

Issue 6 | January 2013 | Humanities Graduate School Newsletter

# Our Graduate School

Welcome to the Humanities Graduate School Newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to introduce you to 'Our Graduate School' and the range of activities which we run each year. Whether you are a returning postgraduate, a new student, or someone who is thinking of joining our postgraduate community in the near future, this newsletter will contain something for you.

The Humanities Graduate School is a vibrant and supportive community of postgraduates studying a range of different programmes across our seven academic disciplines. Annual Graduate School activity includes a series of interdisciplinary Reading Groups; a student-led postgraduate conference; a peer-reviewed student journal which publishes papers from the conference; a weekly seminar series covering a range of different topics; social activities run by our student group GradNet; and, for students studying for a PhD, a programme of research and transferable skills training. To help you to develop your own activities, we have a development fund which provides start-up funding for study days, workshops and small-scale conferences. Read on to find out about some of our recent events and to learn how you can get involved!

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# Struggling with a difficult text?

## Join one of our Graduate School Reading Groups

You can join a Reading Group on range of cross-disciplinary topics including memory, gender, culture and biography.

Groups meet at least twice a year. Meetings vary; sometimes informal discussions, sometimes presentations of papers, sometimes discussion of key texts and sometimes, invited speakers.

Can't see a group on our list which suits you? Why not set up your own group? We provide funding and webspace for advertising.



# Getting by with a little help from our friends

## **Robert Baird explains how a new language research reading group came to be added to the Humanities Graduate School.**

Sometimes a PhD can become a lonely mission: a battle between literature, time, ideas... oh, and with our supervisors. We sometimes have tunnel vision as we focus solely on our computer screens and books, awaiting, sometimes fearing, the next supervision. We are almost always completely oblivious to the amount of knowledge and input around us in the shape of our friends and colleagues. Some fellow students and I, however, managed to profit from this by setting up a reading group among students who had diverse but overlapping interests, at a time when it was beneficial to create a little space to share and experiment with ideas and get constructive feedback on our thinking from those in neighbouring specialisms.

In 2008 I was extremely lucky to be among an intake of humanities PhD students who immediately formed a very strong relationship, which continues to this day (some finished and gone, others still completing). We were all involved in the Centre for Applied Language Research (CALR) and/or the Centre for Global Englishes (CGE), and regularly participated

in presentation and training sessions. In our second year, however, we all seemed to reach a stage at which more heads would be better than one for the intricacies which were not covered in other university activities. Our supervisors were often heavily focused on our completion, but we had open questions about the underlying reasoning behind what we were doing, our methodologies, our use of terminology, possibilities for input from other disciplines, etc. Although our problems were shared / directions similar, we were facing different issues in our data and argumentation. Over brief cups of coffee, we realised that many of the anxieties we had individually were being felt by others in the group too, and so debate between us was relevant to all, literature that was central to one person's approach seemed important for others' (as we had shared interests), and expression of our own ideas was something best practiced and scrutinised among supportive friends.

We decided that each person should pick a theme that they had been thinking about, and we met regularly to discuss each theme in a session led by the person who chose the theme. That person could ask people to read a piece of literature, a part of his/her data or a part of his/her thesis, or to prepare some

ideas on a particular subject. What was most invaluable from the first meeting was that boundaries between fields that are separated in much literature melted away during our engagement. Some were looking at language teaching, some at language teacher education, and others at language use, but all could engage critically with the subject matter and offer beneficial insights to the group.

Needless to say, we enjoyed great success; I feel that what I gained was invaluable and would not be available by other means (reading, lectures, supervisions). We gained confidence, knowledge and companionship through something as simple as setting up a reading and research group among our peers. I would strongly recommend that if you are a postgraduate student who does not engage academically outside of supervisions and your own head, you should think about meeting with others who share an interest in your area, perhaps in a group like ours. It is amazing what people around you know and what can emerge from mutual engagement on a topic. My PhD owes a great deal to Buk, Kalina, Mariko, Mustafa and Ying for their contribution.

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# Women on Gender Postgraduate Reading Group

## **Christen Elaine Ericsson describes a unique reading group focussing on gender and feminism.**

In my first year as a PhD student I attended an inspiring conference on feminism in the 21st century held at Birkbeck, University of London. My research on the lives of Victorian women and the complexities of subjectivity - my own experiences as a 21st century woman historian being an inevitable influence on my research - motivated me to attend. The intimate, round-table style of the conference created an environment perfectly suited for engaging and forthright group discussion. I left the conference craving future events that would combine this inspiring atmosphere with a subject of personal and professional interest.

As postgraduate researchers, reading and researching in isolation is only part of our experience. Having to articulate and defend our own knowledge through discussion and listening to alternative perspectives helps to solidify and broaden our understanding. Reading and discussion groups offer postgraduate researchers this necessary venue. As there was no existing group focusing on feminism and gender studies at Southampton I decided to check with other postgraduates to see if anyone else was studying or interested in these topics. After hearing affirmative responses from a half dozen students I enquired about setting up a discussion group.

The Women on Gender group began meeting in 2009 and boasted over 12 members from its inception. The aim of the group was to


provide an interdisciplinary, informal and welcoming community wherein we could explore shared research questions in women's and gender history and discuss the effects of gender and feminism on our experiences as 21st century researchers. We held monthly meetings of a rigorous standard whilst simultaneously ensuring an open and respectful environment that enabled us to analytically engage with each topic without criticism or judgment. Sessions included broad explorations of terminology and developments in the fields. We held a spirited debate on 'Feminism versus Gender in Theory and Practice', another on 'Nature versus Nurture', and an in-depth discussion on the term 'Woman'. Sessions on specific texts or theories were also covered, such as Judith Butler's theory of Performativity.

In these sessions guest speakers provided engagement with the academic community beyond Southampton. A presentation on 'Gender Stereotypes and Advertising' led by Dr. Dan Varndell, lecturer at the University of Winchester, brought our highest attendance and generated a lively discussion on current debates in gender representations in contemporary media.

Not only did the group allow us to explore complex issues and theories, thereby reinforcing our own knowledge through engagement and discussion, it also provided us with a venue to interact with our peers, draw connections between disciplines and research subjects, and create networks within and beyond the Southampton postgraduate community.

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# Want experience of presenting your work? Give a paper or poster at our annual conference



Every year Humanities Graduate School hosts the Humanities Postgraduate Conference. An event run entirely by our students.

The theme is always broad and cross-disciplinary to give everyone a chance to be involved. Past themes have included 'The Defining Moment'; 'Memory and Myth'; 'Interactions and Identity'. The best papers from each year are published in our journal, *Emergence*.

Want to give a paper in a friendly environment or have a hand in organising a conference? Then look out for the calls for committee members and contributions which are sent out at the start of each academic year.





Conference delegates and attendees discuss the conference between sessions at Chawton House

# Writing the Lives of People and Things, AD 500-1700:

A two-day interdisciplinary conference on biography, 1-2 March 2012 at Chawton House Library

This early-career conference was organised by Gemma Watson and Robert F. W. Smith and is the second in the past two years to be organised by postgraduate researchers in the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Culture. The conference delegates were united by an interest in recovering and understanding medieval and early modern lives, whether of individuals or groups, well-known figures or obscure and little-studied ones. The interaction between people and objects, as well as the biographies of objects themselves, were also common themes throughout the two days. The conference was designed to showcase the benefits of engagement between scholars from backgrounds in art history, archaeology, musicology, history, and literary studies.

The conference opened with an address by renowned biographer Charles Nicholl who stressed the importance of primary documents as a means of bridging the gulf between the lives of historical figures and the researcher. There followed a panel in which speakers discussed ways in which their subjects had sought to shape the material legacy they would leave to future generations. For instance, Gabriel Byng (Cambridge) discussed the biographical potential of the steeple of St Mary Magdalene's at Bolney in Sussex. Subsequent panels examined the varieties of medieval religious experience and stages in the 'lives' of books in the early centuries of printing. Amongst others, Ismini

Pells (Cambridge) examined the biographical potential of Philip Skippon's annotated bible. The biographical potential of Renaissance drama was also considered.

The focus on 'rescuing forgotten lives' continued in the first panel on the second day by Michael Gale (Southampton), whose paper constructed a biographical framework for the anonymous author of the sixteenth century 'Dallis lutebook'. The lives of objects were also discussed. Dr. Toby Martin (Sheffield) discussed early English ethnicity as revealed in the archaeological record. The conference also heard Dr. Cheryl Butler (Eastleigh Borough Council) introduce the Southampton 'Tudor Revels Project' and its database of Tudor Southampton inhabitants. Lindy Richardson (Edinburgh College of Art) also gave a thought-provoking presentation on her art installation inspired by the story of St Ursula and her martyred companions, which triggered a stimulating discussion on the ethics of using human remains for decorative and devotional purposes. The conference ended with a round-table discussion where the problems of interdisciplinary research and the future of biographical studies were debated. It was concluded that interdisciplinary and creative approaches to biography would increase our understanding of past lives and the worlds in which they existed. All in all, the conference was a highly successful and rewarding event for both organisers and delegates.

We wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Humanities Graduate School Development Fund, the Society for Renaissance Culture, the Music and Letters Trust, the Royal Historical Society, Oxford University Press, and Ashgate Publishing which enabled early-career researchers to attend this conference.

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Bringing the past back to life in inventive ways

# Genre Beyond Hollywood

**Elena Caoduro, Beth Carroll and Zubair Shafiq Jatoi tell us more about ‘Genre Beyond Hollywood’, one of many conferences supported by the Humanities Graduate School Development Fund this year.**

PhD students of the Department of Film Studies Elena Caoduro, Beth Carroll and Zubair Shafiq Jatoi organised the postgraduate event “Genre Beyond Hollywood”, which took place on 8th of July 2012 at Avenue Campus, University of Southampton. The conference was funded by the School of Humanities, the Department of Film Studies and BAFTSS (British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies). The conference provided a platform for postgraduates and early career researchers to present their research, exchange knowledge and develop networking skills. The aim of the conference was to investigate genre theory in European and World cinema contexts, extending the borders of genre theory beyond the classic paradigms of Hollywood. The event attracted over 40 delegates from the UK, Europe and the US and showcased three sessions running in parallel. Topics in the various panels included papers on analysis of Asian and European genre films, transnational generic borrowings and overviews of current trends in the Bollywood and Nollywood film industries.

The keynote lecture was delivered by Professor Yvonne Tasker from the University of East Anglia. Tasker delivered a paper entitled “Exploring Action Cinema in a Global Context” which dealt with transnational patterns of production, distribution and consumption of contemporary genre cinema. Tasker argued that action films generally mobilise and reanimate old forms of storytelling, but,

although they draw on national themes and myths, contemporary examples are under the influence of other traditions and adopt a transnational style. Her engaging presentation reconsidered the role of genre cinema and evinced how the action film is evolving under the influence of other genres and non-western traditions.

One of the salient features of the conference was the BAFTSS-sponsored workshop led by Professor Tim Bergfelder, Dr Deborah Shaw and Dr Kevin Donnelly on “How to get published”. The panellists gave plenty of advice to postgraduate and earlycareer scholars on how deal with the publishing process. Particular attention was paid to how to turn a dissertation chapter into an article or how to prepare a book proposal at the end of the PhD. As journal editors and renowned scholars, the speakers offered useful advice to the engaged audience and presented their experience both as persons in charge of editorial decisions and as researchers. They addressed issues relating to the selection of the right journal and to dealing with criticism from reviewers.

Overall, “Genre Beyond Hollywood” was successful in yielding new insight in genre theory and challenging classic paradigms. All sessions showcased high-level research and strong presentations by young scholars, and triggered stimulating and lively discussions. The event was a positive end to the academic year 2011-2012, but not to the interactions and networks it has helped to create, which will hopefully continue over the years to come.

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Expert advice: Professor Tim Bergfelder, Dr Deborah Shaw and Dr Kevin Donnelly leading the BAFTSS-sponsored workshop, ‘How to get published’



# The Connected Past: people, networks and complexity in archaeology and history

**Tom Brughmans gives the details of a highly interdisciplinary conference that he organised in the Humanities Graduate School along with Anna Collar (University of Exeter) and Fiona Coward (Bournemouth University).**

A symposium held recently at our Faculty of Humanities confirmed that networks are older and more interesting than Facebook or the Internet would have you think. Over the weekend of 24-25 March 2012 a group of 150 archaeologists, historians, mathematicians, computer scientists, physicists and others, from 19 different countries, met at the University of Southampton. Their objective: to discuss the critical application of network and complexity perspectives to archaeology and history. The result: a stimulating and friendly gathering of academics from very diverse backgrounds. Collectively they turned this symposium into an exciting discussion platform about how recent advances in network science can be critically applied to the study of the past.

The last few weeks before the symposium were hectic for us as organisers. There were many lastminute decisions to be made and problems to be solved. But in the end, everything and everyone arrived on time to kick-start the symposium. Most delegates arrived from all over Europe and North America, and some joined us from places as far as Australia and Japan. We were happy to welcome delegates from over 60 different universities. The most important work during the symposium took place behind the scenes by Lucie Bolton and her great team of volunteers who were there to welcome all delegates at 8am and make sure they were fuelled with lunch, coffee and cakes. In fact, we received support from students and staff all over the university and it felt great to be part of such an amazing team.

Jon Adams, head of the Department of Archaeology here in Southampton, opened the symposium and introduced our first keynote speaker Alex Bentley. His paper provided a great start of the conference by setting out a framework for complex systems simulation and identifying the role networks could play within this. A first session of the symposium followed, with a very diverse group of papers discussing a range of theoretical and methodological issues. After lunch we reconvened for a session called 'Big data and archaeology'. At the end of the day we had the pleasure of listening to our second keynote Carl Knappett live from Toronto. I am sure this is the first time Carl had a Skype meeting with 150 people at the same time. After a long night out and a night's sleep further shortened by daylight savings time, we were surprised to see almost all delegates appear at 9am to listen to our third keynote Irad Malkin, followed by a session titled 'Dynamic networks and modelling'. After lunch we had the pleasure of listening to papers in our last session 'Personal, political and migration networks'.

In our eyes The Connected Past was a great success. We enjoyed the experience of organising the event and were delighted with the overwhelming response to our call for papers and registration. In the end, however, it was the delegates themselves who seized the opportunity to engage in multidisciplinary discussions and to consider future collaborations in innovative research directions.

The Connected Past does not end here! We are working hard on publishing the proceedings and planning future meetings, this time supported by an international committee. All will be revealed in time.

Read more about The Connected Past and access recorded presentations online: <http://connectedpast.soton.ac.uk/>

The Connected Past was sponsored by Archaeopress, The Classical Association, the Archaeological Computing Research Group, Oxford University Press, USRG complexity in real-world contexts, the Web-Science Doctoral Training Centre, and the Humanities Graduate School Development Fund.

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# ‘Interactions and Identity’: The Fifth Annual Humanities Postgraduate Conference 2012

Each year the Humanities Graduate School holds a conference, organised throughout by postgraduate students. In its fifth year, the conference took ‘Interactions and Identity’ as its theme and name. Jennifer Craig Norton and Charlotte Medland report on the work that went into it as well as its immense success.

## Organising the conference

**Jennifer Craig-Norton explains her role in the co-ordination of ‘Interactions and Identity’.**

When I first arrived at the University of Southampton in the fall of 2011, I tried to involve myself in activities that would enable me to meet like-minded postgraduates as well as help me find my footing as a new postgraduate student. Thus, I volunteered as a co-coordinator of the annual GradNet (Humanities Graduate School Student Network) Conference, bringing experience as an educational outreach planner to the task. Helping to originate a conference theme, draft the call for papers, review abstracts and select speakers, build the agenda and create the conference booklet provided me with valuable interdisciplinary knowledge about the Humanities postgraduate community at Southampton and prepared me to be a participant in postgraduate conferences at other universities. By far the greatest benefit, however, was the opportunity to work with a dedicated and enthusiastic group of Humanities postgraduates, many of whom I can now count as friends as well as colleagues.

Planning began early in the first term, and commenced with the creation of an engaging conference theme that would invite submissions from a variety of disciplines. The title needed to be catchy, and the concept both broad and specific. We settled on ‘Interactions and Identity’, and spent the next few weeks drafting and perfecting our call for papers. We then decided to open up the HPGC conference to universities beyond Southampton for the first time. Both decisions proved to be propitious, as we received nearly 40 abstracts from 6 universities, across a wide spectrum of disciplines. As we were loath to turn so many worthy proposals away, we made the decision to create an agenda with parallel panel sessions, enabling us to include eighteen of the applicants as speakers. The remainder were

offered the opportunity to participate as poster presenters, and six of the submitters agreed to do so.

The main task I undertook was the creation of a conference booklet that would include the agenda, speaker biographies and abstracts, and information about Emergence, our post-conference publication. We wanted this booklet to be both professional and informative and we engaged the help of the Print Centre in this endeavour. After having participated in three other postgraduate conferences across Great Britain, I can state with confidence that our publication was the most polished and detailed one I have encountered at such an event, and, overall, I take pride in the fact that our efforts at organising a well-run and professional, no-fee conference were outstanding.

This level of excellence could not have been possible without the efforts of the entire committee, which was comprised of students from across the Humanities. We met regularly, divided tasks as necessary and collaborated on all major decisions regarding the agenda and panel selection. The core group, comprised of Katie Merriken, Charlotte Medland and Anne Hughes, was ably aided by the efforts of Emergence co-editors Sarah Shawyer and Peter Girdwood, whose on-going task is to shepherd the conference proceedings into publication. Participating in this committee brought welcome camaraderie and social networking into my life, a wonderful respite from long hours spent in the Hartley Library archives. I also learned a great deal about other disciplines within the Humanities faculty and was able to glean insights about the entire PhD process from those in their second and third years of the program. The entire experience was invaluable for me in my first year, and so rewarding and enjoyable that I have committed to helping coordinate next year’s conference, which we hope will surpass this year’s successful undertaking.

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## Participating in the conference

**Charlotte Medland, also a conference organiser, reports her experience as a conference delegate.**

The Humanities' Fifth Annual Postgraduate Conference was a unique experience for me. Not only had I been part of the Conference Committee, improving my organisational and interpersonal skills, but I also gave my first conference paper. As a conference participant, I was keen to see whether our Committee aim to make the event as accessible as possible would come to fruition, and I was anxious to see how others would react to my research project.

I was not disappointed! The day was as student-friendly as possible, both for the postgraduates presenting and attending, and for current undergraduates, who experienced what the University of Southampton can offer its Humanities researchers. I took part in the first student panel of the day, and was really pleased with the large multi-disciplinary audience we attracted, who then remained all morning! The reaction to my paper was very helpful, both from Faculty and students, and I was given valuable advice as well as interested comments from participants. From a first-time presenter's perspective, I found the feedback both affirming and challenging, and this diversity led me to think about both contextual and practical influences from other areas within the Humanities, thus helping me to improve my work for subsequent papers.

The atmosphere of the entire day was incredibly supportive, with students from all six participating universities mingling and discussing work; I even had a Philosophy student from Canterbury tell

me that she had recognised elements of her own research questions in my presentation. The organisation of the day allowed me to see all the papers I had been interested in, and the breaks following each parallel panel session instigated further discussion among delegates, leading, by the end of the day, to a real camaraderie among all presenters and attendees. This familiarity encouraged the majority of participants – including those from other universities – to stay for the reception launching the Humanities Graduate School (which the Conference Committee had publicised through our materials). This launch demonstrated how much the university is investing in its Humanities research, and the feedback from external participants was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone I spoke to said that they were looking forward to next year, and would be recommending Southampton events to colleagues. This made me so pleased to have chosen an internal conference for my first paper, because being part of such a successful day boosted my confidence, and at the same time the 'home' audience made the whole experience less nervewracking.

Because of this, I am thrilled that the Conference Committee has decided to send next year's call for papers out nationwide. My experience shows that a friendly, less formal environment can be essential in building the skills of paper-presenting, and that a multi-disciplinary arena does not necessarily mean less-valuable feedback. My hope is that subsequent Humanities Postgraduate Conferences will continue to raise the profile of Southampton's researchers, while simultaneously encouraging interdisciplinary discourse with other universities around the country.

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Want to get published?  
Submit your work to our  
peer-reviewed journal,  
*Emergence*

Following our annual conference, a collection of the presented papers are published in Humanities Graduate School journal, *Emergence*.

*Emergence* is peer-reviewed, edited and published by our students. It has an ISSN number, making it an official publication and ensuring that a copy of every issue is stored in the British Library.

If you join the *Emergence* team, you will gain invaluable experience of putting together an academic journal which looks great on your CV; if you submit your work you will gain a publication – which looks great on your CV too!



# Emergence: Volume Four

co-edited by Peter Girdwood and Sarah Shawyer

Sarah Shawyer updates us on the progress the Humanities Graduate School's *Emergence* journal, which this year comprises the proceedings of the Fifth Annual Humanities Postgraduate Conference, 'Interactions and Identity'.

The fourth volume of the Faculty of Humanities Postgraduate Journal *Emergence* is due to hit desks of staff and students alike in the autumn, ready for the start of the new academic year. As co-editors of *Emergence*, Peter Girdwood and I have been heavily involved in the on-going preparations for its publication. However, work on *Emergence* is very much a team effort with various members of the postgraduate community involved in both the design and editing processes.

Due to inclusive aims of the journal it seems appropriate that the beginning of the process for assembling this year's issue of *Emergence* began at the Fifth Annual Humanities Postgraduate Conference on 'Interactions and Identity' organised by the faculty's postgraduates, of which I was one. As a conference proceedings journal, it was decided to include, for the first time, articles by postgraduates from other universities. Once the articles were commissioned, the next step was to send out style guidelines to the contributors and wish them luck in submitting their articles by the deadline.

It was also vital at this stage to supply Peter and I with a committee to help us in the, sometimes daunting, task of producing a journal. Luckily, a fair bit of interest was received in response to several email calls to the postgraduate community. The *Emergence* 2012 team is therefore divided into two sections – one dealing with design aspects of the publication and the other with the editing side of the process. Naturally, there is an overlap between these two subteams with several committee members sitting on both.

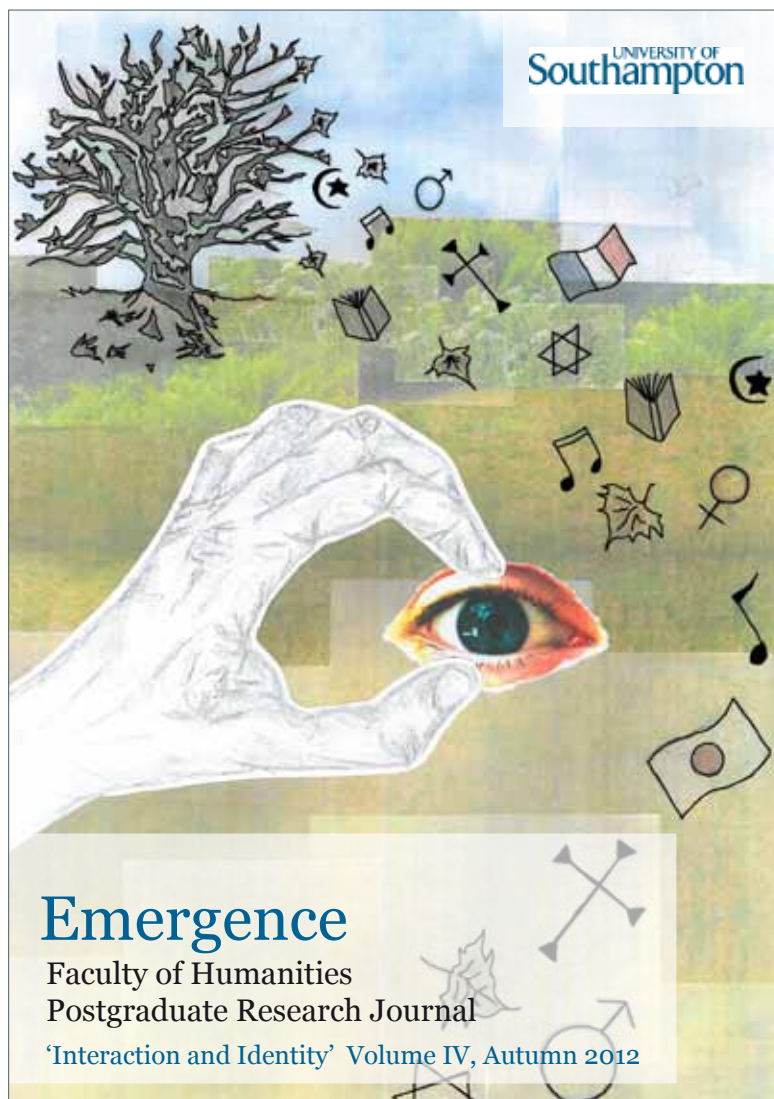
As co-ordinator of the editing side of the process, it was my responsibility to ensure that contributors to the journal submitted their articles within the deadline and that these original pieces of scholarly research were sent out to the editing team for further inspection. The attentiveness and enthusiasm of the editing team made what

could be an awkward job much easier. I also found myself involved with the design aspect of the publication through attendance and input at design meetings.

Although, as you can tell, we are keen to honour the customs of *Emergence*, this year we have also decided to include a foreword by one of the members of the faculty panel involved in the conference. We have been very lucky in this respect, as Professor Clive Gamble has written us not only an interesting but also humorous piece.

So, with eight original scholarly articles ranging from an exploration of French women's literature to that of the role of the 'monster' within current society, original artwork (pictured above) and not to mention that foreword, I am genuinely excited about this year's edition of *Emergence*. And on that note I would like to end by saying a very big thank you to all who have been involved, from article authors to committee team members: your hard work has been much appreciated.

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Want some advice  
from your fellow students?  
Attend one of our  
Graduate School seminars

We run an annual seminar series covering a range of topics including teaching, money management, organising a conference, writing a literature review ...

All sessions are led by your fellow students so you can get advice from those who have recent experience of postgraduate study; no need to book a place, just come along and join in.

Want to lead your own seminar? You can – each year we send out an email asking for volunteers, offer a topic and we will find you a time, date, location and audience!

[www.soton.ac.uk/humanities/postgraduate/graduate\\_school](http://www.soton.ac.uk/humanities/postgraduate/graduate_school)



# The Philosophy postgraduate research seminar

## David Woods outlines the postgraduate research being conducted in the Philosophy department.

Every fortnight, the Philosophy PhD students of the University of Southampton convene for their postgraduate research (PGR) seminar. There, one student presents to the others on an aspect of his or her research, whether it be a recent development, an upcoming conference paper or an area of unsureness which could benefit from an extra perspective. In fact, if something philosophical yet extraneous to his or her research really presses a student, then a seminar can be arranged around this too.

Though it is a formal component of the programme, and chaired by the incumbent Director of Postgraduate Operations in the philosophy department (currently Dr. Genia Schönbaumsfeld), the nature of each seminar and the direction of the series are determined by the students, according to their individual research interests. In the academic year 2011-12, the PGR seminar covered such areas of philosophy as the parallels between Plato and Nietzsche on the question of harmony of the self, as well as Nietzsche's philosophy of health and well-being; John McDowell's diagnoses of the dualisms of philosophy, in his book *Mind and World*; Wittgenstein on philosophy as conceptual, not empirical, inquiry, as well as the implications that this has for how statements with ethical content can be made; and Donald Davidson's celebrated essay 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', the seminar for which was an instance of the students electing to discuss subject matter not directly relevant to any particular individual's research, but which would nonetheless be valuable to each student. The series began with a paper from my research, which proposed a more global interpretation of Schopenhauerian pessimism, and later in the year I had the opportunity to rehearse the content of an upcoming conference appearance.

The number of postgraduate researchers in Philosophy is small, relative to some other departments; however, it is this which makes such a seminar series possible. The regular group in attendance is sufficient for a spread of comments and questions, ranging from those that are informed by research interests very close to the presenter's to those that come from another domain of philosophy entirely, either of which poles is valuable. Yet the number of attendees does not exceed the possibility of each student presenting at least once during the year, and in many cases twice. Furthermore, our group quickly became close-knit and sociable, and on occasion discussed the seminar immediately before or after it had taken place, amongst more general conversation.

For my own part, after just the first seminar I had already gained a couple of suggestions for my research which I imagine will feature somewhere in its end-product. One was a particular scene from Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, which expresses much of the tone and content of the philosophy that I am researching, and the other was an informative book by the Wittgensteinian philosopher of religion D. Z. Philips. These recommendations, seemingly diverse in spite of them being made to me by the same fellow researcher, may never have been brought to my attention were it not for the kind of opinions which the Philosophy PGR seminar is wont to provide.

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## The GradNet Seminar Series

Beth Carroll tells of her experience running the GradNet (Humanities Graduate School Student Network) Seminar Series, the Graduate School's very own student organised training programme.

This year GradNet has continued to encourage postgraduate student participation and development through their annual seminar series. Attending these seminars which have run throughout the year has been a truly informative experience. Their multi-disciplinary, student-led and centred, focus has meant that an incredible range of topics have been addressed. Such topics included, but were not limited to: setting up, establishing and running conferences; organising academic journals; teaching during your PhD; and the use of images in research. These fortnightly, two hour sessions are entirely student led and attended. Postgraduates may put forward seminar abstracts on any topic they desire and feel would be beneficial to the research community. The advantages of organising the sessions in this manner are twofold. Firstly, postgraduate students are perhaps the best equipped to identify any weaknesses in their skills-base or any issues that they would like to be addressed. Seminars on what are student-identified important areas mean that the initiative and responsibility for academic development are being given back to the student. Secondly, because the sessions are run and led by students, essential skills in presentation, teaching and seminar-leading are honed and put into practice.

It was my pleasure to organise the running of these sessions this year (2011-12) and my own PhD has been enriched greatly as a result. Their multi-disciplinary nature works so perfectly in a postgraduate humanities context where an individual's work can be infamously isolating. By coming together across the disciplines to share and gain knowledge on the various topics, people were able to take their own research to new depths. Having a session on maintaining an online presence as budding early career researchers, for example, brought us up to date with the best ways for extending the reach of your research. It provided essential information for any academic who wishes to strengthen and extend their networking skills but also control the flow of information in the digital age. The session on teaching, on the other hand, extended and strengthened a different skills-base. It provided not only a forum for students with teaching experience to offer their thoughts and experiences to the rest of the group, but also an opportunity to understand the complexities of marking, learning outcomes, and class management, important skills for both first time teachers and those brave enough to go back for more.

The skills development aspect aside, the seminars provided ample opportunity for students to socialise with like-minded people, and more often than not conversation continued well into the evening at the pub, where all the best ideas are formed.

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# Want to be part of our social network? Join us for some of our community activities

Humanities Graduate School has lots of activities running each year which enable you get out and about around Southampton and Hampshire.

Regular social activities include the Sunday Walking Club, American Thanksgiving Pot Luck supper, Bonfire Night fireworks, Christmas Lunch, Chinese New Year Celebrations and the Summer Barbeque.

None of our social activities suit you? Then why not lead your own. Each year we will ask for your ideas and suggestions for social events, just email them through, tell us how you can help and we will set them up.



# International Chinese New Year

**Melissa Yu recounts her Chinese New Year celebrations in Southampton, one of many social activities that took place in the Humanities Graduate School this year.**

Like the annual festivities of most societies, for Chinese communities worldwide Chinese (Lunar) New Year is the largest and most important, when family and friends gather to convey the best wishes to their loved ones for the upcoming year. Unlike Solar New Year in Western countries, Lunar New Year falls on different dates each year. In 2012 (the year of Dragon) it fell on January 23, when the spring term had just begun, which made it inconvenient for Taiwanese international students in Southampton to fly home and celebrate. Although Chinese New Year is not an official holiday in the UK, I had a fabulous time with friends from different countries.

One of the most pleasant parts of our celebration is eating. We had a wonderful international Chinese New Year meal of mostly Taiwanese and Japanese cuisine, prepared by my Maltese friend Neville, a fellow PhD student, with me as his kitchen assistant. We did not have many traditional Chinese New Year dishes, but we did have dumplings, which play a key part in Chinese New Year culture, where they suggest prosperity. We had Chinese custard steamed buns and sipped Taiwanese high mountain green tea, savoring every mouthful.

Another important part of Chinese New Year celebration is exploring Chinese culture, saying Chinese New Year greetings and writing Chinese characters. None of my friends who celebrated Chinese New Year with me had learned Mandarin before, so I gave them an introductory class. They were such skillful language learners: every one of them learned how to say Chinese New Year greetings well very quickly. Chinese character writing is very challenging, but now some

of them occasionally use Mandarin for expressions such as 'hello', 'goodbye' and 'thanks'. Most of my Taiwanese friends back home were amazed by my American, Austrian, British, Dutch and Maltese friends' beautiful character writing, and I must add that not all native speakers of Mandarin can write as well as they did. We had a fantastic celebration full of Chinese culture immersion and intercultural exchanges.

My friends' engagement in my home culture and my mother language made Chinese New Year in Southampton a vibrant celebration. For an international student like myself, friends' engagement and participation meant a wonderful Year of Dragon. We surely will do it again next year.

Melissa Yu, Modern Languages | hyy1g10@soton.ac.uk  
Images courtesy of Lothar Zhou | <http://www.lotharzhouart.co.uk/>



## The Southampton Scavenger Hunt

**Roxanne Selby explains her involvement with graduate student social events, including the Southampton Scavenger Hunt.**

Although postgraduate work is a step up from undergraduate academically, this doesn't mean that you will be locked in the library all of the time. University of Southampton has a thriving social scene for postgraduate students, which includes coffee mornings, movie nights, day trips, and plenty more besides. There are over 150 societies and 80 sports clubs; at the beginning of my MA, I joined the Mixed Lacrosse Athletic Union Club and the Ballroom and Latin Dance Society. I also became an active member of GradNet (Humanities Graduate School Student Network). They organise a range of academic and social events specifically for Humanities postgraduates: presentations and forums, reading groups, walking groups, trips to the theatre, and lunches and dinners in our local pub The Crown.

New GradNet events are always being organised, but one that I was particularly involved with in 2010-11 was the Southampton Scavenger Hunt. The premise of the event was for groups of new students to race each other across Southampton collecting various items and completing tasks. I had studied at University of Southampton for my undergraduate degree; however, many new postgraduates come from all over the country, Europe, and the world. Speaking to such a diverse range of students, I realised that we needed an event which would introduce them to the hotspots in Southampton – the places of cultural, historical, and architectural interest, as well as the cute little cafes, the places to go shopping, and places to watch live music or go to the theatre.

The Scavenger Hunt led the groups around various parts of the city centre. Starting at Varsity Road the groups set off to find the Titanic Engineers Memorial, Holyrood Church, Oxford Street, the World's Oldest Bowling Green, and the Bargate Monument. With a map and a list of questions, the teams raced to get as many points as possible. We gave bonus points for the group that took the most photos and that made the best Titanic replica. It was a very close call when we tallied up the points at The Art House cafe during lunch! Because of a special bonus point awarded to one team for taking a photo of a woman in her wedding dress, we decided on a winner.

The event was a great introduction to Southampton. As is typical in England, the weather could have been a bit better but it was a great way for new students to make friends through an interesting team building exercise. Personally, it developed my organisation, creative, and communication skills; even though it took some time away from my degree, there were many benefits to organising the event. I believe it's really important to get involved with things outside of your degree programme in order to develop essential transferable skills. The Humanities Graduate School and Gradnet already organise many events for postgraduates, but if you have an idea for something new make sure you act on it. I am really glad that I suggested and organised the Scavenger Hunt. I hope I can come back and help next year!

Roxanne Selby, English | rfs1v07@soton.ac.uk

# Want to develop your skills base? Come along to our training sessions

We offer PhD students an opportunity to take part in our established Skills Development Training Programme to enhance their research experience, life skills and employability

The programme meets all of the Research Councils' criteria for training provision and is delivered face-to-face and online. You can undertake as many sessions as you like and concentrate on developing the skills that are important to you

You can learn how to: raise funding; give a research paper; turn your thesis into a book; plan your research project; think critically; get motivated; hone your media skills; write your CV; apply for jobs and attend interviews ... and much, much more



# Re-discovering the British Memorial: Community-driven Recording for Churches

**Gareth Beale, Nicole Beale, Dr. Adam Chapman and Rose Ferraby describe an on-going project which connects university departments with church communities.**

## **Project description**

Students and researchers from History and Archaeology have been helping community groups in the south of England to design and implement recording programmes for church graveyards and cemeteries.

The Rediscovering the British Memorial project, which was awarded Digital Humanities funding this year, utilises expertise and technologies from the Archaeological Computing Research Group, to train special interest groups, and church based organisations in the use of low cost technological solutions. Our project aims to guide the documentation and dissemination of gravestones and memorials from British churches and to produce an online archive which can be accessed freely and improved through user contributions.

have attempted to document gravestones and memorials.

Our work builds on this, by testing and developing technological recording solutions which are appropriate for use by local groups. These constitute highly effective but easy to use methods which can be used independently by previously untrained local groups, and which can be easily shared with few demands for expertise or specialist resources. In collaboration with the groups, we are producing reusable guidelines for these methods, to be made freely and publicly available.

Our approach is collaborative and responsive to the needs of project partners. The emphasis is balancing partner requirements with team members' technical knowledge to produce sustainable outputs that are useable by groups aiming to record and share churchyard data. Further project partners and case studies are being sought by the project team.

The next phase of this project will be for members to meet and compile a



Cheerful work:  
postgraduate  
researcher  
Gareth Beale



Taking images at The  
Branscombe Project for  
St. Winifred's, Devon

## **What we are doing**

The cemeteries and churchyards of Britain represent one of the nation's most extensive documentary and physical archives. Despite their significance as a source of cultural and historical knowledge, the objects that make up this archive are in a state of constant deterioration, and the information that they hold is often undocumented. Many enterprises, often functioning at local levels,

methodology for recording to be made available to interested parties at a national and international level. Our methodology will contain technical guidelines and will be informed in terms of both content and presentation by the experiences of project members. We are looking for participants in this process, from the university and from community groups.

## **Who we are working with**

Our project is made up of members of the Archaeological Computing Research Group and the History Department, with an external partner from the University of Exeter.

We have been working closely with three local history groups: The Branscombe Project for St. Winifred's, Devon, Community Archaeology project of St. George's, Dorset, and the Royal Garrison Church in Portsmouth. The project is working directly with Wessex Archaeology and the Churches Conservation Trust on delivering training events for young people and in recording further churches in Somerset in July-August 2012.

If you would like to find out more about the project, or get involved in any way, visit our website at: <http://ourti.org/> or email [nicole.beale@soton.ac.uk](mailto:nicole.beale@soton.ac.uk) for more details. You can follow our work on the website, or with our Twitter account: @CommunityRTI

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Photographs courtesy of Rose Ferraby

# 3D-BARE and noTours technologies: new ways to experience digital music

**Ben Mawson reflects on the motivation behind projects that literally give new dimensions to music.**

As a composer I was fascinated, visiting the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research (ISVR), to encounter their 3-D speaker systems, and realised that a problem for studio-based composers could be solved by a little invention: a way for listeners to walk inside a piece of music and investigate it at will, hearing it differently each time. Collaboration to build the 3-D Binaural Audio Rendering Engine (3D-BARE) is now under way.

Why? Two reasons: digital music can either be heard using headphones or speakers. But why go to a concert to see no-one actually playing? Concerts are about far more than listening to sounds among other listeners - we witness live 'interpretation': a musician's struggle to create beauty and meaning by moving horse hair across a string, blowing down a pipe or banging things together. Music itself has always been in flux - perhaps now more than ever - but the ways we listen, at least to 'art' music, have remained the same since the gramophone and wireless arrived nearly a century ago. We either listen to a recording or go to a concert hall and sit still in awed, reverential hush to sounds from loudspeakers, as though the composition were an inviolable object to be revered and recreated in unchangeable form.

So, secondly, the idea - that a musical score or a performance of it somehow are the music - is part of this problem: they are only approximate transcriptions of what the composer imagined. They are both attempts at reaching something magical, beyond.

If music is produced in a studio, without possibility of being 'performed', does the output we hear suddenly become this fixed object we imagine a composition to be? How terrible, if there were only a single way to hear a piece of music, in all its deep-seated reference and memory, refraction of experience and heard sounds!

3D-BARE is being developed and will shed new light on listening to sound and the compositional process: a means to walk inside music as though it were a physical structure - investigating the parts as we choose.

Meanwhile, I am collaborating with Escoitar.org ("Listen" in Galician), developers of noTours software for situating sounds in a place, by way of an android phone handset connected to GPS.

During 2011-12 I composed pieces first heard at an indoors venue via speakers and then, immediately following, in the open air with headsets - the music spread across a wide area without visual signposting. Listeners had to follow their ears to investigate, first inside the building then in its surroundings, under the satellites encircling the planet. The same music now transformed into an invisible sound sculpture in the landscape itself.

Composing like this is a lot to do with the place it is heard, integrating with it, reflecting its sounds into the music. The real ambient noise of the place is transformed and placed back into in the space: the composition and the space become harder to distinguish and the

distinction less relevant. The sonic reality of a place is distorted and augmented at once, heightening awareness of incidental sounds around us and of the tightly constructed musical composition momentarily positioned there.

My thanks are due to ISVR, Digital Humanities and to the Department of Music without whose support these would still just be ideas. For more information and to contribute to the geo-located composition "Southampton 2012: Audio Portrait of a City", e-mail [blm1g10@soton.ac.uk](mailto:blm1g10@soton.ac.uk).

Ben Mawson, Music | [ben.mawson@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ben.mawson@soton.ac.uk)



Listeners experimenting with new musical landscapes around the University of Southampton





Workshop participants visualise their research in three dimensions by creating maquettes

# Thinking and working in digital 3D

## Gareth Beale and Nicole Beale bring 3D to the University of Southampton.

On the 13th of June the Archaeological Computing Research Group (ACRG) hosted the first Southampton interdisciplinary 3D workshop entitled Thinking and Working in Digital 3D. The event, which was supported by Southampton Digital Humanities, was an opportunity for people from across the university to get together and learn about digital 3D technology and how it might be used in their work.

Students and staff from Archaeology, Winchester School of Art, Electronics and Computer Science, and Libraries came together at Avenue Campus for a day of demonstrations and activities organised by postgraduate research students from Archaeology and ECS. The day began with short talks by Gareth Beale of the ACRG and by Simon Ryder, an artist working with 3D technology in collaboration with Archaeology.

Following this, a range of work was on show, including demonstrations of cutting edge 3D data capture techniques using equipment from Archaeology and Geography as well as examples of 3D printing, projection mapping and augmented reality.

In the afternoon attendees put their creative skills to good use, using craft materials to produce maquettes and posters promoting their plans for hypothetical exhibitions using 3D technology. These wonderful, if not always structurally stable, models provided an excellent talking point and really got people thinking about how 3D technology could be used for exhibitions and events across the University and in Southampton and Winchester.

The University of Southampton has taken a lead in the use, development and investment in digital 3D, especially in the Arts and

Humanities. This workshop helped participants and organisers to further appreciate the potential of collaboration in this area and the range of exciting projects which might be realised through pooling expertise and resources.

The event was a great success with numerous inter-disciplinary collaborations already on the horizon and follow up workshops already being organised. If you would like to talk about Digital 3D technologies and how they might be used in your work, or if you would like to know more about upcoming 3D tech events then contact [gareth.beale@soton.ac.uk](mailto:gareth.beale@soton.ac.uk).

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Staff and students gather to learn vital new skills in digital 3D technology

# Humanities skills training: Looking back on a successful year

**Jenny Carl and Chris Lewis review the many postgraduate research training activities of the year.**

The Faculty of Humanities has a vibrant, diverse postgraduate research community. To meet the training needs of our students and to support the community, we have developed a comprehensive training and development programme. Our aim is simple: to give our postgraduate research (PGR) students a helpful, positive, rounded training experience. We aim to offer training which has benefits in both the present and in the future. Our training offers students an opportunity to make the most of their skills and qualifications but also provides an occasion to connect with others. This enhances research experience and also helps to build potentially useful networks with students from across the different disciplines of the Humanities.

To introduce helpful structure, our training has been categorised under the following classifications: practical sessions (such as Project First Aid and The Seven Deadly Sins of PowerPoint), research skills (Writing an Academic Book Review and Re-writing and Responding Effectively to Criticism, and Research Ethics), and employability (for example, Pitch Perfect: Making a Great First Impression and Applying for Post-Doctoral Funding), alongside a number of complementary grouped 'packages' such as:

Getting Started (this 'package' comprises both practical and research-focused sessions and example workshops include Project Planning and Critical Thinking) and Milestones (example sessions include Giving Your First Year Presentation, The MPhil Upgrade, and Your Viva). To widen access we have presented repeats of many essential training sessions. This has proved helpful to those starting their research candidature at times other than the start of the academic year in October.

To offer participants an opportunity to directly target their specific training needs, our programme has been carefully mapped to correspond to the four domains outlined by the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). The RDF is 'a major new approach to researcher development, which aims to enhance our capacity to build the UK workforce, develop world-class researchers and build the UK higher education research base' (for further information on the RDF please see: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/428241/Researcher-Development-Framework.html/>). The four outlined domains are: A: Knowledge and Intellectual Ability; B: Personal Effectiveness; C: Research Governance and Organisation; and D: Engagement, Influence, and Impact. Each year we produce a Training Handbook. Full details of our training can be found inside and, similarly, how each session links to another and how a session sits within the RDF framework.

Throughout the academic year we collaborated with the wider University community. We worked with Life Long Learning (LLL) to develop a series of five teaching skills sessions. Participants on this short course were introduced to a number of core skills such as audience orientation, lesson planning and time management, and presentation. Upon completion of the sessions, participants were invited to write and present a proposal for the 2012 academic year Life Long Learning Programme. We also collaborated with the Researcher Development and Graduate Centre (RDGC) on a Writing Workshop for PGR. The sessions were participant led and tackled many important problems. The Faculty of Humanities PGR training programme works with the Centre for Language Study (CLS) (<http://www.soton.ac.uk/cls/>) to offer two short-courses for students for who English is not their first language. Sessions and workshops that operated with CLS, LLL, and the RDGC were very well received and it is hoped that further opportunities will present in the new academic year. We are also very pleased to report that we have witnessed an increase in 2011/12 by 29% compared to 2010/11.

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## About this newsletter...

This newsletter was edited and designed by David Woods (PhD student in Philosophy) working in partnership with the University Print Centre. If you are interested in editing a future issue, please contact Eleanor Quince.

Next year's annual theme for Humanities Postgraduates is 'public engagement'. We want to consider how the Humanities Graduate School interacts with the world outside of the university; how we engage the public with our research. If you are trying to engage the wider public with your work, why not get in touch and tell us about it?

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