

Welcome from Director, Professor Dawn Hadley

When I put a note in my diary a couple of months ago that I needed to write an introduction to the spring newsletter, I was pretty clear about what I would be discussing. I imagined I would be telling you all about our April trip to Utrecht with the 2019 cohort for their first colloquium, and reporting on our discussions about future collaboration with colleagues in the Faculty of Humanities. I would also be informing you about plans for the final colloquium for the 2017 cohort, scheduled for Weetwood Hall in Leeds in early June. Well, what is it that they say about the best laid plans??!! We are living through extraordinary times and my key message to you all is to look after yourselves, and to prioritize your physical and mental health and wellbeing. Do what you can on your research and keep in touch with your supervisors and with the WRoCAH office, where we are doing everything that we can to support you and keep you updated about opportunities, information coming to us from your universities and UKRI. We know it is overwhelming at times and if you need us to help you to navigate the information overload then please do get in touch; and also bear with us as we are working our way through the situation and the requirements of UKRI and the AHRC, who are themselves having to respond to a fast-changing situation.

I would like to offer up a huge vote of thanks to colleagues from across the three universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York who worked tirelessly, collegially and with good humour to complete this year's studentships processes on time, as they reviewed funding applications, undertook a fair and robust moderation process and dealt with the need to move to a virtual meeting platform at minimal notice. In this they were ably led by the subject cluster chairs, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude: Andrea Major (History, Leeds), Mark Westgarth (Heritage & Material Culture, Leeds), Alasdair Cochrane (Thought, Sheffield), Jane Hodson (English & Cultural Studies, Sheffield), Ben Poore (Creative Arts & Media, York) and Lucia Aiello (Modern Languages & Linguistics, York). As a result of this hard work we were able to get our offers out to the 2020 cohort on time and we look forward to welcoming those students in October, whether in person or virtually as circumstances dictate. Finally, a word about the WRoCAH office team. We have recently said goodbye to David Barrow who has been an important part of the team over the last year and I would like to thank him for everything that he has contributed to WRoCAH, both as a student and a colleague. I would also like to highlight the hard work of the WRoCAH office team over recent weeks; much of this has gone on behind the scenes, but without the tireless work of Caryn and Clare WRoCAH would grind to a halt. I am sure you will all join me in saying a huge 'Thank you' to them both.

Your fellow WRoCAH students are a resourceful bunch and some great ideas for keeping in touch and supporting each other have come forward in recent weeks. There are opportunities to talk to your WRoCAH colleagues through the weekly online peer support group meetings organised by Hope Bachmann (Leeds, School of Politics and International Studies) and if you fancy sending and receiving a postcard, real or virtual, then Lucy Moore (York, Archaeology) has set up an initiative for this. If you have a similarly great idea for keeping in touch, supporting one another or sharing your research then please do let the WRoCAH office know, and we will do what we can to facilitate this. WRoCAH students are an imaginative group and I have been struck by your flexibility in applying to undertake virtual REPs; I look forward to hearing how those went! In the WRoCAH office we are talking to our counterparts at Utrecht and Aarhus and exploring how we can continue to develop our collaborations and looking to the future when we will all be able to meet up in person. We are also discussing the best ways to reorganise the whole cohort events we had to postpone and we will confirm these arrangements shortly. We haven't followed the rush to move everything online immediately because we know that you are all having to take time to get used to the current situation; when the time is right we will reschedule these events in whatever format is possible.



WRoCAH CDA Blog Series

2019 saw the start of ten AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards – PhD projects in which students and partner organisations work together on a piece of applied research that will have immediate impact. The PhD experience these projects offer is very different to the norm, bringing their own opportunities and challenges. In this series we hope to celebrate the early experiences of the students undertaking this collaborative and dynamic research.



Lucy Brownson

CHATSWORTH

No matter how many times I witness it, I'm always spellbound as Chatsworth House, its gold leaf window frames accentuated by the bright winter sunshine, sails into view first thing in the morning. When I first arrived here back in October last year, equally excited and nervous to start my collaborative PhD, the place was resplendent in oranges and reds as autumn reached a blazing crescendo.

<https://wrocah.ac.uk/wrocah-cda-series-lucy-brownson-and-chatsworth/>

Christopher Wakefield

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

I've always been fascinated by archaeology. From finding a medieval coin while digging in my garden as a child to endlessly pestering my parents to take me to visit excavations, I've been obsessed with the past for as long as I can remember. My interest in archaeology never stopped and led from volunteering on digs as a teenager to becoming a senior field archaeologist.

<https://wrocah.ac.uk/wrocah-cda-series-christopher-wakefield-and-the-council-for-british-archaeology/>

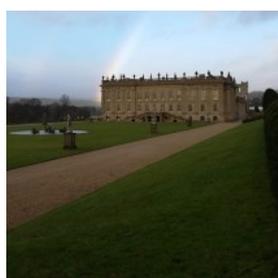


Louise Calf

CHATSWORTH

Few people are aware that there is a theatre inside Chatsworth House. Between 1896 and 1907, this private theatre annually hosted the King and Queen of England. The crux of my research is uncovering the stories and significance of this overlooked space and sharing those stories with Chatsworth's staff and visitors.

<https://wrocah.ac.uk/wrocah-cda-series-louise-calf-and-chatsworth/>



Katie Crowther

NATIONAL TRUST

My CDA explores manuscript material and print ephemera penned by aristocratic and gentry women at Georgian National Trust properties. I consider these documents alongside the eighteenth century's vibrant culture of letters, including epistolary fiction and property novels. The National Trust works to conserve and protect landscapes and buildings across the British Isles and most importantly to ensure that these beautiful places are open for everyone to enjoy; 2020 marks 125 years since the charity was founded meaning that it's an exciting year to work alongside them.

<https://wrocah.ac.uk/wrocah-cda-series-katie-crowther-and-the-national-trust/>



Focus on Training:

Marielle Hehir, School of Design, University of Leeds



A recent small award has allowed me to bring the alchemy of colour I have long been reading about in books into my practice-led research. In January I attended a workshop to learn how to dye with rust and plants led by an art and design practitioner, at the Ruskin Centre for Research in Lancaster. It felt like the appropriate setting, surrounded by John Ruskin's musings on the natural world. Natalie Linney led the workshop, and throughout I was able to put into practice some experiments that had previously been rattling around in my head.

I am a painter and my practice-led research explores how contemporary painting responds to the current environmental crisis. The site, on which I am currently focusing my research, and where I collect my moments of encounter to take back to the studio, is the canal system. Particularly in areas where the canal is now decommissioned from its origins in industry, natural substances begin to engulf the concrete, iron and steel that slice through land, muddying the division between man-made and natural. Long-post its industrial heyday, the canal system offers a material marker of the current climate crisis. Close scrutiny of any stretch of the canal system will offer a spectrum of material forms and a complex interweaving of natural life and pollution, some of which I have adopted into my research practice. The workshop with Natalie has helped me to develop some new skills that mean my engagement with the materials I select can be enhanced in new areas of experimentation.

"The workshop has helped me to develop some new skills that mean my engagement with the materials I select can be enhanced in new areas of experimentation."



Dye tests in the workshop (left)

Natural leaves in water. Iron blanket (cotton soaked in iron solution) and silk are sandwiched with the leaves in between (right)



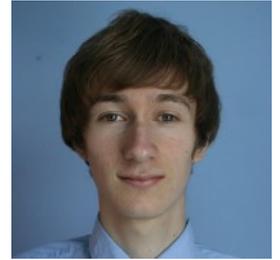
Natural leaves in water, Acer, Ferns, Eucalyptus, common Geranium, printed onto silk (left)

Iron soaked leaves (soaked with rusty objects), printed on silk (right)



Rory Hanna (Department of History, University of Sheffield)

STUDENT PROTEST AND ACTIVISM IN WEST GERMANY, 1949-1967



When applying for PhD funding, I was struck by how much financial and practical support the WRoCAH team provide for their scholars' core research and professional development, and am very glad to now be part of such a diverse researcher community. WRoCAH's training days encourage members to get to know each other and exchange ideas. As well as enabling ample opportunities for researcher collaboration, these events provide a somewhat rare chance to talk to peers from outside your own discipline.

With funding from WRoCAH's Large Award grant scheme, I undertook my first PhD research trip to Germany in January and February 2020. Having the opportunity to carry out fieldwork at an early stage of my PhD has helped me to refine my project. I consulted written sources at the university archives in Göttingen and Freiburg, and at government archives in Freiburg and Stuttgart, as well as carrying out three oral history interviews with former student activists. Acquiring this source information has informed the thematic focuses and chapter breakdown of my thesis, and spending nearly four

weeks conducting research abroad – longer than anything I had undertaken for my BA

or MA – taught me some valuable lessons about what to bear in mind for future trips. If you're taking lots of photos of written sources, bring a hard drive with you in case your phone runs out of memory and you need to clear space!

"The demonstration caused outrage among regional politicians who had financed the construction of a modern-looking canteen, with its stylish steel and glass façade, only to witness 'ungrateful' students boycotting its service"



My research allows me to discover the controversial histories behind familiar settings. In Freiburg, a city in south-west Germany, I found out about a 'canteen strike' in 1961, in which 1,500 students sat down in front of the newly-opened university cafeteria to protest against the expensive and poor-quality meals on offer. The demonstration caused outrage among regional politicians who had financed the construction of a modern-looking canteen, with its stylish steel and glass façade, only to witness 'ungrateful' students boycotting its service. Yet the canteen strike was a sign of changing attitudes in post-war West Germany, as the country's economic boom had led to higher expectations among students about the standards which their universities should meet.

The building (pictured) is still used as the university's main canteen, although its architecture has perhaps dated somewhat since 1961. I went there for lunch during my research visit, and enjoyed telling some current students about the tumultuous events at the opening of the building in which they were sitting.

Hayley O’Kell (School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds)

THE WORTH OF WOMEN: HISPANIC WOMEN’S RESPONSES TO THE EARLY MODERN QUERELLE DES FEMMES



Literature often provides a gateway to a specific cultural and emotional moment. Words, initially scrawled on a manuscript, page or screen, are able to encapsulate the zeitgeist of any era. In the case of women’s writing, tears, exasperation, loss and alienation seep through the lines of female-authored short stories, plays, poems, chronicles, biographies and hagiographies.

María de Zayas was a seventeenth-century Spanish female writer who was later named by Stephanie Merrim as ‘the most unabashed, militant Hispanic feminist of her age’. An exceptional writer who I spent 30,000 words writing about for my Masters by Research thesis. In her second collection of short stories *Desengaños amorosos* [The Disenchantments of Love], one of her female narrators states, ‘I don’t think it’s off track to say that out of fear and invidiousness, men deprive women of the exercise of both letters and arms.’ This statement underlines particularly for the early modern period, the jarring process of women occupying the male-dominated literary sphere, in which they were not made to feel particularly welcome.

To uncover the experiences of our female precursors in greater depth therefore, sources such as literature, salaries paid by the city government and hagiographies of female saints can be read as a subtext of women’s experiences. By analysing women’s words in the early modern period for example, we can see that women’s experiences of feeling alienated from their bodies, exasperated at men belittling their talents or feeling completely unheard, are not too dissimilar to what women around us still experience today.

My WRoCAH-funded research focuses on neglected female voices in the early modern Iberian Atlantic, giving due space to the creative craft of Hispanic female voices that have been perpetually overlooked in the scholarship. It aims to move past dichotomies of both Spain and Latin America and Portugal and Brazil and appreciate the complex movement of individuals within the Iberian Atlantic, including both the metropolises and colonies. It probes the gendered dissemination of power within a colonial matrix and how the experience of being female in each of these

spaces largely varied. A refracting experience that can be investigated through the literature of the period, Inquisition records, letter correspondence and legal records, to name but a few historical sources.

WRoCAH has provided me with access to an

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interdisciplinary network of humanities students, with whom I am thrilled to collaborate in the near future. Unravelling ideas for my potential REP partner in Spain or Latin America has certainly kept my mind whirring and I will soon be planning a Large Awards application for a primary research trip to the *Archivo Histórico Nacional* and the *Biblioteca Nacional* in Madrid. Earlier in the year with WRoCAH’s support, I ventured to The National Archives to attend an archival training course and to the University of London more recently, for a pan-European conference on women’s identities between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. To be amongst such an inspiring and supportive cohort of students, I can only dream of the possibilities and personal growth that my WRoCAH-funded PhD will bring in 3 riveting years. One thing I do know is how lucky I feel to be part of the collaborative and dynamic WRoCAH consortium.



(above) *Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid*

(below) *The National Archives, Kew*



Dr Michael Samuel (University of Leeds alumnus, WRoCAH 2014 cohort)

Life beyond the microcosm of the university campus, away from the ups and downs of the PhD and the structure of WRoCAH's developmental programme is challenging. After the final colloquium and the award of the PhD at graduation, you are suddenly confronted with an immediate sense of the present. Reminded by the immediate past—by your tumultuous relationship with your thesis and the rewarding experience of undertaking the journey alongside other WRoCAHs (though I will never get used to saying this aloud), and confronted with the existential abyss beyond, as you explore your toughest research question, *who am I?*, while you write personal statements for jobs.



While I have grappled with these feelings and more, rather than grow nostalgic for the past and my amazing time as a WRoCAH, I instead asked myself, *how can I build on my experiences, the friendships, the skills that I acquired during my time undertaking a PhD (2014-19)?* The answer came immediately (well, a year after my viva): why not create a project with your good friend, fellow WRoCAH Dr Louisa Mitchell (Leeds)?

Combining our shared interest in Media, and specific expertise in

Film, Television and Cultural Studies, Louisa and I recently put together a book proposal, which has already received some excellent abstracts and has caught the interest of a publisher. It is called *Streaming and Screen Cultures in Asia-Pacific* and is committed to exploring the visual and cultural implications of advancing media technologies in the Asia-Pacific region.

We are overjoyed to have already caught the attention of some major scholars writing in the field, but we are also particularly keen to invite PGRs to contribute. The call for contributions is still live, so please consider sending an abstract our way.

<https://tinyurl.com/y826vbdm>

Dr Megan Girdwood, (University of York alumna, WRoCAH 2014 cohort)

Early Career Research and Teaching Fellow, University of Edinburgh

I finished my PhD in English at York in 2018 and began an Early Career Research and Teaching Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh in January 2019. It was difficult to leave York after developing such a close community of friends during my PhD, but Edinburgh is a beautiful city, and a familiar one, so I felt fortunate to be moving back to Scotland. My post combines research with teaching duties, and the first semester was slightly frantic in terms of trying to prepare for seminars, catch up on reading, and find my feet in a new department. I teach on a range of undergraduate and postgraduate modules, mostly in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, though I did have to brush up on my medieval texts for one first-year course. This term, I've been able to teach on a module I designed myself, which was a great opportunity to bring some of my research interests into the classroom. I'm also trying to finish writing my first book, *Modernism and the Choreographic Imagination: Salome's Dance after 1890*, which will be published by Edinburgh University Press. This book is based on the PhD I completed at York, and I'm grateful for the various opportunities WRoCAH provided during these three years, as well as the broader sense of support generated by the White Rose Universities Network.

