

# CENTRE FOR RENAISSANCE & EARLY MODERN STUDIES (CREMS)

## Director's Report on Academic Year 2012-13

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This academic year was highly successful and productive. Of particular note has been

- the completion of the major AHRC funded research project '**Conversion Narratives in Early Modern Europe**' (PIs Simon Ditchfield & Helen Smith) in the Centre and the accomplishment of all its research targets
- the continued internationalization of the Centre's activities
- further publications emerging from the Centre's conferences and workshops
- the commencement of new externally funded research projects supported by and drawing upon the Centre's academic community

### **Publications**

In addition to the impressive array of books and articles of individual members of the Centre (detailed below), including five monographs and nine edited collections of essays, this year saw the publication one special issue of a journal derived from CREMS-supported conferences:

Jean-Christophe Mayer, Stuart Sillars and William Sherman (eds.) *Shakespearean Configurations*, a special issue of *Early Modern Literary Studies* (June 2013).

Since 2009 CREMS conferences have led to five edited books and four special issues of journals. The process by which Centre activities lead on to publication and other research initiatives continues. One journal special issue is forthcoming; two edited books of essays are under contract; another is in negotiation with more than one publisher interested.

### **Prizes**

Helen Smith's *Grossly Material Things* (2012) was awarded the Ronald H. Bainton Literature Prize and the SHARP DeLong Book History Book Prize, 2013

### **Externally Funded Research**

The Centre has successfully fostered and continues to foster external grant applications.

'**Conversion Narratives in Early Modern Europe**' (AHRC) concluded in August 2013. As was clear at the final meeting of its steering group, this was an exceptionally successful project. Both post-docs completed full drafts of their book *MSS*; a very successful series of public lectures in association with the project was held in the York Medical Society; the research led on to a major partnership with Hardwick Hall with interactive phone app, commissioned art work which together contributed to an Impact Case Study.

For more details, see <http://www.york.ac.uk/crems/conversion/> and the project blog <http://europeanconversionnarratives.wordpress.com/>, and for an interactive view of the work with Hardwick Hall, including a characteristically tuneful Renaissance flash mob <http://www.york.ac.uk/crems/conversion/vandv/>

Although Abigail Shinn is now teaching at the University of Leeds and Peter Mazur has moved back to the USA, the project continues to bear fruit. The Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies is now an academic partner of the new 5-year SSHRC-funded project, *Early Modern Conversions: Religions, Cultures, Cognitive Ecologies* at McGill University (2013-18). Helen Smith attended its inaugural meeting, Centre PhD students have been successfully nominated as Graduate Student Associates of the Project and CREMS will host a 2-day workshop of the project in June 2014. In addition, Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith have, as a result of the project, been invited to lead and teach a 2-day master class at the Folger. We hope that links with the Folger can be deepened over the coming years.

**The Oxford Works of Sir Thomas Browne** (AHRC), Co-I, Kevin Killeen (English). With its remarkable research strengths in intellectual history and the history of early modern knowledge making as well as in literary studies, CREMS has co-sponsored and supported the Thomas Browne Seminar since 2009 (see below) and is delighted in the success of this major research project which has further supported one PhD student, now part of the CREMS community. For more details: <http://www.york.ac.uk/english/news-events/browne/>

**Shakespeare in the Making of Europe** (SIME 2014-16), Co-I, Erica Sheen (English). The Centre has begun supporting and collaborating with this international network between the Universities of York, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Munich and Łódź. York will host a major conference on this theme in 2015.

**The Origins of the Roman Inquisition Reconsidered: the Diplomatic Career of Gian Pietro Carafa in England and Spain (1513-19)** (ERC). In June 2013 we were delighted to welcome Dr Andrea Vanni, a Marie Curie Fellow mentored by Dr Simon Ditchfield, working on the early career of Gian Pietro Carafa in a transnational context. The Director wrote in support of this application outlining the potential contribution of CREMS to it, and to the applicant's professional development. We anticipate that his work will feed into a Centre conference or workshop in 2015.

**'St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster: Visual and Political Culture, 1292-1941'** (AHRC), PI John Cooper (History). <http://www.york.ac.uk/history/news/news/ststephenschapel/>

With its strengths in architectural history, in the analysis of space and the built environment and in the study of religious and political culture, we look forward to working with this project which examines the significance of a space at the heart of English and British public life through associated workshops on the politics of space and buildings.

### **Conferences and Workshops**

As in previous years, the Centre organized, sponsored and hosted a series of high profile and successful conferences and workshops:

#### **Sensing the Sacred 1300-1800 June 2013**

Keynote speakers: Chris Woolgar (University of Southampton), Nicky Hallett (University of Sheffield) & Matthew Milner (McGill University).

Hailed as ‘inspirational’ by Prof John Arnold of Birkbeck, this agenda-setting international conference contained 64 papers with speakers from six countries, and 131 delegates. It was an enormous success not only because of the quality of papers, but also because (to quote another delegate) ‘The conversations were extraordinary, across and between panels’. The resultant book is in development and the editors have strong interest from three academic presses.

We also held and sponsored five one-day conferences and workshops – formats which have proved highly productive in past years.

### **Royal Loss: Untimely death, public and private mourning, and the monarchs who never were... November 2012**

We co-sponsored this conference which was timed to coincide with the National Portrait Gallery exhibition, *The Lost Prince: Henry, Prince of Wales (1594–1612)*. Eighteen speakers from six countries gave papers.

### **Renaissance Reincarnations on the Stage March 2013**

Invited speakers, Tom Wright & David Edgar. This examined the theatrical construction of Early Modern afterlives with an innovative combination of public rehearsal and interview.

### **Women and the Popular in Early Modern England May 2013**

Keynote Speakers: Laura Gowing (King's London) & Adrian Wilson (Leeds). A highly focused and productive workshop which has already led to publications, the synergies established at this occasion led to two CREMS members joining scholars at King's London and Cambridge forming a panel for the Renaissance Society of America 2014 conference in New York. ‘To say that I enjoyed it would be a massive understatement. I don't expect ever again to have a conference experience to rival it!’ (A. Wilson, Email to Director)

### **Poetics and Prose Theory in Early Modern English - Thomas Browne Seminar May 2013**

Keynote Speakers: Gavin Alexander (Cambridge) & Jennifer Richards (Newcastle).

A highly productive 12-paper international day event linked to the Thomas Browne project.

### **Renaissance Reincarnations on the Page June 2013**

Speakers: Germaine Greer, Pamela Hartshorne and Robert Hutchinson. An imaginatively conceived event examining the ways in which Renaissance lives afterlives are constituted and reconstituted in biography and in historical fiction.

In addition, CREMS, with its world-leading expertise in the history of the book and in the history, art and literature of Reformation and Counter-Reformation religion, was a natural co-sponsor of the inaugural meeting of the **Cathedral Libraries and Archives Network (CLAN)** held in March 2013. We see this as supporting new research bids and activities.

### **Public Events**

CREMS continues to put great emphasis on public engagement and promoted public lectures and other such events in order to ensure effective knowledge transfer and also to build links with external audiences and partners.

We co-sponsored the Patrides Lecture: this year's speaker was Professor Nigel Smith (Princeton University) 'The European Marvell', June 2011.

Several of the conferences contained public lectures and in the spring term, Conversion Narratives promoted six public lectures on the theme of "**Cultural Encounters: Travel, Religion, and Identity in the Early Modern World**".

Held in the Medical Society in Stonegate, they were a great success and were all full to capacity. In order to extend their reach, they are preserved for posterity on at <http://www.york.ac.uk/crems/conversion/resources/podcasts/>.

CREMS is fortunate to be continue working with the various groups in the university and the community who present, display and perform aspects of early modern culture. Several CREMS staff contributed to the website developed in conjunction with the TFTV production of Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* put on during the Festival of Ideas; 'Les Canards Chantants', who sang during the 2012 workshop on Music and Sociability, performed during the **Cultural Encounters** lectures.

Furthermore, as noted above, the Conversion Narratives project led on to a major partnership with the National Trust at Hardwick Hall with the development of an interactive phone app and a day in which CREMS staff and graduate students worked with and briefed National Trust guides at the Hall.

### **Research Seminars**

We continued with a lively series of seminars which continue to attract a substantial and highly interdisciplinary audience of staff and postgraduates. Speakers included Richard Checketts, Prof Malcolm Gaskill, Prof Peter Goddard, Prof Brenda Hosington; Dr Chris Langley, Prof Carole Levin, Prof Eric Rasmussen, Dr. Nicole Reinhardt, Prof Quentin Skinner, Dr Adam Smyth, Dr Cordula van Wyhe, Prof John Walter, Dr Wes Williams.

These were supplemented by Brown Bag seminars, over lunch in the BS Treehouse, for interested faculty and postgrads.

The CREMS seminars have attracted large audiences – regularly in excess of 30 – and have generated impressive and incisive discussion and debate of the type which continues to mark out CREMS as an exceptionally lively intellectual community which substantially enhances the university's reputation. In the opinion of Quentin Skinner, 'the discussion of my paper at your seminar was one of the best I've had of my work for a very long time. So much learning and acuteness' (email to Director, Feb 2013).

### **Postgraduate Activities**

CREMS has a large and dynamic community of graduate students. Five students completed the CREMS MA in Sept 2013; six will complete in 2014. (These figures are broadly in line

with our MTP plans.) These work, and continually interact, with the students on the MAs in Renaissance Literature and Early Modern History, on teaching and training and dissertation workshops. They also attend the Centre's research seminars and workshops. Together they make up a body of 21 (2012-13) and 25 (2013-14) early modernist MA students, one of the largest such groups in the UK. The body of 71 research students is similarly large and engaged.

We continued to sponsor and support the regular postgraduate research forum, The Cabinet of Curiosities. This held graduate seminars, symposia and social events throughout the year. Developing a model introduced by Bill Sherman, the Centre was fortunate that both the Aylmer and the Patrides lecturers agreed to lead these very different but highly successful masterclasses with CREMS graduate students:

Lyndal Roper and Jenny Spinks: 'Carlstadt's Wagon: visual propaganda for the Reformation'

Nigel Smith: 'Literature, Politics and Religion in the Dutch Republic: 'True Freedom' and an Anglo-Dutch perspective'

The Centre's research activities thus enhanced the training and professional development of the students and showcased the exceptional quality of the graduate community to the distinguished visitors.

The strength and supportiveness of the Centre as a graduate centre can be gauged by the ambition and success revealed by the graduate-led, Director-mentored, conference *Sensing the Sacred*.

### **Publicity**

Conscious of the need to sustain and improve our publicity for the MA and the Centre in order to retain and improve our position, we invested jointly with the Renaissance School of the Department in video interviews highlighting the CREMS and its interviews. We intend to develop this and are keen to do something similar with other departments.

We are in the process of establishing a CREMS blog on the model of the Conversion narrative site in order to engage a wider audience and to promote the Centre, its MA and associated early modern work at York. This will go live in the spring.

### **The Centre in 2013-14**

Although this Report is retrospective, it is appropriate briefly to outline how the activities of the Centre are developing this year.

In addition to the seminar series, which continues to attract the numbers and the level of engagement commented on by Quentin Skinner, we are sponsoring and promoting an impressive array of conferences and workshops:

Time and Early Modern Thought (May); Classical Philosophers in Seventeenth Century English Thought (May); Narrating Conversion (June); Godly Governance c.1500-1750 (June); Greek Texts and the Early Modern Stage (July);

Cathedral Libraries and Archives of Britain and Ireland: The Thirteenth York Manuscripts Conference (July).

As well as demonstrating the energy, enterprise and multi-faceted research of the CREMS research community, these also show how our research events build, extend and support national and international partnerships and the emergent research themes of the Centre.

**Classical Philosophers** is the next Thomas Browne seminar; **Greek Texts** develops an international panel at the Shakespeare Association of America conference and is organized with Prof Tanya Pollard (Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY). Both feed an emergent cross-departmental interest in Translation in the Early Modern World which we hope will lead to grant bids.

**Cathedral Libraries and Archives** (sponsored also by CMS) is a part of the CLAN initiative; with relevant DRCs we are assisting the formulation of a major grant bid in this area.

Like Sensing the Sacred, **Godly Governance** is graduate-led and Director-mentored. The keynotes now confirmed are Prof Peter Lake (Vanderbilt) and Dr. Lucy Wooding (KCL).

**Narrating Conversion** is in collaboration with our McGill partners. **Time and Early Modern Thought** is co-organized with the University of Lancaster, re-establishing not only a Roses link but also aiming to embed CREMS within a revived Northern Renaissance Seminar. We have also approached the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield with a view to holding the first annual White Rose Renaissance and Early Modern graduate conference in the spring, in order to integrate our activities more seamlessly with the structures of WRoCAH.

### ***Conclusion***

2013 finds the Centre in good health and good heart with stable recruitment and an exceptionally lively and dynamic research culture.

MJ