

Collaborative Doctoral Awards Studentship Competition (Project-led)



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

Project Title:	Intellectual Life at Newcastle’s Literary and Philosophical Society, 1793-1825
Project Summary:	This project focuses on a major, unique primary resource that has so far been largely overlooked: a body of archival material located in the collections of Newcastle-upon-Tyne’s Literary and Philosophical Society, dating from the years immediately following the Society’s foundation, 1793 to 1825. The aims of this project are, firstly, to catalogue the fully material so that it may become an accessible resource for scholars and other interested parties, and secondly, to bring out the significance of this archive’s contents to the intellectual culture and heritage of Newcastle, and beyond.
Institution:	Newcastle University
Partner Organisation:	The Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Primary AHRC Subject Area:	History
Creative Practice Component:	None

For further information and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:			
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EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN:			13 January 2020

Project Description:
<p>This project focuses on a major, unique primary resource that has so far been largely overlooked: a body of archival material located in the collections of Newcastle-upon-Tyne’s Literary and Philosophical Society, 2 dating from the years immediately following the Society’s foundation, 1793 to 1825. This evidence encompasses letters exchanges on questions of intellectual inquiry between members of the Society and correspondents, both locally and across Britain and the Empire; transcriptions of the lectures given to the Society across this period; books of ephemera, reports of the Society’s meetings and bylaws, rationales for the Society’s foundation and ethos, and accounts of its activities in the press. This rich and diverse set of records have never received a proper investigation. The aims of this project are, firstly, to fully catalogue the material so that it may become an accessible resource for scholars and other interested parties, and secondly, to bring out the significance of this archive’s contents to the intellectual culture and heritage of Newcastle, and beyond.</p> <p>The intellectual culture of the Enlightenment did not simply revolve around big thinkers and big ideas: networks and institutions were vital to the creation and communication of knowledge. The increasing recognition of this amongst scholars is the consequence of important work on the sociology of knowledge by Peter Burke, on publishing networks by Robert Darnton, and on scribal networks by Harold Love. While scholarship on the French Enlightenment has produced important work in this area, and local learned societies have been recognised as significant players in Italian and German</p>

intellectual life since the Renaissance, provincial academies have received less attention in the English context. This body of evidence provides an unrivalled opportunity to study the intellectual network centred on the Lit&Phil.

The project will consist of four parts: the details of the correspondents; the intellectual content of the society's work; the networks within Newcastle and beyond; and the ramifications of these findings for our understanding of intellectual networks and culture of the period. It will begin by using prosopography to identify the figures who form part of this intellectual, charting the names, background and status of all the individuals involved in the Society's correspondence and lectures, together with their respective stakes in the Society itself. This will place our understanding of the social, economic, national and intellectual composition of the Society and its correspondents, and the balance of power within the Society itself, on a new and stronger footing. It will be an essential basis on which to build the rest of the research project, while also providing an additional resource for those seeking to use the archive and explore its potential.

The focus will the turn to the subject matter of the Society's inquiries, considering the balance between humanities and sciences, and how this reflects the changing educational landscape. The lectures delivered at the Society encompass topics addressing applied science, natural philosophy, and antiquarian and literary matters, together with distribution of translations of French and Latin texts. Scholarship, particularly on classical topics, permeates these discussions, demonstrating the enduring centrality of humanist scholarship even within scientific learning, contrary to traditional characterisations of the Enlightenment as the victory of science over humanism.

The third part will focus on what this archive reveals about Newcastle and the world, working out from the local relationships revealed to the international communications, demonstrating the connection between provincial intellectual culture and global intellectual history. As a result, major inroads into the understanding of the intellectual heritage of the city of Newcastle will become possible. The correspondence and lectures from the Lit&Phil Archive address a vast range of subject matters, from problems of local economic and social importance, particularly centred around mining and recent technological developments, to issues of literary, geographical, and naturalistic significance.

Moreover, it reveals the close connections between the foundation and development of the Literary and Philosophical Society and other institutions in the North East, such as the Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The correspondence reveals relationships at work within Newcastle and Northumbria, throughout the UK, and beyond, with particularly interesting communications with settlers in recently established colonies, notably Sierra Leone. These aspects of the collection will ensure that it becomes a vital resource to future work on the social history of Newcastle and its interaction with British imperial history.

This envisaged collaboration between Newcastle University and the Lit&Phil can make a gamechanging contribution to the understanding of the early modern cultural and intellectual legacy of the city and the North East.

SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

First Supervisor:	Federico Santangelo	School/Department:	School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle
Second Supervisor:	Katherine East	School/Department:	School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle
Additional Advisor:	Rachel Hammersley	Organisation/Institution:	School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle
Additional Advisor:	Kay Easson	Organisation/Institution:	Lit & Phil, Newcastle

The supervisory team reflects the strong collaborative outlook of the initiative and the distinctive set of expertise that is available between the School of History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA) at Newcastle University and the Lit&Phil.

Federico Santangelo is Professor of Ancient History. He has wide-ranging interests in the classical tradition and the history of classical scholarship. He has edited previously unpublished papers of George Grote and Sir Ronald Syme. He also has a strong interest in prosopography and prosopographical methods, and in his work on Roman history he has worked on the impact that personal connections between intellectual and political figures played in shaping intellectual developments. He has supervised to successful completion eight PhD students, four of whom as main supervisor.

Katherine East is a Lecturer in the History of Radical Ideas whose research focusses on early modern England, with a particular interest in how the intellectual culture of the period facilitated the creation and advancement of knowledge through debate and correspondence. Her research also looks extensively at the history of scholarship and its interaction with intellectual history, using this research to explore the development of radical perspectives in politics, religion, and natural philosophy.

Rachel Hammersley is Senior Lecturer in Intellectual History. Her work focuses on the early modern period, and primarily on political ideas, with a particular interest in how those ideas were disseminated and circulated beyond expected methods, including through the materiality and physical forms of books. She has previously collaborated with the Lit&Phil, and has a strong interest in rendering early modern intellectual material more broadly accessible, through tools such as blogs and media engagement.

Kay Easson has been the Librarian of the Lit & Phil since October 2000. On behalf of the Society she has already worked with Newcastle University, and in particular with HCA, and views this project as an important development in the furthering of the relationship between the two institutions. She brings to the project a distinctive set of archival expertise and an intimate knowledge of the Society's history and historical records that will prove crucial both to the overall scoping of the study and to its day-to-day development.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The project marks a new shift in the collaboration between HCA and the Lit&Phil. There is of course a long-standing track-record of shared work between the two institutions: the Library of the Society is a familiar working environment for many members of the School, and the lecture programme of the Lit&Phil regularly features contributions from HCA staff. However, this project is an altogether new shared research collaboration, which has been jointly developed by both institutions.

The PhD student will be based at both institutions and will play an active part in the activities of both institutions. Their day-to-day work environment will be the Lit&Phil, where they will have ready access to the archival material and will be able to resort to the advice and expertise of Kay Easson. Meetings with two main supervisors will typically take place on a biweekly basis. The candidate will also be playing a part in the research environment of HCA, both by attending research seminars at History and Classics, and by being closely involved with the work of the PG Forum, where they will have the opportunity to present and discuss their interim findings. They will be fully integrated within the Ideas and Beliefs Research Strand at the School, and will be encouraged to take a proactive role in its activities.

They will have access to a strong body of specific expertise beyond the proposed supervisory team, both in the classical tradition (notably Dr Susanna Philippo's work on neoclassical architecture in Northumbria) and in early modern intellectual, social and cultural history (notably Professor Helen Berry, Professor Jeremy Boulton, and Dr Simon Mills). Beyond the School, they will have access to the strong scholarly network of the North East Forum in Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies, which brings together colleagues from Newcastle, Durham, and Sunderland. The NU Humanities Research Institutes provides valuable resources for PhD students, notably the Challenge Labs, which encourage PhD students to develop interdisciplinary collaborative projects. The developing NUCoRE in Heritage will provide valuable opportunities to establish research connections across the area and to reflect more widely on the methodological implications and challenges that work on Heritage presents, and on how it may intersect with the University's civic agenda. The project will in due course entail the exciting challenge of how best to make available the catalogued material: NU offers a distinctive set of expertise in Digital Humanities, notably through the Animating Text (AtNU) project, which will provide invaluable insight into how to best secure the long-term intellectual legacy of the proposed work on the Lit&Phil Archive.

The proposed CDA will thus enable the PhD candidate to have access to a unique exciting body of primary evidence, a diverse and highly distinctive set of supervisory expertise, and an exciting wider research environment.

