

Message to all IMEMS members

As you are probably aware, Tony Claydon has recently stepped down as Director of the Institute for Medieval and Early Modern studies (IMEMS) after a period of energetic and inspiring leadership, for which he deserves our congratulations and thanks. He has established the Institute as a meeting point for researchers in the medieval and early modern periods from the universities of Aberystwyth and Bangor, eagerly fostering scholarly activity in our fields, especially across the boundaries which often exist between those working in particular historical periods, disciplines and institutions. The institute has surpassed its funding targets for its first three years, and we are very grateful to Tony for guiding our progress and cajoling us into action.

This message comes from the team who are now leading the institute this year: Helen Wilcox (Director), Sarah Prescott (acting Deputy Director for the first semester) and Diane Watt (currently on study leave but resuming her role as Deputy Director in the second semester). As fellow researchers in IMEMS (Helen at Bangor, Sarah and Diane at Aberystwyth), we'd like to remind you of what the institute can do for you, and invite you to consider what (more) you might do for IMEMS. Please take a few minutes to read this letter and to act upon it – thank you!

1. **What can IMEMS do for you?**

- We can provide a *forum* in which to try out your ideas and discover the stimulus of mutual interests; many of the successful projects in the institute came into being because of unexpected meetings of minds and research areas within the IMEMS 'strands'. [See section 2 of this message for the list of research strands and their leaders.]
- The institute can give you *financial support*, such as assistance in the organisation of conferences or providing much-needed time in the form of teaching relief if you are in the early stages of developing a project and need a bit of breathing space for the preliminary research.

- We can put you in touch with the relevant colleagues to give *advice* about grant applications, offering the service of reading draft projects and passing on tips from those who have already been successful. In other words, we can help you to turn your first vague ideas into a funded project.
- The institute continues to organise and host the cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional video-linked *seminar series* on Tuesday afternoons at 5pm. This semester's programme has been circulated and can also be found on the website at <http://www.imems.ac.uk/videolinkresearchseminars.php>. We hope that you will support the series regularly and find it stimulating.
- This year will also see the establishment of an *annual IMEMS public lecture*, to be held in the spring and given by a scholar of international distinction.

2. What (more) could you do for IMEMS?

- You may already be an active member of a research strand or project team, in which case we invite you to offer a paper for the seminar series, organise and/or speak in a workshop, develop an academic network bid or work on a major grant application. As mentioned in section 1 above, we can offer support (both financial and intellectual) for these activities.
- If you are not actively involved in one of the research strands but would like to be, please send a brief email to the strand leader outlining your research interests and asking to be added to the strand's mailing list for information about their next event. The details of the contact persons are as follows:

Cultures of War and Conflict Resolution – Andrew Hiscock (els408@bangor.ac.uk)

Women and the Sacred – Helen Wilcox (helen.wilcox@bangor.ac.uk)

Cultures of the Written Artefact – Thomas Schmidt-Beste (mus205@bangor.ac.uk)

Centres and Peripheries – Sarah Prescott (scp@aber.ac.uk) N.B. This fourth strand is still evolving and is likely to be re-titled to make clearer its interest in Welsh history and culture.

- If you are unsure who to contact regarding other activities and initiatives within IMEMS, or if you have ideas for new members, an exciting new project or other research focus, please feel free to contact Helen Wilcox – who will also be hoping to meet you individually during this first semester.

3. The academic year 2009-10 in IMEMS:

- On 30th September the Mostyn Project was officially launched with a public lecture in Bangor on the history of the Mostyn estates given by Professor Tony Carr. The project has already attracted funding for two postgraduates, and several groups of colleagues are at work on different aspects of the wide-ranging Mostyn collections in the National Library and in the Bangor University Archive. For more details, contact the director of the Mostyn Project, Elisabeth Salter (els@aber.ac.uk).
- The seminar series began on 13th October with a paper by Estelle Stubbs (Sheffield), hosted by Aberystwyth, on the scribal evidence for the earliest Chaucer manuscripts. The seminars continue at fortnightly intervals throughout the semester.
- On the same day, the Society for Renaissance Studies completed its year-long ‘road-show’ by hosting a public lecture in Bangor by Margaret Bent (All Souls, Oxford) on the dissemination of early Renaissance music.
- On 18th October the Bangor Pontifical Digitisation Project was launched with a presentation and reception at Bangor Cathedral. The project, to preserve this liturgical manuscript while also making it available on the internet, involves co-operation between the National Library, Bangor University and the Cathedral and Diocese of Bangor. For further details, see <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/archives/bangorpontifical>.
- In the coming months there will be meetings of all the research strands to inform new members of the current activities / projects of the individual strands, and to draw in members whose areas of research are under-represented so far in the life (and grant successes) of the institute.
- We will be compiling a catalogue of all medieval and early modern M.A. provision in our two institutions, with a view to future co-operation in an IMEMS postgraduate programme.

- A training and information session will be laid on for IMEMS members, addressing in particular the question of how best to approach non-academic partners and other external funders (charitable foundations, National Trust, etc.) when drawing up projects.
- The first IMEMS annual public lecture will be held in the spring.
- Paleography training will be held in April for postgraduates in medieval and early modern studies, organised by Raluca Radulescu (English, Bangor).
- The IMEMS annual research day will be held in May.
- An IMEMS postgraduate conference will be hosted in June, as a pilot event for future provision of summer schools and short courses for postgraduates.
- And meanwhile, research continues on the major IMEMS projects. These include interdisciplinary work on Welsh seals; a series of conferences on pre-modern war and peace; early modern Welsh identities; an international Chaucer project (linking with the Huntington); and Welsh women writers in English. In addition to the two projects recently launched (the Mostyn and the Bangor Pontifical), further projects in the pipeline are Nation and Identity; Romantic Shakespeares (jointly with the Tate Gallery); and Women, Writing and Death in Medieval and Early Modern England. Other regular activities under the IMEMS umbrella include the Medieval Research Centre (video-linked lectures on Monday afternoons) and the Bangor-based research network on Pre-Modern Travel.

We trust that this message has reminded you of the many activities of IMEMS and the ways in which these can benefit you and your research, as well as the wider community of medieval and early modern researchers. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with questions, ideas, problems ... we'll do our utmost to respond constructively.

With best wishes,

Helen Wilcox, Sarah Prescott and Diane Watt

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