

Kent History Federation Report (1 September 2017 meeting) – School of History, University of Kent

Recent Developments:

- New Vice-Chancellor – Professor Karen Cox has taken up her post at Kent in August, replacing Dame Julia Goodfellow after a decade as Vice Chancellor. Professor Cox graduated from King's College London with a BSc (Hons) and Registered General Nurse qualification and has held a number of clinical posts in Oxford, Southampton, Gloucestershire and Nottingham, specialising in Oncology and Community Health Care. She completed her PhD at the University of Nottingham and was a visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania (supported by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the Florence Nightingale Foundation).
- On the 18th of May Dr George Conyne gave an interview to Radio Sputnik on the crisis in Venezuela and an interview to radio Worcestershire on Alcatraz Prison.
- Dr Rebekah Higgitt joined regular presenters Professor Kate Williams and Greg Jenner to talk about Louis XIV's role as a patron of science, from the foundation of the Academie des Sciences and Paris Observatory to Versailles' fountains and the dissection of exotic animals. While the future benefit of investing in science was promised, it was above all about spectacle and a demonstration of State, and monarch's power. The episode is available on the BBC iPlayer here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08tnkmt>
- In June we celebrated the launch of the new 'Ditchfield Room' in honour of Professor Grayson Ditchfield. Professor Ditchfield gained his doctorate from Cambridge and joined the University of Kent in 1970. Accordingly he is the longest serving member of the School and was asked to speak at the School's alumni day in 2014 as part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations.
- In July, Professor David Welch was invited to speak to 500 politicians, diplomats, and senior military figures at a conference organised by NATO's StratCom (a division of NATO Central Command) in Riga, Latvia. Professor Welch presented a paper on the role of propaganda in the dis-information age.
- In September we welcome a new member of staff, Dr Suzanna Ivanic as our new Early Modern Europeanist.

Recent publications, include:

- Professor Mark Connelly, Professor Ian Beckett and Dr Timothy Bowman, *The British Army and the First World War*, (Cambridge University Press).

This is a major new history of the British army during the Great War written by three leading military historians. Ian Beckett, Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly survey operations on the Western Front and throughout the rest of the world as well as the army's social history, pre-war and wartime planning and strategy, the maintenance of discipline and morale and the lasting legacy of the First World War on the army's development. They assess the strengths and weaknesses of the army between 1914 and 1918, engaging with key debates around the adequacy of British generalship and whether or not there was a significant 'learning curve' in terms of the development of operational art during the course of the war. Their findings show how, despite limitations of initiative and innovation amongst the high command, the British army did succeed in developing the effective combined arms warfare necessary for victory in 1918.

- Dr Ben Marsh and Dr Mike Rapport (Glasgow University), *Understanding and Teaching the Age of Revolutions*, (University of Wisconsin Press).

To learn about the "Age of Revolutions" in Europe and the Americas is to engage with the emergence of the modern world. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, nations were founded, old empires collapsed, and new ones arose. Struggles for emancipation—whether from royal authority, colonial rule, slavery, or patriarchy—inspired both hopes and fears. This book, designed for university and secondary school teachers, provides up-to-date content and perspectives, classroom-tested techniques, innovative ideas, and an exciting variety of pathways to introduce students to this complex era of history.

- Dr Ben Marsh, Visitor from South Carolina: Mrs Eliza Pinckney. in: Marschner, J. ed. *Enlightened Princesses: Caroline, Augusta, Charlotte, and the Shaping of the Modern World*, (Yale University).

Caroline of Ansbach (1683-1737), Augusta of Saxe-Gotha (1719-1772), and Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744-1818) were three German princesses who became Queens Consort-or, in the case of Augusta, Queen in Waiting, Regent, and Princess Dowager-of Great Britain, and were linked by their early years at European princely courts, their curiosity, aspirations, and an investment in Enlightenment thought. This sumptuously illustrated book considers the ways these powerful, intelligent women left enduring marks on British culture through a wide range of activities: the promotion of the court as a dynamic forum of the Hanoverian regime; the enrichment of the royal collection of art; the advancement of science and industry; and the creation of gardens and menageries. Objects included range from spectacular state portraits to pedagogical toys to plant and animal specimens, and reveal how the new and novel intermingled with the traditional.

- Dr Andrew Cohen, *The Politics and Economics of Decolonization in Africa: The Failed Experiment of the Central African Federation*, (I.B. Taurus).

The slow collapse of the European colonial empires after 1945 provides one of the great turning points of twentieth century history. With the loss of India however, the British under Harold Macmillan attempted to enforce a 'second' colonial occupation - supporting the efforts of Sir Andrew Cohen of the Colonial Office to create a Central African Federation. Drawing on newly released archival material, *The Politics and Economics of Decolonization* offers a fresh examination of Britain's central African territories in the late colonial period and provides a detailed assessment of how events in Britain, Africa and the UN shaped the process of decolonization. The author situates the Central African Federation - which consisted of modern day Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi - in its wider international context, shedding light on the Federation's complex relationships with South Africa, with US Presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy and with the expanding United Nations. The result is an important history of the last days of the British Empire and the beginnings of a more independent African continent.

- Dr Jan Loop, Professor Alastair Hamilton (The Warburg Institute), Professor Charles Burnett (The Warburg Institute), *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, (BRILL).

The essays in this volume shed light on how, for what purposes and to what extent the Arabic language was taught and studied by European scholars, theologian, merchants, diplomats and prisoners in early modern Europe.

Future events:

- Start of the Year Lecture 2017: Reflections on the Russian Revolution. (Monday 25th September 2017, 6pm Woolf Lecture Theatre).

The School of History is delighted to welcome Professor Dominic Lieven (Trinity College, Cambridge). The title of his paper is Reflections on the Russian Revolution.

This lecture will examine the many angles of the Russian Revolution. Professor Lieven will begin by recounting briefly the strange fates of his grandfather and his siblings during the years of revolution: this is history from "below" and the chaotic and often counter-intuitive story it tells is a useful antidote to over-schematic retrospective surveys by historians of what happened. He will then look at how Western interpretations of the revolution have evolved since he began his career in the mid 1970s. From there he will discuss a number of possible scenarios for how matters might have turned out in the pre-revolutionary period as well as in 1917-21. This will go far to explaining his views on both why the Bolsheviks won and what their victory meant for Russia. The second half of the lecture will largely be devoted to explaining the impact of the external context, including the First World War, on the Revolution's course, outcome and longer-term consequences. Above all, this lecture will be an international historian's perspective on the Revolution.