

Mark Knights reports a successful summer school held at the Newberry Library between 10 and 23 July for *Connections, Convergences and Disjuncture - the Joint Histories of Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth Century England/Britain and English/British America, 1650-1750*. The summer school followed two previous workshops. The first of these, focusing on the period 1650-1700, had been held at the Newberry on 5 November, with 20 participants from the US, and the second workshop, held at Warwick on 24/5 March with 30 participants, focused on Britain and British America 1700-1750. Details of all three events are to be found on the Renaissance Centre website.

The summer school, run jointly with Prof Trevor Burnard, followed a similar format to the workshops: an invited guest selected some readings and helped to lead and guide the ensuing free-flowing discussion. We had eight distinguished guest scholars: Paul Cheney (Chicago), Lisa Cody (Claremont McKenna College), John Garrigus (Texas, Arlington), Evan Haefeli (Columbia), David Hancock (Michigan), Sarah Pearsall (Oxford Brookes), Kevin Sharpe (London) and Phil Withington (Cambridge). Each guest took a theme (supplemented by sessions led by me and Trevor) ranging from trade and political economy, gender, religion and visual culture to citizens and communities, slavery and comparisons with European rival empires.

The postgraduates and early career participants were a particularly lively and high-powered group. They were selected by a committee chaired in the spring, during the Warwick workshop, by Prof Eric Slauter, and Ingrid de Smet also kindly helped us come to our decisions. We were extremely impressed by the quality of applications and by their number - we had 29 in all. We selected 16 US participants, each of whom had the opportunity during the course of the summer workshop to present research papers based on their own work. These, to name just a few of the topics covered, included magistracy, race, migration propaganda, portraiture, monarchical visual culture, literature, and religion, and ranged across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In our group discussions we returned to some of the topics explored in earlier workshops. These included the problems of periodisation; the nature of revolution and what 'revolutionary principles' might amount to in a transatlantic context; the role of political economy; and political culture. The divergences in the historiographies of Britain and British America were again a frequent topic of discussion. As earlier, insecurity - we identified a series of anxieties - proved a fertile theme. But we also developed new topics (particularly in response to the participants' own interests), dropped some (the Britishness that we discussed in November was only relatively rarely a central concern) or took older topics in new directions. We had only briefly touched on issues of race and slavery but these became far more central to our concerns; the importance of visual culture emerged much more strongly in a number of sessions; we got a good deal out of discussions about network theory; we explored and questioned changing notions of gender; we found that the notion and construction of community was an extremely productive one to think further about; 'space' entered into our discussions in helpful ways; and we also found a linguistic approach, focusing on certain key concepts, could also help frame our analysis.

The fortnight was intellectually exciting but also physically exhausting! Reading a very large number of pieces of secondary reading prior to an intense analysis and discussion of them was very productive format but also meant that we all worked extremely hard! We played hard too, of course, continuing discussion with our guests in a more informal way in the evenings, sampling the wonderful but sometimes gargantuan plates of food served in Chicago's restaurants.

The participants' feedback was pleasingly positive. The following are some of the comments made on the evaluation sheets at the end: 'my scholarship has changed tremendously'; 'discussions were always lively and productive'; 'I'm seeing entirely new connections'; 'a challenging, stimulating and very rigorous programme'; 'it well exceeded expectations'; 'it will continue to shape my work moving forward'; 'great!'; 'the guest faculty were excellent - well prepared and engaging'; 'the workshop built a strong sense of community'; 'the guest faculty were uniformly excellent'; 'Mark and Trevor were great directors, giving a great sense of collegiality while successfully facilitating our discussions'; 'the directors were superb'; 'it exceeded expectations in all regards'; 'the workshop seemed particularly successful in drawing together a lively community of scholars'; 'fantastic'; 'superb!'

Two fellowships were awarded to participants who wish to study during the summer of 2012 at the Newberry. The Fellows will be Stephanie Koscak and Elizabeth Bourdin.

Thanks must go again to the very strong administrative support we have had from the Newberry. Karen Christianson deserves particular credit for their unstinting helpfulness but we have also been lucky enough to have had great institutional support from Carla Zecher, Ingrid de Smet, Liese Perrin, Jayne Brown, Tia Parks and Katie Klaasson. Thanks should also go to Trevor Burnard for participating, and temporarily reassuming his Warwick identity, despite his move to Australia.