

Mark Knights reports two successful workshops for *Connections, Convergences and Disjuncture - the Joint Histories of Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth Century England/Britain and English/British America, 1650-1750*. The first workshop, focusing on the first half of the period under study, was held at the Newberry on 5 November, details of which are at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/warwicknewberry/mellon-newberry/renaissanceandearlymoderncommunities/britishandamericanhistories/5nov/>. We had a much larger than expected response to our call for applications for participants. Although the grant fully funded 10 from the US, we were actually able to take double that number, providing the 10 who were not fully funded with accommodation and meals, though they had to provide the costs of travel out of their own, or their institution's, funds. The extra resource was created because Trevor Burnard and I stayed only two nights and one of Warwick's PhD students was already in the US; we also did not bring a fourth UK participant. This meant that we could accommodate all the US consortium applications.

This made for a lively and large group of students and early career scholars, whose interests ranged chronologically quite widely in focus (literature, art history, space, piracy, gender, political economy, governance, to name just a few). The format worked well. Participants were given readings in advance (placed on the website) and discussion was then guided by our two excellent US-based scholars who led the afternoon sessions. Prof Tim Harris at Brown is a leading scholar of the revolution of 1688 from a British perspective, particularly knowledgeable about its Scottish and Irish dimensions. Prof Mark Peterson (Berkeley) is a leading expert on Boston and shared with us a chapter of a forthcoming book about Boston. The audience thus had two of the cutting edge historians to guide discussion and ask questions to provoke discussion - which flowed both within the formal structure of the workshop and afterwards, more informally, in the evening.

We discussed problems of periodisation; the nature of revolution; what 'revolutionary principles' might amount to; the role of the political economy and community; political culture; and the divergences in the historiographies of Britain and British America, with a particularly interesting discussion about what changed before and after 1688 and hence whether that date had significance on both sides of the Atlantic.

The second workshop, held at Warwick on 24/5 March, proved to be perhaps even more successful than the first. We had 30 participants, drawn mostly from Warwick and the UK's pg and postdoc community, though with a few from the US too and one MA prospective PhD student. The standard of conversation was very high throughout a long and intense day of discussion; and a number of the participants and seminar leaders commented on how productive a day it had been. The workshop focused on Britain and British America 1700-1750. Details of the day's organisation are at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/warwicknewberry/mellon-newberry/renaissanceandearlymoderncommunities/britishandamericanhistories/25march/>

The format repeated that used in November: Trevor Burnard and I, as workshop organisers, set the participants readings of recently published work relevant to the day's themes. We also invited 6 (rather stellar) scholars to help lead sessions: Dr Simon Middleton (Sheffield), Prof Eric Slauter (Chicago), Dr Nuala Zahedieh (Edinburgh), Dr Will Pettigrew (Kent), Prof Steve Pincus (Yale) and Prof Brendan Simms (Cambridge). These seminar leaders also suggested additional reading. With no formal papers, there was plenty of time for discussion, which flowed freely. This meant that the

audience could respond to and develop ideas, testing them out in a fuller discussion than might have been possible in a more conventional format.

We covered a wide range of topics, suggested by the readings, by the seminar leaders and by the participants. The first session focused on America and led to a particularly fruitful discussion about the concept of 'security' in all its different forms. This was felt to be a notion that had purchase across a number of different areas: geographical security but also security of food supply, of economy, of the family and so on; similarly 'insecurity' was felt to be a state of mind that could be explored in productive ways. We also had interesting reflections about the role of law, of class, and of patriarchy. The second session focused on literary and cultural topics. We discussed the overlaps (and tensions) between literary and historical approaches, and discussed the public sphere, politeness and 'stability'. The third session picked up the theme of the economy again and led to interesting exchanges about the nature of mercantilism, 'rent-seeking', and the accommodation of slavery within a mindset that valued 'liberty' in other forms. The final session of the day focused more on issues of internal and international relations; again the theme of security surfaced though we also talked about continuities and discontinuities over time. We noted that unlike the previous workshop, with its earlier chronology, the gap between British and British American scholars seemed much narrower; and our discussions at this workshop focused much less on Britishness and religion than had our November exchanges. It was also noticeable that much of our discussion focused on the first two or three decades of the eighteenth century rather than on the 1740s or the 7 Years War.

The Warwick workshop also provided the opportunity for the selection of participants for the two-week residential summer school to be held at the Newberry Library between 10 and 23 July. The application process was electronic and worked well, not least because the materials were viewable from anywhere - an important consideration given that our selection committee was spread across three continents. The selection committee was chaired by Prof Eric Slauter, with Mark Knights, Trevor Burnard and Ingrid de Smet as members. We were extremely impressed by the quality of applications and by their number - we had 29 in all. The candidates from the US were stronger than those from the UK, so we selected 16 US participants, all of a very high calibre.

The summer school will have eight guest scholars to lead sessions: 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). This is an extraordinarily rich array of talent and promises to make the workshop an extremely stimulating one. Topics under discussion include trade and political economy, gender, religion, visual culture, citizens and communities, slavery and comparisons with European rival empires. Participants will also have an opportunity to present research papers based on their own work, which, to name just a few topics, include magistracy, race, portraiture, monarchical visual culture, literature, and religion, and range across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We have already been approached by one publisher who thinks the workshop might produce a volume of essays. We shall have to wait to hear the participants' presentations before deciding on that, but the approach bodes well for the wider interest in our research theme.

Thanks must go to the very strong administrative support we have had on both sides of the Atlantic. Karen Christianson and Jayne Brown deserve 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, Tia Parks and Katie Klaasson. Thanks should also go to Trevor Burnard for returning to Warwick for the second workshop and who will be coming to Chicago for the summer workshop, despite his move to Australia.