

THE BIRKBECK
EARLY MODERN
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Early Modernists,

Welcome to the twelfth edition of our Bulletin. Although our last lecture was Peter Burke's back in June as a Society we have been far from idle. Karen Chester led us on a marvellous walk through Cheam (see review) and we held our third annual student conference, 'Revolution and Evolution' in July. The response to the call for papers was tremendous, with students contacting us from as far afield as Newcastle, Edinburgh and Dublin, and the actual event proved to be a wonderful success.

I have also been busy working on next year's programme and am delighted to report that we have a number of top-class speakers lined up for the next year, including Quentin Skinner who has kindly agreed to return to Birkbeck at Christmas and speak about Hobbes. Due to filming commitments David Starkey cannot now speak to us in June as originally announced, but he has confirmed a date in December 2010 to speak to us about the Reformation and royal ritual.

At our AGM our secretary Laura Jacobs stepped down from her post after three years hard work. All the rest of the committee would like to thank Laura for all that she has done for the Society since its founding in 2006. I am happy to report that Laura has kindly agreed to remain as a member of the committee. I am also pleased to be able to welcome Laura's replacement as secretary, Anne Bryne, and may I wish Anne every success in her new role.

Please don't forget that the committee is always happy to hear suggestions from members, be they connected to a speaker that you have in mind that you'd like us to book, or another type of event such as a trip to the theatre or a gallery etc. Suggestions can be e-mailed to our secretary Anne Byrne at anne.m.byrne@gmail.com

With best wishes,

Stephen Brogan

President, Birkbeck Early Modern Society

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hca/current/societies/#earlymodern>

<http://www.emintelligencer.org.uk/>

THE BULLETIN: EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to Issue Twelve of the *Birkbeck Early Modern Society Bulletin*. This edition continues with the usual mix of a wide and lively range of articles, reviews and forthcoming events.

With the advent of the twelfth edition it is a good point at which to ask if we are getting it right? Judging by the comments from members we are, and we will continue to endeavour to provide a well-balanced publication for members with a broad range of articles, features, news and reviews.

This edition features visits to various sites around the country, proving that although we are a London-based society our interests are not restricted to the capital. So if you have visited some interesting sites during the summer or autumn then why not write a review for publication in the next edition? Likewise, if you have read an interesting book recently, how about sending in a review?

On a personal note (and my only non-early modern reference in this publication), thank you to all those who asked about my house following the last edition. Thankfully I managed to find a really excellent builder in Ealing who repaired the damage done by the first lot of builders and did a really fantastic job. I have no hesitation in recommending Richard Wood at www.deodar@aol.com or on 07879483514 for any building work.

I hope that you all have a marvellous autumn. The next issue will be out in the winter of 2009.

John Croxon
Editor
johnmcroxon@googlemail.com



RECENT EVENTS

The Birkbeck Early Modern Society

'Revolution and Evolution' Conference

Saturday 25 July 2009, Room 532, Birkbeck, Malet Street, London

The 2009 Student Conference proved to be a resounding success, with eight people, two to each session, presenting papers on this year's theme of 'Revolution and Evolution'.

The format saw four sessions with two presenters and each session was grouped in such a way that the two speakers complemented each other. At the end of each session the two presenters answered questions from the audience of over thirty people.

Although keeping to the given theme, the speakers produced a series of varied papers, all well received. In the first session Harman Bhogal spoke about the evolution of demonological thought in Early Modern England and Stefania Crowther gave us an insight into the publishing marketplace at the close of the Cromwellian Protectorate. In the second session Kate Meaden explained the evolution of seventeenth-century medicine from its archaic past to some way towards modern scientific medicine and Karen Baston discussed scientific ideas with particular reference to Charles Areskine. In the third session Steve Cornish spoke about what happened to the buildings in London following the Great Fire and Rei Kanemura discussed how the translation of Roman histories was intended to serve an important purpose in politics during the late-Elizabethan crisis of the 1590's. In the fourth session James Arnold discussed the Cultural Revolution on the French Operatic Stage in the late-eighteenth century and Simon Moore spoke about the poetry of Lucy Hutchinson and Country House Poetry of the time.

The conference was well received and the general consensus was that 2009 had been the best so far with enthusiastic, intelligent and interesting papers.

John Croxon

Speakers

Harman Bhogal (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Stefania Crowther (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Kate Meaden (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Karen Baston (University of Edinburgh)

Steve Cornish (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Rei Kanemura (Cambridge University)

James Arnold (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Simon Moore (Newcastle University)

I have reproduced the extracts supplied by all the speakers prior to the conference:

The first session was chaired by Sue Dale and consisted of the following:

Harman Bhogal, 'John Deacon and John Walker: The Evolution of Demonological Thought in Early Modern England'

This paper deals with the evolution of demonological thought in Early Modern England with reference to two particular authors, John Deacon and John Walker, in the context of the Darrel controversy. At the end of the sixteenth century, the puritan exorcist John Darrel was accused and convicted of fraud. The event has been viewed by historians as an expression of the broader religious conflicts of the time and this is reflected in the tracts produced by both sides. However the sceptical work of Deacon and Walker has thus far been essentially ignored and therefore also the broader, long-term effects of their anti-possession arguments. My paper will therefore look at the *Dialogicall Discourses of spirits and divels* (1601), the first book produced by Deacon and Walker, summarising their main arguments against the possibility of possession. I will look at the influence of contemporary (particularly Aristotelian) concepts of the body and the material and spiritual world on their arguments, as well as the impact of existing works by sceptical authors such as Leuius Lemnius and Reginald Scot. However, I will also highlight the arguments they presented which were novel and unique. In this way, I will show how the work of Deacon and Walker is actually worthy of more attention than it has hitherto been given, as it demonstrates how the Darrel controversy triggered an evolution within demonological thought characterised by scepticism. Their work in turn also influenced other thinkers, furthering this process of evolution, which placed the phenomenon of possession under much greater scrutiny and analysis than ever before.

Stefania Crowther, 'Revolution and Evolution in the Publishing Marketplace at the Close of the Interregnum: The Case of Sarah Jinner's *Almanac and Prognostication*'

The vexed political climate of the closing years of the Cromwellian Protectorate was a catalyst to many kinds of change, both revolutionary and evolutionary. From this chaotic arena emerged Sarah Jinner's almanacs, published by the political pamphleteer John Streeter in 1658-60 and 1664. In her forecast for April 1660, Jinner encapsulates the mood at the time: 'Unconstant will the affairs of the world be at this present. Princes and States will be uncertain in their revolutions'. The term 'revolution' was first applied to political discourse during the interregnum, a borrowing from astrological literature, which was at the time a deeply politically

engaged genre. Contemporary puns did not miss the irony of the word's astrological sense: movement in a circular motion. With the passage of the title of Lord Protector from father to son and the restoration of monarchy imminent, England's republican experiment was about to turn full circle. Jinner is the first known female 'student in astrology' to have published an almanac; partly an outcome of both revolution and evolution of the social position of women in the mid-seventeenth century, as they took on new roles in order to fill the void left by men killed and wounded during the civil war. Additionally, the commercial print industry was evolving rapidly, with new opportunities for wide product diversification provided by the relaxation of censorship following the collapse of royal authority. The emergence of printed receipt books and advice to midwives demonstrates growing recognition in the literary marketplace of women's roles as household and community physicians. My paper will draw these themes together, considering how the astrological charts and forecasts, political commentary, medical receipts and advice on household management in Jinner's almanacs engage with, and can illuminate our understanding of, the revolutionary and evolutionary changes of their social and political context.

The second session was chaired by Nigel Carter and featured the following:

Kate Meaden, 'Revolution or Evolution in Medicine'

The appearance of printed books containing Helmontian or Paracelsian medicine is often claimed to signal the evolution of seventeenth-century medicine from its archaic past some way towards modern scientific medicine. The scientific revolution itself signals the birth of experimental philosophy.

However, if we look at the print history over the early modern period of a medical recipe such as 'Dr Stevens Water' what we see is neither evolutionary nor revolutionary. Over a period of at least 180 years, the recipe is repeated in its totality, remaining untouched; even experimentation does not appear to touch it in any way.

Is this because the recipe demonstrates the gap between elite theory and the practical application of knowledge or is the recipe more of totem representing achievable home care and comfort for a range of diseases. Perhaps it is because, as Wootten has recently written, new technologies are rarely applied when first developed.

This paper will explore the recipe and its relevance to the history of medicine and medical publishing in the early modern period.

Karen Baston, ‘Northern Newtonians: An Exploration of the Sources of Charles Areskine’s *Theses Philosophicæ* of 1704’

How did scientific ideas spread in early modern Scotland? This paper will provide an exploration of the sources used by Charles Areskine in his *Theses Philosophicæ* of 1704.

Areskine was a regent of the University of Edinburgh who presented his first group of students for graduation in 1704. Regents wrote sets of theses for their students to defend as their qualification for graduation.

From Areskine’s *Theses Philosophicæ* of 1704, we can explore the state of the arts curriculum at Edinburgh. Was this a scientific backwater or a centre of cutting-edge scholarship? What did Areskine expect his students to know after four years of his teaching?

Regents pursued their own interests in conjunction with the standard arts curriculum. From his *Theses* we know that Areskine was interested in Newtonian science, mathematics, and astronomy. He used the most recent sources he could access including the most recent edition of Newton’s *Optics* and articles from *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* to demonstrate the level of achievement he expected his students to have obtained.

This paper will offer a micro-level intellectual history showing the evolution and transmission of scientific ideas within a specific location and context. Far from being the reactionaries they are sometimes painted as, Areskine and his fellow regents were up-to-date participants in debates about natural philosophy.

The third session was chaired by Robin Rowles and consisted of the following:

Steve Cornish: ‘The Buildings after the Great Fire: Evolution or Revolution?’

Following the Great Fire of London, the Rebuilding Act of 1667 specified that the new houses were to be built in brick or stone. Elizabeth McKellar considers, however, that the switch from timber to brick was not absolute. She has concluded that the post

Fire buildings were more evolutionary than revolutionary. Her examination of the post Fire structure of the house reveals that behind the brick façade, wood continued to play a critical role, for the entire interior of the house was of timber construction. This apparent desire to retain traditional building techniques maybe explained in the context of modernity.

Peter Guillery informs us that Eighteenth-Century London has an enormous importance as a crucible of modernity, so the presence in it of vernacular architecture carries particular significance. Modernity, an attribute that characterises a whole historical period, while much debated and given many nuances, is widely and increasingly understood as referring not just to those aspects of recent times that have been new, but rather, in a translation from Walter Benjamin, to ‘the new in the context of what has already been there.’ The perceptual and necessarily oppositional separation of new and old, awareness that the present is unlike the past, must underpin any idea of modernity. The perpetuation of tradition was itself a part of modernity in so much as it was sometimes seen as a reaction to the new.

I propose a critique of the work by McKellar and Guillery to consider whether they address the questions put forward by this year’s conference

Rei Kanemura, ‘ “Let Rome in this History be a Witness”: The History of Rome and the Late-Elizabethan Crisis’

My research examines the English writing of history in the 1590s, and this presentation will discuss how the translation of Roman histories was intended to serve an important purpose in politics at a time when historical writing was taken to impart important political lessons. While Henrician humanists rejuvenated the study of histories such as Livy and Polybius in the early-sixteenth century, English interest in publishing ancient histories did not reach its peak till the 1590s. Four emblematic studies on Roman history emerged between 1591 and 1601: Henry Savile and Richard Greenewey translated Tacitus, and Philomon Holland and William Fulbecke drew from various sources such as Livy and Florus. The period shows an early English uptake of the Continental revaluation of the Roman historian Tacitus’ works on tyrannical rule, as a means to discuss political resistance. The English interest in Tacitus was at its height in the later period, yet I will explore how and why the accounts of civil war, rebellion, and transition of power in Roman histories intrigued Savile and Fulbecke to an unprecedented degree. Savile was closely associated with the second Earl of Essex, who was also an ardent reader of ancient history, and the profound shift in historical writing cannot be separate from his political career in the 1590s: the rising rivalry with the Cecils, the severe quarrel with the Queen, and the unsuccessful Irish campaign. In these circumstances, late-Elizabethan historical

writing achieved two significant transformations. Firstly, ancient histories and their account of civil unrest came to provide an intellectual locus for the learned to participate and engage in political discourse, in this case, on the topic of tyranny and political resistance. Secondly, historical writing came to serve an important political function not just to the ruler but to those on the fringe of court politics, and the 1590s publications show how ancient histories were used to highlight the sign of upcoming revolution both parties witnessed: the succession crisis and dynastic change.

The fourth session was chaired by Timothy Alves and featured the following:

James Arnold, 'Fateful Harbingers: A Cultural Revolution on the French Operatic Stage, 1770-89'

Thirty years before the fall of the Bastille, the writer Jacques Lacombe was warning of the 'fateful harbingers' of a revolution on the Parisian stage. A combination of attention-seeking authors and sensation-seeking audiences was, he argued, producing a dangerous vulgarisation in taste. As the decades passed, others pointed to a revolution in manners, which was leading to a decline in behaviour among theatre-goers.

For some observers, meanwhile, it was 'a happy revolution'. Freeing itself from the dead hand of insular tradition, French theatre was becoming more naturalistic. A more socially mixed audience was, at last, being presented with work that reflected its own sentiments and situations, not those of a narrow elite.

Looking back through the lens of 1789, the recurrence of the word 'revolution' in aesthetic and critical writing of the late Ancien Regime produces a frisson. But should it? Is it valid to link, as some modern historians have attempted, the increasingly quarrelsome artistic arena of the 1770s and 1780s with a political arena rapidly heading toward cataclysm?

Art is redolent of its period. But while a novel or a play can literally be read, the search for historical clues in less explicit outlets of culture is complex. Historians are, I would argue, overlooking much material by passing lightly over aspects such as music. I propose to explore the questions above through the medium of comic opera, perhaps the quintessential theatrical genre of late-eighteenth century France. As André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, perhaps its greatest exponent, wrote: 'Music is a thermometer of manners.'

Simon Moore, 'Remembering the Revolution: Lucy Hutchinson and Country House Poetry'

The recovery of the republican writer Lucy Hutchinson has prompted an ongoing revision of critical work on the poetry of the 1660s and 70s. Her sequence of *Elegies*, the biblical epic *Order and Disorder* and her *Life* of her husband (the regicide John Hutchinson) offer an opportunity to reassess the ways in which Restoration writers used genre to claim cultural space for their revolutionary or reactionary causes.

Hutchinson's elegy, 'To the Gardin att O.', can be read in conjunction with extant work on country house poetry to chart the processes of cultural change in the period. In the first section of this paper I sketch out the history of the country house genre, with particular focus on Ben Jonson's 'To Penshurst', and the critical response of Kari Boyd McBride. In the second section I deal with a number of the ways in which 'To the Gardin att O.' reshapes, combines and compresses the tropes of the genre, figuring the personal and political losses Hutchinson suffered as a republican through the prism of this most royalist of genres. In the final section I argue that whilst Hutchinson's attempts to take ownership of country house tropes may have had limited cultural purchase in her own time, her tactic was a powerful one, given the mnemonic power of generic forms. The revival of her reputation in our own time challenges received ideas about Restoration writing, and should influence how we read her better-known contemporaries.

VISITS

Visit to Cheam and the Lumley Chapel with Karen Chester

On Saturday 15th August a group of EMS members joined Karen Chester on a guided walk around Cheam. Cheam is perhaps not the first place which springs to mind when contemplating early modern themes. Yes, many people will have heard of Nonsuch Palace which once graced the landscape of Cheam but some people will be more familiar with the radio comedy which featured Anthony Hancock who lived at 23a Railway Cuttings.

Cheam has a rich architectural heritage much of which has been well preserved. Our walk commenced at the railway station which had a comfortably neglected appearance including a well established and quite spectacular crop of weeds between the tracks. From the station we walked down to the shopping centre, an example of 1930's Tudorbethan retail architecture. However, hidden among the modern shop fronts was 'The Old Cottage', a fifteenth-century building which is believed to be the remnant of a larger house which had originally been located nearby. This building was moved to its present location during the redevelopment of the village in the 1920s. This house now trades as a bridal wear emporium!



Anne and Karen are both dismayed to find the bridal shop closed

We then left the shopping centre and made our way along Parkside to the Lodge and Cheam Park, the site of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace, now long demolished. After enjoying the views across the park we walked along Park Lane to rejoin the Broadway. Park Lane has a number of well preserved late-eighteenth century brick cottages as well as timber cottages dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In addition, there are two carpenter's workshops dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the end of Park Lane we found ourselves approaching along the side of one of Cheam's most famous landmarks, Whitehall, to which we will return later.

Our next port of call was the Lumley Chapel located in St Dunstan's Churchyard. The chapel is in fact the chancel of the original Cheam Church which was demolished in 1864. The chapel is the oldest standing building in the London Borough of Sutton and it contains fragments of a window of Norman or possibly late-Saxon date. In the late-sixteenth century John Lord Lumley converted the building into a memorial chapel for himself and his two wives. He commissioned three remarkable tombs which are major features of the chapel today.



The site of Nonsuch Palace

The tomb on the right of the door is that of Lumley's first wife Jane Fitzalan d. 1577 the daughter of the Earl of Arundel. This tomb is constructed of alabaster with marble pilasters. The decorations incorporate the Lumley arms, popinjays and a prancing white horse. In addition, the front panels show Jane and her three children.

On the left hand side of the doorway is the tomb of Lumley's second wife Elizabeth Darcy d. 1617. This tomb is also constructed of alabaster and marble with low relief carving. John Lord Lumley's tomb stands next to Jane's. Like the other tombs Lumley's tomb is constructed of alabaster and marble although the decoration is largely heraldic. The chapel also contains memorials to a number of local notables including the Pybus family who lived at Cheam house, the Antrobus family of lower Cheam House and Ann the five year old daughter of Rev. William Gilpin, the headmaster of Cheam School from 1752- 1777. Lumley was a leading Elizabethan connoisseur. After his death his collection of books was purchased by James I and this subsequently formed the basis of the British Library.



Park Lane

Following our visit to the Lumley Chapel we returned to Whitehall. Whitehall is now open to the public and houses the local museum and a pleasant tea room. The house, which dates from the fifteenth century, was probably built by a yeoman farmer on the site of an earlier structure. Architecturally the building is a two storied continuous jetty building with a very deep overhang at both the front and the back. The main structure which was made from 'green oak' would have been fabricated in a workshop and then assembled on site. Over the centuries the house has been altered and modified in response to changing requirements. In the nineteenth century the house was adapted and additional bedroom space was created in the roof to provide boarding accommodation for pupils from the nearby Cheam School. The museum is quite extensive and contains many local artefacts and items of interest some of relatively recent date. I must admit to being somewhat startled to discover that one of the items, a polished metal home savings bank/money box, was very similar to one that I had as a child!



Karen and Nigel admire the beauty of the Lumley Chapel



Inside the Lumley Chapel



Whitehall – the local museum



Ye Olde Red Lion

We concluded our visit to Cheam with tea at Whitehall and some of the party then adjourned to a local hostelry, not the Hand and Racquet where Mrs Cravat served brown ale to Anthony Hancock, but to the Red Lion.

With many thanks to Karen for arranging such an informative and enjoyable visit to Cheam.

Nigel Carter

To book a walk with Karen Chester, visit her website at <http://www.bigsmokewalks.com> or click on the link on the Birkbeck Early Modern Society blog <http://www.emintelligencer.org.uk>.

The Highland Folk Museum at Newtownmore **Newtonmore**

The Highland Folk Museum is an open-air interactive history museum near the Cairngorms. It has been featured on BBC4 recently. Aubrey Manning visited it during his exploration of the Cairngorms and it was used to recreate the Highland homes of victims of the Glencoe Massacre of 1692 in *The Glencoe Massacre*.

The museum recreates different aspects of Highland life from circa 1700 to the early-twentieth century. This includes a rebuilding of the township of Easter Raitts. The original site is located well up the Spey Valley side to the north of Lynchat, near Kingussie. Which is to say, very close to the modern site at Newtownmore.



The 'Weaver's Cottage' at the Highland Folk Museum
Karen Baston

The Township had residents of all classes from the 'tacksman' who was a freeholder of land and a leading village figure to the cottars or peasant farmers. Their houses had stone walls at the bottom over which walls of turf and twigs were added to fill in wooden frames. The floors were of uncovered earth with fire pits dug in for peat fires. The interiors are dark and smoky. Roofs were made of heather or reed thatch. Windows were not common. The photo above is of one of the few houses which had a window. It is for this reason that the recreation assigns this house to the weaver. His profession required light. Notably the living quarters of this residence do not have natural light and could be closed off from the rest of the dwelling at night.

Although the way of life seems grim, the museum was a lovely place to visit on a sunny September day. The guides were friendly and helpful, too. One reported that when the houses are used for filming, they come of life. The smallness of the rooms and a convivial atmosphere apparently improves the effect!

Villages like the Township were gradually replaced by stone houses at places like Newtonmore and Kingussie (not pronounced 'King Gussie' but rather 'Kin-lussie'). The next generation preferred the convenience of town life and the comforts of more solid homes. Villages like the Township at Easter Raitts were on the wane long before the Clearances.



*Newtonmore:
Stone construction takes over in the Cairngorms*

Although the Highland Folk Museum will be closed for winter you can see a video of the Township here: <http://www.highlandfolk.com/newtonmore-township.php> . There is also a map of the village and more information about the rebuilding of the houses available on the website.

KAREN BASTON

Godinton House Godinton, Great Chart, Ashford, Kent



The medieval hall house of Godinton was built in the fourteenth century by the de Godynton family and consisted of an open two-bay hall and two bays of a two storey cross wing on the east side. Although substantial, it was not the principal building in the neighbourhood.

However, its status was greatly enhanced after the Goldwells and the Tokes succeeded to the property. By the time that the minor courtier John Toke was working for Henry VII the character of Godinton was beginning to change from a feudal house to one of evolving comfort and by 1539, as well as the Great Hall there was a parlour, a new parlour, a chamber within a parlour and a great chamber. However, the greatest transformation took place in the early part of the seventeenth century under the auspices of Captain Nicholas Toke who added an elaborately carved staircase and Great Chamber as well as many other additions. Captain Toke was the longest continuous resident of Godinton, owning the estate for over fifty years. He had a naval career and was an ardent royalist during the Civil War. He married five times and died on his way to London in 1680 at the age of ninety-two seeking to acquire a sixth wife! For the next ninety years there were no major changes to the house until it came into the care of John Toke in the second half of the eighteenth century. Toke made extensive alterations to the exterior, altering both the north front and the south range. Work was also carried out within and the dining room was completely transformed in 1770.

Successive generations of Tokes continued to own Godinton until 1911 when, encumbered by debt, the property was sold to George Ashley Dodd. Rooms in the house were remodelled and the garden altered to produce something in keeping with the period. Upon his death in 1917 the house was sold to Lillie Bruce Ward who saw Godinton as an ideal place to develop her skills as a hostess, collector and gardener. She collected a large number of items from the Queen Anne and Georgian periods, particularly porcelain and furniture. Her daughter, Geraldine, who had married her mother's agent, Captain Wyndham Green in 1920 never actually owned Godinton but many of her possessions are on display at the house and show her love for Art Deco.

Upon the death of Lillie Bruce Ward in 1952, Godinton passed not to her son, Edward, a businessman married to the heiress of the Nestle family who did not want to live at Godinton, but to her grandson, Alan Wyndham Green who had been brought up at Godinton and who loved the estate. He served during the war in North Africa and Italy before taking part in the Normandy landings and the Allied advance into Germany. After the war he ran Godinton in a relaxed style, developing the farming and woodland side of the estate and becoming closely involved in the lambing and felling. He also collected paintings, particularly landscapes and was heavily involved in the Glyndebourne Opera Festival. Alan Wyndham Green set up Godinton as a charitable trust in order to preserve it into the future. Here I must declare an interest, a very good friend of mine was goddaughter to Alan Wyndham Green and she remembers him as a lovely man. She also recalls striding across to the entrance hall and having an upstairs window pointed out to her and being told that her wet nappies used to hang from it!

Godinton is only open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons and we got there early, and when the doors finally opened we were the only visitors (many more would arrive during the following thirty minutes) and our guide, Poppy, agreed to take just two of us around the house.

From the Entrance Hall we entered the Dining Room which reflects the late-Georgian tastes of John Toke's modernisation. A William IV dining-table with Georgian chairs stand at the centre of the room with two regency lamps above. A number of portraits decorate the walls, including Captain Nicholas Toke, Geraldine Wyndham Green and the last owner, Alan Wyndham Green.

Proceeding into the Great Hall one's eyes are immediately drawn upwards to the magnificent chestnut tie beam and crown post roof dating from the late-fourteenth century. The room contains furniture dating from the seventeenth century. On the walls are pictures of family and patrons of the Tokes such as James, duke of York, later James II who was godfather to John Toke.



The Great Hall

Moving eastwards, one enters the Parlour or Priests Room, so called because of the ecclesiastical nature of some of its fittings, the Protestant Toke's would not have retained a priest. In this room was painted 'The Last Day In The Old Home' a Victorian morality painting by R.B. Martineau a close friend of John Lesile Toke who allowed members of his family and this room to be used for the painting which depicted a family fallen on hard times forced to leave their ancestral home due to the rakish behaviour of the man of the house. Whilst the females of the house are shown in evident despair, he is unrepentant, drinking wine and bringing up his watching son in the same manner. This painting was featured in Jeremy Paxman's recent BBC series on the Victorians.

The Gallery Room has a strong French appearance with an Arbusson carpet, Louis XV style chairs and some beautiful French clocks. The room also contains a fine collection of eighteenth century needlework pictures.

The Great Chamber is a wonderfully original room demonstrating Captain Toke's interests, featuring an elaborately carved chimney-piece and friezes dating from the sixteenth century. The figures and animals over the fireplace represent country pursuits while the friezes around the top of the walls denote the movements of musketry and pike drill with each figure representing a movement in the drill. Elegantly furnished, yet this room also retained a wonderfully relaxed feel to it.

Alan Wyndham Green's Bedroom is much as it was when the last owner slept here and the room contains items associated with him. The mahogany four-post bed dates from George III's reign and there are various watercolours on the walls. Also on display is his army uniform.

The seventeenth-century staircase is gorgeous with imaginative carvings based upon Flemish designs, and the landing contains fifteenth century English and sixteenth century Flemish stained glass windows plus seventeenth century Dutch wall lights.

The First Library has a fine chimney-piece and carved friezes completed in 1631, a pair of Dutch marquetry drawing room chairs, a wonderful walnut and sea-weed marquetry chest and two Gainsborough armchairs.

The Inner or Second Library is another handsome room and the bookshelves contain many books on the history of Godinton, Westwood Park and other properties owned by branches of the family. There is a huge display cabinet running along one side of the room and family portraits dominate the walls.

The Chinese Room was formed by Mrs Bruce ward in the 1920's to display her Chinese collection and include hand-painted Chinese wallpaper, lacquer chairs and table in the Chinese Chippendale style and a black lacquer Chinese travelling chest.



The White Drawing Room

The White Drawing Room was created in 1896 in a Queen Anne style of white painted panels and marble chimney-piece. On the walls are some fine watercolours by a number of Victorian artists.

The gardens contain walled gardens, formal gardens and parkland all wonderfully maintained that are all a pleasure to stroll around.

Godinton is a lovely estate with a house that is both impressive and stylish, with a warm, welcoming atmosphere. It must have been an absolute joy to live here. Situated just a few miles off the M20 near Ashford it is easy to get to and a delight to visit.

John Croxon

ARTS REPORT



THEATRE

As You Like It
Royal Shakespeare Company
The Courtyard Theatre
Stratford-Upon-Avon



Katy Stephens as Rosalind

As You Like It is one of Shakespeare's great comedies, it subverts the traditional rules of romance, confuses gender roles, nature and politics and demonstrates the bewildering yet pleasurable aspects of life. First performed in February 1599, for many decades the play was staged as a pastoral fantasy, yet Shakespeare's play was written against a background of court intrigue, land enclosure, poor harvests, rural vagrancy and economic depression, as James Shapiro's recent book '1599' clearly demonstrates. This was a time when the aged queen was ruled by a clique and the Elizabethan authorities had paid spies everywhere. In this production Michael Boyd manages to reflect the play's sombre historical context, while capturing the comedic moments and the liberating power of love that Shakespeare provides.

Duke Frederick's court is a tyranny where black costumed Elizabethans move in regimented order against an imposing, white panelled wall. It mirrors the Elizabethan court where cruelty and ambition stamp on the face of humanity and cast past loyalties to the wind. As the action slowly graduates towards the countryside we catch glimpses of freedom and humanity that occur away from the court.

Katy Stephens as Rosalind is, at court, a tight-corseted figure who determinedly steps in front of Celia to get Orlando's attention. Banished from court and fearing for her life Rosalind escapes to the Forest of Arden. Celia, aghast at her friend's treatment, flees too.

Bond has assembled quite a strong cast: Mariah Gale is touchingly sweet as Celia, always in the shadow of her more forceful friend. Richard Katz is a somewhat disturbing but highly effective Touchstone, while Geoffrey Freshwater as Corin caused a sharp intake of breath from the audience and the squeamish turned their heads away from the stage as he methodically skinned a real rabbit. Forbes Masson gives us a arrogantly melancholic Jacques, every so often strumming his guitar and bursting into song. His seven ages of man speech delivered in a mournful refrain worked quite well, apart from the slight distraction from other characters moving about the stage. Jonjo O'Neill is a fine if unexceptional Orlando but it is from Katy Stephens as Rosalind that the production garners its real strength. She delivers the part with vigour, first in her female attire at court and then disguised as a man in the forest, and upon finding Orlando's letters strewn about the forest, plays the scene with gusto. When she persuades Orlando to read his poetry to her in her guise as a sympathetic fellow man, she displays both great comic timing and consummate acting skills as she demonstrates both her strong attraction towards Orlando and her confusion at how to act in her gender disguise as Ganymede.

Rural poverty is never far from the surface in this production as is the power and oppression of the court. Shakespeare has the shepherd Corin so impoverished that he cannot afford to feed or lodge his guests, and is fearful of becoming homeless and unemployed as soon as his master can sell off the cottage in which he lives, and enclose the land. However, it is away from the centre of power in the more gentle countryside that the various characters find happiness and past feuds are ended and all the lovers are wed.

Although not perfect, this is a strong production of *As You Like It* and whilst retaining its comic appeal and romantic charm it also reminds us that life in Elizabethan England was often hard, dangerous and uncertain.

John Croxon

Optimism
Malthouse Melbourne
Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh
Edinburgh International Festival
17 August 2009

What do you get if you cross Voltaire's *Candide*, 1980s pop music, and a lively Australian theatrical team and ensemble company? It may sound like a riddle but the result is real. The answer is: you'd get *Optimism* by Tom Wright.

Optimism is a modern take on Voltaire's philosophical novel which was first published 250 years ago in 1759. As with its source, the play questions the idea that there is a 'best of all possible worlds' to live in. Wright has selected nineteen scenes from *Candide* in which to explore the ideas of goodness, happiness, chance and the problem of evil as our hero experiences the traumas of existence both from his own perspective and in the stories of others.

We meet Candide (Frank Woodley) as a servant to the Baron and Baroness in Westphalia. He is in love with their daughter Cunégonde (Caroline Craig) and all is well as the family's tutor Dr Pangloss (Barry Otto) explains that their life of comfort and privilege is meant to be. Devo's 'Beautiful World' sums up the state of things. Cunégonde seems to reciprocate Candide's interest but when the Baron catches Candide with his daughter, the servant is exiled. Candide must fend for himself and joins the army.

Although he finds his new life to be difficult, Candide always reminds himself of Pangloss's teachings. For Pangloss and therefore for Candide, there is no such thing as 'evil' in the world. All is for the best whether it be war, sexually transmitted disease, or slavery. Humans simply do not have the ability to understand God's overall plan. This philosophy was based on the thinking of Gottfried Leibniz and it was a world view which Voltaire did not share.

In *Optimism* an ensemble cast recreates the most famous scenes from *Candide* and gives them a modern spin. Air hostesses, businessmen, and tourists accompany Candide on his adventures as he dreams of being reunited with his Cunégonde. The actors take on several roles each (with the exception of Candide) and musical numbers move the story along. Perhaps the most effective of these was the scene in which Candide meets a horribly maimed slave (Hamish Michael) during his travels in the new world. The slave has had a hand and a leg cut off while trying to escape and Candide learns that this is the price his fellow beings are being made to pay so that Europeans like himself can have sugar in his coffee and tea. After Candide takes his leave, the slave sings

I would like to climb high in a tree
I could be happy, I could be happy
Or go to Skye on my holiday...
All of these things I do to get away from you...

This is, of course, the Altered Images's song 'I Could Be Happy' it really worked here (and went down very well with the Edinburgh audience!) with the victim singing the words in all earnestness – until he is shot and killed by a passing air hostess. In both the novel and the play, it is when Candide meets the slave that he renounces Pangloss's system. Evil clearly does exist and no amount of justification can excuse treating anyone in a cruel way for our own gain. The incident is one in a chain of events which Candide witnesses from his own experience of war to Cunégonde's rape and murder (she's feeling better now) to a natural disaster to the horror of an *auto-da-fé*. By the end, even Pangloss's faith in his creed seems shaken as he begs his old student to confirm the goodness of their situation.

Optimism keeps the thinking and, importantly, the humour of Voltaire and adds twentieth-century sensibilities to the tale. Candide's development into an independent thinker who can question received wisdom and use his own experiences to interpret his world remains an example for all. My only real criticism of the production was the inclusion of a sing-along yodelling session near the end which didn't really add much.

KAREN BASTON

The Last Witch
Traverse Theatre Company
Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh
Edinburgh International Festival
29 August 2009

The Last Witch by Rona Munro was commissioned for the Edinburgh International Festival. It inverts the Festival's 2009 theme of 'Enlightenment' by exploring one of the darker sides of Scottish life in the eighteenth century.

The production opens with an elegantly wiggled and suited harpsichordist (Simon Smith) who plays as we take our seats. This figure represents the enlightenment as it existed in early-eighteenth century Edinburgh. He is, like us, an observer of the events of the play, which is set in 1727, but for the first act, his music also helps to create the worlds of fantasy which are created by the title character.

Janet Horne (Kathryn Howden), the last witch, believes that she can transform herself and her environment. Her daughter Helen (Hannah Donaldson) is not convinced and takes a much more practical approach to life. When Helen wonders what they will have to eat, Janet proposes turning herself into a bee to that she can find some honey for them. Although she buzzes herself into a frenzy, Janet fails to transform. The mother-daughter relationship at this point in the story is a bit like the one in *Absolutely Fabulous*. Janet is a dreamer and she likes to share her dreams. Helen wants a more normal life - to marry and run a successful farm - despite her deformed hands and feet.

Desperation has lead Helen to take some peat from the neighbours, Douglas and Elspeth, so that they can have a fire. Douglas objects to this and believes that Janet has cursed his cows into illness to force him to share. Elspeth is more sympathetic and

brings food and drink in exchange for conversation and a share of the herbal drink which Janet uses to escape reality. Janet is happy to tell tales and create fantasies. But this is the limit of her powers. She knows how to call the devil but she has never done so. She tells Helen how to do it and the desperate daughter succeeds in conjuring a mysterious man. 'Nick' has never met her mother.

Village life goes on with people accepting Janet's dreamy ways and assuming she has supernatural powers until a new sheriff comes to the area and demands that an investigation take place. Captain David Ross (Andy Clark) is just the sort of opponent Janet wants. He is a younger man and ripe for seduction. Janet succeeds in her plan and taunts: 'See the charm I work, Captain Ross? See what I can do? Who has the power Davey boy? You or me?'. But her power over Ross is temporary and her plan backfires spectacularly. Ross comes to hate her and, as complaints about sick cattle and plants continue, he decides to officially charge Janet with the crime of witchcraft.

Where the first act features a splendidly confident Janet, the second sees her chained, tortured and eventually executed. Helen tries to save her by confessing her own dealings with the devil but it is Janet whom Ross wants to destroy. Helen has Elspeth's help in escaping the village and Elspeth manages to let Janet know that her daughter will be safe. *The Last Witch* was well acted and moving. The execution scene was especially well done – not gory, but convincing and sobering.

The Last Witch is based on the last trial and execution for witchcraft in Scotland. The details of this case are clouded by history. The trial did not come to Edinburgh and whatever local records there were for it were lost. It is not even known if 'Janet Horne' was the real name of the last person to be executed for witchcraft. In 1736 the Witchcraft Act made such executions illegal and repealed the conditions of all earlier witchcraft legislation.

KAREN BASTON

Scotland Exports the Enlightenment
Edinburgh International Festival
The Enlightenment: Discussions and Talks
16 August 2009

The Edinburgh International Festival offered a series of talks related to the Festival's 2009 theme of 'Enlightenment'. In this session professors Tom Devine and Arthur L. Herman and Ong Keng Sen, Artistic Director of TheatreWorks, Singapore, brought three different views on the aftermath of the Scottish Enlightenment to their discussion. All three first presented a short outline of some of their ideas before they began their discussion and took questions from the audience.

Professor Herman started the session with a focus on how much influence Scots thinkers have had on American thought. He singled out Thomas Reid's 'common sense' way of thinking as a main influence. Early American writers and professors saw perception as a mental act rather than as a passive process. Life could therefore be seen as a DIY project with people taking an active role in shaping their destinies. Keng Sen Ong spoke of Enlightenment as transformation. He considered the impact of Scots on Asia, colonialism, and cosmopolitanism.

Professor Devine reminded the audience that the Enlightenment was a convivial environment which was fuelled by alcohol before considering some of the reasons why Scottish settlers were so successful when they reached other shores. Key to this success was education. Many of those who moved abroad, especially to North America, were university educated, middle class, and had professions. These were not victims of the Clearances. They were ambitious Lowlanders who were looking for opportunities. Another important factor in the acceptance of the Enlightenment was that, with the exception of David Hume, most of the key writers and thinkers were Christians. Their ideas found favour in places like America.

The following discussion considered if it is time for a new Enlightenment and what role Scotland might play in such a phenomenon.

KAREN BASTON

The Face of the Enlightenment
Edinburgh International Festival
The Enlightenment: Discussions and Talks
30th August 2009

The Edinburgh International Festival offered a series of talks related to the Festival's 2009 theme of 'Enlightenment'. In this session, Roger L. Emerson, Paul Goring, Anne Bogart and Lee Breuer brought four different views on the aftermath of the Scottish Enlightenment to their discussion. All four first presented a short outline of some of their ideas before they began their discussion and took questions from the audience.

Roger L. Emerson opened the discussion with a brief history of the Scottish Enlightenment before highlighting the importance of scepticism and science to enlightened thinking. Emerson admitted that he found the theme of the session to be a bit unwieldy but suggested two nominations as possible representations of the Enlightenment's 'face'. First, a group portrait of Lord Alva and his family at home. This family portrait shows James Erskine, Lord Alva, with his second wife and children. Erskine was a patron of the arts and this family portrait was one of the first commissioned in Edinburgh in this style from David Allan. The family demonstrates politeness and musical proficiency. Alva was a patron of several of Edinburgh's musical societies.



David Allan
James Erskine, Lord Alva and his family, 1780

Or would a portrait of one of the most powerful men in Scottish politics and intellectual life be a more appropriate choice? Allan Ramsay's portrait of Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll was commissioned when the sitter had lost much of his political power.



Allan Ramsay
Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll

He is shown in his legal robes to remind his viewers that he still had his influence and his intelligence. Campbell's is also the face which adorns notes printed by the Royal Bank of Scotland. He is also the subject of a forthcoming biography by Emerson.

Paul Goring considered the theme from a literary perspective. He pointed out that the eighteenth century face could be very different from the faces we see today. Scars from smallpox were common, noses were removed by syphilis, dentistry was not as developed as it later became, and the cosmetics in use at the time created very different effects from those we seek now. Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* uses his body and face as symbols and Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* is continuously taken in by crooks thanks to his faith in physiognomy. James Boswell, meanwhile, came to the conclusion that it was often better to not reveal one's true feelings and therefore to conceal emotions behind a neutral façade.

The two theatre directors, Anne Bogart and Lee Breuer, considered questions of how an era looks and how to recreate that look on the stage as well as the energy that might be released at certain times and places. Anne Bogart believes that a new mood of enlightenment is happening in contemporary theatre. Lee Breuer pointed out that artists always need patronage and that Enlightenment figures, therefore, are not so very different from the point of view of the artist.

KAREN BASTON

OPERA

Le Grand Macabre

by György Ligeti

The Coliseum, London



Le Grand Macabre is a thoroughly contemporary opera that is the musical equivalent of the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel the Elder. It depicts a surreal and terrible world – aptly named Brueghelland – peopled by cruel, outlandish characters. The mixture of sexual perversion, grotesque carnival atmosphere and underlying sense of foreboding are redolent of Bosch’s ‘The Garden of Earthly Delights’, whilst the nightmarish detail of Brueghel’s ‘The Triumph of Death’ is a model for Brueghelland’s anticipated destruction by ‘le grand macabre’. Their influence is clear and indeed Ligeti saw both paintings hung at opposite ends of a small gallery in Madrid in 1961.

Ligeti based the opera on a play by the twentieth-century Belgian surrealist Michel de Ghelderode, 'La balade du Grand Macabre'. He described the piece as an "anti anti-opera" when he composed it in the mid 1970s, a truly operatic work, but yet one that parodied the conventions of opera. Apparently an extreme story-line filled with fantasy characters and bawdy jokes, but underneath there lies a very serious theme – that of death and the fear of death. In Breughelland, those in charge are obese and corrupt, and about to be popped off by revolutionaries. The charlatan Nekrotzar, "le grand macabre", claims to have returned to destroy the earth. Meanwhile the transvestite astrologer Astradamors, pursued relentlessly by his topless, sex-obsessed wife, prophesies that a comet spells further doom. However, when the world fails to end spectacularly, Nekrotzar slinks off, a diminished and literally puppet-like figure.

The most striking part of this production was the stage set created by the Catalan theatre collective La Fura dels Baus, and based around a giant revolving figure of a naked woman. Claudia crouches on, and totally dominates, the stage at the Coliseum. Out of Claudia's every orifice, and some more unexpected places, emerge the cast. Nekrotzar slithers out of her mouth, the lovers Amanda and Amando sing their love duet one in each eye, Piet the Pot unscrews a nipple and disappears, and all manner of characters emerge from her backside. The production had its first outing in Brussels earlier this year getting rave reviews: after seeing it, wrote one critic, "even the terminally depressed would be ready to dump the Prozac and pull the chain".

The performers were more than capable of fulfilling their roles which seemed to be as much acting as singing. Particularly outstanding were Pavlo Hunka as Nekrotzar, Andrew Watts as the spoilt Prince Go-Go, and Frode Olsen as Astradamors. Baldur Brönnimann conducted with complete assurance - despite Ligeti's use of a myriad of different sounds including whistles, klaxons, and saucepans - and the orchestra received the largest round of applause. Disappointingly, the set designers did not appear on stage.

'Le Grand Macabre' is not an opera that it's easy to imagine sitting at home listening to, with its fragmentary nature and often jarring sounds. However, this production was a fantastic spectacle, each scene came with new surprises and Claudia was the undoubted star of the show.

Sue Dale

ART EXHIBITIONS

“BACCHUS AND ARIADNE”

Expanded from notes for the E.M.S. National Gallery visit on 5/6/09



The “Bacchus and Ariadne”, ca. 1520-3, by Titian, at first glance does not look like the product of a Christian society at all. However Bacchus was the god of wine and to a sophisticated sixteenth-century Italian he had almost automatic eucharistic significance as in statues of the pagan god by Michelangelo and Jacopo Sansovino both now in the Bargello in Florence, respectively ca.1496-8 and 1506. In the painting vine leaves appear on a staff held aloft by one of his entourage and the cymbals and tambourine especially when raised, as in the elevation of the host at the climax of the mass, bring to mind the bread of the communion. The host could in this period take the form of large flat bread such as that held aloft as a standard on at least one of Julius II’s campaigns (King, “The Pope’s Ceiling”, p. 33). Flesh is also present in the ripped animal’s leg, also held aloft, and the boar’s head dragged by the boy. Bacchus leaping over the parapet of his chariot somewhat recalls an image of Christ rising from the tomb. He surprises Ariadne as Christ did the Magdelene appearing as a gardener on the morning of the Resurrection, the two episodes being telescoped by Titian. At the time of the E.M.S. visit Titian’s “Noli me Tangere” hung next to the “Bacchus and Ariadne”, a good piece of hanging by the National Gallery curators.

There is also a reference to an Annunciation with the right and left positions of male and female, Virgin and Gabriel, reversed. Titian's woman is rather scantily clad, more appropriate for a Magdelene, but the colours are right for the Virgin and the stars, denoting the classical heroine's transformation into a constellation allude to the Virgin's Assumption and Coronation as the Queen of Heaven. The Annunciation theme was also imported into the Titian "Death of Actaeon" which we looked at later. The connection is clearer in this painting of probably nearly three decades later as there are only two major figures. They are not, as are the two principle figures among many in "Bacchus in Ariadne", in the same plane parallel to the frame.

Confrontations of only two figures within a rectangle go back in classicising art to Greek metopes. Renaissance pictorial space could complicate interpersonal connections as we saw in connection with the "Death of Actaeon. In that Bacchus, with his entourage behind him, is the cutting edge of all the movement towards Ariadne there is no ambiguity as to the direct interaction in this painting. Where all the members of a crowd have their own individual connection with a focal figure, as in Titian's "Worship of Venus", 1518-9, Prado, or Michelangelo's drawing "The Archers", ca.1531, Royal Collection, Windsor, there can be problems. The "Worship of Venus" was along with "Bacchus and Ariadne" one of four paintings for the Alabaster Room for Alfonso d'Este Duke of Ferrara in his principle urban castle in that city. The other large paintings for this programme were Titian's "The Andrians", ca. 1520, Prado, and the aged Giovanni Bellini's "Feast of the Gods", 1514, National Gallery, Washington, with a background substantially repainted by Titian to make it fit in with his own paintings. The London National Gallery painting was, I believe the last painting to be finished for the room and the most sophisticated, though others put the "Andrians" last (Pedrocco, "Titian: The Complete Paintings", p. 140). The first two works entirely by Titian were accurate interpretations of passages from Philostratus the Elder's "Imagines", while the "Bacchus and Ariadne" was a fairly faithful rendition of Catullus's Carmina around line LXIV. Visual sources were a drawing by Fra Bartolomeo for the "Worship of Venus", which at one stage was to have been his, and the right half of the damaged Cascina cartoon of Michelangelo by then in Mantua almost certainly seen by Titian when he and Dossi, the artist of the small frieze paintings in the Alabaster Room, visited Mantua from Ferrara in November 1519 (Freedberg, "Painting in Italy 1500-1600", pp. 154-6).

It is not just Christianity and paganism that leak into each other in this period, this phenomenon being part of a more general intellectual synthesizing culture. Myths become conflated with each other. This is especially the case in Ariosto's mock epic "Orlando Furioso", where there seem to be stock sequences of actions that comment on each other by means of variations, much as in painting poses echoing each other and copied poses from other works carry with them glosses and layers of meaning. The first edition of the poem appeared in 1516 its publication paid for by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, brother of Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, whose court Ariosto frequented and for whom he worked as a diplomat and administrator. The poem was later substantially expanded and revised. The Titian painting of ca. 1520-3, one of the set of three by the artist for Alfonso's Alabaster Room, may well have been inspired by parts of the poem, or if the relevant sections are in the later revisions, the poem may have done the inspiring rather than vice versa. Titian was temporarily resident in Ferrara for a time in the period of the Alabaster Room and fully exposed to its court culture.

There are two related episodes in “Orlando” in which a heroine is rescued at the seashore from a terrible aquatic monster the Orc, a story more related to Perseus and Andromeda than Theseus and Ariadne, the ostensible source of the painting. Theseus, having abandoned Ariadne on Naxos is seen in the picture sailing away in the distance as Bacchus and his entourage arrive (there is also a tiny distant boat seemingly being pushed away, but perhaps drawn back, by a gesture of a foreground reveller in the “Andrians”, where it represents the arrival of Dionysius). Stories inspired by Perseus and Andromeda happen twice in Ariosto’s epic. The two stories are interwoven in the telling, one, that of Olimpia and Orlando, also being conflated with a clear borrowing from abandonment by Theseus of Ariadne. The clearest anticipation of the painting by Ariosto is in Canto X particularly verse 23.

22

e corre al mar, graffiandosi le gote
presage e certa ormai di sua fortuna.
Si straccia i crini, e il petto si percuote,
e va guardano (che splendea la luna)
se veder cosa, fuor che ‘l lito, puote;
né fuor che ‘l lito, vede cosa alcuna.
Bireno chiama: e al nome di Bireno
rispondean gli Antri che pietà n’aveno

23

Quivi surgea nel lito estremo un sasso,
ch’aveano l’onde, col picchiar frequente,
cavo e ridotto a guisa d’arco al basso;
e stave sopra il mar curvo e pendente.
Olimpia in cima vi sali a gran passo
(così la facea l’animo possente),
e di lontano le gonfiate vele
vide fuggir del suo signor crdele:

Beside the sea, now certain of her fate,
 She tears her face, her hair, she beats her breast.
 Along the shore (the moon is setting late)
 She looks for signs of life, to east, to west.
 In all directions, and, now desperate.
 She calls: 'Bireno', and the caves attest
 Their sympathy by echoing his name –
 'Bireno' - calling every time the same.

At the shore's farthest end a cliff arose
 Which breakers by their frequent battering
 Had hollowed to a structure like a bow's.
 It overhung the sea; there clambering,
 Olimpia to the very summit goes,
 By anguish rendered strong for such a thing,
 And from afar the swelling sail she sees
 Of her unfaithful, cruel lord who flees.
 (Reynolds, Penguin translation)

The Titian painting is odd for while Ariadne appears to be on a narrow beach she seems to be elevated above a middle distance headland. Recession into the distance involving the shore and the sea is often problematic in the High Renaissance as in Patinier's contemporary works. The passage from "Orlando Furioso" can be compared with the Catullus

namque fluentisono prospetans litore Diae,
 Thesea cedentem celery cum lasse tuetur

indomitos in corde gerens Aridna fuores,
 55 necdum etiam quae uisit uisere redit,
 utpote fallacy quae turn primum exita somno
 desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena.
 immemor at iuuenis fugiens pellit uada remis,
 irrita uentosae linquens promissa pcellae.
 60 quem procul ex alga maestis Minois ocellis,
 saxea ut effigies bacchantid, prospicit, eheu,
 prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat ubdis,
 non flauo retinens subtilem uerice mitram,
 non contacta leui uelatum pectus amictu,
 65 non tereti strphio lactentis uincta papillas
 omnia quae toto delapsa e corpora passim
 ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant.
 sed neque tum mitrae neque tum fluitantis amictus
 illa uicem curans toto ex te pectore, Theseu
 70 toto animo, tota pendeat perdita mente.
 There, gazing out from Dia's¹ surf-loud shoreline,
 eyes fixed on Theseus as he and his swift vessels
 dwindle away to nothing, with uncontrollable passion
 55 filling her heart, not yet able to credit the witness
 of her own eyes, roused that moment from treacherous slumber,
 Ariadne finds herself left on the lonely strand, poor creature,
 while her heedless young lover vanishes, oar strokes flailing
 the shallows, scattering broken promises galewards.

60 Him from afar, there on the wrack-strewn beach, eyes
agonized, Minos' daughter, a stony bacchant, watches,
ah, watches, in breaking waves of grief unbounded,
lost the fine woven net from her golden tresses,
lost the light garment veiling her torso, lost the
65 rounded breast-band that gathered her milk white bosom -
all of them, slipped from her body every which way, now
at her feet had become the salty ripples' playthings.
But at this moment neither net nor floating garment
were noticed by her: she with her whole heart, Theseus,
70 whole mind, whole spirit, was concentrated on you.

(trans. Green, "The Poems of Catullus: A Bilingual Edition", pp. 136-7)

The Olimpia and Orlando story in "Orlando Furioso", after a typical break to create suspense, resumes in Canto XI at verse 33, now in Perseus and Andromeda mode, and continues, into the 50s, Olimpia's identity, she having been anonymous for a while, and the link to the Theseus story line being revealed in verses 54-5. This short retrospective connecting passage spares us a cumbersome linking episode but may also show the poet was somewhat ill at ease outside his tropes. In the contrasted story, the magic shield of Ruggiero functions very much as did Perseus's Medusa's head, stunning the monster but not killing it or turning it to stone so Orlando has to kill it in his later rescue. Titian's Laocoön group in the painting (see below) is however perhaps a reference to the stunning and petrifying shield in "Orlando Furioso" and also to Catullus's line "agonized, Minos' daughter, a stony bacchant watches", originally applied to Ariadne but transposed to three more literal bacchantes. The conflation of the Perseus and Theseus legends in Ariosto might have led in Titian's mind to a reversal of petrification being applied to the Laocoön group which comes alive.

The Orlando and Olympia sequences constitute the more serious version of the two double mostly Perseus and Andromeda legends in the Renaissance mock epic. The Ariadne and Andromeda episodes of the Olympia and Orlando story sandwich the Ruggiero and Angelica variant between them. However the story of Ruggiero being warned of Angelica's plight actually precedes the adaptation of the Ariadne legend by may verses. Angelica/Andromeda begins at Canto X, 92. Ruggiero fails to kill the Orc after he has subdued it with his magic shield so it is left to Orlando to despatch in Ariosto's final visit to the composite stories. When Orlando is in the monster's mouth there are references to Jonah and the whale, the Mouth of Hell and Christ's Harrowing of Hell, the latter being, in Christian theology, a fulfilment of the antetype of the

Jonah story. Moreover the Virgin left behind in the World after Christ's death on the Cross, and His heroic voyage to Hell, is symbolized by Ariadne in the Virgin's colours in the painting left alone by Theseus. Titian is by no means alone in mixing paganism and Christianity. Tintoretto, as mentioned in connection with Rubens's "Peace and War", also discussed later in the E.M.S. visit, was inspired to create "The Discovery of Ariadne", Doge's Palace, Venice, also in a set of four, by Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne". Titian's struggling satyr, with tiny horns but human legs and the two figures on either side of him was derived from the recently dug up "Laocoön and his Sons". The snake, taken from the several in the sculpture, seems like a token reference to Ariosto's monstrous Orc, scaled down, like the python in the ancient "Apollo Sauroctonos". In yet another example of the cross fertilization of the classical and the Christian, Michelangelo used the Laocoön as the basis for both Haman and for the initial creating God on the Sistine ceiling.

The mock version of classical art, so evident in Orlando Furioso pervades "Bacchus and Ariadne". The figure of Bacchus is either taken from some knowledge of Myron's "Discobolos" or, so imbued with the classical spirit had Titian become, that he recreated him (the "Discobolos") in ignorance of the great work. Very early Greek classical works, such as this sculpture, were not generally appreciated, or even known, in the "Renaissance" which had far more Roman copies and Hellenistic works to hand. I believe Titian did know of a version of the "Discobolos", perhaps a sketch, or a bronze statuette, or a sketch of a statuette, if not a full-scale version because the upper cymbal is like a dropped discus/huge communion wafer as the athlete/Bacchus catches sight of Ariadne. Titian was quite capable of parodying classical art as in the case of the woodcut from his circle, perhaps after a drawing by him of the Laocoön group as three apes, a comment on the excessive deference paid to the great work by artists. Titian would return to the format of Bacchus and Ariadne format, getting rid of the crowd and making its tone darker. The first example is the "Death of St. Peter Martyr", 1528-30, destroyed, formerly in the Zanipolo in Venice, but well known from copies. The murderer, up a small incline, is in Bacchus's pose but turned with his back to us and the victim is at his feet. St. Peter's companion, fleeing, is in a posture close to Ariadne's, but turned to face us. The whole Ferrara episode in modified form is as it were seen from behind, while the two more active figures are more like each other. In a more static form the pose is used for the late "St. Margaret", ca. 1565-6, Prado. This time the only other figure, a dragon, is to the right and the saint is in danger of being attacked. Titian also used a very modified Discobolos for the secular "nephew"/grandson in "Paolo Tre and Due Nipote" (Pope Paul III and Two "Nephews"), 1546, Capodimonte, Naples. In all three Alabaster Room Titians the crowd is like a rounded frieze curving back into space, derived from the Bellini for the room. As Titian worked his way through the project the more consistent the curved penetration became, but the geometrical definition of it less precise and the figures larger.

Philostratus the Elder in the "Imagines" describes ancient paintings. There is considerable debate among experts whether the paintings, all allegedly in a house in Naples, were real, probably copies of famous originals. Alternately they could be a mere literary device. Very recently it has been suggested (Conference on Irony and the Ironic in Classical Literature, University of Exeter, 1-4/9/09, Philip Etherington, "Levels of Understanding in the Elder Philostratus' 'Imagines'") that the speaker, allegedly a teacher, has sexual designs on some among the crowd of adolescents who

follow the tour given to his younger pupil. In this scenario, the paintings become a mere pretext to engage their interest and, as less important, less likely to be real. Mistakes are made in the “teacher’s” accounts of mythology and the homoerotic is emphasized to make his intentions clear to the reader. This interpretation is not known to have been suspected in the Renaissance, but given the louche company Titian kept, while he appears to have been heterosexual, the modern theory might have amused him. It cannot be ruled out that elements of the “Bacchus and Ariadne” are taken from a painting of Ariadne described by Philostratus, but this is far less closely related to Titian’s painting than is the passage from Catullus particularly as in the text it is Dionysius who comes to the rescue of the heroine, though the two gods are clearly manifestations of the same impulses. In any case Ariadne in Philostratus’ version is shown asleep. In the most literal way the description could have influenced the Titian: “... the Bacchanates are not clashing their cymbals now, nor are the Satyrs playing the flute, nay, even Pan checks his wild dance that he may not disturb the maiden’s sleep” (trans. Fairbanks “Philostratus Imagines, Callistratus Descriptions”, p. 63). More relevant is “Having arrayed himself in fine purple and wreathed his head with roses, Dionysius comes to the side of Ariadne ‘drunk with love’ as the Teian poet (Anacreon) says of those who are overmastered by love” (p. 63). It is speculated (p. 65) that Ariadne’s breath tastes of apples or grapes comestables that relate to the two other Titian mythologies for Ferrara. Philostratus also mentions a barely visible leopard (p. 63).

The painting, described by Philostratus, and used apparently as the basis for the “Andrians”, in a short passage worth quoting in full, is about an arrival of Dionysius as much as the “Bacchus and Ariadne” is about the arrival of the god Bacchus in its generally used title and the departure of Theseus.

The stream of wine which is on the island of Andros, and the Andrians who have become drunken from the river, are the subject of this painting. For by act of Dionysius the earth of the Andrians is so charged with wine that it bursts forth and sends up for them a river; if you have water in mind, the quantity is not great, but if wine, it is a great river - yes, divine! For he who draws from it may well disdain both Nile and Ister and may say of them that they would be more highly esteemed if they were small, provided their streams were like this one. These things, methinks, the men, crowned with ivy and byrony, are singing to their wives and children, some dancing on either bank, some reclining. And very likely this also is the theme of their song - that while

the Achelouïs bears reeds, and the Peneius waters Tempe, and the Pactolus ... flowers, this river makes men rich, and powerful in the Assembly, and helpful to their friends, and beautiful and instead of short, four cubits tall; for when a man has drunk his fill of it he can assemble all these qualities and in his thought make them his own. They sing, I feel sure, that this river alone is not disturbed by the feet of cattle or of horses, but is a draught drawn from Dionysius, and is drunk unpolluted, flowing for men alone. This is what you should imagine you hear and what some of them are really singing, though their voices are thick with wine.

Consider, however, what is to be seen in the painting: The river lies on a couch of grape clusters, pouring out its stream, a river undiluted and of agitated appearance; thyrsi grow about bit like reeds about a body of water, and if one goes along past the land and these drinking groups on it, he comes at length on Tritons at the river's mouth, who are dipping up the wine in sea shells. Some of it they drink, some they blow out in streams, and of the Tritons some are drunken and dancing. Dionysius also sails to the revels of Andros and, his ship now moored in the harbour, he leads a mixed throng of Satyrs and Bacchantes and all the Seileni. He leads Laughter and Revel, two spirits most gay and most fond of the drinking-bout, that with the greatest delight he may reap the river's harvest. (pp. 97-9)

Not only does wine make men larger it seemingly can move them through time. This is the only one of the three Titian Alabaster Room mythologies with modern people who, through wine and the imagination, have slipped back to ancient Andros. The unpolluted purity of the wine to a Christian is eucharistic so the river god on the couch a type of Christ as or in the grape press.

The “Worship of Venus” again is taken substantially, though selectively from Philostratus from a rather longer passage than that which inspired the “Andrians”. The eating of apples to a Christian brings to mind the most obvious implications. Original sin, so theology tells us is all pervasive. Again from a Christian perspective one passage in particular has a far deeper meaning than an ancient pagan reader could have taken from it.

... and the second pair are engaged in archery, one shooting at his

Companion and the latter shooting back. Nor is there any trace of hostility in their faces; rather they offer their breasts to each other. In order that the missiles may pierce them there, no doubt. It is a beautiful riddle ... (pp. 23-5)

The ideal of turning the other cheek could be anachronistically read into the extract. There is severe censure among the cupids for one who causes pain by bending back the fingers of an opponent in a wrestling match, an incident omitted by Titian. The episode with the hare is in the text and there is an allusion to the presentation of a hare to the beloved as a means of creating a sense of obligation and perverting love. Titian has made explicit what Philostratus merely implies by painting in the statue of Aphrodite.

... and do you look, please at Aphrodite. But where is she and in what part of the orchard yonder? Do you see the overarching rock from beneath which springs water of the deepest blue, fresh and good to drink, which is distributed in channels to irrigate the apple trees? Be sure that Aphrodite is there, where the Nymphs, I doubt not, have established a shrine to her, because she has made them mothers of Cupids and therefore blest in their children. The silver mirror, that gilded sandal, the golden broaches, all these objects have been hung there not without a purpose. They proclaim that they belong to

Aphrodite, and her name is inscribed on them, and they are said to be
the gifts of the Nymphs. (p. 29)

The gifts are reduced by Titian to the mirror, while Aphrodite/Venus is not lost in the orchard or behind the rock but as a statue in front of the rock. Philostratus probably had in mind a huge collection of ex-votos as in Rosso's "The Sacrifice" at Fontainebleau as shown in a print by René Boyvin. Rosso, in Venice before moving on to France, moved in Titian's circle. With her bowl (instead of the oil flask) and scanty attire the statue could be a Magdalene worshipped by two of the renowned members of her former profession, who are literally nymphs. The mirror one holds aloft probably is meant to be seen as revealing to her one of the other paintings in the Alabaster Room. There is also a verse in "Orlando Furioso" Canto VI, 75 which in some respects anticipates the Titian canvass and which also recalls in the boys at the tops of trees Christ's entry into Jerusalem in the usual iconography of paintings. A few verses (VII 9) later Ruggiero is described as being received in Alcina's city like God himself come down from Heaven.

75

Per le crime dei pini e degli allori,
degli alti faggi e degl'irsuti abeti
volan scherzando i pargoletti Amori :
di lor vittorie alti godendo lieti,
altri pigliando, a saettare i cori,
la mira quindi, altri tenendo reti;
chi temprà dardi ad un ruscel piu'
e chi gli aguzza ad un volubil sasso.

75

Among the topmost branches of the trees,
Laurels and conifers, tall pine and beach,
Gaily rejoicing in their victories,
Small Cupids flutter, chattering each to each,
And if a heart as yet untouched one sees,
He shoots; or else, if it be out of each,

He spreads a net. Some to a stream are flown

To temper darts or file them on a stone.

(Reynolds, Penguin translation)

At the end of the first Perseus and Andromeda episode in “Orlando Furioso”, true to the genre of the mock epic, and typical of the layerings of meaning which Titian must have appreciated Ruggiero attempts to rape Angelica. This lapse in no way impairs his standing as a good character as the story is told by the poet, nor is it woven into a consistent sum of actions that reveals his character. The story line turns to farce even before she uses the magic ring to disappear after an interruption of many verses in the purest soap operatic cliff hanger.

114

Quivi il bramoso cavalier ritenne
l'audace corso, e nel pratel discese;
e fe' raccorre al suo destrier penne,
ma non a tal che più le avea distese.
Del destrier sceso, a pena si ritenne
di salir altri; ma tennel l'arnese;
l'arnese il tenne, che bisognò trarre,
e contra il suo disir messe le sbarre.

115

Frettoloso, or da questo or da quell canto
confusamente l'arme si levava.
Non gli parve altra volta mai star tanto;
che s'un laccio sciogliea, dui n'annodava.
Ma troppo è lungo ormai, Signor, il canto,
e forse ch'anco l'ascoltar vi grava:
sì ch'io differirò l'istoria mai
in altro tempo che più grata sia.

114

The eager cavalier his daring flight
Brought to a halt, and straightway dismounted.
One horse he'd curbed, and yet to a new height
Upon another he would fain have mounted.
One obstacle alone impedes the knight:
His armour – and on this he had not counted –
His armour keeps him back from his desire
And causes him delay, for all his fire.

115

And so, in frantic haste to be without it,
Disorderly his armour he removed;
And never had he been so long about it,
His tackle tangling as he pulled and shoved.
My canto is too long (I do not doubt it)
And wearisome, my lord, perhaps has proved,
And so this history is now postponed
Until an hour more pleasing shall be found.
(Reynolds, Penguin translation)

Timothy Alves

Robert Adam's Landscape Fantasies: Watercolours and Drawings from the Permanent Collection

**National Gallery of Scotland
25th April – 2nd August 2009**

This small exhibition brought together a selection of views of architecture and landscapes. Most of the works were by Robert Adam (1728-1792) but the selection also included drawings by John Clerk of Eldin and Paul Sandby who often went sketching with Adam. Many of the watercolours and drawings by Adam featured castles. He was fascinated by castles. He grew up in a castle at Blair Adam in Kinross and remained interested in castle architecture all his life. His work of the 1780s involved several 'castle style' projects.

For Adam, a castle was an ideal subject for a picturesque picture. His drawings show the interaction between architecture and its landscape setting. Adam's buildings, whether in his imagination or as a realised building, have a bond with their landscapes. His fantasy castle pictures are dramatic because the ideal setting for such buildings is among picturesque ruins, wild waterfalls, and other wonders of nature on a grand scale.

Adam is best known today for his elegant buildings in Edinburgh's New Town especially those in Charlotte Square.



Robert Adam
Cullen Castle, Banffshire
c. 1770-1780

http://www.nationalgalleries.org/index.php/collection/online_az/4:322/results/0/21924

KAREN BASTON

LECTURES

Simon Blackburn: 'Hume and the Enlightenment'
Edinburgh Book Festival
31st August 2009



David Hume

In one of the final sessions of the Edinburgh Book Festival, Simon Blackburn considered the legacy of one of the city's most famous philosophers.

David Hume (1711-1776) may have been an eighteenth-century thinker but he 'got things right' from a modern perspective. Many of his ideas anticipated Darwinian themes and he is also considered as an originator of cognitive science. For Hume, human nature was the same as animal nature and therefore 'reason' was no match for 'the passions'. His version of evolution was not to do with physical evolution but rather with the evolution of concepts such as law, justice, and contract as means of coping with the passions.

Hume recognised that we only act when we care about something. Our motivations are not based on reason but on our own individual concerns. But we are also social beings and our need for others can regulate our behaviour. We continuously evaluate ourselves against others and we need a social setting. Hume's ethical theory also depends on evolution. There are certain traits of the human character which we admire and would like others to think we have. These are natural virtues like courage. Artificial virtues like justice or law have a trickier evolutionary process which involves the building up of reciprocity. Self-interest becomes a moral concern.

Ethical evolution can go wrong. A prime example of this for ‘The Great Infidel’ is in the development of religions. Religion goes against nature. Hume especially attacked ‘monkish ritual’ and demands for celibacy as having no purpose. For Hume, these were not virtues but vices. Hume, however, never called himself an ‘atheist’. He thought of ‘God’ merely as a verbal construct. Nature and the world go on whether ‘He’ is involved or not.

Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* is for Blackburn the one work by Hume everyone should read. In this dialogue Philo (Hume), Cleanthes (supporter of the design argument), and Demea (probably modelled on Leibniz) consider why religion exists. Philo posits that you cannot take small things and use them as a model for the entire universe. Cleanthes and Demea form an unstable alliance against Philo. The *Dialogues* put religion in social context. Rituals and belief are a cognitive approach for guaranteeing good behaviour. We tend to behave better if we think someone is watching us.

Blackburn reinforced this point with the example of a psychological experiment of 2006. In this experiment, an honesty box into which visitors to a staff common room at a university were expected to pay for their coffee or tea was decorated in different ways in different weeks. Some weeks the box featured a picture of some flowers but in other weeks eyes made up the design. During the weeks in which eyes were on the box, people paid for their drinks.

Religious belief is therefore an adaptation to control our behaviour in a social setting. Hume recognised this. But he was not a radical. Hume had respect for institutions which were formed by the artificial virtues such as contract, property, and law. He distrusted ‘enthusiasm’ and schemes and was generally conservative in his outlook. Most of his friends were middle-class Edinburgh folk (much like visitors to the Edinburgh Book Festival!) and some of his closest friends were ministers.

Blackburn delivered an entertaining and enlightening talk on one of Edinburgh’s best loved citizens.

KAREN BASTON

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

Events 2009-2010

All events start at 6.30p.m. unless otherwise stated, and are followed by refreshments and questions

22nd October 2009: Dr Roger Mettam, 'Absolute Monarchy and Provincial Identity in Louis XIV's France', Malet St, Room 633.

12th November 2009: Karen Hearn (Curator of 16th-and 17th- Century British Art, Tate Britain), 'Tudor and Jacobean Pregnancy portraits', Malet Street, Room 509

10th December 2009: Prof. Quentin Skinner, 'Word and Image in the Philosophy of Hobbes', Malet Street, Room B35; followed by Christmas party in Room B04.

29th January 2010: Prof. Alex Walsham (Exeter), 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation', Malet Street, room to be confirmed

5th March 2010: Tim Knox (Director, Sir John Soane's House), 'The Strange Genius of Sir John Soane', Malet Street, Room 415.

25th March 2010: Prof. Michael Hunter, 'The Decline of Magic', subtitle to be confirmed, Malet Street, Room B30

April 2010: Dr Richard Williams, 'Text and Image in Reformation Visual Culture', Malet Street, date and venue to be confirmed

May 2010: Dr Malcom Jones, 'Death in Early Modern English Prints and Book Illustrations', Malet Street, date and venue to be confirmed

June 2010: Prof. Julian Swann, title, date and venue to be confirmed

For further information on membership and activities contact the secretary, Anne Byrne: Membership is £5 for the year. Non-members may attend events at a cost of £3 each.

Film Night

As a Society we are constantly looking at ways of extending our scope and entertaining our membership, one such innovation is a monthly film night, held on a Friday and shown in one of the lecture theatres at Birkbeck.

Film Night has been running for a while now and has proved a popular event for our members. Why not come along, see a great film and meet other members. We show a variety of British and foreign films, all dealing with subjects associated with the Early Modern era. Film Night is free to members and we also provide wine and snacks.

For further information on Film Night contact Laura Jacobs at:
l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

This section concerns those events staged by other societies which we feel might be of interest to our membership.

Henry VIII: Dressed to Kill The Tower of London

Until January 2010

Telephone: 0844 4827777

The Tudor monarch is battle-ready in this exhibition that features various examples of his armour and weapons. The objects are beautifully made and are designed both to impress and to serve a functional purpose.

Tudor Weekend Commemorating the Accession of King Henry VIII The Vine, Basingstoke, Hampshire

17th-18th October 2009

Telephone: 01256 883858

A Tudor weekend celebrating the 500th anniversary of the accession to the throne of Henry VIII as the Hungerford Household bring to life characters from his reign.

**Mary Queen of Scots
Scottish ruler, Catholic martyr, Talented golfer
National Portrait Gallery, London**

A look at the many facets of Mary Queen of Scots through a series of portraits.

**Chastleton House
Near Stow-on-the-Wold, Oxfordshire
Guided Tour: the Turbulent Years**

31st October 2009

Telephone: 01608 674981

Discover Chastleton's connections with the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

**The Richard III Society, Norfolk Branch
Norwich Study Day
Towton Past and Present**

Contact Annmarie Hayek on annmarie@talktalk.net or telephone 01603

A series of talks concerning the decisive battle of Towton when the Yorkists under King Edward IV vanquished the Lancastrian army on Palm Sunday 1461 in the bloodiest battle fought on English soil.

The Historical Association

Central London Branch

Meetings are at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House

**Contact the secretary, Bill Measure on
measure@btinternet.com or 020-85585491**

Saturday, 10th October 2009, 2.00 p.m. Professor John Miller (Queen Mary College, University of London), Civic Celebration between 1660-1722

Saturday, 19th December 2009, 1.00 p.m. Stephen Gilbert, 'Medieval Bruges and Flanders'

Saturday, 14th January 2010, 2.00 p.m. Dr Alastair Duke (University of Southampton) "A fair bird suited with godly borrowed plumage?" The economic and cultural contribution of Southern Netherlanders to Holland's Golden Age, c. 1585-1630.

BOOK REVIEW

NON-FICTION BOOKS

I hope that many of you will send in your reviews of newly published books and the occasional old book. The only criteria being that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

Richard III: The Maligned King by Annette Carson, The History Press

Yes I know what you are thinking: Yet another book about Richard III. We now all know it was all Tudor myth and propaganda so why do we need another book? Well, that's just it. Although more and more people no longer believe in the Shakespearean monster there are still many that do and there are still a number of establishment historians who repeat the tired old cliché about the last Plantagenet king.

There are a number of reasons for reading this book. Firstly, it is extremely readable, written in a simple yet effective style, free of any pomposity and often sprinkled with dry humour. Past theories are relentlessly worked over and destroyed. For instance '*to the best of my knowledge there are no reports giving Professor Richmond's version of (Edward IV's) wishes*'.

Carson constructs her argument in three simple stages: (1) present evidence, (2) establish its precise status, (3) interpret it.

Undoubtedly people will continue to argue over detail and the circumstances of events and there will be differences of opinion as to how much weight should be given to particular historical sources. For instance, should we give Sir Thomas More any credence at all? Annette Carson clearly does not think so and she tends to exclude him from most of the book. Then there is the question of how we interpret the sources and the evidence.

All the arguments are well presented and follow a logical pattern. Indeed, the author sets out all the facts and examines each event in a clear and precise way so that even a reader with little knowledge of the late-fifteenth century will easily be able to follow the arguments, and with the always welcome addition of family trees this clear and cogent approach pays dividends.

The author has attempted to avoid the many pitfalls of biased late-fifteenth century politics and rivalries by eschewing the over-reliance upon historical sources, and in her approach she takes a not too subtle swipe at many well-known historians who use this material without questioning its veracity and the motives behind its construction. She confronts directly the problem of Richard's historiography and in the appendix provides a list of sources, dividing them into those written during Richard's lifetime and those produced during Tudor times, and the author gives her evaluation of each source.

In '*Richard III: The Maligned King*' Annette Carson has produced a valuable addition to the continuing debate. Pleasingly presented, with clear, well defined chapters and an excellent range of illustrations, the book adopts a determined and straightforward approach to the events of the late-fifteenth century and, like all good historical researchers she presents her evidence and then leaves the reader to reach their own conclusions.

John Croxon

FICTION BOOKS

The criteria for fiction books is the same as that for non-fiction book reviews; that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (Edinburgh: B&W Publishing, 1993; first published 1816)

The Antiquary was Scott's own favourite of his novels. He saw a lot of himself in the title character and this adds an extra dimension to reading this story.

The eccentric Jonathan Oldbuck, Laird of Monkbarns, enjoys exploring his neighbourhood in while searching for clues about Scotland's Roman past. His well-stocked library contains many valuable books and he delights in a love of the Latin language. He has several academic projects on the go and is always keen to share his knowledge – right or wrong - with anyone who will listen.

We meet Oldbuck in Edinburgh where he waits with a young stranger for the coach to Queensferry. The travellers are both heading for the fictional town of Fairport. Oldbuck because he lives nearby and the mysterious Lovel for reasons of his own. Oldbuck thinks Lovel might be an actor. The Antiquary is fond of forming theories without much evidence.

Lovel's purpose for visiting Fairport unwinds throughout the novel. Along the way he takes part in a dramatic cliff-side rescue, is haunted by the ghost of Oldbuck's ancestor, wounds Oldbuck's nephew in a duel, loves from afar, and is commissioned by the Antiquary to write an epic poem, *The Caledoniad; or, Invasion Repelled*. But who is he and why is he in Fairport? (I won't say here but suffice it to say that if you've read any other of the Waverley Novels, you'll be able to have a fairly good guess!).

As with other Scott novels, characters from the 'lower orders' are memorable. Chief among them is the blue-gowned vagrant Edie Ochiltree. Ochiltree travels throughout the countryside exchanging gossip and stories for food and shelter. He knows everything that is going on but he is also a trusted and respected member of the community. He is content with his life and refuses several offers of money and stability because he enjoys his freedom. He also knows that Oldbuck's 'Roman' ruins are part of a campsite he helped to build! Ochiltree is a strong presence throughout the novel and he helps young Lovel out of scrapes. He also acts as a messenger for people of all levels of society from Lord Glenallan at the top to an elderly woman with a twenty-years or so old secret (maybe connected with Lovel?) who lives in the village.

The Antiquary's neighbours are the proud Wardour family who enjoy a long Scottish heritage but whose finances do not match their status. The Baronet has fallen victim to a German swindler called Mr Dousterswivel who tries to convince both the Baronet and the Antiquary to invest in treasure finding schemes. The Baronet needs the money but the Antiquary is not convinced. Dousterswivel claims to have supernatural powers and this helps with his undoing.

A lot happens in *The Antiquary* and it would be impossible to detail all the plots and subplots in a short review. The story is set in the 1790s when a French invasion was a very real possibility and one which the seaside citizens of Fairport are especially wary of. This gives an extra sense of tension to the novel and sets the doings of the Antiquary and his friends in relief.

You can find out more about *The Antiquary* (and other writings by Scott) at the Sir Walter Scott Digital Archive. The site includes links to more than 300 freely available texts by Scott. The page for *The Antiquary* is here: <http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/novels/antiquary.html>

Karen Baston

THE AUTUMN QUIZ

1. Who was killed at the siege of Nancy on the 5th January 1477?
2. Who was born on the 3rd May 1446 at Fotheringhay castle?
3. Who was burnt at the stake at Vilvourde near Brussels in October 1536?
4. The tournament of the Golden Tree in 1468 marked the marriage of which two people?
5. Which English monarch died at Whitehall on the 6th February 1685?
6. Which institution first met on the 3rd November 1641?
7. What year did Pepys stop writing his diaries?
8. What year did work commence on the new St Paul's Cathedral?
9. What was the Atterbury Plot of 1721?
10. What was ended by the Truce of Berwick in June 1639?
11. What did the Treaty of London in August 1604 achieve?
12. Who died at Malines on the 23rd November 1503?
13. What took place in Scotland on the 13th February 1692?
14. What was captured by Sir George Rooke and Sir Cloudesley Shovell on the 23rd July 1704?
15. Which English commander defeated the French at the battle of Malplaquet in 1709?
16. Who died on the 28th October 1708?
17. What petition was presented to parliament in December 1640?
18. Why was George Cony imprisoned in November 1454?
19. What great work was first performed in Vienna's Theatre an der Wien in 1808?
20. What did Nelson lose at Tenerife in July 1797?

Answers on the following page

ANSWERS TO THE AUTUMN QUIZ

1. Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy
2. Margaret of York
3. William Tyndale
4. Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy and Margaret of York
5. Charles II
6. The Long Parliament
7. 1669
8. 1675
9. A Jacobite plot against the Hanoverian regime foiled by Robert Walpole
10. The first Anglo-Scottish Bishops' War
11. It ended war with Spain
12. Margaret of York
13. The Glencoe Massacre
14. Gibraltar
15. John Churchill, duke of Marlborough
16. George, Prince of Denmark, consort to Queen Anne
17. London Root and Branch petition against bishops
18. For refusing to pay customs duties
19. Beethoven's 5th Symphony
20. His right arm

THE BIRKBECK EARLY MODERN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 2006

This society was founded in the belief that more study, discussion and interest in the Early Modern period is required. The society aims to promote, encourage and stimulate new research and discussion into a wide range of themes, including art and images, consumption, gender roles, literature, magic, politics, religion, science, music, sexuality and, travel and exploration.

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