yale Center for British Art) – *Aliens at Prayer: The Representation of Jewish Life in London’s East End c.1905*

The Edwardian Era has recently been described as ‘turbulent period’ in the representation of Anglo-Jewish experience. Anxiety over the influence of Jewish businessmen, and the ever-expanding tides of Jewish immigration into the East End of London, ensured that the status of the British Jew was regularly under the spotlight. There were two major outcomes of this public debate: the growth of the British Zionist movement, supported by Joseph Chamberlain, and the 1905 Aliens Act, the first anti-immigration law to go through British parliament.

In the midst of these developments, two Anglo-Jewish artists, Alfred Wolmark and William Rothenstein, embarked upon a series of paintings in the Jewish East End. The artists came from
very different backgrounds: Rothenstein was born into a wealthy, liberal German-Jewish family in Bradford, whilst Wolmark was Polish by birth, moving to London in the late 1880s. Whilst Jewish subjects were a common feature of Wolmark’s early career, they only entered Rothenstein’s oeuvre for a brief period in the 1900s. Both artists, however, painted more Jewish subjects around 1905 than at any other point in their lives. This paper will question why this was, and what part their paintings played in the wider debate surrounding Jewish immigration, assimilation and Zionism. It will explore the complex Jewish identities of the two artists, and the ways that this did – and didn’t – play out in their art works. To what extent were they able to, or were perceived as being capable of representing the Jewish experience in the East End of London? Who were they painting for, and how were their works received by a non-Jewish audience?

Sarah Shaw (University of York) – ‘To find an Open Sesame wherever true literature is valued’: Edwardian Readers and the Literary-Critical Pilgrimage

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of literary studies and literary criticism as significant new forms of reading. Often aligned with liberal humanist discourses, which stressed the moral benefits of studying literature, early literary criticism has tended to be associated with predominantly male, establishment, conservative, and London-centric cultural commentators. Yet just as ‘English literature’ was becoming a formalised profession, requiring specialised training and initiation into a specific protocol and vocabulary, the practice of literary tourism – arguably a more egalitarian form of encountering literature – surged in popularity.

This paper argues that there existed an interplay between Edwardian literary criticism and literary tourism that resulted in what I’m terming ‘literary-critical pilgrimages’: studies that departed upon imaginative journeys across the pages and spaces of literature and nation. In combining the tropes of literary tourism with the protocols of literary criticism, and developing connections between literary histories and cultural spaces, commentators working in this mode wrested the formation of English Literature away from metropolitan circles and presented it as something to be experienced – and produced – by ordinary readers in localised, regional sites. In the process, these critical pilgrims constructed an alternative form of English Literature that decentralized and destabilized the establishment, reclaiming national culture for marginalized readers and reading communities.

Sophie Martin (University of Bristol) – A Rhetoric of Newness and continuity in Edwardian Art Criticism

‘... The fashion during the 1890s and 1900s for calling so many things new’

J B Priestley, The Edwardians
The critical preoccupation with 'newness' in the Edwardian era was nowhere more evident than in the art press, where a sense of optimism surrounding a new century was accompanied by a slump in the contemporary art market, and by gradual stylistic shifts that necessitated changes in the critical lexicon. This prompted a desire within the press to redefine concepts, terms and movements against what was Victorian, in order to promote emerging artists, galleries and works. However, this rhetoric masked a degree of continuity in how art was marketed, debated and defined.

This paper will explore how journals such as The Studio International and the Art Journal aimed to provide new definitions for critical terms. Of particular interest will be the treatment of the terms 'artist' and 'craftsman', where the latter replaced the former in an attempt to highlight the skill and professionalism of modern artists. The art press also criticized the Victorian era for its support of low-quality art goods and populist painting. Such rhetoric was motivated in part by the unfavorable economic conditions facing new art, and the policy of journals such as The Studio to support emerging British art. The marketing of new galleries such as Carfax & Co and the Leicester Galleries shows the market value placed on newness. The critical promotion of new display, venues and art demonstrates how 'newness' as a concept validated the developing contemporary art market.

This rhetoric of newness however, masks the ongoing connection between 19th and 20th century art dissemination. The relationship between old and new art in commercial galleries, along with recurring tropes in debate and terminology, will reveal the degree of continuity underpinning the Edwardian art world.

Kathryn Lamontagne (Boston University) – Maude Petre: Modernism, Domesticity, and Damnation for the ‘New Woman’ in Catholic Britain?

The current historiography of Victorian and Edwardian women articulates that the vicissitudes of late-Victorian morality were incredibly complex; the women were neither pedants nor prudes but marriage and domesticity remained at the heart of the private sphere for many women. My paper, ‘Modernism and Maude Petre (1863-1942): A New Woman for Catholic Britain,’ teases out the hybridities of womanhood and, furthermore, religious ‘New Womanhood’ over the long-Edwardian era. I contend that Petre, and other New Women of the 1890s, never abandoned their unconventional ideals of femininity and domesticity, or the independent spirit that they embraced as young women. Through three major aspects of her life over the traditional Edwardian period Maude Petre demonstrates the failures of traditional periodization to explicate individual experiences. 1914 for Petre was not when ‘all that was solid melted into air,’ but years earlier, from 1907-1909.

Maude Petre was a leader in the Roman Catholic Modernist controversy, a member of the Old Catholic gentry in England, a religious sister, and a woman with a deep religious faith. But she was
also the author of a controversial work listed on the Vatican’s Index of Forbidden Books who financially supported and lived together with the polemic Jesuit, Father George Tyrrell (1861-1909).

Complexity and contradiction define Maud Petre. She was a New Woman because she followed her own attitudes and ideas about love, religion, domesticity and womanhood. British women could be incredibly active in the public sphere but lacking feelings of solidarity with other women. This notion of personal exceptionalism came from her upbringing as a people apart, as a Catholic and aristocrat, but also a generational belief held by some middle- and upper-class women in the Late-Victorian and Edwardian eras. Petre would not be cowed by others, no matter how powerful, including by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church or the Pope himself. Petre rejected traditional ideas of how a British, Catholic woman should behave; demonstrating that even the most religious, ‘traditional’ of women could be a truly ‘New’ and ‘Modern’ woman.


Historical and contemporary analyses of literary nostalgia have almost exclusively examined the past object, entity, space or time that is desired. The nostalgic individual, until now, has remained a peripheral entity, a generalised visionary who ‘looks back’ to past cultures. Subsequently, little has been done to foreground the importance of the cultural identity of this individual in creating their relationship with a ‘desired past’. Therefore, this paper will explore the importance of homosexual identity in Alan Hollinghurst's nostalgic novel The Stranger's Child (2011). I assert that Hollinghurst constructs his depiction of the Edwardian period, through a particular ‘gay’ mode of nostalgia.

I claim that Hollinghurst is nostalgic for the exciting ‘piquancy of risk’ (Hollinghurst 1979), which informed homosexual men's experience of the Edwardian period. I demonstrate that in The Stranger's Child these unique emotional heritages of homosexual culture form an emotional poignancy so strong, that they define the reader's engagement with the country houses in which they take place. I continue to depict how, as Hollinghurst's narrative moves forward in the century of gay liberation and away from the consideration of homosexual acts as illicit, his country houses also undergo an aesthetic shift. The Edwardian country house, pregnant with the potency of illicit ‘erotic opportunity’, is resigned to the past as Hollinghurst moves to depict a series of country houses that are redesigned, relabelled built over, eventually becoming worn-out shells awaiting destruction. The primary aim of my paper is to depict the importance of homosexual cultural heritage in shaping our twenty-first-century relationship with the Edwardian period in unique ways. A secondary focus is to open a discussion of Hollinghurst as speaking for a contemporary gay culture that is not only interested in a future in which two men or women can marry, but is also deeply interested in the uniquely ‘queer’ emotional heritages that it has left behind.
Ben Roberts (Teesside University) – Civic ritual, public festivity and Edwardian event fatigue: setting an example for twenty-first century national celebrations

In terms of civic ritual and ceremony, it is reasonable to refer to a long-Edwardian period, commencing with celebrations to observe Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in 1887 and culminating in the 1911 coronation of George V. Following a relative dearth of celebrations during Queen Victoria’s mourning, this period saw the transition from rigid ceremonial events which reinforced municipal and national power structures, to participatory, recreational celebrations which promoted aspects of identity whilst allowing public festivity.

The highpoint of this period was 1901-02, when the British nation marked the funeral of Queen Victoria, the Relief of Mafeking, the end of the South African War and celebrations to mark the coronation of Edward VII. The actual coronation was postponed following the monarch being taken ill with appendicitis. Most civic celebrations still went ahead and were widely enjoyed, with the encouragement of sombre overtones to express respect. Yet when the actual ceremony took place two months later, many communities were unwilling to engage in another period of festivity. It was suggested that the frequent celebrations and commemorations of the previous year led to public reluctance to have a further day off work.

This sudden appearance of “event fatigue” is striking, particularly when contrasted with events in 2011-13, which witnessed a royal wedding, the Diamond Jubilee of Elizabeth II, the Olympic and Paralympic Games and finally, the birth of Prince George. This paper therefore considers how the Long-Edwardian period laid the foundations for frequent national celebration. It explores how the Edwardians embraced recreational civic ritual, before quickly tiring of frequent celebrations. This led to the adaptation of subsequent civic-national celebrations. In this light, the response to Edwardian “event fatigue” will be highlighted as a precedent for future twenty-first century national events, and as a guide to future analyses of the 2011-13 period.

Margaret Stetz (University of Delaware) – John S. Goodall and the Politics of Late-Twentieth-Century Edwardianism for Children

In an obituary written for the Independent, the art historian and gallery owner Christopher Wood praised John S. Goodall (1908–1996) not merely as “one of England’s best loved artists,” but as a watercolorist with a “genuine feeling for the spirit of the Victorian and Edwardian age.” For Wood,
as for legions of fans on both sides of the Atlantic, who made bestsellers of his “small and rectangular” books—all “completely designed and illustrated by him,” with “alternating whole and half pages” often composed entirely of wordless images depicting turn-of-the-century landscapes and interiors—Goodall was the holder of the key to a lost world. Awash in beauty and nostalgia, the numerous picture books that Goodall produced for the Macmillan publishing firm from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s coincided with the Thatcher years, a period of political conservatism and British cultural self-celebration supported by the so-called “heritage industry.” British cinema and television of the 1980s promoted the goals of the heritage industry through its dramatization of the vanished world of the country house, but the ideological effects of these films were largely confined to adults; Goodall’s books reached a wider audience and made visions of a glorious Edwardian England available to children. With his immensely popular Edwardian-themed works—*An Edwardian Summer* (1976), *An Edwardian Christmas* (1976), *An Edwardian Holiday* (1978), *An Edwardian Season* (1979), and *Edwardian Entertainments* (1982)—Goodall brought a high-art finish to scenes of upper-class figures strolling across the vast lawns of their estates, enjoying the opera, partaking of holiday feasts, and traveling abroad throughout the Empire, always elaborately dressed and always attended by domestic servants. His illustrated *An Edwardian Diary for 1979*, moreover, allowed the young purchaser to conflate the events of his or her own year with those of the imaginary Edwardians depicted in the volume’s idealized scenes. Absent from these constructions of the English past—which were heavily marketed to children, but which crossed over as well to an audience of adult fans and to parents who gave these as presents—were any suggestions that the Edwardian Age had also been a period of social, political, or international conflict that saw working-class, feminist, and anti-colonial activism. Goodall’s books created instead an aestheticized image of the Edwardian world as static, untroubled, and as bathed in golden light, even as they reinforced the notion that the privileged classes were beautiful in themselves and had been the custodians of a beautiful way of life. The generation that grew up with Goodall’s ideologically and artistically potent productions is in power today in Britain. In the Conservative government of David Cameron—who was born in 1966, and who was ten-years-old when Goodall’s Edwardian series began—we may even be witnessing the legacy of these fantasies.

**Julia Gillen (Lancaster University) — Writing Edwardian postcards: a revolutionary social networking phenomenon**

Picture postcards were an extraordinarily popular phenomenon in the Edwardian age, in ways that presage the digital revolution of more recent times. Emerging through a nexus of new communication technologies and changes in society, the postcard enabled writers to send brief, multimodal messages cheaply in a “culture of speed.” With several deliveries a day, the experience
of using cards was closer to contemporary digital communications than in any intermediate period. Working with the Postmaster General’s reports, we have calculated that between 1901 and 1910 approximately 6 billion cards were sent, approximately 200 per person per year on average. They were appropriated by an almost universally literate population, with an unprecedented sense of mobilities. Internal and external evidence make clear how much people enjoyed using this new, informal and highly accessible tool, untrammelled by the formal requirements of letter-writing.

We have compiled a corpus of 3,000 cards sent through the post in the UK between 1901 and 1910 and combine a variety of linguistic, semiotic and historical methods to find out more about postcard users. In this paper I respond to the following questions:

1. Who used picture postcards to communicate with their social networks?
2. How did people make use of the speed of the cards, across time and distance?
3. In what ways did postcard writers make use of the new multimodal opportunities?

I will combine an overview of findings in response to these questions with some exemplifying illustrations. I will conclude with reflections on the place of the postcard in Edwardian society and culture, making some comparisons with current social networking communications.

**Ian Miller (University of Ulster) – Medical Ethics and Hunger Strike Management: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

In September 1909, the Home Office initiated forcible feeding policies in an attempt to tackle the problem of female prison hunger striking. In response, militant suffragists and concerned medical practitioners commenced a protracted debate on the physical and psychological safety of forcible feeding, the ethical appropriateness of forcing prisoners to eat against their will, and whether force feeding was being used to save the lives of individuals close to starvation or to coerce recalcitrant prisoners. In this paper, I argue that these key ethical issues, which first emerged towards the close of Edwardian era, frequently re-surfaced in twentieth-century British, Irish and Northern Irish prisons. In addition, I maintain that the ethical questions that have surrounded force feeding since the Edwardian period have remained largely unresolved, leaving behind a problematic legacy that continues to impact on our perceptions of prison medical practice during periods of hunger striking.

Exploration of the key questions on force feeding first posited by militant suffragists can be fruitfully used to explain and critique the use of force feeding in contemporary contexts such as Guantanamo Bay. Contrasting historical and contemporary experiences can reveal much about how to interpret prisoner accounts of the apparent pain involved in being force fed; the use of propaganda by groups resisting the authority of the state; the complex role of prison doctors caught in the dilemma of adhering to the ethical norms of their profession and the needs of the state; and the physiological and psychological safety of applying the stomach tube to quell prison resistance.
Sarah Edwards (University of Strathclyde) – *The neo-Edwardian novel and the problem of periodization*

The neo-Edwardian novel, like its neo-Victorian counterpart, embodies attempts to revise, reinterpret and rediscover the Edwardian era for a contemporary audience. However, the brevity of the period is a significant focus of interest and is reflected in both the formal and thematic structures of these texts. I will consider a range of examples, including novels by A. S. Byatt, Julian Barnes, Fay Weldon, Isabel Colegate and Tracy Chevalier, which display common preoccupations with time, periodization and the definition and limits of ‘Edwardianism’. These authors dwell on the connotations attached to particular years - such as 1900 and the theme of modernity versus tradition, or 1914 and the foreshadowing of war – and debate their significance for understanding the present as part of an era; they demonstrate interest in the developing self over a short period of time and, particularly, in the rapid changes in children over several years (who also represent the ‘childhood of the century’); and they often employ narrative techniques from life writing, such as precisely-dated diary entries, to represent these types of subjective experience. This paper will consider then, how the novel has been used to debate and discuss the uncertain periodization of the Edwardian era.

Sally Bruce-Lockhart (University of East Anglia) – *Between the Wars: The Edwardian Era as the Middle Coda between the Boer War and 1939*

Rather than bookending the Edwardian Era between the Boer War and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, I would argue instead for seeing the Edwardian era as the middle Coda between the Boer War and the Second World War.

My model for proffering this argument to the conference is that the move to radicalise the state’s relationship to land in the long 1930s came from the tutorials of undergraduates in the 1880s. The radicals of that liberal kindergarten were mentored, grew but failed to flourish in the Edwardian era, not designed intellectually for the formats of the party politics of the time, and their writings indistinct amongst the festoons of Edwardian small magazines. Post First World War however their Edwardian ethic gave rigour and rectitude that drove them to formulate policies that met the fallout from the depression with legislative ardour.

This ardour was given diachronic cohesion through the love of the leafy and the land that ran uninterrupted from the late Victorian to the outbreak of the Second World War, with its pinnacle in the relationship of the Arts and Crafts movement to the heritage preservationists in the Edwardian era. It was then the Baedeker Blitz of 1942 that caused the rupture and returned the drive to formulate national identity away from the land into the town centres. I will argue for bookends that will interest this conference being the foundations of the preservation societies in the 1880s and their even tone to 1939. I will argue that both the leafy and the land separately absorbed the
national psyche from 1880 to 1940, and that in both cases that absorption was killed off by the Second World War.

Rosie Šnajdr – Cultural Revisions based in Predictions: How the War shaped Pre-War Culture in Britain

Whilst the cultural significance of the First World War cannot be denied, I wish to discuss some of the problems that attend the use of August 1914 as a ‘terminus’ in cultural history. My paper will consider the critical significance of cultural continuity across both ‘halves’ of 1914, with specific reference to the predictive tendencies of genre fiction in the earlier months of that year. Cultural attempts to predict, understand and adapt to visions of the War to come will be discussed, with reference to the way in which they problematise the cleanliness of August 1914 as a historical bookend.

Early 1914 saw a vogue for adventure stories that speculated about the machine-use in battles which uncannily foreshadowed coming War—acrobplanes engaged in dogfights, submarines torpedoed cargo ships, and cars and motorbikes sped across live battlefields. These stories shared some key features: all presented a situation of war analogous to the war to come, lending them a predictive and political edge, and all included machine-driven battle sequences, featuring technology on the cusp of possibility.

Reflecting real-life archetypes, like the stunt pilots that looped-the-loop at Hendon, the flight-age action hero did not require the muscles of his colonial adventure story predecessor. With the growing sense that the future of human power lay in harnessing the superior strength of machines came anxieties about the relative weaknesses of human limb and the replaceability of heroes whose prowess was provided by technology. There emerged a new type of hero—the dextrous machinist—who was intellectual, lean, and newly mortal. ‘Mechanical war stories’ are indicative of the way in which War revised British culture long before the assassinations in Sarajevo. In them, entrenched notions of heroism, gender, and nation were revised against predictions of the shape of the war to come, developing a new range of modern values.

Anthony Patterson (American University of Ras Al Khaimah) – Getting Sex Square with the Rest of Life: Sex and Health in H.G. Wells’s ‘New Machiavelli’ (1911) and Hubert Wales’s ‘The Yoke’ (1909)

At the end of book one in The New Machiavelli, Richard Remington exclaims: “Sex [...] is a fundamental thing in life [...] I'm going to look at it, experience it, think about it — and get it square with the rest of life!” Later, in Experiments in Autobiography, Wells minimised his own contribution to writing about sex claiming that the waters of oblivion” would “swallow up” his writings about “love
and sex-reactions”. This paper, however, explores these Edwardian notions of “love and sex-reactions” through Wells’s *New Machiavelli* and Hubert Wales’s *The Yoke* in order to gauge the extent to which new understandings of Edwardian sexuality as expressed in the Edwardian sex novel distinctly break with both a late-Victorian notion of sexuality and later Freudian understandings of sexuality which came to prominence after the Great War. Indeed, I will argue that the sex novels of Wells and Wales promote a new sexual aesthetic that centres and celebrates sexual desires and practices in ways considerably distinct from both Victorian predecessors and Modernist successors. Thus, I will argue that although there are clear continuities regarding perceptions of sexuality with both past and future, the period of the great sex war as Wells denominated it from 1900-1914 describes a unique phrase in the development of understandings of sexuality. If sexual desire is recognised and on occasion celebrated in late Victorian fiction when most novelists explored sexual themes and issues, they invariably highlighted the punishment practitioners of aberrant sexual activities and arrangements endured. While much Edwardian fiction also polemically challenges the social, moral, and ideological limits placed upon sexual acts, it also celebrates sexual pleasure as central to mental health, often providing the sexual transgressor with much greater happiness and success than most Victorian fiction allows. This paper explores the extent to which this discernible pre-Freudian shift to sex viewed as essential to psychological wellbeing, this getting sex square with the rest of life, merits a thorough reconsideration of how Edwardian sexuality has generally been perceived.

**Viv Gardner (University of Manchester) – From Matinee Hats and the K.O.W. Brigade to Flapper Furies: responses to the ‘feminisation’ of theatre spectatorship, 1900-1918**

Looking back in 1924 Frank Vernon blamed the ‘War-time flapper’ for the ‘butchery’ of British Theatre, arguing that, ‘while the men on leave came and went, [the Flapper] remained, helping one soldier after another to spend his money on the entertainment she chose… she knew it was a jolly war, because it bought home men in uniform, and that thrilled her sexually.’

This paper will explore the roots of this hostility towards the female spectator in the Edwardian period and explore the impact of an increasingly visible female spectatorship in both the popular and radical theatre of the time. It will argue that the perceived ‘feminisation’ of theatre audiences was well underway by the end of the nineteenth century with the advent of matinees in the 1880s which enabled middle-class women to round off ‘a day of shopping and sightseeing with an afternoon at the theatre,’ but that women’s presence attracted relatively little criticism before the war, largely because it was associated with trivial, ‘female’ leisure activities such as shopping, fashion and celebrity culture – critics concentrated on ridiculing the fashion for matinee hats and the ‘adolescent behaviour’ of Lewis

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Waller’s female fans – and was commercially advantageous. However, tensions between traditional notions of womanhood, which could accommodate this ‘female frippery’, and women’s growing social, political and sexual autonomy (e.g. the emergence of an overt ‘female gaze’ in performance spectatorship) and incursion into the workplace, characterised the pre-war period and grew as the war progressed. The paper will focus on the London West End theatre and performance (where this tension is most manifest) but touch on performance in suburban and provincial theatres where appropriate.

CALL FOR PAPERS
‘ARNOLD BENNETT AND HIS CIRCLE’
A SYMPOSIUM CO-HOSTED BY THE EDWARDIAN CULTURE NETWORK AND THE ARNOLD BENNETT SOCIETY
KEELE UNIVERSITY 17TH – 18TH OCTOBER 2014
As I closed the book at 7 in the morning after the shortest sleepless night of my experience a thought passed through my head that I knew pretty well my "Bennett militant" and that, not to be too complimentary, he was a pretty good hand at it; but that there I had "Bennett triumphant" without any doubt whatever. A memorable night.

Joseph Conrad in a letter to Arnold Bennett, January 1924

Conrad was one of many contemporaries who recognised Arnold Bennett as one of the most assured and influential writers of his generation. At once both a commercially-successful and an experimental writer, Bennett’s range encompassed commercial fiction and naturalism, self-help books and short stories, journalism and science-fiction. ‘Arnold Bennett and His Circle’ will seek to present Bennett as an icon of the Edwardian age, fundamental to our understanding of the period, and a writer whose work needs to be considered specifically in an Edwardian context.

We invite abstracts for ten-minute papers on any aspect of Bennett’s Edwardian writing, biography and wider circle. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Bennett and the Edwardian literary field
- Bennett’s literary theories
- Bennett and his contemporaries
- Bennett’s influences and influence
- Bennett and genre
- Bennett and material culture
- Bennett’s readers

Proposals should be sent to edwardianculture@hotmail.co.uk by Monday 30th June 2014. Confirmed speakers include Professor David Amigoni (Keele University), Professor Ruth Robbins (Leeds Metropolitan University), John Shapcott (Keele University), and Professor Deborah Wynne (University of Chester). For updates about the event, please visit www.edwardianculture.com