

CMRC presents a Research Day on:

Material Histories

The CMRC 2011 research day is rooted in discussions among Southampton academics generated by differing reactions to the 2010 Reuter lecture *Re-presenting the past: material things and uncertainty*, delivered by Sheila Bonde. This event focussed on questions of how to reflect the uncertainties of archaeological data when presenting them in graphic form, and the nature of the image as active agent in shaping our interpretation of the past. The wide spectrum of responses among researchers from our different disciplines seemed to reflect an intriguing lack of consensus concerning the aims and methods underlying the wider study of material objects in the past, and raised serious issues of methodological interest, in particular between Archaeology and History, but also more broadly within the Humanities community. Many of the scholars within CMRC currently conduct research on material objects, whether actual or within texts or images, using a diversity of approaches, but it is clear that no consensus exists on how to conduct, interpret or present such research. 'Material histories' thus aims to examine what approaches to material things can be found within the CMRC, and how these are situated in terms of the relationships between archaeological and other theories, historiography, spatial theory, social and economic approaches, and representation. It is hoped by these means to be able to talk to each other more meaningfully about materiality, in addition to bringing into focus what is distinctive about CMRC scholarship.



Monday 24 January 2011, from 10 am
Lecture Theatre C, Avenue Campus

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Material Histories

Organisers: Alison Gascoigne and Maria Hayward

Programme:

- 10.00 Welcome and introduction (AG)
- 10.10 Matthew Johnson (Archaeology): 'Material Histories and the Rules of Scholarship: Or, What's at Stake in doing Interdisciplinary Research'
- 10.40 Erika Corradini (English/LLAS): 'Old texts, new texts: an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Old English in the eleventh century'
- 11.10 Discussion
- 11.25 Coffee
- 11.45 Jude Jones (Archaeology): 'Embodied shadows: reading gender issues embedded in early modern tomb effigies and mortuary memorials 1500-1680'
- 12.15 Lena Wahlgren-Smith (English): "'Books Speak of Other Books": Using Textual Criticism to Reconstruct a Material Object'
- 12.45 Discussion
- 1.00 Lunch (not provided)
- 2.30 Laurie Stras (Music): 'Nuns Having Fun: The *ricreazioni di monache* of Suor Annalena Aldobrandini'
- 3.00 Rosie Baker (History/Chemistry): 'William Morris and the medieval revival'
- 3.30 Discussion
- 3.45 Coffee
- 4.05 Maria Hayward (History): 'Henry VIII's wardrobe unlock'd: The challenges posed by a lack of objects and a possible solution'
- 4.35 Chris Briggs (History): 'Inventories of medieval English peasant chattels: questions and approaches'
- 5.05 Discussion
- 5.20 Taking it all further: objects, histories, stories (open forum led by Marianne O'Doherty and Stephanie Moser)

The interest generated across humanities disciplines by this year's research day topic, Material Histories, has shown quite how many of us across the humanities share a research interest in the relationship between objects, histories and stories. The point of this open forum is to do two things: to draw out the methodological insights provided by the day's papers, and to investigate the potential for further collaborative work in this area. It strikes us that there are some questions about this relationship between things, histories and stories, and ways of dealing with this relationship that we as a research centre would be very well-placed to investigate. In particular, do approaches like that of the current radio series, 'a history of the world in 100 objects' encourage us to be a bit too utilitarian in our approach to material things? What do we do with objects that don't have a story, or that don't slot easily into a broader narrative history? This question applies, of course, not just to academics, but to other cultural organisations (e.g. museums and galleries). The National Trust recently addressed the 'problem' of its unknown portrait collection by inviting novelists to write short stories about them; what do we do as academics? And can we think about why we (as academics and culturally) do what we do?

6.00 (or whenever it ends) Drinks and nibbles with book launch in the North Corridor

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